

The BOOK of
REVELATION
Mysteries Revealed

Don T. Phillips

Second Edition

“The Book of Revelation: Mysteries Revealed,” by Don T. Phillips. ISBN 978-1-62137-119-9.

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Acknowledgments

There are many people that I would like to thank who have contributed to this book. Above all there are three individuals that without their help, I would have never completed this manuscript: God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Ghost. Each has comforted me, encouraged me, chastised me and given me wisdom beyond my normal understanding at one time or another. In the physical realm, there are several individuals who have helped me in various ways. Without a doubt, the one person most responsible for my interest, examination and understanding of basic scriptural principles has been Pastor Dan Cummins. Dan has been my friend and mentor for over 20 years. Long ago he introduced me to the Seven Feasts of Israel in a revival, and later showed me the significance of the Pattern of the Harvest. In the Old and New Testaments, people lived completely off of the land and were farmers, shepherders and hunters. In the New Testament, Christ often spoke in agricultural terms and used these principles as a basis for many of His parables and miracles. Understanding both the Seven Feasts of Israel and the Pattern of the Harvest is crucial to understanding the Book of Revelation. Both are used extensively in this book. Dan has been a valued friend, spiritual advisor and theologian ... thank you Dan. In the early 1990's Dr. Mark Rutland, now president of Oral Roberts University called me out during one of his sermons and anointed me to teach the gospel. I have heeded his call, and have taught and intensely studied prophecy for over 25 years. I am also grateful to Dr. Terry Tekyl, who was my pastor at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in College Station, Texas and taught me to wait on the Lord. Dr. Tekyl allowed me to teach Sunday school classes for many years under his covering. His ministry of prayer left an enduring mark on my faith and teaching ministry. I am also grateful to Danny Green, pastor of Covenant Family Church in College Station for allowing me to teach in his church for several years. Pastor Green is a fine theologian and was a strong role model. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the influence that Dr. Bruce Wood has had on my spiritual maturity. Dr. Wood is currently my pastor at Aldersgate United Methodist church, where I am now a member.

There have been many, many individuals who have joined me in countless hours of fellowship and study of the word. Without their continually asking *why*, I would never have found the profound hidden meanings in many scriptures. I would like to thank Jim Beard for his early encouragement. Of course, it almost goes without saying that some of the most influential, respected and well known biblical scholars have *fed me meat* when I was *chewing on bread*. Some are still alive, but many have passed into eternity in the hands of Jesus.... A position that I am confident I will achieve not by any works that I have done, but because of the Grace of my Lord Jesus Christ. I want to thank Dr. Clarence Larkin, A.W. Pink, Robert Thomas, Sir Isaac Newton, James Ussher, Dr. Floyd Nolan Jones, Hal Lindsey, Jack Finnegan, S. H. Horn, L. H. Wood, Dr. Edwin R. Thiele, Donald Salerno, Dr. John MacArthur and Dr. John Walvoord to name a few. Without a doubt, there are two people who have had the most influence on my views of the rapture and my intense examination of the structure of the Book of Revelation: Marvin Rosenthal and Robert Van Kampen.... both visionaries and outstanding Biblical researchers.

I have saved my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for the last. My main supporter in writing this book; my severest critic; and the person who continually challenged my scriptural understanding of prophecy; is my wife: Candyce J. Phillips. She suffered through countless hours of editing, reading, challenging and inquiring the pages of this manuscript. She encouraged me to write this book and by her faith in me it is now contained herein.

I would like to reserve very special thanks to Pat Marvenko Smith for allowing me to use five of her artwork collection: One in each of Chapters 10, 16, 17, 21 and 27. Duncan Long is thanked for allowing me to use one of his pictures in Chapter 10.

Finally, I am very aware of the following warning considering what I have written in trying to provide a new and biblically based interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Rev 22:17-19

I have tried to reveal the scriptures without compromising either content or meaning. I hope that in some way, the words in this book will lead a soul to Christ, and for others strengthen their understanding of prophecy. I encourage anyone who reads this book to seek the Holy Spirit in forming their own opinions; take nothing as an absolute truth without intense investigation; and always... always... let the scriptures themselves speak the truth. God will hold me accountable for what I have written and knows that I have done the best I can. I can only believe in His Grace to save me, wretched creature that I am. In future years I will no doubt look at some of my words and realize that they could be better...or even wrong. Scriptural understanding is a life long journey. For now, I place my future in the large, capable hands of my Savior... the Son of God.....Jesus Christ.

Don T. Phillips
September, 2012

To those that matter most in my life.....

