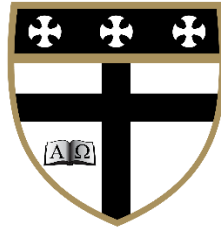


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## A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“The Apocalypse of St. John: Epilogue to the New Testament”<sup>1</sup>

by

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<sup>1</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). [www.roderickford.org](http://www.roderickford.org).

# “The Apocalypse of St. John: Epilogue to the New Testament”



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## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

The Book of Revelation reminds us that Jesus Christ, as the *Logos*, is a Lord and King, and that His universal and moral law is “Truth” itself.<sup>3</sup>

The symbolism of the “New Jerusalem,” with its twelve gates containing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and of the 144,000 sealed servants from those same twelve tribes, and which are contained within the Book of Revelation, represent Jesus of Nazareth’s reaffirmation and fulfillment of His central position as the promised heir to King David— i.e., as the Messiah the Prince, the Christ.

As such, the Book of Revelation displays Christ’s ultimate authority as prophet, high priest, and king of the unified kingdoms of Judah and Israel (i.e., the spiritual Israel), to wit:

### The Three Crowns of the Constitution of Israel

<b>CROWN</b> <b>The <i>Keter Torah</i></b>	<b>CROWN</b> <b>The <i>Keter Kehunah</i></b>	<b>CROWN</b> <b>The <i>Keter Malkhut</i></b>
The <i>Prophetic function</i> : to interpret the <i>Torah</i> ; “the domain of constitutional interpretation.”	The <i>Priestly function</i> : “the domain of the priesthood”; connecting people to God; the ritual and sacerdotal function.	The <i>Kingly function</i> : “the domain—literally crown—of civil rule.”
Men and Women with a Special call directly from God to speak His Word.	Kohen Gadol (Chief Priest)  Priests  Levites	King (Judah/ Israel)  12 Princes  70 Elders  Judges/ Officers

<sup>2</sup> This paper is dedicated to the **Rev. John Wesley (1703 – 1791)**, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford and principal founder of the Methodist Movement and the Methodist Church, and who once proclaimed: “The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness.”

<sup>3</sup> John 17:17 (“Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**”) John 4:24 (“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in **truth.**”); Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 645 (“For by consulting the Gospel we learn that **Christ is Truth.**”); and Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Noble Books (2007), p. 48 (“**Your law is truth** and you are truth.”)

The message to the seven churches of Asia Minor certainly demonstrate Christ’s prophetic and priestly function. And the warfare that is depicted within the Book of Revelation demonstrates Christ’s “kingly” function as general of an army and as chief judge over the Last Judgement.

Indeed, the Book of Revelation informs us that we are all currently living in a post-millennial prophetic Age in which the promised Messiah— i.e., Jesus of Nazareth— **now reigns upon earth** through his saints, his universal churches (plural), and divine Providence.

This is manifest in the Book of Revelation where Christ directs seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor, thus demonstrating the importance and significance of the “institutional church” to his earthly reign. And this manifestation is even more clearly affirmed in the Gospel of Matthew, where Christ states:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.<sup>4</sup>

This Great Commission, which is to teach, to baptize, and to observe all things, is comprehensive, humanitarian, geopolitical, constitutional, and jurisprudential in nature.<sup>5</sup>

And, as I have argued in my postdoctoral dissertation at Whitefield Theological Seminary, this Great Commission covers even the magistrates, rulers, and governors of the civil polity.<sup>6</sup> And all of the nations of the world—not simply

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28:18-20. [KJV].

<sup>5</sup> See, generally, Thomas Woods, *Institutes of the Laws of England* (1720)(citation omitted); Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation: or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730)(citation omitted); Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736)(citation omitted); and William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1753), supra, p. 27 (“This law of nature, being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.”)

<sup>6</sup> Romans 13:4, 6. (“For he is the minister of God to thee for good... for they are God’s ministers...”) [KJV]. See, also, Martin Luther, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent it should be Obeyed* (1523)(“Here you inquire further, whether constables, hangmen, jurists, lawyers, and others of similar function can also be Christians and in a state of

the churches within those nations— are of the subject matter of Christ's Last Judgment upon the earth:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed on my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of least of these, ye did it not to me. And these

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salvation. Answer: If the governing authority and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, then everything that is essential for the authority's bearing of the sword must also be divine service.”).

shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, in Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence, *the doctrine of equity* was devised in order to achieve this very objective.<sup>8</sup> In English jurisprudence, for instance, the *law of equity* was none other than the “law of Christ.”<sup>9</sup> And, in fact, equity jurisprudence in England was considered to be a manifestation of Jesus Christ himself—since Christ had come to fulfill the law,<sup>10</sup> so, too, “[e]quity had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it.”<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, justice is the end of civil government,<sup>12</sup> placing all civil governments in a perpetual “state of natural religion”:

“Justice [is] the link between the sacred and the secular . . . .”<sup>13</sup>

“Politics is religion because it has to do with major morals, with the relations of men to each other . . . . The one cry that goes up from man to God is for justice.”<sup>14</sup>

“[T]he Law must always be the Law of God, and all their overwhelming greatness. The study of the Puritan doctrine of the Law

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 25: 31-46 [KJV].

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *Pomeroy’s Equity Jurisprudence* (Fifth Edition), Vol. 1, Sec. I, § 8 -- Aequitas as Embracing “Jus Gentium” and “Lex Naturae”; *Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics* (Chicago, IL: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011); William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity*, supra, pp. 36-37 (“Justice is the synonym of equity . . . . A God of equity, whose ways are equal, must require equity . . . .”)

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Law of Christ is to “love ye one another” (John 15:12); to do justice and judgement (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3). See also “Parable of the Good Samaritan,” Luke 10: 25-37; see, also, Robert F. Cochran, Jr. and Zachary R. Calo, *Agape, Justice, and Law: How Might Christian Love Shape Law?* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge Univ. P., 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 5:17.

<sup>11</sup> Goldwin Smith, *A Constitutional and Legal History of England*, supra, p. 209; Roderick O. Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL.: Xlibris Corp., 2015), pp. 423-444.

<sup>12</sup> James Madison, *The Federalist Paper*, No. 51 (“Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit.”)

<sup>13</sup> Ruben Alvarado, *Calvin and the Whigs: A Study in Historical Theology*, supra, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics*, supra, p. 304.

of God must begin, therefore, by an examination of the relation of God to the Law.”<sup>15</sup>

And chapter eighteen (18) within the Book of Revelation, which addresses commercial and economic injustices, clearly brings all forms of secular activities and injustices within the realm of Christ’s Final Judgment upon earth.

And so, we look to Christ for an ultimate example for the establishment of Justice, both in this world as well in the world to come. Indeed, Augustine of Hippo’s *The City of God* reminds us that Christians have been invested with important power—the authority *to sit upon the thrones of judgment and to judge*—in the present world, to wit:

For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, ‘**And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given.**’<sup>16</sup>

It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but into the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in words, ‘What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’<sup>17</sup>

By its very nature, then, the ruling elders over the churches of Jesus Christ must be multidisciplinary in function and scope: they must be, inter alia, jurists, lawyers, and political scientists, as well as priests and theologians. For, indeed, the tendency among the Hebrew prophets—especially Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zechariah—was to emphasize *social justice* more than religious rituals.<sup>18</sup> The ministry of Jesus was the natural fulfillment of that tendency.

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<sup>15</sup> Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria Pub., 2018), p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> Here, Augustine of Hippo is referencing Revelation 20:4 (KJV)(“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them....”)

