See the introduction *Revelation - Isogogical Considerations*.

**Read Revelation 1:1-20. Note the following structure:**

**Introduction: 1:1-20**

**1:1-3 - Preface: Substance, Purpose, Means & Promise**

**1:4-7 - Author, Recipients, Greeting, Christology, Prophecy**

**1:8 - Christ speaks: Reveals who He is**

**1:9 - 10 - Author, Circumstance, Location**

**1:11-20 - The beginning of the Revelation**

**1. The voice**

**2. *Mandatum Scribendi***

**3. Recipients**

**4. Vision of the Lampstands (12)**

**5. Vision of Christ (13-17a)**

**6. Christ speaks (17b-20)**

**A. I AM - The Risen Christ is God**

**B. The Keys of Death and Hades**

**C. *Mandatum Scribendi -* Prophecy**

**D. The Explanation of the Vision**

**1:1 -** What does the Revelation reveal?

Why was it given?

How was it given? What does the word "angel" mean?

**1:1 -** Cont. - the word "angel" is used more in the Book of Revelation than in any other New Testament Book. What does this mean?

To whom is the Revelation given?

**1:2 -**

What does John do with the Revelation?

What does John say that he saw?

**1:3 -**

What is the Promise?

To whom does the Promise come?

Why?

**1:4 -** Now Revelation reads like a letter. Note the author and recipients. See our early study on the authorship and date of Revelation. Note the location of the churches on this map:



**1:4 & 5** - What does John wish the recipients of his letter? From whom do these blessings come?

"The seven spirits" is frequently translated "the seven-fold Spirit", although in the Greek it is plural. See 3:1; 4:5; and 5:6. Then read Zechariah 4:2, 10; and Isaiah 11:2. This is best understood as the Holy Spirit, who works the seven-fold gifts recounted in Isaiah.

Is there a Trinitarian reference in Revelation 1:4-5?

How is Jesus Christ described by John? How does this relate to 1:1?

"Faithful witness" - See John 18:35, Revelation 3:14, and Isaiah 55:4. The Greek word here is ὁ μάρτυς, from which our word "martyr" is derived. Those who provided a faithful witness were often killed for that witness.

"Firstborn from the dead"& "Ruler of the kings of the earth" - see Colossians 1:15, 18. What is Christ the "Firstborn" over, and from? See Psalm 89:27. Psalm 89 ties the "Firstborn" together with "Ruler of the kings of the earth". See 1 Timothy 6:15.

**1:6** - 1:5b naturally flows into verse 6. How is Jesus described?

"Who loves us…" See John 15:13, 17:26; Romans 5:8, 8:37.

" Freed us from our sins by His Blood…" Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 10:19, 13:20; 1 John 1:7.

"…made us to be a kingdom of priests…" 1 Peter 2:5 - what does a priest do? See Hebrews 4:14-16. See Exodus 9:3-6 - How is John like Moses?

What is the purpose of this priesthood?

Note the 2 "…to Him" references. How do these "frame" this verse?

**1:7 -** Verse 7 is a prophetic interjection - a Promise. It is the first prophecy of Revelation, which balances it with 22:20 - opening and closing with a Promise. What is the Promise? See Daniel 7:13-14. See Matthew 24:30-31 - John's prophecy is the same as Christ's Promise. See Zechariah 12:10. What is the context of the Prophet's words?

**1:8 -** Here for the first time the Christ speaks. One of the marks of the Gospel of St. John is his record of Jesus' "I Am" statements (the Vine, the Good Shepherd, the Gate, the Way…" I Am is God's personal Name. See Exodus 3:13-15. Now see John 8:57-59, and the reaction of the Jews. What is it that Jesus says He is?

"The Alpha and the Omega" - The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet - the beginning and the end - see 1:17-18. See 21:6.

"…Who was, Who is, and Who is to come…" See John 1:27 - only God is eternal.

Already in Revelation we have seen Jesus shown to be: alive, eternal, fully God, the Second Person of the Trinity, and our Redeemer. This is "The revelation of Jesus Christ…"

**1:9 -** Now John returns to the "letter format", and addresses those who will read this revelation. How does John identify himself? From our introduction, we remember that John was imprisoned on Patmos for his witness of Jesus Christ.

**1:10 -** "The Lord's Day" is Sunday, the first day of the week - Acts 20:7; the day on which the offering is made - 1 Corinthians 16:2. It is the Lord's Day because it is the Day of Resurrection. The Greek construction is seen only here and in 1 Corinthians 11:20.

"In the Spirit" - John's description of his state when he received this vision. In our introduction we read of Paul in a similar state in 2 Corinthians 12:1-6. This is common language in the Old and New Testaments - see Judges 14:6; 2 Chronicles 20:14; Ezekiel 3:14; Daniel 5:14; Matthew 22:43; Luke 2:27; Ephesians 6:18, and many others. In Revelation see 4:2, 17:3, and 21:10.

John was suffering for his faith. In the midst of his suffering, he would receive the most extensive vision of heaven, the most complete vision of Christ in glory, given to any Prophet in the Bible. Consider the implications of this for John and for the Church. What comfort this must have brought to a persecuted Church!

The voice - this is usually understood to be Christ Himself. John describes the voice as "like a trumpet". Trumpets are found elsewhere in Revelation also - but here it seems to mean clear, pronounced, forceful, while still beautiful.

**1:11 -** "Write!" - the *mandatum scribendi*, God's command to record the vision. Remember from our introduction that God spoke this way to several other Prophets. What does this tell us about the Bible?

What is John directed to do with the Words he receives? What will this accomplish in the churches?

Compare the list of cities with the map on page 1 of this study. The cities would be travelled to in the order they are listed in verse 11. This reminds us that Scripture is written to real people in real places - that God became Man and dwelt among us - and that the Truth of Scripture is seen in the many verifiable historic and geographic facts it records.

**1:12 -** What does John see when he turns? Christ Himself will interpret the vision in verse 20.

**1:13-16 -** "Son of Man" - This is frequently used in Daniel, but in the New Testament is the most common Name Jesus uses for Himself - more than 80 times in the Gospels Jesus calls Himself the "Son of Man".

Compare this vision to Daniel 7:13, and to the other visions (Ezekiel 1 {especially 25 forward}, Isaiah 6, etc.) we saw in our introduction.

Consider each element of this vision. Fr. Braden will discuss each in greater detail. On the sharp double-edged sword, see especially Hebrews 4:12 and Revelation 19:15. On the face of God see Exodus 33:20 and compare this section to Exodus 34:27-33. How is John like Moses?

**1:17 -** What was John's reaction? Consider Isaiah's reaction in 6:5. Why do John and Isaiah react this way?

Christ touches John. See Ezekiel 1:28-2:2 and Daniel 8:17-18. What do Ezekiel and Daniel do when they receive their visions? How are they brought to their feet?

"Do not be afraid" - see Matthew 28:5, 10; Luke 1:13, 30; Luke 2:10, 5:10, Acts 18:9.

How does Jesus describe Himself? Compare this with 1:8.

**1:18 -** What doctrine, central to the Christian faith, is supported here? Why is this so important for a persecuted Prophet and Church? What does He hold? See Matthew 16:18-19, 18:18; John 20:21-23. To have the keys is to have complete dominion. What is the significance of this for John? For the Church?

**1:19 -** What is John commanded to do? For whom does he do so? What is he to write? How does what he writes relate to God, "Who is, Who was, and Who is to come?" (Revelation 1:8).

**1:20 -** What John has seen is recorded in verses 12-18. It is an mysterious, apocalyptic vision, much like those we saw in our introduction (Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah). But a mystical vision avails the church nothing. So our Lord explains the vision, and by doing so He also tells us that the vision is representative - the things seen stand for other things.

What do the stars represent? The Greek word ἄγγελοι is "angels", which means "messengers". While angels are present with us in worship, here the word is used as a reference to the Pastors of the churches. What is the purpose of the Pastor in the Church? Which churches? Note 2:1-3:22.

See Zechariah 4:2; 11-14. Zechariah wrote in the late 6th century B.C., when the Jews had been returned from exile to a destroyed Jerusalem, and began to rebuild. How is that similar to the situation in 95 A.  D.? The abundance of oil is representative of the Holy Spirit, the "anointed" are the ones chosen by God to lead Israel. Even in the depths of tribulation, God delivers His people - for Zechariah by anointing Zerubabel from David's lineage, and Joshua the Priest. In John's time, God sends Pastors to the churches, and John as Bishop and Prophet.

In verses 19-20, what is John's job? Why? See Hebrews 1:1-2. What does this tell us about how God comes to us in this time?

Having established that the elements of the vision are representative, the Lord now speaks to John Words to give to the Churches. The letters will generally follow the pattern of praise, conviction, and call to repentance. But in all of the letters we see that God is aware of the most minute details of our life - ascended and reigning at the Right Hand of the Father, He is still Immanuel. He is still with His Church.

**Read Revelation 2:1-7**

**2:1 -** Find Ephesus on the map. These places and churches are historical. Ephesus was the most important city in Asia Minor. It was the seat of the worship of the idol Diana (Artemis in Greek, see Acts 19:21-28). Paul established the Church there, and lived there three years (see Acts 19:1-10).

To whom are Christ's Words directed? From whom is the letter? What comfort is there is the sure knowledge that He walks among the Churches? See Genesis 3:8.

**2:2-3** What praise does Christ have for the Church in Ephesus? (the numbering is unimportant)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

What would the Lord say of these same things of the church today? Of Zion?

**2:4 -** What does the Lord "hold against" the Church in Ephesus? The reference here is to the compelling love for God that is present in a convert.

**2:5 -** How does God describe the "first love"? Have the Ephesians maintained that? What image does God use to describe their current status?

What does God command they do?

What if they do not?

**2:6 -** What praise does God have for the Ephesians? The Nicolaitans were a libertine sect that taught that they were free to engage in idolatry and immorality. What would the danger be? Does God really praise hate? What does this say for us today?

**2:7 -** See Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 13:43. What is the context of each of these admonitions? How does that relate to the Revelation of Jesus Christ to St. John? It is faith that hears.

**2:7 -** "the Spirit says" - here again we meet the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of Scripture. See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21. The verbal inspiration, thus the Divine nature, of Revelation is here affirmed. It is the Spirit of God that speaks through the Prophet to the Churches. This is God's Word.

**2:7 -** The Tree of Life - See Genesis 2:9, 3:22-24. What is the promise God makes here?

**2:7 -** The Paradise of God - See Luke 23:43. This word is used only three times in Scripture - the third is 2 Corinthians 12:4.

**Read Revelation 2:8-11**

**2:8 -** Find Smyrna on the map. Note the relationship between the cities and their order in Revelation: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicaea. From Patmos one would go ashore into Ephesus, then the rest of the cities lay on the trade route - here named in order.

Smyrna was a Roman city very supportive of the Emperor and his worship. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* is a record by Eusebius, an early church historian (263-339 A.  D.). It is one of the few genuine writings that chronicles the age of Christian persecution. It records the marytrdom of Polycarp, who lived at the same time as St. John (69-155). Polycarp was the Bishop of Smyrna, who was commanded to recant Christ. An audible voice spoke from heaven to him, after which the following occured: "But when the magistrate pressed him hard and said, 'Swear the oath, and I will release thee; revile the Christ,' Polycarp said, 'Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and He hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Polycarp was set on fire in front of the crowd. But as he burned, Eusebius records that they did not smell burning flesh, rather "we perceived such a fragrant smell, as if it were the wafted odour of frankincense or some other precious spice." This gives us an accurate historical picture of the times in which St. John, in prison on Patmos, lived and wrote.

**2:8 -** From our earlier study, do you remember what the word "angel" means here?

"The First and Last, who was dead and came to life" - here the Divinity, death and resurrection of Christ are summarized - the center of the Christian faith. On the term "First and Last", see our earlier study above.

**2:9 -** The Christians in Smyrna were suffering. But God With Us speaks to them by the Spirit through the Prophet's pen to let them know that He sees, and knows, what they suffer. So also does He see and know what you suffer.

But the Smyrnans are not poor - they are rich! How so? See Matthew 6:19-20, 31-33, 19:21; Romans 8:16-18.

"those who say they are Jews but are not…" St. Paul has already taught clearly who Israel is - those with faith in Jesus Christ. See Galatians 6:14-16, for example. The word "synagogue" is a Greek word that means "gather together". Those who do not confess Christ are not of the true "gathering" of the faithful, but rather of the "gathering" of Satan, the devil, hence their "blasphemy". The word "Satan" first occurs in the Scriptures in Hebrew in 1 Chronicles 21:1. The word means "adversary". Interestingly, the word "devil" (accuser) does not occur in the Old Testament.

**2:10 -** God does not promise that they will not suffer. Nor does He promise that for us - indeed the opposite is true: John 16:2; Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 12:26-27. Still, the Smyrnans are not to be afraid - See Romans 8:31. Note that while men may imprison the Christians, it is the Devil that works. Remember that John writes from prison. What "test" does St. John refer to? Perhaps Polycarps' story is proof sufficient.