Candy Phillips

Ronald Alan Phillips (Ron)

Don T. Phillips, III (Donnie)

.....and “*The Mouse*”



Preface

The first thing to settle is my unwavering belief in God's word. The very existence of Jesus Christ is accepted by simple faith, and that existence is revealed in every book of the bible. I believe in the complete and perfect transmission of God's word between Him and His people He chose ordinary people to write the Holy Scriptures under the influence and guidance of the holy spirit. I believe that there are no contradictions or fables in the Holy Bible. I am aware that well-meaning Christians spend an enormous amount of time identifying biblical errors in both composition and in translation. The modern mantra seems to be that when scripture cannot be easily resolved, there is a *scribal error*. I completely reject such a conclusion. If an equal amount of time...and more...was devoted to resolving biblical conflicts, I am persuaded that a solution to any conundrum can be found. I have chosen with good reason to principally rely upon the Authorized King James Version of God's Holy Word in this book. I am well aware that the original Aramaic and ancient Hebrew versions of the Holy Bible are without a doubt God inspired and without error, but I believe that the King James Bible was equally inspired by the Holy Spirit. When in doubt of any verse or word, I believe that the original meanings of each should be sought out and if possible studied in the context of the words of an original manuscript. Unfortunately, laymen such as I have no access to such documents. Strong's Concordance, Vines Dictionary and other sources of translation are invaluable. The King James Bible was the only readily available source of God's word for centuries, coming to the world in the fullness of time when the printing press was passed from God to the earth. I am persuaded that with so many souls at stake the Authorized King James Version is not inerrant in key concepts or translation. I must point out that other modern bibles such as the NIV study bible and the Ryrie New King James Bible are easier to read and provide valuable information. I have not abandoned these holy documents, but have sought further understanding in their translations. In summary, all in-line scriptural references in this

book... and there are many...will be from the Authorized King James Bible.

Having stated apologetics, I will now address an important and relevant question: ***Why yet another book on the Revelation Record?***” The answer reflects my acquired beliefs that there has been widespread misunderstanding on how the Book of Revelation is structured and how it is organized and presented. In addition, other important topics such as the Rapture and the Wrath of God have been core to my investigation of prophecy for some time. Long ago, I taught a ***pre-tribulation*** rapture theology with the tribulation period being 7 years long. After investigating the scriptural support of a pre-tribulation rapture and the associated 7 year duration of the Tribulation Period, I began to seriously question that position. I read hundreds of articles, books and papers searching for the truth. Finally, after many years of frustrated investigation I decided to do the only thing which could lead to the truth... look at the Holy Scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and understanding. Of course, because of all of the time that I had spent trying to unravel scholarly explanations of scripture by learned theologians, I had seen all of the available theories and support for the pre-post-mid tribulation rapture theories. In 1990 Marvin Rosenthal published his landmark book entitled *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*. This made sense to me and squared with most scripture, but there were still some nagging questions regarding timing and position. In 1992 Robert Van Kampen published a new book on the pre-wrath rapture called *The Sign*. This convinced me that a pre-wrath rapture made more sense than a pre-tribulation, mid- tribulation or post-tribulation position. However, I was still not convinced that the pre-wrath rapture presented by both Rosenthal and Van Kampen passed scriptural scrutiny. I was always haunted by Rev 11:15-19, which if carefully examined without any preconceived bias demanded a rapture, resurrection and rewards at the 7th trumpet. Finally, I realized that the seals, trumpets, and bowls were not lock stepped sequential across a 7 year time span: The seals only provide a general overview of the tribulation period, just like the preface to any good book. Almost simultaneously, I developed

an intense interest in building a Biblical Chronology from Adam to the death of Christ. I did not realize that this was the key to unlocking the duration of the tribulation period, which I am now convinced is only 3.5 years. Finally, I began to realize that the Seven Feasts of Israel were not just historical events ordained by God after the Exodus, but collectively they provide a *blueprint* of all the events in the life of Jesus Christ (His first advent) and the Book of Revelation leading up to His second coming (the second advent). All of the pieces then came together, and the result is this manuscript.

It should again be noted that the key to understanding the Book of Revelation is to recognize that the seals, trumpets and bowls do not constitute a continuous sequence of events which transpire in lock step across a fixed period of time. Structurally, both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation have much in common. They are both constructed in such a way as to first reveal a great prophetic truth without complete detail, and then later to reveal more details in parallel descriptions. Without devoting a great deal of time to this issue, it should be stated that the book of Revelation is organized along *three* great themes.

- A description of God's heavenly kingdom (Rev 4) and of the risen Christ (Rev 1:1-19): ***The things that thou hast seen*** (Rev 1:19).
- A description of: ***The things which are*** (Rev 1:19). Letters to the Seven Churches in Asia Minor (Rev 2-3 and Rev 5).
- A description of: ***The things which shall be hereafter*** (Rev 1:19 through Rev 6-22)

The ***things which shall be hereafter*** are composed of four main sub-groups of scripture.