<sup>17</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 725- 728.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., **Isaiah 1:11-17** (“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? ... Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow”); **Hosea 6:6-7** (“For I desired mercy, and



For the Book of Revelations is regarding the future sentencing hearing of the Last Judgment. It speaks of twenty-four elders who are close to the throne of God and who praise and worship God. And in the days of Moses these elders (whether the seventy elders or the rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, as judges over the tribes of Israel) were “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the Book of Revelation affirms that Christ’s reign upon earth is established through his churches— whether visible or invisible— and this present-day reign is characterized as the “thousand-year” reign, meaning that it is for a very long time or the whole duration of human history.<sup>20</sup>

Hence, by his very nature, the role of the presbyter and the bishop is *to judge* and, above all else, to be an *evangelist* or an *angel* of the church, or a *messenger* for Christ.<sup>21</sup> Fundamentally, the government of Great Britain is premised upon the authority of the church to have jurisdiction and to judge.<sup>22</sup> “This was a key condition for the persistence of the view that the English state and Church were two sides of the same coin so that Parliament could be seen as the ‘lay synod’ of the Church of England ....”<sup>23</sup>

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not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me”); and **Amos 5:12-24** (“I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thug away from me the noise of thy songs: for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”)

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 18:21 [KJV].

<sup>20</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 720 (“... the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fulness of time.”).

<sup>21</sup> Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, supra, pp. 248 – 249 (“This is why the statement in the plural, ‘Let us make man,’ is also connected with the statement in the singular, ‘and god made man. Thus it is said in the plural, ‘after our likeness,’ and then in the singular, ‘after the image of God.’ Man is thus transformed into the knowledge of God, according to the image of him who created him. And now, having been made spiritual, he judges all things—that is, all things that are appropriate to be judged... Now this phrase, ‘**he judges all things,**’ means that man has dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all cattle and wild beasts, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And he does this by the power of reason in his mind....”)

<sup>22</sup> See, generally, William Warburton, *Alliance of Church and State* (1736) [citation omitted]. According to Bishop Warburton, the Bishops’ seat in Parliament comprised a grand “alliance” between the church and the state, since the “Church, by this alliance, having given up its Supremacy to the State... the principal Churchmen are placed in a Court of Legislature, as Watchmen to prevent the mischief, and to give the Church’s Sentiments concerning Laws Ecclesiastical. But when the Alliance is broken, and the Establishment dissolved, **the Church recovers its Supremacy.**”

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Gregory, Editor, *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Establishment and Empire, 1662 – 1829*, Vol. II (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 69.



The nature of Christ's current reign on earth is in the nature of ongoing conflict against the spirit of Antichrist, which appeared simultaneously when the virgin Mary gave birth to the man-child Jesus. For it was then when the galactic powers in heaven were shaken and the Angel Michael threw the Dragon to the earth.<sup>24</sup>

“It is then of this kingdom militant,” wrote Augustine of Hippo, “in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with the warring lusts, or **government laid upon them as they yield**, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy....”<sup>25</sup> And “this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world... -- there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the save persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the strait of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty....”<sup>26</sup>

The Book of Revelation thus pulls no punches: when the book opens, the seven churches of Asia are in great distress. Jesus Christ himself appears to the Apostle John and delivers a personal message to the “angels” or rulers of each of these churches.

Next, the Apostle John is given a vision of book with the seven seals, which only the Lamb of God is qualified to unseal. As the seven seals are opened, the prophecy of the end of the world and time is unfolded before the Apostle John's eyes. He sees many visions, including the iconic Red Dragon, the Beast and his Image of the Beast, the Great Whore who is Babylon the Great, and a galactic battle of Armageddon, Gog and Magog.

In the end, Jesus Christ not only reigns, together with his saints, but he presides over the Final or Last Judgment after the Second Resurrection whereby the living and the dead shall be judged. Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the Lion of Judah, The Word of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; and all nations of the earth give honor and obeisance to Christ and the New Jerusalem.

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<sup>24</sup> Revelation 12: 1-17. [KJV].

<sup>25</sup> St. Augustin, *The City of God*, supra, p. 726.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 730.

The very reason way the Gospels or the New Testament is called “the Good News” is because Jesus Christ came, was crucified, was raised from the dead, has all power in heave and earth in his hands; the righteous, upon their deaths, will reign in heaven; the church currently reigns with him upon earth; and He will preside over a Last Judgment which shall establish ultimate justice and peace.

## Chapter One

### Seven Churches of Asia Minor<sup>27</sup>

When Jesus of Nazareth revealed himself to the Apostle John, the later was on the Greek Island of Patmos.<sup>28</sup> At that time, John received the following directive:

‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.’<sup>29</sup>

All of these churches are located in Asia Minor in the modern-day nation of Turkey. At time when the Book of Revelation was written, these churches were all located within the Rome’s Asia province and were thus a part of the Roman empire.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Revelation 1:4 [NIV]. See, also, “Turish Museums: 7 Churches of Asia Minor in Turkey,” <https://www.turkishmuseums.com/blog/detail/7-churches-of-asia-minor-in-turkiye/10070/4>

<sup>28</sup> Revelation 1:9 (“I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”) [NIV].

See, also, “Patmos,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patmos>

Patmos (Greek: Πάτμος, pronounced [ˈpatmos]) is a Greek island in the Aegean Sea. It is famous as the location where John of Patmos received the visions found in the Book of Revelation of the New Testament, and where the book was written.

<sup>29</sup> Revelation 1: 11. [NIV].

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., “Roman Empire: Byzantium” <https://madeinturkeytours.com/history/roman-empire/#:~:text=In%20129%20BCE%2C%20the%20Roman,declared%20as%20Asia%20Minor%27s%20capital.> (“In 129 BCE, the Roman republic claimed Anatolia as its own. They established Asia Minor, made up of Anatolia and the surrounding area. Ephesus, a west Turkey city, was declared as Asia Minor’s capital.”)



This Roman province of Asia was generally prosperous and was one of the most prestigious throughout the Roman Empire. During the time of the Apostle John, Asia Minor was “Greek-speaking” and culturally Hellenistic.

Asia (Ancient Greek: Ἀσία) was a Roman province covering most of western Anatolia, which was created following the Roman Republic's annexation of the Attalid Kingdom in 133 BC. After the establishment of the Roman Empire by Augustus, it was the most prestigious senatorial province and was governed by a proconsul. That arrangement endured until the province was subdivided in the fourth century AD.

The province was one of the richest of the Empire and was at peace for most of the Imperial period. It contained hundreds of largely self-governing Greek city-states, who competed fiercely with one another for status, through appeals to the Imperial authorities and the cultivation of prestigious cultural institutions such as festival games, religious cults, and oratory....

After Augustus came to power, he established a proconsulship for the province of Asia, embracing the regions of Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia. To its east, the province of Galatia was established. The proconsul spent much of his year-long term traveling throughout the

province hearing cases and conducting other judicial business at each of the assize centers. Rome's transition from the Republic to the early Empire saw an important change in the role of existing provincial cities, which evolved from autonomous city-states to Imperial administrative centers.

The beginning of the principate of Augustus also signaled the rise of new cities in Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia. The province grew to be an elaborate system of self-governing cities, each responsible for its own economics, taxes, and law in its territory. The reign of Augustus further signaled the start of urbanization of Asia province, as public building became the defining characteristic of a city....

Imperial cult was prevalent in provincial communities during the Roman empire. Soon after Augustus came to power, temples erected in his honor sprang up across Asia province. The establishment of provincial centers of imperial cult further spawned local cults. These sites served as models followed by other provinces throughout the empire.

Imperial cult served as a way for subjects of Asia province to come to terms with imperial rule within the framework of their communities. Religious practices were very much a public affair and involved citizens in all its aspects including prayer, sacrifice, and processions. Rituals held in honor of a particular emperor frequently outnumbered those of other gods. No other cult matched the imperial cult in terms of dispersion and commonality.<sup>31</sup>

The Early Church in Asia minor, then, originated within a Greco-Roman culture that already had firmly-entrenched imperial religion.

Was this Greco-Roman culture hostile towards the Early Church? Not exactly, at the first, because the Early Church was largely viewed as an extension of the Jewish synagogue and the Hebrew religion.