"Ten days" - Ten is the Biblical number for completeness or perfection. Here the number is a promise that the time of persecution is limited by God. See Matthew 24:21-22.

What does God command about that persecution? What is His promise? See James 1:12 - the only other occurrence of "crown of life" in Holy Scripture. But see 1 Corinthians 9:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4.

**2:11 -** This is faith language - faith hears God's Words. See Matthew 11:15, 13:9,13.

The "second death". Scripture teaches two births - physical and spiritual. Scripture teaches two deaths - physical and spiritual. See Revelation 20:6, 14, and 21:8.

**Read Revelation 2:12-17**

**2:12 -** Find Pergamum on the map. Pergamum was the capital of Asia, the Roman province. Pergamum was situated on a high hill overlooking the surrounding lands.

How does the Lord identify Himself in verse 12? See 1:16. Who is this that speaks? What meaning does the sword have?

**2:13 -** What atribute of God is expressed here? (hint: remember the three "O"s.)

Satan's throne - as capital, Pergamum was the center of emperor worship. Does the church engage in this? What might be the consequence of refusing to worship the emperor?

What have the members of the Church in Pergamum not done?

Antipas is a name that occurs frequently in history. All that is known of the Antipas in verse 13 is that he is a martyr, faithful until death for his Christian confession.

The Lord reiterates that Satan lives in Pergamum - indeed he is the prince of this world. See Ephesians 2:2

What manifestations of "Satan's throne" do you see in our country? What is our "national religion"?

**2:14 -** What is it that the Lord has against those in Pergamum? Balaam was a sorcerer invited by king Balak to tempt the Israelites with Midianite women and to lead them astray - see Jude 11 - he also was to call down curses upon Israel - what happened? See Numbers 24:17-19.

Is eating or not eating a matter of the Kingdom of God? See 1 Corinthians 8:8-13.

Which commandment does sexual immorality break? What is Luther's explanation? How does our society violate this Commandment today?

**2:15 -** See verse 6 and notes there.

**2:16 -** What are those in Pergamum commanded to do by Christ? If they fail to do so, what will His weapon be? See verse 12 and 1:16, and notes there.

**2:17 -** What allusion to faith does our Lord use here? See verse 7 and notes there.

**Read Revelation 2:18-29**

**2:18 -** Find Thyatira on the map. It was home to many "trade guilds" - as we see in Lydia, a dealer in "purple cloth" (Acts 16:14)

**2:18 -** How does Jesus describe Himself in 2:18? See Matthew 4:3, Revelation 1:14-15, Ezekiel 1:27

**2:19 -** Does the Lord know the men of Thyatira? What does He know about them? What does He know about you? How do their "first works" compare with their works now? See 2:4

**2:20 -** What does the Lord have against the men of Thyatira? Who is Jezebel? See 1 Kings 16:29-31; 19:1-2; 2 Kings 9:22, 30-37. The name Jezebel is derived from the Phoenician word for "prince", deliberately distorted in the Hebrew to honor Baal. Was Jezebel alive in the time of John? As with the lampstands and stars, here our Lord speaks in "picture language". There is a woman, influential in the congregation, who was influencing others to forsake the ways of God and follow the ways of unbelief. What else does Revelation say about her in 2:20?

**2:21 -** Does God condemn the woman immediately, or is He longsuffering? See Romans 9:22-23; 1 Peter 3:18-22.

**2:22-23 -** "Jezebel" did not repent. What did she earn?

**2:23 -** What is the purpose of her condemnation? What does this say to Zion? To our Synod?

**2:24 -** Are all in Thyatira followers of Jezebel? See 1 Corinthians 11:19, Romans 16:17-20

**2:25 -** What does God command the faithful to do? What do they have? What do they await? See Matthew 16:27

**2:26 -** What does "overcomes" mean? Overcomes what? See Matthew 24:4-14.

"…does my will" - See Matthew 20:21-22

"…power (authority to govern) over the nations" - See 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Psalm 149:4-9.

From whom does this power (authority) come? See Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1-4.

**2:27 -** See Psalm 2:1-9. Of whom does this Psalm speak? Why would the use of this Psalm bring great comfort to the congregation in Thyatira? To John? To us? Of what time does Christ speak?

**2:28 -** "Morning Star" is a Name of Jesus. See 22:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Numbers 24:17 (remember the Nicolaitans in 2:14?); Daniel 12:1-3. To receive the "Morning Star" is to participate in the eternal reign of Jesus.

**2:29 -** We have met this expression before - can you remember what it means? (hint - hearing=faith). While the Words are Christ's Words, note that the admonition is to hear what the Spirit says, as in 2:11 and 2:17 - See John 14:26. What is the "job" of the Holy Spirit?

**Read Revelation 3:1-6**

**3:1 -** Find Sardis on the map. Sardis, some 30 miles southeast of Thyatira, was once a glorious city. But this splendor lay in the past. In 17 A. D. an earthquake destroyed Sardis and Philadelphia. To commemorate the rebuilding, Sardis minted a coin featuring Caesar Augustus. A huge but unfinished temple to Artemis (as in Ephesus) was located in Sardis. The people of Sardis engaged in pantheistic worship of nature, including an interest in fertility and the bringing of life out of death.

Who speaks the Words? How does the Christ describe Himself? See 1:16, Isaiah 11:2 (as above…). The "seven spirits" is sometimes rendered "sevenfold spirit", but the word "spirits" is plural in the Greek. See 1:4 and our study notes there.

What does Christ know? What is the name (reputation) of the church in Sardis? But what is actually true? Who alone can see faith? Discuss the Biblical doctrine of the visible and invisible church. What would this look like today?

**3:2 -** What command does Christ give those in Sardis? To which opposites in verse 1 does this command refer?

The city of Sardis had twice been destroyed by conquerors because the watchmen weren't vigilant. Those in Sardis are in a "spiritual sleep." Which destroyer/conqueror does our Lord warn them to be vigilant against?

**3:3 -** What does Christ tell the congregation in Sardis to remember? What had they received? What had they heard?

What will happen if they do not wach? See Matthew 24:36-44.

**3:4 -** What have "a few" not done? This is baptismal language. How so? See Isaiah 1:18. With what does Christ "vest" us in our baptism? See Matthew 22:11-13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:9-10; Revelation 7:9-14; 19:11-14.

**3:5 -** What will be true of those who overcome? Book of Life: see Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 20:12-15, 21:27, 22:19.

"I will confess his name before My Father…" See Matthew 10:32. What does it mean to "confess Me before men"?

**3:6 -** We have had this several times - what does this mean?

**Read Revelation 3:7 -13**

Find Philadelphia on the map. It is located 30 miles south and east of Sardis on the main trade route. This was also the main Roman postal route to Troas. Philadelphia was known as the "gateway to the east". The city was named for Attalus Philadelphus, who showed love and loyalty to his brother Eumenes II, King of Pergamum. Philadelphia was subject to frequent earthquakes, but the rich volcanic soil was a benefit. In 92 A. D. the emperor issued an edict that half the grape vines be cut down in Philadelphia. This was a crushing blow to their economy. The "god" of the Philadelphians was Dionysus, the "god" of wine.

**3:7 -** How does Christ describe Himself? Pastor will discuss the importance of "opening" and "closing" in Scripture, as well as the "Key of David".

**3:8 -** What is it that the Lord knows about the Philadelphians? See the Letter to Thyatira in 2:19. On the keeping of the Word, see Matthew 28:19ff; John 14:23-24. What is it that He sets before them? What relationship does this have to the key in verse 7? Why is the door open to them? Many commentators hold that this represents and "open mission field" as in 1 Corinthians 16:9 and 2 Corinthians 2:12. Others hold that since the Christians were thrown out of the Synagogues, this door is the door to the Kingdom of God.

**3:9** - "Synagogue of Satan" - See 2:9. See John 8:44. These are words of condemnation against the Jews that would persecute the true Israel - the Christian Church. See Romans 9:6-8, 11:7-11. "I will make them come and worship…" This Words describe the last day, the day of judgment, a major theme in Revelation. See Romans 14:11. What will the Messiah cause those false Jews to know? See John 13:34; 15:9.

**3:10 -** The Commandment to endure - They have kept His Word (3:8). The Greek translates literally "the word of my endurance". See 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, Hebrews 12:2-7. Have we also kept the Word?

The "hour of trial" is the Last Day - Malachi 3:2-5

**3:11 -** What is the Lord's Promise to the Philadelphians? This becomes a heartening refrain in Revelation - see 11:14, 22:7, 22:12, and 22:20. What is the Lord's command to the Philadelphians? See 2:25-26. What do these Words say to us?

**3:12 -** The Temple was destroyed in 70 A.  D. What encouragement does our Lord have for the Philadelphians? What will the Lord write on the faithful? See 2 Chronicles 3:15-17. See Exodus 28:36-38. The New Jerusalem is a theme in Ezekiel chapters 40-48, a description of the Church Triumphant in Paradise. See especially 48:35. What is the name of the city? What Promise does this impart to the Philadelphians? What additional Name is written on the believer? See Philippians 2:9; Revelation 14:1, 19:12-13. This Divine Name is revealed only at the Last Day. Where is God's Name "written" upon us?

**3:13 -** Again, as in the previous Letters, the Lord closes this Letter with a reference to the faith of the Philadelphians.

**Read Revelation 3:14-22**

**3:14 -** Find Laodicea on the map. It is located to the south and east of Philadelphia. It was founded in 253 B.C. by Antiochus II, and named after Laodice, a wife he divorced. Other cities named in Revelation participated in revolts against the Roman government - but Laodicea remained faithful to Caesar. The city was famous for its rich black wool. It was also famous for its great wealth and medicine, but because of its location it was prone to earthquakes, and could not furnish enough water for the citizens. The residents of Laodicea were worshippers of the Roman gods.

Again in this letter our Lord directs the Epistle to the "angel of the church". This is not a nebulous reference to an unnamed angelic creature, rather it is a direct reference to the Pastor of the church there.

Our Lord identifies Himself as: the "Amen"; the "faithful and true witness", and the "ruler of God's creation." These Titles are only true of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is not only the ruler of God's creation, but through Him all things were made (John 1:2; Proverbs 8:22-30), and through Him comes the new creation (See 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:5). But this language also ties Christ to the Old (see Isaiah 65:16-19). Discuss the implications of this passage on the theme of Revelation, especially Revelation 21:1-6. He is the God that does not change. That He is the "Amen", the Truth (see John 14:6) provides wordplay not evident in the English, for the "Master Craftsman" is in the Hebrew the אָ֫מ֥וֹן.

Anytime God says "I Am …" He teaches you about Himself. What does God teach with these words?

**3:15 -** What does God know about the Laodiceans? What do their deeds show? See Matthew 7:16-21. What does God wish? Why? See Romans 9:6-8. What would God say about the deeds of Zion? About your deeds? Are we saved by our deeds? Based on the Matthew passage, what relationship is there between faith and deeds? See James 2:17-26; Galatians 6:15-16. How are these two passages understood together?

What is God about to do to the Laodiceans? Jesus identifies Himself as "Faithful" and "True" - how does this contrast with the Laodiceans?

Like foul-tasting, spoiled food, what does God say He is about to do to the Laodiceans?

**3:17 -** What do the Laodiceans believe themselves to be? (See our introduction to verse 14). See Matthew 6:19-21. They are like unto Ephraim in Hosea 12:8, and the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 4:8 - they mistake earthly wealth for security… See Luke 12:20-21.

**3:18 -** From our introduction we saw that the Laodiceans were rich, produced fine wool, and were known for medicine, especially a salve used on the eyes. How does God address these exact items in this verse? What does He say about the gold? What does this mean? See Malachi 3:2; Daniel 12:10; Zechariah 13:9. What do these texts have in common with Revelation? (Hint - the coming of the Lord in judgment…)

How would they be rich? (see Bible verses above). How would they be vested? This is baptismal language. How would they truly see? See Isaiah 29:18-19.

**3:20 -** Notice the imminence of the declaration "Behold, I stand…" This is the time for conversion. But God's Kingdom of Grace has an end. What does the Lord say about the relationship between His rebuke and His love? What was His rebuke? See Hebrews 12:5-10. What is God's command to the Laodiceans? What does "I stand at the door and knock…" mean? See Matthew 24:32-35; James 5:7-9. What is the "voice" of Christ that we hear? "I will eat with him…" See Luke 14:16ff; Revelation 19:9, 17.

**3:21 -** Again here we have the refrain "To him who overcomes…" What is the context of this repeated statement? What will the one that overcomes receive? See Matthew 19:28. Christ "sat down" with His Father - see Hebrews 10:12, 12:2.

**3:22 -** To close the last letter, Christ appeals to faith, which alone can receive and understand His Word - see Matthew 13:10-17. Who is it that speaks to the Churches? Of what does He speak? See John 14:26, 15:26.

**Read Revelation 4:1-11**

**4:1 -** There is now a change in the Revelation. The dictation of the letters to the churches has ended. As in 1:12-16, John will describe what he sees. Here we have an open door - recall the discussion of the doctrines of "opening and closing" in Scripture - what is open to John now? Who is speaking? See 1:10; Exodus 20:18. What is to be revealed to John? After a description of the vision (2-11), John will see the scrolls in the hand of the Lamb, which ushers in the opening of the seals, the revelation of the history of God working in the world to redeem men through the sacrifice of the Christ.