- A description of the *tribulation period... the seals, bowls and trumpets* (Rev 6-19)
- The Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20)
- The New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev 21-22:1-5)

- Closing remarks and warnings (Rev 22:6-21)

The descriptions of: *things which will be hereafter* (Rev 6-22) are further subdivided into what is called a *bifed* in the English literature. The *seals* span the entire tribulation period of 3.5 years, and predict conditions or general events which will occur...They are not precursors to the trumpet and bowl judgments as is erroneously taught (Rev 6:1-15, Rev 8:1). The tribulation period of 3.5 years contains the trumpet and bowl judgments which are released sequentially (Rev 8, 9 11:1-14, 16:1-21). Parenthetical events are described in Rev 7 (144,000 sealed and a great multitude seen in heaven): Rev 10 (the Little Scroll) and Rev 11 (the Two Witnesses) The *bifed* occurs at Rev 12. Between Rev 12:1 and 18:24, things which take place on heaven and earth during the same 3.5 year tribulation period are presented in greater detail. The Tribulation Period is initiated by a great war in Heaven, concluding with Satan and his angels being cast down to the earth.

(Rev 12):1-17

The rise of the Antichrist (Rev 13:1-10) and the false prophet (Rev 13:11-18) are detailed in Rev 13. Three more interludes are then recorded which describe special events. In rapid sequence, 144,000 overcomers are seen in heaven (Rev 14:1-5): Three angels who warn the people of imminent tribulation (Rev 14:6-13): And the Harvest of the earth (Rev 14).The first Harvest is to gather the saints to meet Christ in the air at the rapture (Rev 14:14-16), and the second Harvest is to gather all of Satan's armies to the great Battle of Armageddon (Rev 14:14-20). The Wrath of God, which is the 7 Bowl judgments (Rev 16:1), is described in Rev 15 and Rev 16. Rev 17 and Rev 18 describes both the *content* and the *collapse* of the Religious Empire of the Antichrist (Rev 17), and the Commercial Empire of the Antichrist (Rev 18). These two systems will exist over the entire tribulation period. After describing the Religious and Commercial empires of the Antichrist, the Apostle John is now shown how the Church Age (the Age of Grace) will end. Rev 19:1-10 describes heavenly praise because the end of Satan and his influence over this world has arrived. The *second advent* of

Christ is described in Rev 19:11-21, which includes the Battle of Armageddon and the ultimate fate of the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Rev 20:1-6 describes the binding of Satan for 1000 years in the Abyss; the 1000 year Millennial Kingdom and the Great White Throne judgment of all unbelievers. Finally, the New Heavens and the New Earth are described in great detail in Rev 21:1-27 and Rev 22:1-5. The Book of Revelation ends with a doxology that issues a warning to all who refuse to heed the words of this great, prophetic book (Rev 22:6-21).

I would like to tell the reader about a few literary rules which I have purposely violated and why. *First*, every *scripture* used in text is indented and in bold-italics. All scriptural references are taken from the Authorized King James Bible. *Second*, even though my wife complained bitterly, I have liberally used italics to emphasize *key concepts* in the narratives. In general, these highlighted words or terms are excerpts from a Biblical scripture, but some quote noted authorities on the subject at hand. On many occasion, I chose to use only *italics* to simply *emphasize* a word or term, and usually these referred to historical or secular concepts.... there are exceptions to both rules. However, when you see highlighted text, it is a sign to pay close attention to the concept being presented. Finally, out of utmost respect for God the Father and Christ the Son: I have tried to capitalize any word which directly refers to either. In fact, one of the forgotten literary conventions of the Original King James Bible was that any reference to **God** which applied to God the Father was capitalized. I have extended this convention to the **Son** of God out of respect for his holy name.

What a glorious journey it will be for all of those who take the time to read and study the things which were recorded by the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation. It may come as a surprise to many to know that God has placed a special set of blessings upon you for studying these things. A special blessing (beatitude) has been promised for all who read and study these words.

Blessed is *he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein* (Rev 1:3)

The world is captivated by people like Nostradamus and Edgar Casey who have claimed that they can see into the future; and who would not like to be able to predict the future with certainty? For sure, there have been men (prophets) of old that have accurately prophesied about future events. But, in all cases their words of prophesy were inspired and guided by God's thoughts.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of“ II Peter 1:19-21, 2:1-2

Do not be lured into the snare of buying books that tell of the future. Avoid soothsayers and fortune tellers. There is only one book ever written that will accurately and faithfully teach you what the future holds. Saints, I can assure every one of you reading this preface that the Book of Revelation is the only book which has ever been written or will ever be written that describes things which will surely come to pass. John the revelator wrote:

“The angel said to me, “these sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done” Rev 22:6