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<sup>31</sup> "Asia (Roman Province)," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia\\_\(Roman\\_province\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia_(Roman_province))

“According to Josephus, the Roman Empire took care that the Jews could live according to their laws. This toleration and even favour to the Jews was a result of Julius Caesar’s confirmation of existing treaties and the fact that he recognised Hyrcanus as High Priest and leader of the Jews of the Empire.”<sup>32</sup>

However, the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD during the Jewish Wars. It is commonly believed that the Book of Revelation was written during the 90s AD. The fierce anti-Christian Roman Emperor Nero had reigned from 54 to 68 AD. It is therefore likely that the seven churches in Asia Minor were under great distress during the time when the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation.

Sir Isaac Newton’s *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* concludes that by the time when the Apostle John was banished to the Island of Patmos, where he saw the vision of Christ and wrote the Book of Revelation, that the Romans had already started to persecute both the Jews and the Christians.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> L.A. Thompson, “Domitian and the Jewish Tax,” *Historia* 31 (1982), 330.

<sup>33</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), pp. 139-141.

## Chapter Two

### “The Angels of the Church”

In the Book of Revelation, each of the seven churches in Asia Minor are described as having “angels,” to wit:

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write....”<sup>34</sup>

“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write....”<sup>35</sup>

“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write....”<sup>36</sup>

“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write....”<sup>37</sup>

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write....”<sup>38</sup>

“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write....”<sup>39</sup>

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write....”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rev. 2:1.

<sup>35</sup> Rev. 2:8.

<sup>36</sup> Rev. 2:12.

<sup>37</sup> Rev. 2:18.

<sup>38</sup> Rev. 3:1.

<sup>39</sup> Rev. 3:7.

<sup>40</sup> Rev. 3:14.



According to Augustine's *The City of God*, the word "angel is 'messenger.'"<sup>41</sup> Similarly, a person may be "called an *angel* on account of the *evangel*... *evangel* is 'good news.'"<sup>42</sup> Thus, the barer of the Gospels, or the good news, may rightly be call an evangelist, or an angel.

When the Early Church was created, the leader of the Christian synagogue, who was an elder or presbyter, was often called "angel."

The elders were called parnasiym , "pastors," "shepherds" (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1), ruling over the flock (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7); they with the ruler managed the affairs of the synagogue and had the power of excommunication. The officiating minister was delegate (sheliach , answering to the term apostle, "sent") of the congregation, the forerunner of "**the angel (messenger sent) of the church**" (Revelation 1:20; Revelation 2:1).<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, we may rightly conclude that the word "angel," as used in these several passages which relate to the seven churches in Asia Minor, are the bishops or the chief elders in each of those churches.

Since the conditions and struct of the Christian churches had not yet evolved into their orthodox Medieval structure during the time of the Apostle John, it is appropriate to share Sir Isaac Newton's historical analysis of the evolution of the

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<sup>41</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 643.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> "Synagogue," Fausset's Bible Synagogue - Fausset's Bible Dictionary - (studylight.org). See, also, "Ruler of the Synagogue," <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Ruler-Synagogue>

RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE (Heb. שֹׂרֵר הַבֵּית; Gr. ἀρχισυνάγωγος, G801, ruler of a synagogue). The ruler of the synagogue was the man chosen to care for the physical arrangements of the synagogue services. The president of the synagogue would be the equivalent designation today. Several men serving in this capacity are named or mentioned in the NT. They include Jairus, the father of a twelve-year-old girl whom Jesus raised from death (Mark 5:22-43; cf. Matt 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56); an unnamed man who became indignant because Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17); those who permitted Paul and Barnabas to speak in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:15); Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, who believed in Christ as a result of Paul's preaching there (Acts 18:8); and Sosthenes, also a ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, who was seized and beaten when Gallio refused to hear charges brought against Paul (Acts 18:7). If he is the same Sosthenes mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1, he also became a Christian believer.

Church in his *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, to wit:

In the first ages of the Christian religion the Christians of every city were governed by a Council of Presbyters, and the President of the Council was the Bishop of the city. The Bishop and Presbyters of one city meddled not with the affairs of another city, except by admonitory letters or messages. Nor did the Bishops of several cities meet together in Council before the time of the Emperor Commodus....

But in the days of that Emperor they began to meet in Provincial Councils, by the leave of the governors; first in Asia, in opposition to the Cataphrygian Heresy, and soon after in other places and upon other occasions. The Bishop of the chief city, or Metropolis of the Roman Province, was usually made President of the Council; and hence came the authority of Metropolitan Bishops above that of other Bishops within the same Province. Hence also it was that the Bishop of Rome in Cyprian's days called himself the Bishop of Bishops. As soon as the Empire became Christian, the Roman Emperors began to call general Councils out of all the Provinces of the Empire; and by prescribing to them what points they should consider, and influencing them by their interest and power, they set up what party they pleased.<sup>44</sup>

The “angel” of the Early Church was a term of art to symbolize the “president” of the Christian synagogue, whose official title may not have then been known as, or commonly called, “bishop.”

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<sup>44</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), p. 117.

## Chapter Three

### “Tribulation of the Seven Churches”

The existential state of the seven churches in Asia was that of “tribulation,” as the Apostle John identified himself as their “companion in tribulation.”<sup>45</sup>

On this very point, Sir Isaac Newton has mentioned in his *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, the following:

Seeing therefore Peter and John were Apostles of the circumcision, it seems to me that they staid with their Churches in Judea and Syria till the Romans made war upon their nation, that is, till the twelfth year of Nero; that they then followed the main body of their flying churches into Asia, and... that the Roman Empire looked upon those Churches as enemies... and therefore to prevent insurrections, secured their leaders, and banished John into Patmos.<sup>46</sup>

During this troublesome period, Jesus Christ appeared to John in a sort of angelic figure of a Lamb, standing in the midst of *seven golden candlesticks*, to wit:

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow... his feet like unto fine brass.... And he had in his right hand *seven stars*.<sup>47</sup>

The *seven candlesticks* represent the seven churches of Asia.<sup>48</sup>

The *seven stars* represent the seven angels (i.e., bishops or messengers) of the churches in Asia Minor.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Revelation 1:9. [KJV].

<sup>46</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), pp. 143-144.

<sup>47</sup> Revelation 1:14.[KJV].

<sup>48</sup> Revelation 1:20 [KJV].

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

The prophecy informs us that Jesus Christ himself is speaking, that He utilizes the symbols of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks, and that, by doing so, we are informed of the authorization which he has invested in the organizational and institutional body of His ecclesia or gathering or synagogue.

Jesus Christ himself directs the Apostle John to deliver seven unique messages to each of the seven churches in Asia Minor, as follows:

<b>Seven Churches of Asia Minor</b>	<b>Jesus' Counsel and Assessment of Each Church</b>
<b>Ephesus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church's "works," "patience," and "labours"</li> <li>• He is also intimately familiar with their trials of false prophets and liars</li> <li>• He states that this church has abandoned its "first love." He admonishes them to repent and to return to their "first love" and to do their "first works."</li> <li>• He forewarns them that if they do not repent, that he would remove their candlestick</li> <li>• Finally, he concurs with this church's hatred of the deeds of "Nicolaitanes."<sup>50</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>50</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaism> ; "The church at Ephesus ( Revelation 2:6 ) is commended for hating the "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes, and the church of Pergamos is blamed for having them who hold their "doctrines" (15). They were seemingly a class of professing Christians, who sought to introduce into the church a false freedom or licentiousness, thus abusing Paul's doctrine of grace (Compare 2 Peter 2:15 2 Peter 2:16 2 Peter 2:19 ), and were probably identical with those who held the doctrine of Baalam (q.v.), Revelation 2:14 ."