**4:2 -** As is 1:10, John is "in the Spirit", receiving an ecstatic vision from God.

**4:2 -** The first voice - see 1:11. See Exodus 19::17-20. The parallels between God's revelation to Moses and to John are striking. On what he is about to see, read 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.

What does God say He is about to show John? Consider this promise in light of the scroll (chapter 5), the seals (chapter 6), the trumpets (chapter 8), the plagues (chapter 15), and the bowls (chapter 16) - here God tells John that these speak of "things which must take place".

**4:3 -** The Vision John is given begins the balance of the Book of Revelation. Compare this vision with the vision in Daniel 7:9-14. Note especially:

The words used in the opening of the vision: Daniel 7:9 (see also 7:2, 6-7); Rev 4:1

The throne: Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:2, 4

God seated on the throne: Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:2

God's appearance: Daniel 7:9; Revelation 4:3

Fire before the throne: Daniel 7:9-10; Revelation 4:5

Heavenly beings surrounding the throne: Daniel 7:10; Revelation 4:4, 6-10, 5:8, 11, & 14.

Books before the throne: Daniel 7:10; Revelation 5:1-5

The book openend: Daniel 7:10; Revelation 5:2-5, 9

The Messiah approaching the throne to receive authority: Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 5:5-7, 9, 12-13.

By the similarities in the vision, John is placed on par with Daniel. How were their circumstances similar? What did this mean to the people of Daniel's time? Of John's time?

On 4:3, see 1 Timothy 6:16 and Ezekiel 1:26-28. Ezekiel too lived during the Babylonian exile.

**4:4 -** Twenty four elders - note the use of numbers - 3 x 4 = 12, this is 12 x 2, representative of the Old and the New, the Tribes and the Apostles. In any case, they are identified here as "elders", πρεσβυτέρους. Note also how they are dressed. See Mark 16:5, Luke 9:29, Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9, 13-14. What do the robes mean? See Romans 4:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21. Where do the robes come from? See Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27. What do the crowns mean? See 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4.

**4:5 -** These signs frequently mark the presence of God. See Exodus 19:16-19; Psalm 18:12-15: 77:18.

Seven lamps: See 1:12. Here these are explained as the "the seven Spirits of God" - as in 1:4, see Isaiah 11:2ff. What is notable is that the Spirit of God is present in the midst of the vision.

**4:6 -** Sea of glass: See Ezekiel 1:22. See Revelation 21:1, 22:1. Some interpreters explain the "sea of glass" in conjunction with the basin in 1 Kings 7:23-25.

"The Greek reads: 'and before the throne as a sea of glass like crystal.'

**4:7 -** Four living creatures (τέσσαρα ζῷα). See Ezekiel 1:5-14. "Covered with eyes" is a symbol of omniscience - they see all.

**4:8 -** Six wings: See Isaiah 6:2-4. When do we sing this song? What relationship does this have to the presence of God? Why is this heavenly hymn called the "trisagion?"

**4:9-10 -** Note the presence of liturgical worship in heaven. What do the creatures "give" to God? What do we do on earth when we sing this hymn? Throughout the Old Testament worship of the true God is liturgical - with chanting, bowing, prostration, incense and candles - and in heaven worship will be the same. Should it be any different on earth?

The act of laying the crowns before the throne is an ascription of praise - it is God who won and freely gives the crowns. His wearing of the crown of thorns earned for you who believe in Him a heavenly crown.

**4:11 -** What do the elders say? Note the first stanza of the "new song" in 5:9. The creation and the creative work of God is praised. See Jonah 1:9. God is worthy because He has overcome sin, death and the devil. This "creative work" is the completion of the new creation - the making new of all things. See Revelation 21:5.

**Read Revelation 5:1-10**

**5:1 -** Read Isaiah 29:11-17. What does the scroll represent in Isaiah? How is this similar to the scroll in Revelation? Read Daniel 12:1-4. What similarities are there to the setting of Revelation? What are the contents of the scroll? See Revelation 4:1. See Ezekiel 2:3-9. How is this similar to what we are seeing in Revelation?

"Seven seals" - we have already discussed the meaning of the number 7. Note that here the stream of 7s begins - seven seals, seven trumpets (8:2), seven angels with seven plagues (15:1), seven bowls of God's wrath (16:1). These repetitive revelations describe the time of the Church, each leading up to the last day. The seals on the scroll represent the fact that it contains the future - man cannot see it now, only God can.

**5:2, 3, 4 -** Man, in his sinfulness, cannot know the future. By virtue of His Deity, Christ alone is worthy, for His Divine Providence governs all things, including the future.

**5:5 -** How do the titles used for Christ reflect His worthiness? See Genesis 49:8-12; see also Isaiah 11:1, 10. How has He triumphed?

**5:6 -** The previous verses introduce the vision of Christ. How is Christ seen? See Genesis 22:7-8; Exodus 12:1-7; Leviticus 16:20-22; 1 Peter 1:18-19. What does it mean that He is slain? See Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29, 36. That He is in "the midst of" (not seated upon) the throne?

"Four living creatures… and the elders" See 4:4 ff.

"Seven horns and seven eyes" - attributes of the Lamb. Seven is the number for earthly fullness or completion, 3 + 4. On the horns, see Deuteronomy 33:17; 1 Kings 22:11; Psalm 89:17; Daniel 7:7-8:24. The horns are a symbol of power. On the eyes, see Zechariah 4:10-14. The eyes are a symbol of God's omniscience and omnipresence, as explained in verse 6. Note that Christ alone is the Lion and the Lamb.

**5:7 -** The worthiness of the Lamb is seen in His taking of the scroll. From which hand does He receive it? See Mark 12:35-27; Acts 2:33.

**5:8 -** The mighty act of receiving the scroll, which is to receive the full power of God, elicits what reaction from the creatures and elders?

**5:8 -** What do the elders hold? (The Greek participle is masculine and plural, so the creatures are not included in the "holding") What do the bowls represent? On the harps, see Psalm 1 Chronicles 25:1-7; 33:1-5.

"New song" - See Exodus 14:29-15:1; Isaiah 42:9-10. Note the context there. This is the new song that celebrates the new creation, which begins with the "Messianic Event".

**5:9 -** The New Song. The song begins with a proclamation of Christ's worthiness (see verse 2). The opening of the seals is the ushering in of the salvific acts of God leading up to the final judgment.

What justification is given in the "New Song" for Christ's worthiness? Was this purchase made with gold or silver? (the Greek verb is used for the act of buying in a market) From whence were the men "purchased?" See Acts 20:28. (the verb for "purchased" in Greek is different here)

**5:10 -** What has Christ the Lamb made the redeemed? See 1:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9-10.

"reign on earth" - see 2:26-27, 22:5; Matthew 19:28-29; 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

**Read Revelation 5:11-13**

**5:11 -** Now the celestial chorus joins in the worship. See Daniel 7:9-10; Luke 2:13-14; Hebrews 12:22

**5:12 -** The New Song is now expanded, we might say that verse two is sung. How do the words describe the Lamb's act of receiving the scroll?

**5:13 -** The third verse of the New Song reaches a crescendo as all living creatures join in (a manifestation of the last day) - the third stanza is a doxology. How do the heavenly creatures respond? How is this like what we do on Sunday morning?

**Read Revelation 6:1-6**

Now the seals will be opened. The seals, like the trumpets, angels, plagues and bowls, will provide a progressive revelation of "salvation history" leading up to, and finally including the Parousia and Judgment.

**6:1 -** What happens when the first seal is opened? What does the creature say?

**6:1 –** Who opens the seal? (see 5:2-5). What is “Come!” an invitation to do? (See 4:1).

**See Handout on the Outline of Revelation**

**See Handout on the major theories of the interpretation of Revelation**

We know from Revelation that Jesus rules over the kings of the earth (1:5, 2:6-27), and that He works through the events of the world, even the ones that seem disastrous, and that these trials serve as either “purification or punishment” (Beale). What man means for evil, God uses for good (Genesis 45:4-7). That Christ is worthy to open the seals means He is also in control of the events they unleash – and that He uses them to the good of the Church (Romans 8:28ff). Note the sequence of events: Christ opens the seal, authorizing what follows, and the heavenly agent (living creature) acts on his Lord’s command by giving the appropriate command – “Come!”, beckoning forth the event. Without the authorization of Christ, none of these would be possible. The world may seem chaotic to us, yet God knows what will happen, and has already planned our salvation and deliverance in Christ.

We have already seen that our Lord clearly prophesies the same events that will come with the opening of the seals (Matthew 24). See also Ezekiel 14:12-22; Zechariah 1:8-17, 6:5-8 (notice the theme of chapter 5, which precedes this section). The events of Revelation 6 are subsequent to Christ’s death and resurrection (see 5:6), but are not necessarily subsequent to one another in their chronology – they may be simultaneous. This is to say they can not be predicted, but rather have been true in many ages since our Lord’s Ascension. This approach, appropriate to the “Idealist” school of interpretation of Revelation, is sometimes called “inaugurated eschatology”. We see chapter 5 as proof of Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension, and the events following occur before His coming on the Last Day.

**6:2 –** What does John see? Note especially the color of the horse, what the rider holds, and what the purpose is. Some hold this to be Christ (see Psalm 43:3-5, note similarities with Revelation 14:14), but the rider does not use the sword (1:16, 2:12), and Christ does not “conquer” the world by the bow (Pastor can explain the etymology of תּוֹרָ֣ה). The Messiah does have the crown, but it is His, not given Him. It is also awkward to have Christ open a seal under which He Himself acts. To understand this as the advancement of the Gospel is acceptable, but seems to fall short. Political/geographic conquest well may be the point – a good or beneficent earthly ruler, see especially the second and third (red and black) horses. Recall from Matthew 24 one sign of the end is that “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom”.

This horseman could be a messenger of Divine judgment, “whose arrows of woe are the following three horsemen”. (Beale) Some hold this rider to be satanic, an antichrist that emulates Christ. If the fourth horseman (death) is understood to be a summary of the first three, then this rider must also be evil All the marks of the antichrist are present (looks like Christ, wears “crown” inside the church, etc...)

Note however that the rider, even if evil, is under God’s control (crown “given to” him), and sent out at Christ’s command (the opening of the seal).

**6:3-4 –** Again here the sequence of events is the same. Christ controls the release of the contents of the seal, the living creature commands it to come forth at that opening. What color is the horse? What power does its rider have? Note that like the crown in verse 2, here the power to “take peace from earth”. Remember in Matthew 24 that one of the signs of the end is “wars and rumors of wars”. His going out causes men to kill each other. While Christ himself has a sword, ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξεῖαν (Rev 2:12), here “sword” is μάχαιρα μεγάλη.

**6:5 –** The opening of the seal, and the command “Come!” are the same here. What color is this horse? What does the rider hold?

**6:6** – Notice that the voice well may be Christ Himself – it is not the voice of a “living creature”. The voice here helps us understand the imagery: "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." This describes a serious, but controlled, famine. A denarius is one day’s pay. A man needed about a quart of wheat per day. Three quarts of barley would feed a small family for a day. Compared to the pricing at the time of the writing of Revelation, these prices are “eight to sixteen times the average prices…” (Beale)

Wine and oil are staples. In 92 A. ✠ D. Domitian ordered half of the vineyards in Asia Minor to be destroyed. In any case, the extent of the famine is controlled by the dictum of the voice. Times may become difficult, but God is in control.

**6:7 -** Here the fourth seal is opened, and the fourth living creature issues the familiar cry “Come!” What color is the horse that comes forth? Who is the rider? Who followed close behind? Notice that “they” are given power – God is still in control – and their harvest of unrighteousness is limited. The sword and famine are found in Matthew 24.

**Revelation 6:7, cont. -** The plague and wild beasts are not.

**Read Revelation 6:8-17**

**6:8 –** The Greek for “pale” is χλωρός, which means “pale green, yellowish green” (see Mark 6:39 & Revelation 8:7 & 9:4) The Greek word φύλλον means “leaf”. Can you think of an English word that uses these two Greek words? Again: What is the name of the rider? Who follows close behind? Note the “anthropomorphism” here. The word ᾅδης “Hades” occurs four times in Revelation, 10 times (total) in the New Testament (see Matthew 11:23, 16:18). It means “netherworld”, the “place of the dead”. In the Septuagint the wordשְׁא֖וֹל is used (sheol), the “abode of the dead” (See Proverbs 1:12). See Psalm 16:10-11 for the opposites there.

**6:9 –** What does John see when the fifth seal is opened? The reader knows there are seven seals (5:1), and is aware this is a “countdown” – the suspense builds – now we even see the innermost part of the heavenly sanctuary. This seal does not unleash more suffering upon the world, but comforts the reader with the sure knowledge that those martyred are exalted and glorified in heaven. They are the martyrs, those killed for their “witness” (τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and “testimony” of the Christ (διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ) (see 1:2, 1:9). Do you see our word “martyr” in the Greek? What does it mean? Read again verse 9. Consider the consolation this vision provides to all those who suffer for Christ on earth! See 20:4, and note the contrast with those in 20:5.