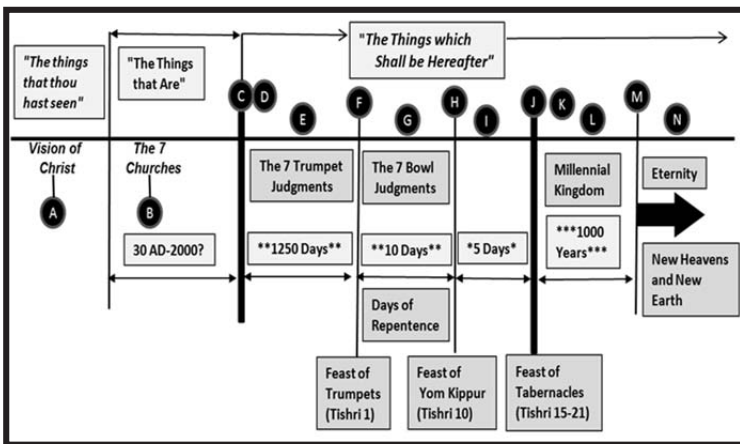
Enjoy your journey and prepare for the Lord.... He is coming again soon.

Don T. Phillips
September, 2012

Overview

This book presents evidence to support that the Tribulation Period is 3.5 years, 1260 days, 42 Months long and not 7 years as commonly taught. The 7 seal judgments are not time sequenced, but provide an overview of the tribulation period. The 1260 days are divided into two major time periods: (1) One of 1250 days during which the Antichrist and the False Prophet persecute those who refuse to worship Satan and the Antichrist. The 7 Trumpet judgments take place over this 1250 day period of satanic persecution. (2) A period of 10 days in which the 7 bowl judgments are poured out upon the earth and the kingdom of the antichrist. The 7 bowl judgments are the *Wrath of God*.

We will present strong evidence that the rapture and resurrection of all saints takes place as the 7th trumpet sounds, just before God pours out His wrath in the the 7 bowl judgments. Hence, this book presents sound scriptural arguments for a **new Pre-Wrath Rapture** theory. The final defeat of Satan and his followers takes place at the Battle of Armageddon which will occur after the 1260 days (The last half of Daniel's 70th week) have run their course. The following diagram provides a graphic and time sequenced overview of the Book of Revelation. Welcome to the future! The following topics are all discussed in this book. The topics described are in a logically consistent and chronological order, but we would never break faith over the



exact sequence in which they are presented. The previous diagram has ● circles containing the letters A-N positioned across the timeline. The key events which will occur either at these points in time, are summarized in the following paragraphs.

A

John is a prisoner on the Island of Patmos when he is called to see the future.

- The Heavenly Throne of God
- Vision of Christ

B

John is told to record and deliver 7 letters addressed to the 7 Churches in Asia.

- Ephesus
- Smyrna
- Pergamum
- Thyatira
- Sardis
- Philadelphia
- Laodicea

C

Before the 1260 day tribulation period can begin, the following things must take place.

- A ten nation confederacy will arise out of the ancient Roman Empire.
- A great world leader will arise from among these 10 nations. Through political, oratory and military skills he will conquer 3 of the ten nations, then unify all ten under his dictatorship.
- The exact timing is not clear, but this great world leader will manage to establish peace in Israel and rebuild Herod's Temple. He will then likely be proclaimed as the long awaited Jewish Messiah. He will establish a *covenant of death* with Israel.

D

It is not clear exactly what prophesied event will actually start the last 3.5 years of Daniel's 70th week. There are two possibilities, and both are very close to one another chronologically. (1) The tribulation period will begin with a great heavenly war (Rev 12: 1-9) or (2) it will begin just *after* Satan and his angels are cast down to earth. We believe that the Tribulation period will begin just after Satan is defeated and cast down. The immanency of the tribulation period will be signaled to all who have studied Rev 12 with a *sign* in the heavens. This *sign* will be a great heavenly conflict between Satan and his angels and Michael and his angels. We believe that the entire world will see this battle, possibly as a great cosmic disturbance. Over some unknown period of time, Satan will be defeated and cast to the earth with 1/3 of all the angelic beings (Rev 12:4)

- Just before Satan is cast down, a *Man Child* is raptured to the Heavenly Mt. Zion. These are the *firstfruits* unto God.
- The world leader will be wounded with a knife unto death; he will be revived by Satan and become the hated Antichrist.

The Tribulation Period now begins. In rapid succession, the following events occur.

- The Beast out of the Sea emerges, which will rule over the world leaders mind and body. This is the Antichrist.
- The Beast out of the Earth arises to support the Antichrist with a worldwide religious system called Babylon the Great.... This is the False Prophet.
- The Antichrist and his armies will turn on Israel and attack Jerusalem. This will be called *The Jerusalem Campaign*.
- The Antichrist and his forces will be supernaturally turned away.
- 144,000 from 12 tribes of Israel will be sealed
- The *Little Scroll* is shown to John

- Two Witnesses stand in the temple to warn everyone:
Do not take the mark of the beast.

E

The 7 trumpet judgments are unleashed.
Trumpets 5-7 are called the *Three Woes*

F

The first 1250 days of the tribulation period will come to a close with two major events which will occur in close proximity to one another.