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/nicolaitanes/> According to the National Association of Christian Ministers (NACM), the doctrine of the Nicolaitains was to create an ecclesiastical hierarchy which has the tendency to suppress and oppress the laity. They state that "Nico" means to "overthrow" and that the word "laitain" refers to the "laity." In other words, "to overthrow the laity." The NACM calls this "ecclesiastical Hitlerism."

<p><b>Smyrna</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church’s “works,” “tribulation,” and “poverty”</li> <li>• He is also intimately familiar with the blasphemy amongst their midst;</li> <li>• He admonishes this church to have no fear, even though some would be cast into prison</li> <li>• He admonishes it to be faithful unto death, and that he would give the a “crown of life.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pergamos</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church’s “works,” and that they have remained steadfast in not denying the true faith.</li> <li>• There are some members who hold to the doctrine of Balaam and (or) of he Nicolaitanes</li> <li>• He counsels them to “repent”</li> </ul>

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<https://nacministers.com/statement-of-faith/priesthood-of-all-believers/> See also, “The name “Nicolaitans” is derived from the Greek word nikolaos, a compound of the words **nikos** and **laos**. The word nikos is the Greek word that means to conquer or to subdue. The word laos is the Greek word for the people. It is also where we get the word laity. When these two words are compounded into one, they form the name Nicolas, which literally means one who conquers and subdues the people. It seems to suggest that the Nicolaitans were somehow conquering and subduing the people.” <https://renner.org/article/who-were-the-nicolaitans-and-what-was-their-doctrine-and-deeds/>

<p><b>Thyatira</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church’s “works,” “charity,” “patience,” and “service”</li> <li>• Jesus lists several concerns against this church:</li> <li>• It allowed a false prophetess named Jezebel to seduce the members into committing fornication, and to eat idols. She repented not;</li> <li>• Jesus will condemn those who are in league with Jezebel and who refuse to repent; but to those members who are not in league with her he will not condemn;</li> <li>• “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.”<sup>51</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sardis</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church’s “works.” And this church is “dead.”</li> <li>• He admonishes this church to “strengthen” what little life that it has remaining; the few remaining faithful should be cultivated and encouraged.</li> </ul>

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<sup>51</sup> Rev. 2: 26-27.

<p><b>Philadelphia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church’s “works.”</li> <li>• This church has remained steadfast and has not denied the faith.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Laodicia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lord Jesus Christ explains that he is very familiar with this church’s “works”—it is neither cold or hot, but lukewarm.</li> <li>• Jesus condemns this church’s being in this state of being “lukewarm.”</li> <li>• This church is also apparently “rich” and has increased with much material goods and “have need of nothing,” but spiritually Jesus considers this church to be “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”</li> <li>• Jesus reminds this church that it should be as gold tried in fire; that it should purchase white raiment.</li> </ul>



## Chapter Four

### “Vision of the Throne in Heaven and the Lamb”

After the Apostle John receives Christ’s directives to the seven churches in Asia Minor, he then sees a vision of the throne of heaven.

The Apostle John then sees:

- *Twenty four (24) Elders sitting around a throne*: these fell down to worship God.<sup>52</sup>
- *Four (4) Beasts, each with six wings*: these sang praises to God.<sup>53</sup>
- *Little Book with Seven Seals*

One of the Elders, who sat on the throne, held a book in his right hand. This book was sealed with *seven seals*.

Suddenly, an angel says, “who is worthy to open the book?”

No man was worthy, and thus John wept.

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<sup>52</sup> Revelation 4:10. [KJV].

<sup>53</sup> Revelation 4:8. [KJV] (NOTE: “the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.” Rev. 4:7). See Wikipedia, stating: “[i]n Christianity, the four living creatures are Cherubim. A prominent early interpretation, variously modified by different interpreters, has been to equate the four creatures with the Four Evangelists. Throughout church history, the most common interpretation (first laid out by Victorinus), but not the original or the only, is that the lion represents Mark, the calf Luke, the man Matthew, and the eagle John. Irenaeus was the first to make the association with the evangelists, but the interpretation laid out by Victorinus and adopted by Jerome, Gregory the Great, and the Book of Kells became dominant. Its influence has been on art and sculpture and is still prevalent in Catholicism and Anglicanism. A view held by many modern commentators is that the four living creatures of Revelation are agents of God and heavenly representatives of the created order, who call every living thing to worship the Creator.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Living\\_creatures\\_\(Bible\)#:~:text=ability%20to%20fly,-.Revelation's%20four%20living%20beings,described%20as%20only%20having%20four](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Living_creatures_(Bible)#:~:text=ability%20to%20fly,-.Revelation's%20four%20living%20beings,described%20as%20only%20having%20four).

John then speaks to one of the Elders, who says “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book....”<sup>54</sup>

A Lamb stood in the midst of the Elders. This Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.

The Lamb took the book out of the right hand of one that sat on the throne, and the four beasts and twenty-four elders bowed down to worship the Lamb:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the 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.*<sup>55</sup>

Then the Apostle John hears voices of many, including angels, the four beasts, the twenty-four elders, and thousands of many others proclaiming the Lamb as worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Rev. 5:6.

<sup>55</sup> Revelation 5: 9-10. [KJV].

<sup>56</sup> Revelation 5: 11-14. [KJV].

## Chapter Five

### “The Lamb Opens the Seven Seals of the Book”

The Lamb opened the book sealed with the seven seals.

Each of the seven seals, after they are opened, unleashes a chain of historical events that lead, ultimately, to *sovereign reign of Christ over all nations*.<sup>57</sup>

#### The First Seal

The Lamb opened the first seal, and one of four beasts, which stood next to the heavenly throne, tells the Apostle John, “Come and see.”<sup>58</sup>

The first seal revealed a white horse, and sitting upon it was a man with a bow and a crown.<sup>59</sup>

#### The Second Seal

The Lamb opened the second seal, and one four beasts tells John, “Come and see.”<sup>60</sup>

The second seal revealed a red horse, and sitting upon it was one who had power to take peace from the earth, and to cause killing or murder.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Revelation 11:15. [KJV].

<sup>58</sup> Revelation 6:1. [KJV].

<sup>59</sup> Revelation 6:2. [KJV].

<sup>60</sup> Revelation 6:3-4. [KJV].

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

### The Third Seal

The Lamb opened the third seal, and one of the four beasts tells John, “Come and see.”<sup>62</sup>

The third seal revealed a black horse, and sitting upon it was one who had a pair of balances in his hands.<sup>63</sup>

A voice in the midst of the four beasts stated, “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”<sup>64</sup>

### The Fourth Seal

The Lamb opened the fourth seal, and one of the four beasts tells John, “Come and see.”<sup>65</sup>

The Fourth seal revealed a pale horse, and sitting upon it was one whose name was “Death” and “Hell” followed him.<sup>66</sup>

He was given power of one fourth part of the world in order to wreck this havoc.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Revelation 6:3-4. [KJV].

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Revelation 6:6 [KJV].

<sup>65</sup> Revelation 6: 7-8. [KJV].

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

### The Fifth Seal

The Lamb opened the fifth seal, and John saw underneath the altar the souls of all the martyrs of those slain for the word of God, and for their testimony.<sup>68</sup>

They asked, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?<sup>69</sup>

They were given white robes and allowed to rest for a season, until the fulfillment of the end of time, when they would be joined by their fellow servants and martyrs.<sup>70</sup>

### The Sixth Seal

The Lamb opened the sixth seal, and John beheld a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth of hair; the moon became as blood; and the great day of God's wrath fell upon the earth.<sup>71</sup>

John then saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, apparently standing guard and prepared to bring havoc upon the earth, until a fifth angel came and instructed them to refrain until all of the servants of God have been sealed in their foreheads.

These servants were divided into two groups: 144,000 of God's chosen of "the tribes of the children of Israel," to wit: twelve thousand for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>72</sup>

And after this, the second group: "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Revelation 6: 9-10. [KJV].

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Revelation 6: 12-17. [KJV].

<sup>72</sup> Revelation 7: 4. [KJV].