In the O.T. the blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the base of the altar (Leviticus 4:18, 30, 34). That blood atoned for the “soul of the flesh” (Leviticus 17:11). But that “altar” was the “brazen altar of sacrifice”, a different altar, and it is not the blood of the martyrs, rather the Blood of Christ, that atones for their souls. If this “altar” is seen in conjunction with the throne (see 8:3-4, 9:13, 20:4-6), it is a place of eternal exaltation and protection, again bringing consolation to those on earth who suffer.

**6:10 –** What do the saints pray? If you have an NIV, note the translation of ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός. Is it wrong to say that the saints pray for us?

**6:11 –** What do they receive? This white robe (στολὴ λευκὴ) is the mark of righteousness (see 3:5, 18; 4:4; 7:9, 13; 19:14. Where do we receive this robe? See Matthew 22:11-13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:9-10;

**6:11 -** For what must the saints in glory wait? See Revelation 2:13; Hebrews 11:36-40.

**6:12-14 -** The fifth seal was a reprieve, a glimpse of the heavenly reward of the martyrs. The sixth seal is a return to the devastation of last days upon the earth. Recall our Lord's clear teaching in Matthew 24. The earth must pass away - see Isaiah 34:4, 50:3; Matthew 24:29, 35; Luke 21:21-27; Revelation 16:20 (note the cyclical nature of Revelation). Note here that the events of verses 12-17 are really the answer to the prayer “How long, O Lord?” of verse 10.

**6:15-16 -** On the Last Day, all will know the coming of the Christ - see Isaiah 45:23-25; Romans 4:11-12; Philippians 2:10-11. What do those being judged desire? See Isaiah 2:10, 18-21. A covering for their sins? See Genesis 3:7; 1 John 2:2. With what are the saints covered? See 6:11.

**Read Revelation 7:1-8**

**7:1 -** Still in the sixth seal, the vision continues. Note that the destruction of the world is in the hands of God's angels, who serve at His will and command. See Daniel 7:2-3 - note the winds are followed by the beasts - as in Revelation.

**7:2-3 -** What does the angel have? See Ezekiel 9:3-5. Note the result of the sealing in Revelation - see 9:4 & 14:1. How is this like the Passover? Where is the Christian “sealed”?

**7:4 -8 -** Nehemiah 9:38, and 10:1ff. What does the number 144,000 mean? Is it literal or figurative? Compare the list of the tribes to Genesis 35:23-26. How many tribes are there? Levi is not usually counted among the 12 - the Levites receive no land in the Promised Land. Dan is not included in the list in Revelation. Joseph is, but he receives no land for himself in the Promised Land - rather Ephraim (a half tribe) divides a large territory with Manasseh. Why? See Joshua 16:4. So the list in Revelation (which includes Manasseh but not Ephraim) is a figurative list - neither a complete list of the sons of Jacob, nor a complete list of the tribes receiving land. In 14:1 this 144,000 stand with the Lamb on Zion, and they alone can sing the "new song". Do you remember this imagery from 5:9-13? See Revelation 21:12-14. The number 144,000 = 122x103

**Read Revelation 7:9 -17**

**7:9 -** In verse 4 John hears the number, what does he see in verse 9? This helps us better understand the figurative nature of the number 144,000. What are they wearing? (See 6:11 and notes there, see especially Daniel 11:35 noting context there; Hebrews 9:14, and 1 John 1:7).Could Christians be part of the “twelve tribes”? See Romans 2:28-29. Note also that in chapter 5 a Lion is introduced (verse 5) but a Lamb is seen (verse 6). So here the perfect number of Israel is introduced, and the fullness of the saints in heaven is seen.

**7:9 -** What are they holding? See Leviticus 23:39-40 (Feast of Booths or Tabernacles or Ingathering); Zechariah 14:16-21; Matthew 21:9 (Hosanna means "save now"). The scene before John is the ingathering of the harvest of men. How many are there? See Genesis 13:16. Here the true Israel celebrates the Feast aright.

**7:10-12 -** Compare this "new song" with the one in 5:13-14. Don't forget, we're still in the Sixth Seal. Looking backward to verse 6:12, what has this seal revealed?

**7:13 -** The question is rhetorical - this holy truth must be spoken. Verse 14 makes that clear.

**7:14 –** The “great tribulation” is represented by the results of the horsemen and the afflictions of the seals. The end times will be difficult for the Christian as well. As the Church suffers on earth, we can be certain of the eternal joy and felicity that heaven holds for the baptized, who are washed in "blood-tinged" water… It is faith that brings the Blood of Christ to bear in the life of the Christian. In baptism the Christian begins to suffer a taste of Christ’s sufferings, which last throughout earthly life. See Daniel 12:1-3. Note the context there. Note also verse 4, and that in Revelation the book is being unsealed…

**7:15 -** What is the future of those with faith in Christ (what lets us know they have faith?). See Ezekiel 37:26-28. The word used for temple, ὁ ναὸς, is a reference to the inner most part of the temple (see Matthew 23:17). The word occurs 13 times in Revelation. Consider what this meant to the original recipients. The Greek word translated "serve" also means "worship". The verb for "dwell" is also used in John 1:14. It literally means "tabernacle", to dwell in a tent of skin. In John, who "tabernacled" among us? The tabernacle was the skin tent that housed the presence of God. This extends the theme of the Feast of Tabernacles, but centers it in Christ. See Zechariah 14 (the whole chapter and its context), especially verse 16.

**7:16 -** Here the Sabbath Rest promised in Scripture is described - the saints are protected from all the afflictions of the fallen earth. What does Jesus promise the Samaritan woman at the well? See John 4:10-14, compare with this verse. See also John 6:35. See Isaiah 49:9-13.

**7:17 -** In John 10 we meet the Good Shepherd. Here we learn that the Lamb is the Shepherd. Note the last several Bible verses were from John (4, 6, 10), the author of Revelation. Again here the John 4 "living water" is described. In Isaiah, the wiping of tears from the eyes of the faithful and everlasting joy are signs of deliverance and salvation - see 25:8, 35:10, 51:11, 65:19. This Promise is for you too - this bitter little hour will end.

**Read Revelation 8:1-5**

**8:1 -** Now we return to the Seventh Seal. The First through the Sixth Seals have given us a representation of the New Testament era. The Sixth Seal began with the destruction of the earth and proceeded to the faithful in heaven. It was revealed to John, described, but it did not come. The Seventh Seal will usher in not the end, but rather the Seven Trumpets. The opening of the seal brings great awe in heaven, enough that heaven is silent. See Habakkuk 2:20. The new song ceases, and all the host of heaven observe a reverent pause. God's great act of deliverance will follow soon, but not yet.

**8:2 -** The section that begins with the First Trumpet will end in 11:19 with the Seventh Trumpet, again a symbolic vision of the New Testament age. The plagues brought by the trumpets are worse than those brought forth from the Seals, but not as bad as those contained in the Bowls (16:1).

These are not the seven angels of Revelation 1:20, although it is tempting to conclude this. In chapter 1 the angels are the Pastors of the churches. Here the angels are specifically “the seven angels who stand before God”, heavenly emissaries, dispatched to do God's will. See Hebrews 1:14.The angels introduced in 8:2 begin their work in 8:6ff. The interjected section on the “other angel” shows the prayers of the saints (How long, O Lord?) which are answered in the end time work of the seven angels.

**8:3-4 -** This angel is not one of the seven. Several commentators hold this to be the Angel of the Presence in Isaiah 63:9. What does the angel "offer" up? Mixed with what? Recall Revelation 5:8, See Psalm 141:1-2. Incense was also added to most sacrificial offerings in the Old Testament.

**8:5 –** The altar described here seems to be like the altar of incense in Exodus 30:1-6 and Leviticus 16:12. This was located just outside the veil, next to the holiest place. What happens when the angel casts the thurible to earth? These violent physical calamities seem to be a signal to the seven angels to begin their work. See Revelation 11:19 and 16:18.

**8:6 -** The seventh seal did not result in the end of the world and the judgment. As the reader of the Revelation "watched" the seals progressively opened, you expected the end to come. It does not - not yet. Destruction was wrought by the thurible cast to the earth, but the earth was not destroyed. Instead, here we meet the sounding of the seven trumpets - they are not sounded immediately, but the angels prepared to sound. This preparation is a reverent, holy, worshipful pause that acknowledges the great terror the trumpets will unleash.

**8:7 -** The first trumpet sounds. See Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16. What do the trumpets indicate?

Reminiscent of the plagues visited upon the Pharoah, hail and fire descend mingled with blood. See Exodus 7:14ff, and 9:13ff. The raining down of fire is a condemnation paired with destruction seen in Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24), as well as in Ezekiel 38:22-23.

Beale maintains that the first five trumpets are patterned after the plagues of the Exodus. He says the first trumpet = Exodus 9:22-25; the second & third trumpets = Exodus 7:20-25; the fourth trumpet = Exodus 10:21-23; the fifth trumpet = Exodus 10:12-15.

What would this similarity between the Exodus and the Revelation of Jesus Christ to St. John say to the original hearers/readers?

How much of the earth is destroyed? Here again we see God's restraint and longsuffering, not willing that one stalk of wheat be torn up with the tares. (Matthew 13:29)

**8:8-9 -**  The second trumpet sounds. Again here water turns to blood (rendering it foul and undrinkable, as well as unable to support marine life), as in the plagues visited upon Egypt. Here sea creatures and ships are destroyed. The mountain may be a metaphor for an earthly kingdom. In Jeremiah (51:25), Babylon is called a "destroying mountain". See 17:5. Notice again that the destruction is limited.

**8:10-11 -** The third trumpet sounds. Again the water is afflicted, here by a great star. The star's name is Ayinqoj, Apsynth. This is the Greek word for "wormwood", a bitter herb that contaminates water and if ingested, over time, can be poisonous. See especially Deuteronomy 29:17-20, where the referent is Egypt. Although God limits the destruction again here, note the effect of the water. This well may a metaphor for false doctrine.

**8:12 -** Now the heavenly luminaries, hung on the fourth day of creation, are afflicted. See Exodus 10:21ff (how long does the darkness last?); Ezekiel 32:7-8. The water being stricken, now the light of the sky is stricken. Remember the Egyptians worshipped the Nile and the Sun.

**8:12 -** Since the Word of God is a "lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105), and Christ is the Light (Luke 2:32 , John 8:12) this darkness may also characterize the deprivation of the Word, or the obfuscation of the Word by false doctrine. To understand the first three trumpets as a "decreation", reversing the creation, is in concert with chapter 21, which ushers in a new creation.

**8:13 -** Verse 13 contains an "introduction" so to speak - an apparent change in the vision: "And I saw and I heard one eagle flying in the midst of heaven saying by means of a great voice 'Woe, woe, woe…'" This alerts the reader to the increasing severity of the trumpets. The eagle's great voice warns whom? Of what? By whom? We can each feel a little taste of the fear that such a warning brings. See Revelation 18:10 & 19. The Greek word Οὐαὶ is used frequently by our Lord in the Gospels. See Luke 11:42-52, for example.

**Read Revelation 9:1-12**

**9:1 -** The fifth trumpet sounds. St. John sees a star fall, a representation of a fallen angel, an emissary of Satan or Satan himself. See Isaiah 14:12. This has implications for our understanding of Revelation 8:10 - there too, then, the fallen angel is given power to do harm - which reinforces the idea that the "poison" is false doctrine. Here the damage is more profound. The fallen angel in this case can open hell. On “abyss” (ἄβυσσον) see Luke 8:31 and Romans 10:7. This word occurs 9 times in the New Testament – 7 of them in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).

**9:2 -** Dense, foul smoke belches forth. Again light is blocked (as in 8:12). But this time the entire sun and sky is darkened. The inhabitants of earth will taste of hell.

**9:3 -** As the vision grows more horrific, terrible creatures are unleashed by the hellish smoke. They emerge as locust (remember the plague in Exodus 10:12ff, but see also Joel 1:4, 2:1-6, where much of the imagery of Revelation is also seen). Isaiah 14:29-31 has similar imagery. There, as here in Revelation, the invaders take the form of a venemous animal, in Revelation a scorpion. The venomous harm caused here is spiritual harm - men poisoned of soul. See Jeremiah 51:25-29, where an army like locusts descends to punish unbelievers, announced with a trumpet blast.

In Amos 7:1 (LXX) the army that invades Israel is described as “an increase (swarm) of locusts coming from the morning (east), and behold one a caterpillar, Gog the king.” This brings together Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38 & 39) with the locusts. In Revelation 20:8, Satan is the leader of God and Magog, strengthening our identification of the “star” of 9:1.

**9:4 -** What does God protect? Whom does God protect? See Revelation 7:2,3 and our notes there. See Revelation 14:1. When is the seal given? (hint: When is God's Name placed upon you?)

**9:5 -** Those not sealed by God writhe in pain for an extended, but limited time - this is only a taste of hell - hell never ends. Five is the number of the Law - why?