- The two witnesses are slain and lie dead in the street.
- The rapture of all saints (living) and the resurrection of all saints (dead) occur as the 7th trumpet sounds on the Feast of Trumpets (Tishri 1). Every believer in Christ has been removed from the earth at the 7th trump.

G

The next 10 days bring the Wrath of God: The 7 Bowl Judgments. Four major heavenly events also take place over this short period of time.

- The Bema Seat Judgment of believers takes place in Heaven.
- The Two Witnesses are raised and taken to heaven
- The Marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven
- The 7 Bowl Judgments are poured out over a short period of time (10 days).

H

The 10 day period of God's Wrath ends on Nisan 10: The Feast of Yom Kippur. The most important battle in the history of the world takes place on this day.

- The Battle of Armageddon ends the Tribulation period

I

Between the Feast of Yom Kippur on Nisan 10 and the Feast of Tabernacles on Nisan 15, the following events occur.

- The 144,000 sealed Jews will be assembled with those that survived the Tribulation Period to live in the land. This is the fulfillment of God's Covenant with Abraham.
- The Antichrist and the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire
- Satan is cast into the Bottomless Pit for 1000 years (The Millennial Kingdom).
- The Rod Judgment takes place in the wilderness
- The Judgment of the Sheep and Goat Nations takes place in Jerusalem

J

The *Joyous Feast of Tabernacles* (Tishri 15-22) takes place in Jerusalem to celebrate the defeat of Satan and the Antichrist.

K

Following the last great day of Tabernacles on Tishri 22, establishing the reign of Christ will be initiated, and a Period of Restoration will take place. It is likely that the 1000 year Millennial Kingdom begins on Tishri 23; but this is speculation. It might begin on Tishri 11 or Tishri 15.... The exact day is unimportant.

L

The millennial Kingdom of 1000 years will now be established and run its course.

- The Throne where Christ will rule and reign over the nations is set in place
- The land is cleansed
- The Temple is cleansed and restored in Jerusalem
- The temple is Dedicated 75 days after the Feast of Yom Kippur on the Feast of Dedication.

- King David is set upon his throne to rule over Israel
- The land is divided, and Israel inherits the Land

Israel will live in the Promised Land for 1000 years. Everyone will prosper, and the life span of man will be very long.... some possibly 1000 years or longer. However, Adam's curse will overcome some and they will rebel against Christ. The earth will need to be destroyed and all sin purged as in the Days of Noah.



After the 1000 years have passed, the following events will take place.

- Satan will be loosed for a *short while*. He will gather all rebels and unbelievers out of the world
- The last great battle which we call *Satan's Last Stand* will take place in Jerusalem.
- Satan and all evil in the world will finally be destroyed at the last great battle: *Satan's Last Stand*
- Satan is cast into eternal punishment in the Lake of Burning Fire
- Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Burning Fire
- The judgment of all unbelievers from all ages now takes place: The ***Great White Throne Judgment***.



The earth is now completely renovated and all things on it destroyed by Fire. Eternity now begins.

- A new Heaven and New Earth appears for eternal habitation
- The eternal throne of God and Christ is set in place on this earth, and eternity has arrived

Each of these things will be discussed in detail in the next 22 chapters. May God bless you as you study his Holy Word. The journey to eternity will be exciting!!

Chapter 1

The Call from Heaven

Introduction

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” Rev 1:1-3

The Greek word for Revelation is *apokalupsis* which means to *unveil* or to *uncover*. The Book of Revelation is meant to complete the record of the Church Age which started in 30 AD at the Feast of Pentecost. The end of this age is the 1000 year millennial kingdom and then eternity, when new heavens and a new earth will be formed. It also completes the reign of sin over the earth and of that old serpent Satan who brings sin and eternal damnation to mankind. The book of Revelation is the only book ever written that predicts with certainty things that will occur in the future. It may come as a surprise to many Christians, but it is also the only book ever written in which all that *read or hear the words* will be blessed. In fact, the blessing promised is threefold: (1) anyone who *reads* it will be blessed, (2) anyone who *hears* it will be blessed, and (3) anyone who *keeps the commandments* in this book will be blessed. I suspect that everyone can use blessings from God, so be prepared to be spiritually and intellectually blessed. There are those who teach and believe that the book is just a collection of fictitious symbols and symbolism. Those who say that the book is not describing real events have not even read and understood the first verse! Pity those people, for the events of this book *will come to pass*. As we will show in later chapters, those unprepared Christians will have to go

through most of the tribulation period. We are immediately told that John did not dream these things nor was it revealed to him in a vision, he actually *saw* these things with his own eyes. In Rev 4:1, we are told that John saw a door standing open in heaven, a voice *like a trumpet* told him to *Come up here, and I will show you things*. We are told in Rev 1:1 that the message is to *his servants*. The Greek word translated servants is *doulos*. It is used 120 times in the New Testament, and is used by the apostle Paul in Romans Chapter 6.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”

Romans 6:14-19

It is clear that the servants to whom this revelation is given are those who are sanctified, justified and glorified under the new covenant.