<sup>73</sup> Revelation 7: 1-17. [KJV].

All these cried, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”<sup>74</sup>

God shall wipe away all tears; they shall hunger no more.<sup>75</sup>

### The Seventh Seal

The Lamb opened the seventh seal, and John heard silence for about thirty minutes, followed by the seven angels with seven trumpets which stood before God.<sup>76</sup>

An eighth angel then offered incense, which symbolized “the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”<sup>77</sup>

The other seven angels then prepared themselves to blow their trumpets:

<b>First angel blows trumpet</b> <sup>78</sup>	Hail and fire, mingled with blood, were cast upon the earth, burning a third part the trees and grass.
<b>Second angel blows trumpet</b> <sup>79</sup>	A great mountain, with a volcano, was cast into the sea. A third part of the sea became blood. A third part of the sea creatures died. A third part of the ships were destroyed.
<b>Third angel blows trumpet</b> <sup>80</sup>	

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<sup>74</sup> Revelation 7: 10. [KJV].

<sup>75</sup> Revelation 7:15-17. [KJV].

<sup>76</sup> Revelation 8:1-2. [KJV].

<sup>77</sup> Revelation 8:3. [KJV].

<sup>78</sup> Revelation 8:7. [KJV].

<sup>79</sup> Revelation 8:8. [KJV].

<sup>80</sup> Revelation 8:10.

	<p>A great star (called Wormwood) from heaven fell upon the earth. It fell upon a third part of the rivers and water fountains. A third part of the waters became wormwood. Many died because of this contaminated water.</p>
<p><b>Fourth angel blows trumpet<sup>81</sup></b></p>	<p>A third part of the sun, moon, and stars was smitten, so that the days were shortened, and the night lengthened.</p>
<p><b>Fifth angel blows trumpet<sup>82</sup></b></p>	<p>A star fell from heaven.</p> <p>The 5<sup>th</sup> Angel was given the key to the bottomless pit, which he opened.</p> <p>Smoke came out from it, and the air was darkened by reason of this smoke.</p> <p>Locusts came out of the smoke, and these locusts hurt only those men who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads.</p> <p>The locusts were like scorpions, with teeth like lions. They hurt men for five months. These men wished that they could die, but were not allowed to die in their torment and suffering.</p>

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<sup>81</sup> Revelation 8:12.

<sup>82</sup> Revelation 9:1-12.



	<p>The 5<sup>th</sup> Angel served as the king over these deadly locusts.</p>
<p><b>Sixth angel blows trumpet<sup>83</sup></b></p>	<p>Voice of the four horns that are before God's altar.</p> <p>Four angels are loosed near the river Euphrates, and prepared to slay a third of humankind.</p> <p>A third of men were killed, by fire, smoke, and brimstone which issued from the mouths of these angels.</p> <p>Notwithstanding these plagues, the rest of mankind refused to repent or to be reconciled to God.</p> <p>Another might angel descended from heaven. He had cloud and rainbow upon his head, with one foot in the sea, another on the land. He cried a loud roar like a lion. There were seven thunders—but John was not instructed to write them.</p> <p>Time was brought to an end, as the angel lifted up his hands to heaven.</p> <p>There were to be <u>two witnesses</u> or the or the two candlesticks— <u>two olive trees</u> or two prophets who are given great power.<sup>84</sup></p>

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<sup>83</sup> Revelation 9:13-21; 10:1-6.

<sup>84</sup> One commentator concludes that these 2 Witnesses, or 2 Olive Trees, are the Asian churches of Sardis and Philadelphia.

	<p>They will prophesy 1,260 days. They will have powers similar to that of Moses and Elijah.<sup>85</sup></p> <p>When they have finished their testimony, the Beast shall ascend from the bottomless pit, and shall kill these two witnesses or prophets.</p> <p>For three days, the enemies of God view the dead bodies of these two prophets and rejoice.</p> <p>But, alas, God raises them back to life—and this causes great fear. They are then ascended up to heaven.</p> <p>An earthquake follows.</p>
<p><b>Seventh angel blows trumpet<sup>86</sup></b></p>	<p>“[T]he mystery of God” would be fulfilled or finished as this seventh angel begins to sound.<sup>87</sup></p> <p>“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, <b>The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his</b></p>

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<sup>85</sup> It is likely that, in prophetic language, this 1,260 days represents a larger block of time, such as 1,260 years, or other block of time.

<sup>86</sup> Revelation 10: 7. [KJV].

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

**Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.**<sup>88</sup>

The 24 Elders and the 4 Beasts (Cherubim) worshipped God.<sup>89</sup>

“We give the thanks, O Lord God Almighty.... And the nations were angry... that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name....”<sup>90</sup>

The **nations of the world** are angry with God and his judgment.

Even though the “**kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ,**”<sup>91</sup> the Great Red Dragon, the Beast, the Great Whore, and Satan and his demons have not yet all been defeated.

To that end, chapters twelve (12) through twenty-two (22), or to the end of the Book of Revelation, describe the final defeat of Christ’s enemies.

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<sup>88</sup> Revelation 11:15. [KJV].

<sup>89</sup> Revelation 11:16. [KJV].

<sup>90</sup> Revelation 11:18. [KJV].

<sup>91</sup> Revelation 11:15. [KJV].

## Chapter Six

### “Pregnant Woman Gives Birth to a Man-child”

The Apostle John next sees a vision of the Virgin Mary giving birth to the baby Jesus— “a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”<sup>92</sup>

This woman was in travail, crying as she gives birth. *She brought forth a man child—who would rule all nations with a rod of iron.*

This, of course, is a reference to Mary and the birth of Jesus.

In this same vision, the Apostle John also sees “**a great red dragon**” having seven heads with “**seven crowns and ten horns.**”<sup>93</sup>

This dragon’s tail cast a third part of heaven to the earth.<sup>94</sup>

This dragon stood before the pregnant woman, ready to devour this child before it was born.<sup>95</sup>

The woman fled into the wilderness, where she was fed 1,260 days.<sup>96</sup>

A war ensued in heaven.<sup>97</sup>

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Revelation 12:1. [KJV].

<sup>93</sup> Revelation 12:3. [KJV].

<sup>94</sup> Revelation 12:4. [KJV].

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Revelation 12:6. [KJV].

<sup>97</sup> Revelation 12:7. [KJV].

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceived the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”<sup>99</sup>

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Revelation 12:9. [KJV].

<sup>100</sup> Revelation 12:17. [KJV].

# Chapter Seven

## “Red Dragon Empowers the Beast”

Now the Red Dragon, who is “the Devil, and Satan”<sup>101</sup> commences his “war with the remnant of [those] which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,”<sup>102</sup> by giving “his power and his seat, and great authority”<sup>103</sup> to “the beast.”<sup>104</sup>

This Beast has the following features:

- It has seven heads;
- It has ten horns;
- It has on its head “the name blasphemy.”<sup>105</sup>

More generally, the Beast *looks like a leopard*, has the *feet of a bear*, and the *mouth of a lion*.

The whole world worshipped (a) the Dragon and (b) the Beast,<sup>106</sup> to wit:

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, the Beast was given great persuasive authority and the power to oppress the saints and the Church, to wit:

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and

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<sup>101</sup> Revelation 12:9. [KJV].

<sup>102</sup> Revelation 12:17. [KJV].

<sup>103</sup> Revelation 13:2. [KJV].

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Revelation 13:1 [KJV].

<sup>106</sup> Revelation 13:4. [KJV].

<sup>107</sup> Revelation 13:8. [KJV].

tongues, and nations.... He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Revelation 13:7-10. [KJV].

## Chapter Eight

### “The Second Beast Rises”

The Apostle John then sees “another beast” which exercised the same power of the first Beast.<sup>109</sup>

This second Beast exercises “great powers” and causes the earth to worship the “first beast.”<sup>110</sup>

This second Beast performs miracles, great wonders, one of which is the power of deception, and to give life to an “image of the beast.”<sup>111</sup>

The “image of the beast” is made to speak.