**9:6 -** Death would be easier. The suffering is intense. Still, God alone can give and take life.

**9:7-9 -** John sees something that human words cannot express. His description likens the hellish locusts to earthly things (like horses, something like crowns, like the faces of men, like women's hair, like lions teeth), but what he sees is not earthly.

In Joel 1 & 2 an army of locusts invades Israel, where a trumpet signals the judgment (see Joel 2:1, 15). In Joel the locusts are sent because men will not repent. Only a remnant is left after the plague (Joel 2:28ff). Where does the Church use this pericope? What is its relationship to the final judgment? Pastor will explain "the Day of the Lord". The Church had been taught to expect it for many centuries - indeed since the Promise of the Seed. See Isaiah 2:12-21, 13:6-13; Joel 1:15-20; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Zechariah 2:13; Malachi 4:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10.

**9:10 -** Although they are terrible, and their plague upon earth horrific, still God limits their destruction. See 9:5. Remember that five is the number of the Law.

**9:11 –** Note who is the “king” of the horrible locusts – the “star” of 9:2 that opened the abyss. Here his name is given as Ἀβαδδών (a Hebrew transliteration) and Ἀπολλύων (a Greek word meaning “destroyer”, from the verb ἀπόλλυμι). The evokes the “destroyer” (הַמַּשְׁחִ֔ית ) of the Exodus, see Exodus 12:23.

**9:12 –** In 8:13, the eagle announced three “woes”. What followed was horrible. Still, it is only the first “woe” – a double portion of woe remains.

**(This section by Vicar Ryan Beffrey) Read Revelation 9: 13-20**

**9:13** - Now the sixth trumpet sounds. This trumpet announces the end of mercy. See Amos

3: 14. Verse 12 has prepared us for one more. From whence does the voice come   
forth? See 8:3-5. The "horns" of the altar are pointed projections used in the live   
sacrifice of animals. See Exodus 37:25-26; Leviticus 4:18; Psalm 118:27b; 1 Kings   
1:50-51; zekie143:15. The horns of the altar are associated with the blood of the   
sacrifice.

**9:14-15** - Four angels have been prepared for this very moment, their release to kill one third of   
the men who are unsealed. That they are bound suggests that they are demonic,   
although John say as much. We assume their demonic status from Scriptural   
evidence. These angels have been lying in wait at the river Euphrates. The same   
vision of judgment of the ungodly by angels (and their cavalry, 9:16) from beyond the Euphrates was given to Isaiah (see Is. 14:31), Jeremiah (see Jer. 50:41-42), and   
Ezekiel (s e Ez. 26:7-11). That the killing power of these angels is limited and that   
they are only permitted out at a specific time again teaches that only God has control   
over life and death.

**9:16** - John hears the number of troops in the cavalry: 200 million (literally "a double myriad of   
myriads." A myriad is 10,000. A double myriad times a myriad would equal 200   
million (2,000 x 10,000 = 200,000,000). The last time "myriad" appeared was

5: 11-12. here it refers to all those in heaven, a number known by God but unknown   
by man (seen by us as uncountable). Here we are shown that the forces of evil which   
go out and kill is a double this, reminding us that the true Church is always a remnant, not the majority.

**9: 17** - The horses and their riders are here described. They bear a striking similarity to the   
locusts of the Fifth Trumpet in that they also have lion-like features (remember: at the writing of Revelation, Christians were being thrown to lions!), breastplates, and their ability to arm lies in their tail (but the horses also have power in their mouths).

Fire, sulphur, and (occasionally) smoke, the product of the horses' mouths, are signs of God's judgment -temporal and eternal- in the Old Testament. See Genesis 19:24-   
28; Deuteronomy 29:23-25; Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 34:9-10; Ezekiel 38:22.

**9:18-19** - One-third of the unsealed meet death from these demonic horses. The fire, smoke,   
and sulfur of their mouths and tails like snakes are the means by which death comes. The only other place in Scripture where the combination of fire, smoke, and sulfur is found in connection with divine judgment and death is Sodom and Gomorrah, see Genesis 1 :24-25,28.

That death comes from the mouths of these horses is significant. With the trumpets   
affecting non-Christians, we know that the death which they meet is both temporal and eternal. The eternal death comes by deception, being drawn away from God to   
idols. This deception comes from the mouths of false teachers, who legitimize   
idolatry. judgment (seen as a hardening of the heart against God's Word and work)   
for this is recurring theme in both Old and New Testaments: Isaiah 29:9-14;   
Romans 1:18-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

These horses are also similar to the great beasts in Job 40-41, which represent cosmic   
evil. This enhances the identification of these creatures with Satan and his deceptive   
work.

Also, the occurrence here in the fifth and sixth trumpets of scorpions and serpents is a   
Jewish theme representing judgment and delusion by false doctrine. See Numbers

21:6; Deuteronomy 8: 11-16; Psalm 58:3-6; Luke 10: 17-19.

**9:20-21** - The hardness of heart in the unsealed is so great that even these demonic horses and   
the death of one-third of the population will not bring them to repentance. What else   
does Our Lord say would prevent these men from corning to faith? See Luke 16:27-   
31. Instead of a God who loves them and desires that they turn to Him so He can   
lavish every grace, they would rather turn to gods of gold, silver, brass, stone, and   
wood that cannot see, hear, or walk.

Death, however, does not soften the heart, but furthers its hardening, as was seen in   
the Exodus : Exodus 14:4-8, 17.

This list of idol compositions is seen also in Daniel 5:23. The same attitude exhibited   
by Belshazzar and his house is what is seen in those affected by the Sixth Trumpet.   
What doe David say of those who make idols in Psalm 115:87

The list of sins for which they did not repent (v. 21) is always associated with those   
who practice idolatry: Jeremiah 7:5-11; Romans 1:24-3; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. God   
speaks through His Word and His Church to all these people, but they refuse to leave   
their lives of disobedience and resist God. They continue in their murders (fono**ς**,   
murder). Some commentators suggest that in other literature of the time this referred   
to abortions), witchcraft; the use of magic, casting spells, use of illicit   
drugs, etc. Ingeneral: anything that breaks the Second Commandment), sexual   
immorality ,and theft.

**End section by Vicar Beffrey**

**A Note On Chapters 10 & 11 -** The angel with the seventh trumpet has yet to blow (see 8:6). The first six trumpets have brought hail and fire, a blazing mountain, the star Wormwood, the darkening of the heavenly luminaries, the eagle announcing three coming woes, the star that opened the Abyss (releasing the smoke of hell and the demonic locust armies), and the angelic release of the horses and their riders that kill one third of mankind. Still man did not repent - he continues in his idolatry, murder, magic, immorality and theft (9:20-21). The seventh trumpet will blow in 11:15. The intervening vision will include the angel with the scroll, the "two witnesses", and a horrible earthquake. The third woe will follow.

A similar "break" followed the sixth and seventh seals. See chapter 7. The "interlocking" of the "break" after the seven trumpets introduces the second half of the Book of Revelation. In chapter 7 the Christians are sealed, protecting them against the upcoming destruction released by the trumpets. Chapters 10 and 11 reveal to the Christian that God is preparing to judge the unbelievers that are persecuting the Church, an escalating persecution that will soon become unbearable.

Chapter 10 introduces 11:1-13, the main section of the "break".

**Read Revelation 10:1-7**

10:1 - Notice now that John, who had been in heaven for the first part of the vision, now sees this vision from outside of heaven.

The appearance of this strong angel brings hope in the midst of calamity. Some commentators hold this to be the angel of 5:2, where the angel also cries out in a loud voice.

Yet, this angel comes from heaven, wrapped in clouds (Daniel 7:13), a rainbow over his head (Ezekiel 1:26-28, Revelation 4:3), his face gleaming as the sun (Matthew 17:2, Revelation 1:16), with legs like pillars of fire (a symbol of God's presence during the Exodus). This strong angel in Revelation is an agent of Divine deliverance - indeed several of these attributes are associated with theophanies in the Book of Revelation, and in Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel. Christ is not identified as an "angel" elsewhere in the Book of Revelation.

The rainbow is the ancient sign of God's mercy and His "covenant faithfulness" (see Genesis 9:12-16). This vision is exceptionally encouraging to the Church in the midst of the demonic destruction and plagues that have come from the earlier trumpets.

10:2 - The scroll is modified in Greek by a "double diminuitive". We might say in English "a tiny scroll". The contents are probably the contents of the upcoming vision in chapters 11-16 - the Word of God revealed as the Prophet eats that Word.

The enormous size of the angel is seen by his posture - one foot on the sea, one on land, a clear indication that he has control over the future of both.

10:3 - The voice of the angel is like the roar of a lion. The lion is a symbol of Christ (Genesis 49:9, Revelation 5:5). At his speaking, the "seven thunders" utter (speak openly) their voices. 10:4 - The seven thunders seem to speak intelligible words (contrary to Beale) but the mystery they proclaim is not to be recorded. This is quite opposite of the *mandatum scribendi* that John has received (see 1:11), but somewhat like Daniel's prohibition (see Daniel 12:4, 8-9). Some commentators hold that the thunders are not recorded because God, in His mercy, witholds the wrath they would release upon the earth.

What is clear is that John is writing during the vision, recording what he sees that you may read and see it with him.

10:5 - The enormity of the angel is seen by his touching heaven. See Dueteronomy 32:39-43. Then see Daniel 12:6-7.

10:6 - In Daniel the time of the end is withheld. In Revelation 10:6, the angel promises by oath, one hand raised to heaven, that there will be no additional delay.

10:7 - In the Greek this verse reads "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when it is about to blow (trumpet), *then* the Mystery of God shall be completed, as He preached the Gospel to His servants the Prophets." The Mystery is the eternal reign of the God Man Christ Jesus, who was born without sin, lived a perfect life, suffered and died for the sins of the world, and took up His life again that men might be justified by faith in Him. See Revelation 11:15 for the Mystery revealed at the seventh trumpet blast.

**Read Revelation 10:8-11**

10:8 - A voice from heaven commands the Prophet to take the scroll from the hand of the angel. Note that the scroll is open. See Ezekiel 2:9-3:4. What is in the scroll Ezekiel eats? What is the result?

10:9-11 - Having read Ezekiel 2:9-3:4, what now happens to St. John? This supports the conclusion that the scroll contains the upcoming revelation - see our study note on 10:2.

**Read Revelation 11:1-6**

11:1 - See Ezekiel 40. Read there verses 1-6. Then see Zechariah 2:1-7, noting the similarities between the events there and the events of Revelation. It is not that John is "quoting" or "remembering" the Old Testament Prophets. It is that when God reveals heaven, it is unchanging. Here are numbered the faithful. In 70 A. D. the Temple was destroyed. Revelation was written 25 years later. See 7:15. Those then who worship rightly are the Holy Christian Church.

11:2 - The outer court, an area in the Temple also called the "Court of the Gentiles". Gentiles, in the Greek here τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, are the equivalent of the *goyim* גּוֹיִֽם of the Old Testament, the non-Israelites, those not chosen by God. Here it refers to unbelievers. Note here their hostility to the "Holy City" - See Isaiah 63:17-19, Luke 21:24.

42 months is a "time, times, and half a time", which is 1260 days. Pastor will explain the Biblical math. See Daniel 7:25, 12:6-7. 3 1/2 is half of the final "week" (7 days) of Daniel 9:24-27.

11:3 – The two witnesses represent the New Testament Church – see vs. 4, where they are “lampstands” (see 1:20), with whom the beast makes war (vs 7), who will be seen victorious on the last day (11), who witness for the same duration of time as the “holy city” (11:2), the “woman” (12:6, 14), and those “dwelling in heaven” (13:5-7).

11:4 – Here the prophets are called “two olive trees” and “lampstands”. See Zecharaiah 4:2-14.

11:5 – From the preaching of the Church comes a taste of the fire of the last day.

11:6 – See Matthew 17:3. Who is there with Jesus? What power do these two have in 11:6? See Deuteronomy 11:16-17; 1 Kings 17:1-7; Exodus 7:17-25. Remember we are still in the sixth trumpet.

**Read Revelation 11:7-14**

11:7 – Here we see the work of the two witnesses – to give testimony, μαρτυρίαν. This is an evidentiary witness, the recounting of facts, as in a trial. The English word “martyr” is derived from this Greek word – those who are slain on account of their testimony. Because the attack by the beast comes at the end of their witness, we are in the last days (see 6:9-11). See Daniel 7:7-12 for the chronological context. Then see 17:8 and 20:7. We witness here the “cyclical” nature of Revelation, the repeated description of the same period of time, the final days of the Church on earth.

11:8 – During the final persecution the Church will appear dead, as if She has failed in her witness and been put to death, disgraced (bodies lying exposed). I believe that we are in this time now – when it appears that the Church is being killed. The bodies lie exposed in the new “Sodom”, the whole earth, infested with the sin of Sodom. They lie exposed in the new “Egypt”, the place where God’s people are seemingly enslaved to an evil master who prevents the right worship of God and persecutes His people. As proof of this, it is the place where the Lord was crucified.