The Salutation

“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made

us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Rev 1:4-6

John reaffirms that he is the author of the book. We are now told where the book is to be initially read; in the seven churches of Asia (Roman Asia Minor). The seven churches to be addressed are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. It is believed that the apostle Paul established all seven churches on his visits to Asia. There were, of course, many other churches outside of Israel. These seven were chosen because they were representative of all the churches which would be formed during the church age. The book of Revelation is a book of *sevens*, seven being the biblical number of ***completion or perfection***.

- There are 7 churches (Rev 1:4)
- There are 7 Spirits at God’s throne
(Rev 1:4, 3:1, 4:5 and 5:6)
- There are 7 candlesticks (Rev 1:12, 1:13, 1:20 and 2:1)
- There are 7 stars (Rev 1:16, 1:20, 2:1 and 3:1)
- There are 7 lamps (Rev 4:5)
- There are 7 Seals (Rev 5:1, 5:5)
- There are 7 Trumpets (Rev 8:2, 8:6)
- There are 7 Bowls (Rev 15:7, 17:1, 21:9)
- There are 7 Horns (Rev 5:6)
- There are 7 Eyes (Rev 5:6)
- There are 7 Angels standing before God (Rev 8:2, 8:6)
- There are 7 Thunders (Rev 10:3, 10:4)
- There are 7 Thousand People Killed (Rev 11:13)
- There are 7 Heads (Rev 12:3, 13:1, 17:3, 17:7, 17:9)
- There are 7 Crowns (Rev 12:3)
- There are 7 Angels with 7 Bowls (Rev 15:1)
- There are 7 Mountains (Rev 17:9)
- There are 7 Kings (Rev 17:10-11)

The repetition of the number *seven* indicates that God has a perfect plan for His earth, and that everything has been predetermined. The number seven persists throughout the holy writ; there are seven dispensations or ages, there are seven Holy

Feasts of Israel, there are seven High Holy Days, a week has seven days, the last three prophetic feasts which herald the second coming of Christ are in the seventh Jewish month, creation took six days and on the seventh day God rested... etc.

The salutation continues by citing from whom it is spoken: ***him which is, and which was, and which is to come.*** The identification of *him* has caused much controversy. Some say this salutation is from God the Father and some say it is from Christ. However, there is really no controversy since Christ is identified in the very next verse. Christ is described in three ways: (1) He is the *faithful witness*, (2) He is the *first begotten from the dead*, and (3) He is the *Prince of the Kings of the earth*. Notice that Christ is identified as a separate personage from God in the salutation. This confirms the *mystery* of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Yet, they are unity in operation and holiness. The Holy Trinity is prominently displayed in the first chapter of the book of Revelation; they are the triune Godhead. Christ is our *faithful witness*. He sits at the right hand of God on His throne and faithfully intercedes for us; He was faithful in all that God gave Him to do; He was faithful to the death; and He will never forsake us. It is reaffirmed that the real rulers of this earth are not Satan's princes, not kings, not presidents, and not dictators, but our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.”

I Corinthians 15:27

Christ loves us and *washed* our sins away with His own blood on the cross of Calvary. Oh how He loves us!

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to

separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35-39

Christ’s love for us transcends time as we know it. He has declared that we will reign forever as *Kings and Priests*.

“And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Rev 5:9-10

The Coming and Character of Christ

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Rev 1:7-8

Suddenly with no transition, the apostle John presents the first prophetic revelation in the book. The opening word **behold** reinforces the fact that John *saw* all of the things he is about to record. The impact of the opening statement frames the entire message put forth in the book of Revelation; the triumphant Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. The scene is projected all the way to the end of the tribulation period when Christ returns to fight the battle of Armageddon.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine

linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Rev 19:11-16

The triumphant return of Jesus Christ is the culmination of God’s plan for all mankind which started in the Garden of Eden, and it is the fulfillment of what was foretold by the prophets of old.

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13-14

This prophecy recorded by Daniel reaffirms that at His second advent, Christ will be seen by everyone, particularly the Jews who crucified Him and the Romans who pierced His side while on the cross of Calvary. At that time there will not only be a great celebration (Rev 19:6), but great lamentations and wailing (Rev 18:19). We will show in subsequent chapters that the second advent of Christ is likely to take place on the *Feast of Yom Kippur*. Unlike the joyous rapture of the Church, when all living Saints will rise to meet Him in the air at the Feast of Trumpets, at the second advent of Christ, *all kindred’s of the earth shall wail*. The time for salvation has ended, and the time for vindication has come. Those who will be left will have universally rejected salvation through Christ, and now those who are alive at His second advent must pay the consequences. The angel says *amen*, let it be so.