Those who would not worship this “image of the beast” would be killed.<sup>112</sup>

#### Commercial Privilege and Economic Oppression

This second Beast has great control over global commercial activities and, thereby, is capable of oppressing the saints and the church.<sup>113</sup>

This second Beast is able to create a form of economic or commercial monopoly, thus requiring only those who have the “mark of the beast” to be able to engage in trade, buying, and selling.<sup>114</sup>

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand , or in their foreheads: and that no man might

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<sup>109</sup> Revelation 13:11 [KJV].

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Rev. 13:14.

<sup>112</sup> Revelation 13:15. [KJV].

<sup>113</sup> Revelation 13:16-18. [KJV].

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.



buy or sell, save he that had the ark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”<sup>115</sup>

The number of the beast is 666.<sup>116</sup>

This “mark of the Beast” is directly tied to commercial accessibility and economic privilege.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Revelation 13:18. [KJV].

<sup>117</sup> Revelation 13:17 (“...that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark....”) [KJV].

## Chapter Nine

### “A Woman Riding on the First Beast”

Now the Red Dragon had given great authority and great power to the first Beast. This first Beast has the following features:

- It has seven heads;
- It has ten horns;
- It has on its head “the name blasphemy.”<sup>118</sup>

And riding on this first beast was “the great whore.”<sup>119</sup> Upon the forehead of this “great whore” are the following words:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH<sup>120</sup>

The Apostle John writes: “when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”<sup>121</sup>

The “seven heads” that are on the first Beast “are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come....”<sup>122</sup>

The “ten horns” are “ten kings, which received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”<sup>123</sup>

The “ten kings” all have “one mind” and shall join forces with, and strengthen, the first Beast.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Revelation 13:1. [KJV].

<sup>119</sup> Revelation 17: 7 (“I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the **beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns**”) [KJV].

<sup>120</sup> Revelation 17:5. [KJV].

<sup>121</sup> Revelation 17:6. [KJV].

<sup>122</sup> Revelation 17:10. [KJV].

<sup>123</sup> Revelation 17:12. [KJV].

<sup>124</sup> Revelation 17:13. [KJV].

The “great whore,” is “the woman [who] is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Revelation 17:19. [KJV].

## Chapter Ten

### “The Great Whore (Babylon the Great)”

The second Beast,<sup>126</sup> which imposes a “mark of the beast”<sup>127</sup> that prohibits men and women from trading and selling,<sup>128</sup> will be, and must be, resisted by the saints, whom the Apostle John describes in the Book of Revelation, as follows:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw **the souls of them that were beheaded** for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and **which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;** and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.<sup>129</sup>

The immoral economic and commercial activities associated with second Beast are set forth more clearly the Book of Revelation’s description of “**the fall Babylon,**”<sup>130</sup> which is also symbolized by “**the Great Whore,**”<sup>131</sup> to wit:

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, **Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,** and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of **every foul spirit,** and a cage of **every unclean** and hateful bird.

For **all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,** and the **kings of the earth have committed fornication** with her, and **the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.**

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<sup>126</sup> Revelation 13:16-18. [KJV].

<sup>127</sup> Revelation 13:18. [KJV].

<sup>128</sup> Revelation 13:17 (“...that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark....”) [KJV].

<sup>129</sup> Revelation 20:4 [KJV].

<sup>130</sup> Revelation 18:2 (“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen....”) [KJV].

<sup>131</sup> Revelation 17:5 (“And upon her forehead was the name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABONINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”) [KJV].

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins**, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

And **the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,**

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

And **the merchants of the earth** shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

**The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,**

**And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.**

And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The **merchants of these things**, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

For **in one hour so great riches is come to nought**. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.<sup>132</sup>

This materialism, commercialism, and economic abuse and oppression is thus set forth in the Book of Revelation as national and global sin, as well as the source of oppression of the saints.

### *Christ and His Kingdom in Opposition to Commercial Oppression*

The Book of Revelation thus admonishes Christ's followers to "Come out of [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues."<sup>133</sup>

This proverbial "Babylon," to which Christ's followers must come out of, is described in the Book of Revelation as a political and economic system— i.e.,

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<sup>132</sup> Revelation 18:2-19. [KJV].

<sup>133</sup> Revelation 18:4. [KJV].

involving both kings and merchants— associated with the accumulation of “so great riches,”<sup>134</sup> involving even the merchandise in “**slaves, and souls of men.**”<sup>135</sup>

Thus, the cessation of this global materialism, economic abuse, and economic oppression— the fall of Babylon the Great (i.e., the Great Whore)— is depicted in the Book of Revelation as a festival for celebration amongst the saints, to wit:

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all....

[I]n here was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.<sup>136</sup>

Hence, commercial ethics and economic crimes thus comprise a major concern of the servants and saints of Jesus Christ.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Revelation 18: 17. [KJV].

<sup>135</sup> Revelation 18:13. [KJV].

<sup>136</sup> Revelation 18: 20-21. [KJV].

<sup>137</sup> This constitutes the backbone of Oxford Methodism.

## Chapter Eleven

### “Ten Kings to Crush the Great Whore”

The ten horns that rest upon the first Beast represent ten kings or ten kingdoms.

And, at the first, these ten kings or kingdoms shall be deceived by, and come under the jurisdiction of, the “Great Whore.”

They shall all have “one mind” and shall join forces with, and strengthen, the first Beast.<sup>138</sup>

And the “Great Whore,” shall “reigneth over the kings of the earth.”<sup>139</sup>

However, God shall turn these ten kings and ten kingdoms to the service of his Christ, who shall conquer these ten kings or kingdoms, to wit:

For God hath **put in their hearts to fulfil his will**, and to agree, and **give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.**

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And **the ten horns** which thou sawest upon the beast, these **shall hate the whore**, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.<sup>140</sup>

Hence, the ten kingdoms— which are the ten horns on the Prophet Daniel’s Fourth Beast<sup>141</sup> and (or) the ten toes on Daniel’s Great Image<sup>142</sup>— whom Sir Isaac Newton has identified as the kingdoms of the Vandals/Alans; Spain; Visigoths; Alans in

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<sup>138</sup> Revelation 17:13. [KJV].

<sup>139</sup> Revelation 17:19. [KJV].

<sup>140</sup> Revelation 17:17 and 17:16 (in reverse order). [KJV].

<sup>141</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), pp. 19-21, 33.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-31.



Gallia; Burgundians; Franks; Britains; Hunns; Lombards; and Revenna<sup>143</sup>— shall give their kingdoms to the power of the Beast, but they shall also become nominally Christian kingdoms and *eventually* succumbed to the complete authority and sovereign power of Christ.

It is the opinion of the undersigned author that the several churches, which are embedded within these ten kingdoms, shall spread the Gospel of Christ around the world, and thereby shall induce the ten kingdoms to “hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 48 (“I have now enumerated the ten kingdoms, into which the Western Empire became divided at its first breaking, that is, at the time of Rome’s being besieged and taken by the Goths. Some of these kingdoms at length fell, and new ones arose: but whatever was their number afterwards, they are still called the Ten Kings from their first number.”)

<sup>144</sup> Revelation 17:16 [KJV].

## Chapter Twelve

### “Battle for Control Over the Nations”

Fundamentally, the battle between Christ and the Dragon, as recounted in the Book of Revelation, is for geopolitical control over nations of the world (including the ten kingdoms which are symbolized by the ten horns), and the Book of Revelation reveals Christ’s ultimate victory as follows:

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ**, and he shall reign for ever and ever....<sup>145</sup>

And he was clothed with a vesture... and his name is called The Word of God.... 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 hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**....<sup>146</sup>

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem.... And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.... And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.<sup>147</sup>

The Apostle John also sees persons who had attained victory of the Beast, standing upon a sea of glass and having harps in their hands. They are singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, stating:

Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; **just and true are thy ways**, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for **thou only art holy**: for all nations

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<sup>145</sup> Revelation 11:15 [KJV].