11:9 – In the last days the sinful world will count the Church as dead, and gloat over the apparent victory of the world over the Church. We live in those days.

11:10 – See John 16:19-22, where our Lord Himself describes this time. Those who “dwell on earth” are unbelievers.

11:11 – After a time, times and half a time – the resurrection. See Ezekiel 37:5-10. God’s people are vindicated in their resurrection; the unbelievers fear greatly for the smoke of hell beckons them.

11:12 – Then the Church is taken into heaven. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. The beginning of hell is watching the Church enter heaven.

11:13 - See Ezekiel 38:18-23. We will meet Gog again in Revelation 20:8. See also Matthew 28:1-4. See Micah 7:8-17. Note how there are “patterns” in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in the New.

11:14 – Here the “break” of 10:1-11:13 ends. What happened in 9:13-21? Note that in 11:14 the next, the final trumpet sounds. But it is not more horror we see. What did 10:7 say about the last trumpet? Notice that what follows is not predicted to be the “third woe”, but the third woe “is coming quickly”. What follows is not yet the third woe, but rather a taste of paradise for those living in the last days.

**Read Revelation 11:15-19**

11:15 – like the seventh seal (8:1-4) and the seventh bowl (16:17, note the proclamation there), the seventh trumpet inaugurates the end of time.

As in Daniel 7, the world is handed over to the Christ, see Daniel 7:9-12. He reigns forever and ever, a sure sign that eternity has begun.

11:16 – the 24 elders worship – See Revelation 4:4, 4:10, 5:8, 5:15, and 19:4.

11:17 – How is God described? See 1:8, 1:11, 21:6, 22:13.

11:18 – A good summary of the end times, the time of the “two witnesses”. How do the "nations" regard God? What is God's response? What "time" is it? See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. What do God's servants receive? Who are named as servants of God? See Jude 14-20. Who else is named as receiving their reward? See Deuteronomy 6:13-16. Why are these verses especially important?

Although the NKJV reads "destroy those who destroy the earth", the Greek word διαφθεῖραι can also mean "to utterly corrupt", "spoil", or "ruin morally." See the same verb used in Revelation 19:2 and 1 Timothy 6:5.

11:19 - Here the Temple is opened. The earthly temple had been destroyed. But the men who "utterly corrupted" the earthly Temple could not harm the heavenly Temple. This is great consolation for the churches of Asia minor, under persecution for their faith. Not only is the Temple unharmed, it is opened - a sure sign of the promise of salvation.

In the earthly Temple a heavy curtain protected the Holy of Holies - or better said it protected men from the Holy of Holies, for God was physically present there. See Leviticus 16:1-2. But in the vision John receives he can see the Ark - there is no curtain - see Matthew 27:51-53. What miracle accompanies the tearing of the curtain? What does this mean? What physical events accompany John's vision of the Ark? See 4:5, and Exodus 19:16-19. For the Christians in Asia Minor, this was a clear sign that God was near, and that He would soon speak. When He speaks, this world is brought to an end.

The world does not end here. What John has seen is a vision of the end. Encouraged by the vision of heaven opened, instead of the end of the world John is given another vision.

**Read Revelation 12:1-6**

12:1 - What does John see? The woman is the Christian Church, the believers of all times (see Genesis 37:9, Song of Songs 6:10). See the description of the Church in Isaiah 60:19-22. What immediately follows this pericope? Why is this important?

12:2 - What does the woman do? Here the imagery of the Church is blended with a description of the Virgin Mary - see Who she bears in verse 5. This is the Christ. Based on this, where are we in terms of "time" in the life of the Church? Remember that the seals, the bowls, and the trumpets were a "cyclical" presentation of the history of God's people. Here we return to the beginning of the "Day of the Lord". See Isaiah 2:12-21, 13:6-13, 22:12-14, 24:21-23, 28:5; Joel 1:15-2:1, and many more. The birth of the Christ ushers in the Day of the Lord. What do His disciples ask in Acts 1:6-7? The birth pains of the woman are the sufferings of the faithful.

12:3-4 - Note that the devil is powerful. The color red, the heads and the horns are symbolic of power, in this case horrible power. In verse 4, what is the dragon strong enough to do? See Daniel 8:10; Revelation 8:12 - this act of destruction mimics the work of God's angels. See Genesis 3:5. What Satan promised to Adam and Eve was the same thing he wanted, but can never have. Nonetheless, until the coming of the Lord on the last day, the devil has power. The stars falling from the sky may be a metaphor for the fall of men into unbelief prompted by false doctrine, the "devil's tail", or it may be a description of the casting out of heaven of the devil and his evil angels (See Revelation 12:7-9).

Here we see Satan, the Deceiver, desirous of putting the Christ to death at the moment of His birth, that the devil might foil the work of the Last Adam as he foiled the work of the first. See verse 9 for the identification of the Dragon. See also Isaiah 27:1. See also Ezekiel 29:3-6. Note that later in Revelation we will see the "evil trinity", the false "father", the false "son", and the false "spirit". Note the description of the false "son" in 13:1-3. The devil will try to "be like God" until the final judgment.

12:5 - Here we have a summary of the birth and ascension of Jesus Christ. He was foretold for millenia, even to Satan (Genesis 3:15). The language in the Greek here is very similar to Isaiah 7:14 in the Hebrew. See also Isaiah 66:7-11, which is a similar description to the text at hand.

"A rod of iron" - In Psalm 2 this is a description of God's Son, the Messiah. See Psalm 2:7-9; and Revelation 2:26-27. Why does this make you think of *Misericordia Domini*?

12:6 - The woman's flight into the desert is a picture of the Church Militant. The Christ has risen and ascended, but the Church dwells in the desert of this world, protected by God, fed and nourished until the "times, time and half a time" of this age is complete. This is the same period of time that is described in 11:2, 3, and 9. The number 1,260 is the exegetical key.

**Read Revelation 12:7-12**

12:7-9 As amazing as this sounds to us (a war in heaven!), see Isaiah 14:12-15. The saints of old knew that this occurred. Luther writes that this would have been on the first Sabbath, the ultimate desecration of the holiest of days. Satan's being cast down to earth would coincide with Adam and Eve being cast out of Eden. This would have been the carrying-out of the sentence in Genesis 3:14-15. Notice that the devil is not cast into the Abyss - that will come in chapter 20. Here he is cast to earth, together with his angels.

Michael - See Daniel 10:13, 21, and 12:1. See Jude 1:9. Michael, the Archangel, appears only five times in Scripture. You have seen each appearance. In Hebrew, the name Michael is מִֽיכָאֵ֗ל

which means "Who is like unto God". Many Lutheran interpreters have found Michael to be the pre-incarnate Christ (including Luther himself). See Revelation 20:1-3. The 1000 years here is the time of the Church. We will study that more carefully when we study chapter 20. Other interpreters hold Michael to be an Archangel that fights with power Divinely given, thus is stronger than the devil - see especially verse 11.

In either case, Michael and his angels defeat the dragon and his angels, and the devil is cast out of heaven and to the earth, where he is active until the day of judgment. See Luke 10:18, 1 John 3:8, John 12:31-32 (my interpretation of the timing is based on this verse, and the chronology that follows in verse 13). Contrary to my interpretation, many Lutheran resources say that this is the ultimate victory of Christ over the devil, citing verses 10-12. I believe verses 10-12, especially the end of verse 12, are in favor of my interpretation.

12:9 - Here the dragon is named - he is Satan. He is: the ancient serpent (see Genesis 3), the devil (ὁ διάβολος, see Matthew 4:5, 13:39; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 2:10, which strengthens my interpretation above); Satan (ὁ Σατανᾶς, הַשָּׂטָ֖ן which means "accuser", see Revelation 12:10; Job 1:6. See Matthew 12:26; Luke 22:3; John 13:27; Luke 22:31; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 2:18).

12:10 - Another "loud voice" speaks. See 1:10, 5:2 and 8:13. In the context of 12:10-12 see 5:12-14.

12:11 - Who "they"are is pivotal to the understanding of the chronology of 7-9. Because "they" overcame by the "word of their testimony", and "they" did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death", I hold this to be a description of the martyrs, *not*  the angels that prevailed over Satan. The heavenly angels didn't die, and didn't speak a word of testimony. That the martyrs overcame "by the Blood of the Lamb" shows that the Atonement is not bound to time (in fact Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world - see 13:8. The Atonement is timeless, and the salvation that Christ won by the shedding of His Blood extends backward in time to all the saints of the Old, and forward in time to all the saints of the New, until His coming in glory. The referent here is the woman in the desert, the Church Militant, who overcomes the cast-down Satan by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, of whom some will be martyred. See 6:9.

Many noted scholars (indeed my teacher) hold the opposite, that "they" refers to the good angels that fight with Michael and defeat Satan.

12:12 - Heaven rejoices over the victory. Yet the "prince of this world" (see Ephesians 2:2) will work his malevolence until the times, time and half a time are complete. He knows his days are numbered.

**Read Revelation 12:13-17**

12:13 resumes the thought of both verses 6 and 12. Note the structure carefully.

12:13 – The rage of the devil against God is vented on the Church. This is the time of the Church Militant, the time of the Church’s “wandering” in the desert of this fallen world.

12:14 – God delivers His Church. That He does so by giving her wings is established of old. See Exodus 19:4, Deuteronomy 1:31-33, 32:10-12. He keeps her safe. See Matthew 16:18. Time, times and half a time is the “time” of the Church on earth. See 11:2-3; 12:6, (Daniel 12:11).

12:15 – At the end of the time of the Church Militant, the persecution will be so terrible that it appears the Church will be lost – see Matthew 24:21-25. The flood that emanates from the devil’s mouth is false doctrine. Those of us who live in West Detroit and East Dearborn know what such a flood is like.

12:16 – Like Pharoah’s armies (Exodus 15:12), like Korah’s men (Numbers 16:30-33), the earth serves its Creator in the protection of His Church.

12:17 – Note the articulation of who the offspring are – this identifies the woman as the Church. The devil continues in his persecution. Note the description of the faithful, and what the worldly result is – our “confirmation slap”.

**Read Revelation 13:1-10**

13:1-10 – This section is a restatement, a more vivid description, of the events of 12:13-17.

13:1 - The beast we have already met in 11:7. Horns and heads and crowns are signs of evil power. See Daniel 7:1-6, and 11:36-39.

13:2-3 - The beast receives his power and authority from the dragon. Here we have a false “father”, and with the “resurrection” of the beast a false “son”. The third member of this unholy trinity will come in 13:11. Note that the goal of the beast is to have men worship him – his goal in Genesis 3 also. Theories on 13:3 include a reference to the conversion of Contantine, and to the “Nero Resurrection” myth, stories that circulated regarding the death and resurrection of Nero.

13:4 – The devil desired to be like God. Here his followers attribute this to him. Domitian, emperor in the time of John’s writing demanded that he be called *Dominus et Deus noster –* our lord and god.

13:5 – Note what proceeds from the mouth of the beast. The period of time in 13:5 shows that the New Testament period is being discussed.

13:6 – Again we see what proceeds from the mouth of the beast from the sea.

13:7 – In the last days, the devil will have power. See Matthew 24.21-22.

13:8 – Here again we meet the Book of Life. See 3:5. We will see it again in 20:12. Although the persecution is unbearable, the Church is protected by the Blood of the Lamb. See Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29, 36.

13:9 – See 2:7, an admonition to the faithful to hear in faith.

13:10 – The work of the devil is to turn the fallen world against the saints. To be a Christian is not to avoid temporal suffering and death. Indeed, the world will always treat those who bear Christ’s Name as it treated Him. But notice the last line of verse 10: “Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.” See Matthew 24:9-14. Martyrdom is the ultimate test of faith. Making the Good Confession under threat or torture is the ultimate earthly confession. Remember where the martyrs are – 6:9-11.

**Read Revelation 13:11-18**

13:11 – The first beast, the dragon, the false “father”, has been seen (see 12:3). The second beast, the false “son”, is revealed in 13:1-3. Here the false “spirit” is revealed, the last person in the unholy trinity. Notice his appearance – like that of a lamb, in imitation of the Lamb of God. But when he speaks, it is not the voice of Christ. Whose voice is it? See 12:9. The two horns may point to the evil leader of Daniel 8:3-4.

13:12 – As the Son exercises authority on the Father’s behalf, so does the false “son” receive his power from the devil. As the Son of God and the Spirit of God direct all worship to God the Father, so does the false “son” direct all worship to the dragon, the serpent, the ancient foe, the devil (see 13:4). So here does the false “spirit” direct men’s faith to the antichrist, the false son, who appears to have risen from the dead.

13:13 – The devil has power. In the last days that power will be increased to include performing miracles, as our Lord Himself teaches in Matthew 24:23-24. In Daniel 4:34-35 these are attributed to the true God. Here, like a false “moses”, the beast has power to do miracles. Calling down fire from heaven is an evil emulation of the work of the Prophet Elijah. See 1 Kings 18:36-39. Notice that Elijah gives all glory to God.

13:14 – As Elijah gave glory to God, so here does the false “spirit” give glory to the false “christ”. Note how this is an evil manifestation of the relationship our Lord describes in John 14:26.