The next utterance is in the first person and is undoubtedly from *Jesus Christ*. He declares Himself to be *Alpha and Omega*. This

phrase is used by Christ here in the first chapter, and also in the last chapter, Rev 22.

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” Rev 22:12-13

Finally, we are reassured that the Lord we serve is not dead, but lives forever. The Muslims, Buddhists and other man-made religions serve dead gods, but we serve a *living God!* He *was, and is, and is to come.* Like Christ, we proclaim *amen!* Let it be so; come quickly Lord Jesus.

The Messenger and the One Who Sends the Message

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying

unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” Rev 1: 9-20

Although there has been theological debate on who actually wrote the book of Revelation, we have no doubts whatsoever that the author is the apostle John who has been exiled by the Roman Emperor to the island of Patmos. John had been boldly preaching the gospel, and he was arrested and exiled as a political agitator. John was the last of the original 12 disciples, all of whom had been martyred for preaching the gospel. We should take note that even the inner circle that Jesus chose, his beloved disciples, were not spared from horrible deaths. The apostle Paul wrote in many places how he had suffered and was persecuted for Christ's sake. We should take careful note that if these founding fathers were not spared from tribulation, why should we casually wait around for a pre-tribulation rapture and escape tribulation? We will see later that there will be a group of saints who will *escape all of these things* (Luke 2:16); they are called the *overcomers* in each of the seven churches. But the majority of Christians will have the privilege, *yes* the privilege, of going through what has been called the tribulation period and winning many souls to Christ.

John was *in the spirit* on *the Lord's Day*. This phrase has also sparked considerable controversy. The context has been confused with the concept that John had been transformed into a spirit-state to receive the revelation. There is no license or indication that this is inferred here. It is more likely that John is in a state of deep prayer in which as Lenski put it, “*A state in which the ordinary faculties of the flesh have been suspended and the inner senses opened*”. John is probably regularly praying in this state; he is seeking a closer communication and state of

intimacy with his Lord Jesus Christ whom he longs to see again. The *Lord's Day* has been interpreted to mean either the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) or Sunday. In the context of how the modern Sabbath day emerged as Sunday, and the theme of Christ renewing his covenant with the church throughout this book, we believe that the best interpretation is Sunday and not Saturday. By the end of the second century AD, the *Day of the Lord* in reference to the Sabbath was almost universally accepted as Sunday because Christ rose from the dead early on Sunday. The gospel accounts also record how the disciples observed the Jewish Sabbath on Saturday, even after the death of Christ, but also worshipped on Sunday to make that day holy unto Christ. The *voice of a trumpet* is a common theme throughout the entire book of Revelation. It heralds the calling of John to record what he is shown; John is told to come to heaven to *see these things* by a *voice* which was penetrating and loud *like the sound of a trumpet* (Rev 4:1). When the period of tribulation begins to run its course, there are seven trumpet judgments which will be announced by a loud trump (Rev 8:2, 6, 13); the four demonic angels loosed from the Euphrates are told to come forth by a trumpet (Rev 9:14); and the rapture of the church will be initiated by the sound of a trumpet (I Thess 4:16-18, I Cor 15:51-52).

John is next commanded to *write in a book*, what he sees, and to send the book to the *seven churches in Asia* (Rev 1:11). It seems clear that John is commissioned to write an entire book, and to also send a personal letter to each of the seven churches. It appears that the seven letters to the seven churches in Rev 2-3 are separate, personal messages from Christ, but they are all meant to be read by each church. The issue is not important; it is only important to know that this is not a secret book but one which was to be read and shared in all the churches. We should heed this message today and hear more sermons from the pulpit on the contents and messages of these 7 letters.

Christ next reaffirms that he is eternal and that He is *alpha and omega*. The strength of this phrase is that alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and omega is the last. Christ is reaffirming

that in Him all things are complete. He is *the first and the last* and *the beginning and the end* (Rev 22:12).

John next hears a *voice like thunder* and he turns to see *seven golden lampstands*. The Greek translation in the KJV of *lampstands* is best interpreted as candlesticks. We are not confused as to what these represent. We are told in Rev 1:20 that the seven candlesticks represent the *seven churches* of Rev 2-3. The symbolism is clear. The 7 Churches to whom these letters are directed represent all of the churches today; 7 being the biblical number of completeness. However, the *church* is only a building; the real church is its *members*. All Christians are to *let their light shine*. Christ said that we are to be the *light of the world* (Mat 5:14). The simile comes from the *menorah*. The menorah was a lampstand with seven pipes that stood in Herod's Temple in Jerusalem. However, there is likely a deeper spiritual symbolism implied since the menorah was a Jewish artifact in the Tabernacle of Moses under the old economy. The menorah received its oil from a common reservoir, and the seven pipes were of no use without that source. Oil in the new covenant often represents the Holy Spirit, and the seven pipes are symbolic of the witness of salvation through Jesus Christ in each of the seven churches. John immediately recognizes Christ standing *in the midst of the seven candlesticks*. What a glorious picture of how Christ operates through his people. He is in the midst of the seven churches, constantly moving about to minister to and through His saints. In each of the letters to the seven churches, He constantly speaks, saying; *I know, I know*. Christ *knows* what is going on; He is constantly watching and waiting; He is moving through the Body of Christ... *HE KNOWS*.