<sup>146</sup> Revelation 19:13-16. [KJV].

<sup>147</sup> Revelation 21: 2, 24-46. [KJV].

shall come and worship before thee; for **thy judgments are made manifest**.<sup>148</sup>

Thus, Christ's army shall defeat the Devil, the Beasts, the Great Whore, etc., etc.; and Christ shall take, *together with his saints*,<sup>149</sup> control over the nations.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Revelation 15:1-2. [KJV].

<sup>149</sup> Revelation 20: 4 (“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”) [KJV].

<sup>150</sup> Revelation 19:20-21 (“20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”) [KJV].

## Chapter Thirteen

### “The Saints Must Resist Babylon and Persevere”

The existential condition of all humanity, during the period of the persecution of second Beast, whose oppression shall be fundamentally economic in nature, supplemented by violence against conscience, is presented in the Book of Revelation, as follows:

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast** and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

**The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

**Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**<sup>151</sup>

And, in another part of the Book of Revelation, a “voice from heaven” thus admonishes, **“Come out of her, my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”<sup>152</sup>

This admonitions to “Come out of her” explicitly relates to, inter alia, the unjust, unethical, and immoral commercial or economic transactions<sup>153</sup> of the nations.

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<sup>151</sup> Revelation 14: 9-12. [KJV].

<sup>152</sup> Revelation 18: 4-5. [KJV].

<sup>153</sup> Revelation 18.

# Chapter Fourteen

## “Seven Angels with the Seven Vials”

The wrath of God is invested in “the seven plagues of the seven angels,” who have seven vials.<sup>154</sup>

The Apostle John stated, “[a]nd I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.”<sup>155</sup>

Each specific “vial” contains one or more the divine judgments of God upon the nations:

<b>Seven Angels with Seven Vials</b>	
<b>First angel pours out vial</b>	A noisome and grievous sore fell upon the men who had the mark of the beast or who worshipped his image
<b>Second angel pours out vial</b>	A plague upon the sea, which turns into blood of a dead man, killing all the sea animals.
<b>Third angel pours out vial</b>	The rivers and fountains became blood.  An angel says, this retribution for having shed the blood of the saints and prophets.  “[T]rue and righteous are thy judgments.” <sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Revelation 15:8. [KJV].

<sup>155</sup> Revelation 16:1. [KJV].

<sup>156</sup> Revelation. 16:7. [KJV].

<b>Fourth angel pours out vial</b>	Sun begins to scorch men with great heat and with fire. But they still did not repent.
<b>Fifth angel pours out vial</b>	The seat of the beast and the beast's kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.
<b>Sixth angel pours out vial</b>	<p>The Euphrates river became dried up</p> <p>The dragon, beast, and false prophet sent unclean spirits out of their mouths. These spirits went forth to the kings of the earth and the whole world, to prepare them to do battle against God. They were gathered together at "<b>Armageddon</b>."<sup>157</sup></p>
<b>Seventh angel pours out vial</b>	<p>A great voice out of the temple of heaven says, "It is done."<sup>158</sup></p> <p>A great earthquake like none ever experienced.</p> <p>The cities of the nations fall.</p>

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<sup>157</sup> Revelation. 16:16. [KJV].

<sup>158</sup> Revelation. 16:17. [KJV].

## Chapter Fifteen

### “An Angel with the Key to the Bottomless Pit”

Now an angel comes down from heaven to arrest “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”<sup>159</sup>

This devil is incarcerated in a bottomless pit. He is not allowed to deceive the nations.

At this time, “the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands” were permitted to reign with Christ for a thousand years.<sup>160</sup>

These “shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”<sup>161</sup>

This is the first resurrection.<sup>162</sup>

The remaining dead have not yet been resurrected.

Christ shall reign for a thousand years (i.e., for a very long time).

There are unresolved “Premillennialism” and “Postmillennialism” viewpoints on this passage of Scripture.<sup>163</sup>

If the postmillennialist viewpoint is correct, then this means that Christ presently reigns upon the earth today, and that he does so through his Church (both

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<sup>159</sup> Revelation 20:2. [KJV].

<sup>160</sup> Revelation 20:4. [KJV].

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> (NOTE: in post-millennialist theology, the first resurrection is ongoing as we live today; when the saints die, they are resurrected immediately and reign with Christ.)

<sup>163</sup> Premillennialism sees Christ's second advent as preceding the millennium, thereby separating the second coming from the final judgment. In this view, "Christ's reign" will be physically on the earth.

Postmillennialism sees Christ's second coming as subsequent to the millennium and concurrent with the final judgment. In this view "Christ's reign" (during the millennium) will be spiritual in and through the church.

visible and invisible). Stated differently, Christ's thousand year reign (Revelation 20:7) is present and omnipresent as we live today.

*Postmillennialist v Premillennialist View of the Second Coming*

For Christians lawyers, judges, and public officials, the “postmillennialist v. premillennialist” question is fundamental!

The premillennialist position counsels in favor of a passive separation of Church and State, since Christ's thousand-year reign upon earth is yet to come; whereas the *postmillennialist position counsels in favor of an active cooperation between the Church and State*, with the Church often counseling—sometimes criticizing—but always serving as a guiding light to, the State (i.e., the civil body politic).<sup>164</sup>

It is the viewpoint of Oxford Methodism that the postmillennialist viewpoint is the correct theological position, and this conclusion finds strong support in Augustine of Hippo's *The City of God*, who writes:

But while the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time of His first coming.

For, leaving out of account that kingdom concerning which He shall say in the end, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you,’ the Church could not now be called His kingdom or the kingdom of heaven unless His saints were even now reigning with Him, though in another and far different way; for to His saints He says, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.’

Certainly it is this present time that the scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and of whom we have already spoken, brings forth from his treasures things new and old.

And from the Church those reapers shall gather out the tares which He suffered to grow with the wheat till the harvest, as He explains in the

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<sup>164</sup> The government of Great Britain has historically and currently reflects this postmillennialist position. This political theory is consequential, especially for all of the former British colonies, such as the nations of post-colonial Africa, where vast majorities of the population are Anglicans or Protestant Christians.



words, 'The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all offenses.'...

We must understand in one sense the kingdom of heaven in which exist together both he who breaks what he teaches and he who does it, the one being least, the other great, and in another sense the kingdom of heaven into which only he who does what he teaches shall enter. Consequently, where both classes exist, it is the Church as it now is, but where only the one shall exist, it is the Church as it is destined to be when no wicked person shall be in her.

Therefore, **the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ**, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, **even now His saints reign with Him**, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter....

For the reign with Him who do what the apostle says, '**If ye be risen with Christ, mind the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God**. Seek those things which are above, not the things which are on the earth.'...

In fine, they reign with Him who are so in His kingdom that they themselves are His kingdom. But **in what sense are those the kingdom of Christ** who, to say no more, though they are in it until all offences are gathered out of it at the end of the world, yet seek their own things in it, and not the things that are Christ's?

It is then of **the kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, of government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy**, and it is of this first resurrection in the present life, that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted.

For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give **a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church** in those days, in the words, '**And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given.**'

**It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but into the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed.** And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in words, **‘What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’**

Whence the apostle says, ‘What have I do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?’

‘And the souls,’ says John, ‘of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God’—understanding what he afterwards says, ‘reigned with Christ a thousand years’—that is, the souls of the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies.

For the souls of the pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ, nor would it do any good in danger to run to His baptism, that we might not pass from life without it; nor to reconciliation, if by penitence or a bad conscience any one may be severed from His body....

Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies....

As to the words following, ‘And if any have not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his inscription on their forehead, or on their hand,’ we must take them of both the living and the dead. And what this beast is, though it requires a more careful investigation, yet it is not inconsistent with the true faith to understand it of the ungodly city itself, and the community of unbelievers set in opposition to the faithful people of the city of God....