13:15 – The evil power is so great that it can animate idols. Remember how God animated the first man? See Genesis 2:7. Here the false “spirit” tries to be like God. Those who will not worship the devil are put to death, as in 13:10. This evil beast from the land will be called the “false prophet” in 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10. Like Nebuchadnezzar, those who will not worship the idol are slain. See Daniel 3:4-6. Many commentators hold this to be the imperial worship commanded by Caesar.

13:16 – The sealing done by the demonic spirit is a poor imitation of the sealing that God gives in Holy Baptism. See 7:2-4, 9:4. It amounts to an “anti-baptism”. The blasphemy of the dragon knows no bounds. The Greek word here for “mark”, χάραγμα, is used also for emperor’s image on Roman coins (Beale citing Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*). So the forces of evil try to imitate the true God, who created man in His image. Notice also the placement of the mark of the beast as it is compared to Exodus 13:9, and the context there of the Passover and the consecration of the first born. The seal of the beast in Revelation is a figurative, not visible seal, as is the seal in 7:3-8. See also 13:1 for the placement of the “blasphemous name(s)”.

13:17 – In Daniel 7 (especially vs. 17, but see also vs. 3-5), the beasts are political figures. In ancient practice, disobedient slaves were branded or tattooed. (Beale citing Plutarch, *Pericles*). In Revelation 2:9 and 6:5-6 Christians suffer economic persecution, as they do here.

The following verse will explain the saying “the number of his name”. Since this verse is so important, and subject to so many interpretations, a careful translation of the Greek is warranted:

13:18 – “Here is the wisdom. The one who has a mind (must) count the number of the beast, for it is (the) number of man, and the number of him six hundred sixty six.”

Osborne (*Revelation*) writes “Perhaps no verse in the Bible has received more prolonged speculation than 13:18... In the final analysis, we must remain uncertain regarding the actual meaning of 666.”

Note: There is a difference between the Textus Receptus (Majority Text, Byzantine recension) and the critical Greek texts. In the Majority Text the last three words of the Greek are not words but letters – χξς. This Greek construction is equivalent to using the number 666. Here, however, the NA 27 and UBS 4 have ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ which display a preference against the Majority text and in favor of P47 and A and א , spelling out “six hundred sixty six.” Pastor will explain this a bit more.

Some minor manuscripts read “616”. Metzger (*Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*) explains that 666=χξς, but 616=χις, and suggests that later corrections are due to the fact that “the Greek form written in Hebrew characters (נרון קסר) is equivalent to 666, whereas the Latin form (נרו קסר) is equivalent to 616”.

“Here is the wisdom” – see 13:10b for a similar construction. See also Daniel 12:10-12. Having “wisdom” is parallel to “the one who has a mind”. Notice that Scripture does not say that man should “see” the number of the beast, for it is not visible. We are directed to “count”, or “calculate” the number (yhfisa,tw, occurring only here and in Luke 14:28), which taken with “mind” and “wisdom” is to discern what the number means or who the number represents. This is akin to our Lord’s Words “He who has ears, let him hear…” as in 2:7, etc.

Verse 15:2 shows that the number “is that of the first beast” (see 13:1-8), the false “son”, not of the second beast, the false “spirit”. (Beale)

There are three major ways in which 666 has been interpreted. First, it has been seen as gematria, the assignment of numerical values to the letters of a name, which would identify 666 as a “shorthand” for a world leader. Second, it has been understood as “chronological and indicating the duration of the beast’s reign”, which would be to total the years of the consecutive reigns of various rulers. (Beale). Third, it has been taken as a symbolic representation of the antichrist or his power.

As gematria, 666 has been seen as:

Nero Caesar – Ne,rw Kai,saroj - rsq !wrn

(n=50, r=200, w=6, ! =50, q=100, s =60, r=200) =666

Beast - qhri,on – nwyrt

(t=400, r=200, y=10, w=6, n=50) = 666

Latín - Lateinoj

(L= 30, a=1, t=300, e=5, i=10, n =50, o=70, j=200) = 666

Also – using the same scheme, the initials of the major Roman emperor’s names from Julius to Vespasian equals 666.

As pure numerical symbolism, 666 may be the imperfect form of 777(Trinity) or of 888 (Christ). Thus the antichrist tries to appear like God or like Christ, but is imperfect.

Also – the abbreviated form of the Greek titles of Domitian used on coins (Α.ΚΑΙ.ΔΟΜΕΤ.ΣΕΒ.ΓΕ) equals 666.

Some comments:

Nero committed suicide in 68 A.✠ D. Revelation was written in 95 A.✠ D. 13:11-18 is set in the present tense, relative to the vision of the beast, which is in the future. While the “Nero redivivus” myth was popular, John certainly wouldn’t have subscribed to it, nor would there be place for it in the inspired Text. It is possible that John refers to a political leader or power in the future that will, like Nero, impose blasphemous worship upon his subjects, and include socio-economic penalties for those who resist.

The idea that “it is the number of man”, a “human number”, means that it is a number discernable by men (Lenski). See 21:17 for a similar construction. So the first beast is “the whole antichristian power in the whole world and nothing less.” The second beast is “the whole antichristian propaganda in the whole world.”

Man was created on the sixth day. Thus the number of man might be six.

In any case, we learned early in the study of this Book that items (stars, lampstands) and numbers (3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 144,000, times, time and half a time) are representative. This should guide our interpretation here. The Christians are “marked” with the Divine Name in their baptism. Just as there is a true Trinity and a false “trinity” in the Revelation, so is there a “mark” of God given in Holy Baptism – the Triune Name, and a “mark” of the false god. Because the “mark of the beast” is visible in Revelation does not mean that it will be visible to men, like the righteousness that the saints now have by faith, but it is real nonetheless. That unbelief will be required to engage in commerce (as in verse 17) can already be seen by the brutal limitations placed on Christians where Muslims are able to enact their religion/law. That those without the mark of the antichrist would be killed for failing to worship the beast (as in verse 15) is already common in Muslim countries, and in China, etc.

**Read Revelation 14:1-5**

14:1 – The Revelation takes us from a most horrible scene (the beast and his persecution of the Christians) to the center of heaven. While the world is inimical to the Christian, heaven awaits us. This is the fount and source of our hope – the risen Christ reigns heaven and earth.

Here we see the Name of God written on the foreheads of the believers, placed there in Holy Baptism. The dark throes of earthly persecution ended, the complete Church (144,000 – remember 7:4 and our notes there?) is delivered from the vale of sin and death and rejoices for eternity in their heavenly mansion.

Note the opposites that the Revelation provides: the beast/the Lamb; the “mark”/the Name; death/eternal life. While the Christian lives now in the domain of the antichrist (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:8-11 – noting all these references are by the same St. John to whom Christ was revealed) – the Kingdom of God is among us. See Matthew 12:28.

14:2 – On the sound of the “many waters” see 1:15. Who is it that speaks? On the sound of harps see 5:8-9, and 15:2-3, where in both cases it accompanies the praise of the redeemed saints in response to Christ’s victory, ultimately the victory over sin and the beast (which we will see in Chapter 15).

14:3 – The “new song” is a manifestation of praise for God’s victory over the enemy. See Psalm 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1, and Isaiah 42:10. Where is the song sung? See Revelation 4:6-10. While those sealed by the beast (13:7) had special privileges on earth, here only the saints have the privilege of eternal worship in the presence of God. These are the ones “having been purchased” from the earth, paid for by the Blood of the Lamb. See 7:13-17. Note also here the “cyclical” nature of the structure of Revelation.

14:4 – Many commentators suggest that the “ones who were not defiled with women” are those who did not engage in the adulteries of the fallen world and the beast, which would require the figurative interpretation of this passage. Many give the reason that marriage is instituted by God, both before and after the fall, and by Christ Himself, see Matthew 19:4-6, see also Hebrews 13:4. While this is apocalyptic literature, there is no textual reason not to interpret this literally – see 1 Corinthians 7:1-9. If this is understood as fidelity to a God-given spouse, which allows it to be interpreted by the *analogia fidei* it is in accord with Hebrews 13:4. See especially 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27.

In addition to chastity, these saints “follow the Lamb wherever He goes”, see Revelation 3:4; Matthew 8:19, 10:38. These are the “firstfruits”, the best of the first of the harvest, see Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 16:15; James 1:18.

14:5 – In addition to their chastity, “no lie was found in the mouth” of these saints. The lie of which they are innocent is the denial of the Lamb (Revelation 13:14), see 1 John 1:6-10, 2:22, 4:20.

These are “blameless”, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, vested in white, rejoicing by means of the new song, the spotless Bride of Christ, the *Una Sancta*.

**Read Revelation 14:6-13**

14:6 – “…another angel…” The last angel we saw was in 11:15, the seventh angel sounding his trumpet. This angel brings the “eternal Gospel” to those dwelling on earth. Revelation 14:6 was used by Bugenhagen in Luther’s funeral sermon, where he identified this angel with Luther. *Der Lutheraner* used Revelation 14:6 in its masthead to represent Luther, the one who brought the Gospel to the world in the face of persecution from the antichrist. In any case, the Gospel reaching the “ends of the earth” immediately precedes the judgment.

14:7 - There is time in the Kingdom of Grace for men to hear the Gospel and be converted, men from every nation, tribe, tongue and people. But there is a place for the Law in the Kingdom of Grace - to drive men to the knowledge of their need for the Savior, who is the center of the eternal Gospel of verse 16. See Matthew 24:14.

While the angel in 14:6 had the Gospel to proclaim to all men, so also can it be clearly seen from the creation (the heavens, the earth, the sea and the fountains of water) that there is a God. Men who refuse to believe are without excuse. See 11:13.

14:8 - Babylon, the center of the Babylonian empire that overtook the southern kingdom and razed Jerusalem in 586 B.C., is here named for the first time in Revelation. It is the capital of idolatry, the "anti-Jerusalem". See 16:19, 17:5; 18:2; 18:10; 18:21. Just as we have seen a false trinity, the Bride and the harlot, the baptismal mark and the mark 666, so now do we see the evil city, which stands as a nefarious opposite to the Jerusalem to come (see 21;1-2). While Jerusalem is the place where God dwelt, and the source of His Law, here Babylon is the capital that pours for the nations the maddening wine of her adulteries. While parallels between Babylon and first century Rome were meaningful to the original readers and early interpreters of Revelation, any secular or idolatrous socio-economic power can be seen as "Babylon" (think Moscow, Beijing, Tehran, etc.)

In the Old Testament, the adjective "great" is used with the name "Babylon" in Daniel 4:28-33. Note the immediacy of Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, and the parallels to the Babylon in Revelation 14. Babylon took Judah by force, enslaved the Jews, made them worship false Gods, and separated them from the Temple of God, which it destroyed. Consider the parallels to the first readers of Revelation, but also consider that "secular progressive government" may make Washington D.C. the modern "Babylon" to us, which prohibits prayer in public, rejects any religion and actively works to drive any mention of the Christian faith out of the public square, while making all manner of perversion and sin legal (homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, etc…).

The proclamation of the angel is that Babylon is "fallen, fallen!" This immediately follows the warning of verse 7 - just as Nebudchadnezzar's fall was immediate.

See Isaiah 21:8-9, noting the similarities to Revelation 14:8. See also Jeremiah 51:5-8.

14:9 - The first angel brought the Gospel, and warned against rejecting it. The second angel proclaimed the fall of the powers opposing God. In light of 13:11-18, which establishes the mark of the beast, here the third angel warns against receiving it, which is to worship the beast and its image.

14:10 - Not only the harlot Babylon has wine. Hers intoxicates the nations towards her adulteries. God has a wine - a wine of fury, which will not be diluted or be mixed (a reference to the ancient practice of mixing wine with water), but poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. See Psalm 60:1-3; 75:7-8; Isaiah 51:17; Isaiah 63:6; Jeremiah 25:15-17;

All those who have drunken of the cup of the harlot will drink the dregs of the cup of God's wrath. Note that the description of hell is associated with that wrath, and that the suffering of the damned is in full view of the Lamb and His angels. For the persecuted Christian of every age this admonition is a necessary reminder, and brings great comfort. It is not lost on the Christian that God has a saving Cup for you, the Blood of Christ, by which He gives you forgiveness and life.

14:11 - The follower of the beast is consigned to eternal hell. The description is horrible. See Isaiah 34:9-10, where the judgment of Edom is described (remember Edom from our Genesis study?).

14:12 - Following the demand by the beast that men receive his mark and worship him, we saw those who would not yield to idolatry punished. Then the three angels came, proclaiming the Gospel, the fall of the harlot, and the eternal damnation of those who worshipped the beast. Now the Christian reader is alerted to the fact that "here is the patience of the saints…" See 13:10b, 13:18a. This serves as an encouragement to faithfulness during the time when the world seems to turn against the Church and the Christian - a time we seem to be seeing now.

Note the definition of the "saints" - they keep the Commandments of God, and faith in Jesus. The Commandments stand during the time of apostasy. Faith in Christ does not fail the believer, although every worldly sign and occurrence seems to the contrary. See Hebrews 11:1-2.