The personage which John now sees evidently surprised him and overcame him with awe. In Rev 1:17 we are told that *he fell at His feet as if dead*. The last time John saw Christ on the day of Pentecost he appeared as the *suffering servant*. Now, he is dazzling and majestic. He is clothed with a garment (likely white) *from head to foot*, He is girded with a *golden sash about His waist*, His hair was *white like wool*, His feet like *fine brass* and his voice like the sound of *many waters*; deafening and

majestic like Niagara Falls. He is called *like the Son of Man*, Christ's favorite expression of Himself when He was on this earth. The dress is characteristic of those garments worn by the High Priest in their service in the temple. His appearance is the same as that seen by Daniel.

"...the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."

Daniel 7:9

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Daniel 10:5-6

The mental picture is certainly one of *righteousness and majesty*, but it also a picture of the eternal character of the Son. He existed when the world was framed, He existed in Daniel's day, and He exists today. He is the one *which is, which was and which is to come* (Rev 1:2). His *feet of burning bronze* almost certainly stand for *judgment*, and ultimately the eternal separation of the righteous from the unrighteous. In ancient times, the precious wheat was brought to the *threshing floor* where oxen shod with brass feet would trample the wheat. The husks would be separated from the precious grains of wheat, and then the wind (*Holy Spirit*) would separate the wheat from the chaff; then the precious wheat would be stored in the barn. This is a beautiful picture of the *Parable of the Wheat and the Tares* (Mat 21:3) and how Christ will separate His elect (the wheat) from the *tares of the world*. It is also beautifully and prophetically acted out in the Old Testament by the story of *Ruth and Boaz*, and how Ruth came to the threshing floor at midnight seeking the kinsman redeemer (Ruth 2:1-23).

Continuing what John saw, he *fell at His feet as if Dead*. Our merciful King then said *fear not* to John. Oh Saints, these two simple words bring tears to our eyes as we pen this book. I pray and hope that anyone reading this book will understand these two words: ***Fear not***. Are we not fearful that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? Have we not all cast our doubts and fears upon our Lord and Savior? Have we not all been fearful that Christ does not hear our prayers? Will we not all be fearful that when we finally stand before God at the *Bema Seat Judgment* that we will be found unworthy to enter into His presence? (Rev 11:15-18) Listen to these words and believe them. Christ said ***FEAR NOT***. Praise His name forever and ever for saving us by grace and not by works. We have all sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God, but *fear not*.

Christ next reassures John and each of us that He *IS* the risen Christ. He also assures us that He will lay His mighty right hand, the hand of judgment and wrath, on us, and will say: ***I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore; behold I live and through My resurrection and power over death you shall live also***. No exposition can do His words justice. He has conquered death and is alive forevermore. Because we believe that He is the Son of God, that He was dead, buried and resurrected to the Father, we will be also. *Fear not*, He says.

Having reassured John that He is alive forevermore and ruling over all creation, He now commands John to ***write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which will be hereafter***. These simple words provide us with an outline of the book of Revelation. The *things which thou hast seen* clearly refer to what we have just examined Rev 1:1, Rev 1:20. The *things which are* refer to the seven churches which existed when John is called to record the assessment of each church as it is given to him. This is found in Rev 3-4. The *things which shall be hereafter* are the things which are recorded in Rev 4:1, Rev 22:21. In fact, we will hold to the belief that not one thing that John sees after Rev 6:1 has yet occurred; they are all future. The reader might note that we break with traditional

commentaries to characterize the things which John sees in Rev 4:1-4:9 as not being in the future. John is taken through an open door in Rev 4:1, and this happened when he was on the Island of Patmos. He immediately sees heaven and God's throne in all of its glory. We suggest that the throne of God, the four living creatures and the 24 elders surrounding the throne were there in circa 90-93 AD and are there today, just as John saw them. This will be the subject of Chapter 3. Finally, a *mystery* is revealed to John. The concept of a biblical mystery is not what we understand as a modern mystery novel or something that we cannot immediately understand. A biblical mystery is something that has been either unknown or concealed until it is explained by a message from God. The *mystery* revealed at this point in time is that: ***The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*** Here a wonderful and comforting message is given to every church, every pastor and every congregation. There is a *star* assigned to each church and that star is an *angel*! Imagine that!! Every group of Christians gathered together in His holy name has a guardian angel assigned to them who will help the body of Christ (the church) through god times and bad times. Stay the course... stay in the word... and stay in God's care.

This concludes ***the things which John saw***; it is now time to discuss the ***things which are***, or the Letters to the Seven Churches in Asia.