14:13 - In times of such persecution, there will be martyrs, and there will be those that quietly die in faith. This verse is a promise for both. There is a reward of faith. See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The "voice" is also heard in 1:10 - who speaks there? See 4:1-2, 10:4. The Spirit may well be the voice that proclaims the will of God in Revelation. Notice the attestation of the Spirit - "Yes…". See Revelation 2:7, 22:17.

"…and their works follow them." The fruits of faith are the marks of salvation. See Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-10; Revelation 2:2, 9, 13; Matthew 7:20; 2 Corinthians 9:10; James 3:17-18.

**Read Revelation 14:14-20**

In this section the day of judgment is foretold. The persecution prophesied in 13:11-18 will be ended, and there will be a judgment. Who is described in 14:14? See 1:13-16.

14:14 – Like the sixth seal, this section forms the sixth of seven sections that culminate in 15:14. See 6:1, 12-17. Like the sixth seal, this sixth vision describes the judgment at the end. See Daniel 7:9-14. Who is present in Daniel’s vision? How is it similar to what we have just read in Revelation? The crown is the στέφανος, the victor’s crown. The sharp sickle is the sign of the harvest at the end of time. See Matthew 24:30-31, 26:64; Mark 13:26-27, 14:62; Luke 21:27-28; Acts 1:9-11.

Christ seated on the clouds is also a sign of the last day. See Matthew 24:30, 26:64; Acts 1:9-11. Notice who has the sickle.

14:15 – Like 14:6, this angel is introduced as "another angel". Angels abound in Revelation because they are ministers of God's will. So would man be also, but for the fall. The consequences of that are seen clearly in Revelation. This angel proceeds from the heavenly temple of John’s vision, as in 11:19, so from the very presence and with the command of God. That vision of the temple immediately preceded the vision of the woman and the dragon – now conquered, but in the cyclical style of the Revelation that will be seen/conquered again in chapters 17 & 18.

The harvest does not occur here, what is given is a revelation of what is to occur. Notice, however, the earth is harvested. There is no “rapture” as taught by chilaists. See Mark 4:26-29.

The work of the angel is to proclaim the will of God – remember that ἄγγελος in Greek means “messenger”. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 Here this functions like narration, that those who receive the Revelation understand what is occurring. We will see that the angels also announce the will of God to one another.

14:16 – God’s will is proclaimed, God’s will is done. This is a vision of the future harvest. The sins of man have reached their “full measure” (Beale). The Church will perish if not saved. The harvest does not occur here, it is a revelation of what will occur. Notice, however, that the earth is harvested. There is no “rapture” as taught by the Chilaists. See Mark 4:26-29.

The petition “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” is here answered in full. The “first” harvest is of those who sleep in Christ and the believers living at the last day, the “second” those who remain (like the sheep and goats of Matthew 24, see also Matthew 3:12). The elect are the “firstfruits” of the harvest. See Joel 3:13-16.

14:17-20 – In the next few verses the revelation of the final harvest is completed, but here with more information. A chronological interpretation of the two harvests is not impossible, given 1 Corinthians 15:20-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. This would allow for the beginning of the harvest to be those who sleep in Christ and the believers living at the last day, the completion of the harvest those who remain (like the sheep and goats of Matthew 24, see also Matthew 3:12).

14:17 – Another sickle is used for those who do not believe. The “ripeness” here is that man has reached the full measure of his sinfulness – see Genesis 15:16; Daniel 8:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 2:16.

14:18 – Again God’s will is proclaimed. This angel proceeds from the altar, and has authority over the fire. Fire is reserved for the unbeliever. Many commentators hold this to be the angel of 8:3-5, who had charge of the censer and fire. Those pictured in verse 18 as “grapes” (notice the “ripe” language that repeats here from verse 15) are unquestionably the unbelievers, since they are the recipients of God’s wrath.

14:19 – Critics assault this verse because in the Greek “the winepress” is feminine, and the adjective “the great” is masculine. Both are in the accusative case. For the adjective to modify “God’s wrath”, which is masculine, it would have to be in the genitive case. The verse could be read “the winepress of God’s great wrath” or “the great winepress of God’s wrath”. Scribal attempts at correction are evident in early manuscripts, moving the adjective into the genitive. Pastor will demonstrate the Greek of the accusative and the genitive to illustrate how a scribal error might have occurred. In LXX Isaiah 63:2, “winepress” is masculine. Read Isaiah 63:1-6, then Revelation 19:13. Note the wonderful unity of the Word of God and His revelation of the Christ.

14:19-20 – This is a horrible, bloody harvest, one of wrath and judgment. See Matthew 13:27-30. But remember Joel 3:13-21.

1,600 Stadia is approximately 184 miles. This number may be symbolic, as number often are in Revelation – it would be 4 x 4 (the number for earth) times 10 x 10 (the number for completeness/perfection). Thus it would reveal the perfect end to the fallen kingdom of the earth. Some commentators also mention that 184 miles is the approximate distance from Tyre to the Egyptian border (so Biblical Palestine), or the Promised Land covered in the blood of the unbelievers.

**Read Revelation 15:1-4**

This vision introduces the third of the seven-fold visions. We have seen the seals and trumpets, we will soon meet the bowls of God’s wrath. The plagues that the “sevens” bring have grown increasingly worse. That the saints be comforted in the last plagues and the suffering they bring, John receives another glimpse into the heavenly throne room.

15:1 – The third “seven”. The seals (6:1ff) and Trumpets (8:6ff) have been completed. This cycle of seven will bring history to an end. The judgment draws nigh.

15:2 – The sea of glass is seen also in Revelation 4:6, which helps us locate where we are in the vision. Those victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name are the ones named in 12:11, but also remember that the letters to the churches promised this eternal home to those “who overcome” – see 3:5 and others. Note that their victory is three-fold, but one victory.

That the saints hold harps shows them to be rejoicing eternally. We have seen this already in 5:8 and 14:2.

15:3 – The Song of Moses is recorded in Exodus 15:1-21. It is the song sung after the greatest act of deliverance by God in the Old Testament. So too have these saints been delivered by God, through the sea of the baptism, out of tribulation, and into His nearer presence. The “song of the Lamb” is the New Song of 5:9-14, here with the addition of the verse that follows in 3b and 4.

15:4 – Notice that this song is sung by those in heaven, while believers remain on the earth. Where have the “great and marvelous deeds” of God, and His “righteous acts”, been revealed? See Acts 2:11; John 21:24-25.

**Read Revelation 15:5-8**

Chapter 14 ended with a prophecy of the wrath of the end. The first four verses of chapter 15 introduced the seven angels with the seven last plagues (ἀγγέλους ἑπτὰ ἔχοντας πληγὰς ἑπτὰ τὰς ἐσχάτας see Leviticus 26:21), and then provided an interlude, a glorious vision of the Church Victorious worshipping in heaven. Here we return to the vision of the angels with the last plagues.

15:5 – Again John looks into heaven. He sees “and it was opened the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in heaven” (καὶ ἠνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ). (See 11:19). This is a direct reference to structure that contained the Ark of the Covenant, see Exodus 38:21, Numbers 1:50. The Tabernacle was the tent in the wilderness that was constructed under Moses’ leadership, and where God dwelt. The Tabernacle was relocated several times, for a brief while there were two Tabernacles, and ultimately the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant was taken into Jerusalem and installed in the Temple (See 2 Samuel 6:10-17; 1 Chronicles 21:26-22:10; 2 Chronicles 5:1-10). John’s vision is of this Temple, now in heaven, but see Revelation 21:22. This difference is a time marker for us – in chapter 15, the end has not yet come.

15:6 – The angels come out, with the plagues. Their dress, gleaming linen with gold sashes, is the dress of Christ Himself in 1:13, thus they are His ministers.

15:7 – The four living creatures attend to the throne, worshipping. See 4:6. Here one of them gives the angels the bowls “filled with God’s wrath”, the plagues. Bowls are associated with the priestly service in the Tabernacle, see Numbers 4:12-14 (the Hebrew word used for “bowls” also means “basins”,הַמִּזְרָקֹ֔ת ). Now the bowls for sprinkling are distributed to sprinkle the wrath of God upon the earth. See Isaiah 51:17-22. The Hebrew word for “cup” is a different word, כּ֧וֹס . Similarly, the Greek word used here for “bowl” is φιάλη, a word used in the New Testament only in Revelation. Φιάλη is used in LXT Exodus 27:3 for “basin” (note especially its use there). The word for “cup” in the New Testament is ποτήριον.

15:8 - Smoke has attended many theophanies in Revlation, and in the Old Testament. God’s glory is more than an ethereal concept – it is His physical presence, hence related to His power. It is not the angel’s power or wrath, but the power and wrath of God, that is to be poured out. It is only after the final judgment that men will enter. See 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

**Read Revelation 16:1-6**

See Table, Beale, pgs. 809-810.

16:1 – The loud voice is the command of God – see 6:6, 9:13, 11:19. Like the flood in the days of Noah, here God allows His wrath to be manifest on earth. This is not the end, for that will be universal and complete, and come in an instant. The number 7 represents God (3) working on earth (4). Here His working is one of wrath – see 15:7 for the bowls of wrath.

16:2-4 – Consult the table from Beale, 809-810 for the historic antecedents and the Exodus equivalents to the bowls of wrath. The close ties to the Exodus show that God is preparing to deliver His people, giving comfort to those Christians living under persecution.

16:2 – in the first bowl, God punishes those who have engaged in what Beale calls “the world system.”

16:3 - In the second bowl, God punishes the “world system” economically.

16:4 - In the third bowl God punishes those who persecute His people economically.

16:5 – “…the angel of the waters” is a genitive construction in the Greek which can be translated “the angel *having power/authority over* the waters”. The angel attributes God’s actions in visiting His wrath upon earth to His righteousness, for “righteous” is an attribute of God, indeed He is the source of all righteousness. His actions are not mean nor are they capricious. They are an expression of His just nature.

God is “the One who is, who was, and who is to be”. See Revelation 1:4. God is the Holy One – see 15:4. “Holy”, in the Hebrew קָד֧וֹשׁ (see Isaiah 6:3) is an attribute of God alone.

16:6 – Here is the testimony against fallen men – God is eternal, holy and righteous, sinners have killed those He sent – see Matthew 23:29-38, and Revelation 2:13. Consider the consolation this brought to the Christians who first received the Epistles to the Churches. God’s recompense is just.

**Read Revelation 16:7-14 – refer to chart on the Bowls of God’s Wrath**

16:7 – In 16:1 the voice came from the Temple. Here it comes from the Altar. Their voices (perhaps the voices of angels who speak from those locations) bless God and announce His righteous acts. This is in stark contrast to the response of fallen men in 16:9-10. The very plagues that worked repentance and faith in Israel hardened Pharoah’s heart. So to here, the plagues that could drive men to repent and turn to God are met with blasphemies from men.

16:8-14 – compare these manifestations of God’s wrath with those of the Exodus, and those of the Trumpets and Seals earlier in Revelation. Remember that the devil is constantly working in the world to turn men away from God. The devil’s weapon is the lie, false doctrine.

16:15 – See 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, 2 Peter 3:10-13 (what do the saints look for?). The vestments given in Holy Baptism, the robe of Christ’s righteousness, clothes the Christian before God. See God’s Words to an unfaithful Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16:32-43. See Matthew 22:11-13. See Revelation 3:18

16:16 – Armegeddon

* The Greek reads: καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Ἑβραϊστὶ Ἁρμαγεδών.
* “... the place called in Hebrew Armegeddon” In Hebrew, rh; “har” is the word for “mountain.” Remember in Revelation that words like “Babylon” and “Euphrates” are symbolic, referring not to specific geographic locations but rather the actions/beliefs of those who once dwelt there. In 14:20 and 20:8-9 John will describe the location of the final “battle” as being by Jerusalem or Zion.
* There is no mountain in Holy Scripture by this name.
* Some say it is a hill (Beale uses the word “tell”, a small mound) in the valley of Megiddo - ADgIm-rh;B. (Judges 5:19, 2 Chronicles 35:22) Megiddo was a city in west Manasseh, to the north of Samaria, strategically located on the passage from the plain of Sharon to the Valley of Jezreel. In history it has frequently been a battlefield.
* In Judges 5:19, 21 the river Kishon is called “the waters of Megiddo” because of their proximity to the plain. So others say that the referent is Mount Carmel, where Elijah fought against the prophets of Baal. See 1 Kings 18.
* Some hold that “Megiddo” could be derived from the Hebrew verb for “cut, attack or maraud” (Beale), so Armegeddon would be the “mountain of attack”, which may also be described in Zechariah 12:11 (see especially the context of verse 10).
* Megiddo can be translated “gathering” or “reunion” (Beale). Thus Armegeddon would be the “mountain of reunion” or “mountain of gathering”, where the enemies of God congregate, see 16:14. See Isaiah 14:12-15 (d[eAm-rh;B), note the referent there.

So, accepting Isaiah 14:13 as the most appropriate referent, “Armegeddon” is the place where the forces of evil gather to wage war against God.