They, then, who are free from these pollutions, whether they still live in this mortal flesh, or are dead, reign with Christ even now, through this whole interval which is indicated by the thousand years, in a fashion suited to this time.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 725- 728.

And if we follow Augustine’s theological train of thought, through *The City of God*, we find that he affirms “that God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside the laws of His providence”;<sup>166</sup> “there can be no people, and therefore no republic, where there is no justice”;<sup>167</sup> and, “will a wise judge take his seat on the bench or no? Beyond question he will. For human society, which he thinks it a wickedness to abandon, constrains him and compels him to this duty.”<sup>168</sup>

Therefore, for Christians lawyers, judges, and public officials, the postmillennialist conception of Christ’s thousand-year reign imposes upon them the fundamental duty— i.e., as the church militant or as the kingdom militant—to establish true justice, both within and without the organized church, upon the earth, in the present age. This constitutes the duty of true Christians during Christ’s first thousand-year reign.

And Augustine of Hippo assures us that all true believers— “not to the bishops alone, and presbyters, who are now specially called priests in the Church; but **as we call all believers Christians** on account of the mystical chrism...” “shall reign with Him a thousand years.”<sup>169</sup>

And after the thousand years of Christ’s reign (in which we are currently living) have expired, the dragon, who is Satan, is loosened for “a little season.”<sup>170</sup>

This same Satan is the permitted to “go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Ma’gog” in order to gather them to do battle against Christ (i.e., the remnant of Israel).<sup>171</sup>

But, at last, the dragon is defeated and is cast into the same lake of fire and brimstone, together with the beast and the false prophet.

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 700.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 682.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 729 (“Of them the Apostle Peter says, ‘A holy people, a royal priesthood.’”).

<sup>170</sup> Revelation. 20:3. [KJV].

<sup>171</sup> Revelation. 20:8. [KJV].

## Chapter Sixteen

### “Antichrist, Armageddon, and Gog and Magog”

A great battle between Christ and the renegade nations of the world is foretold throughout the Book of Revelation and, also, in the books of a few of the prophets.

When the sixth angel pours out the sixth vial, the Apostle John saw spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Red Dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet; “[f]or they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty....<sup>172</sup> And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon**.”<sup>173</sup>

Similarly, when Satan is loosed out of his prison after the thousand-year period has expired, he “shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, **Gog and Magog**, to gather them together to battle” Christ and the Church.<sup>174</sup> Regarding “God and Magog,” Augustine of Hippo informs us in *The City of God* that:

... this persecution, occurring while the final judgment is imminent, shall be **the last which shall be endured by the holy Church** throughout the world, the **whole city of Christ being assailed by the whole city of the devil**, as each exists on earth.

For these nations which he names **Gog and Magog** are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world, whether the Getae or Massagetae, as some conclude from the initial letters, or some other foreign nations not under the Roman government. For John marks that they are spread over the whole earth, when he says, ‘The nations which are in the four corners of the earth,’ and he added that these are Gog and Magog. The meaning of these

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<sup>172</sup> Revelation 16:12-16. [KJV].

<sup>173</sup> Revelation. 16:16. [KJV].

<sup>174</sup> Revelation 20:8 [KJV].

names we find to be, Gog, ‘a roof,’ Magog, ‘from a roof’ – a house, as it were, and he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss, and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth from concealed to open hatred. The words, ‘And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city,’ do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church shall be—and it shall be in all nations, as is signified by ‘the breadth of the earth’—there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word ‘camp.’”<sup>175</sup>

Though mentioned in completely separate passages of Scripture, the battle of Armageddon and Gog and Magog relate to the same war against the Christ and his Church.

However, throughout Christ’s thousand-year reign, the spirit of Antichrist shall remain active. This spirit of antichrist is symbolized in chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation, when the Dragon attempts to destroy the Woman (Mary) who gave birth the Man-child (i.e., Christ). Throughout the New Testament, the Apostles also mention this spirit of Antichrist as a cause for vigilance and for the Church militant to remain on guard.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 729-730.

<sup>176</sup> First John 4:3 (“that spirit of antichrist... even now already is it in the world.”); Second John 1:7 (“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”) [KJV]. See, also, St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, pp. 730-732.

The spirit of antichrist is predominant in the present age in which we now live. And to that spirit of antichrist, the church militant, or the kingdom of Christ militant, must remain vigilantly opposed.

## Chapter Seventeen

### “The Final Judgment and the Second Death”

The Apostle John then saw “the dead, small and great” stand before God.<sup>177</sup>

Books were opened.<sup>178</sup>

Another “book of life” was opened.<sup>179</sup>

The “dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.... [A]nd they were judged every man according to their works.”<sup>180</sup>

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”<sup>181</sup>

Those whose names were not written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire.

Death and hell were likewise case into the lake of fire.

This is the “second death.”<sup>182</sup>

Augustine of Hippo explains this “second death” in *The City of God*.

The righteous who die, are immediately raised and reign with Christ. These righteous persons are now alive and reigning with Jesus Christ and the church militant.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Revelation 20:12. [KJV].

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Revelation 20:13. [KJV].

<sup>181</sup> Revelation 20: 7-8. [KJV].

<sup>182</sup> Revelation. 20:14. [KJV].

<sup>183</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 725- 728.

However, those persons who have not received Christ during their lifetimes are not immediately raised with Christ upon their deaths. They are now asleep, but they shall arise to the Second Judgment— “whosoever has not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to life— that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh, pass with his flesh into the second death.”<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 728.



## Chapter Eighteen

### “The New Heaven and the New Earth”

The Apostle John then sees a vision of a new heaven and a new earth— i.e., a “new Jerusalem”— which shall descend down from heaven,<sup>185</sup> “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”<sup>186</sup>

“[T]he city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it.... And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.... And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.”<sup>187</sup>

God shall then “makes all things new.”<sup>188</sup>

God will “give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”<sup>189</sup>

God promises that “[h]e that overcometh shall inherit all things.”<sup>190</sup>

The nations and kings of the earth shall walk in the light of God and the Lamb, which shall be the only light and temple in this “New Jerusalem.”<sup>191</sup>

Upon the completion of this vision of the New Jerusalem, the Lord Christ informed the Apostle John to --

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of his book: for the time is at hand.

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<sup>185</sup> Revelation 21: 1-2. [KJV].

<sup>186</sup> Revelation 21: 9 [KJV].

<sup>187</sup> Revelation 21:24-26. [KJV].

<sup>188</sup> Revelation 21:5. [KJV].

<sup>189</sup> Revelation 21:6. [KJV].

<sup>190</sup> Revelation 21:7. [KJV].

<sup>191</sup> Revelation 21:2. [KJV].

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

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.<sup>192</sup>

And with that, the Book of Revelation—the Apocalypse of the Apostle John—closed.

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<sup>192</sup> Revelation. 22: 10-13. [KJV].

## Conclusion

The Book of Revelation reminds us that Christ is a super king. He has in his hands all power in heaven and earth. For this reason, the function and role of the Christian churches are to teach the nations about Christ's law, which is "Truth" itself.<sup>193</sup>

This ecclesiastical function is therefore "constitutional" regardless of whether a nation-state acknowledges Christ or not. Either the churches will be accepted and respected, or rejected and despised; either way, the churches must teach, baptize, and set an example for the nations. (Historically, the kingdom of England and, later, Great Britain, established the Church of England which expressly carried out this ecclesiastical function of evangelizing the civil polity).

In the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation, Christ gives counsel, admonitions, and encouragement to the seven churches of Asia. In doing so, he demonstrates great compassion and love for the churches.

Christ does not intend leave his followers without some knowledge of future events regarding the cessation of tribulation, evil, and death, and the ultimate triumph of Justice. This knowledge, which is contained in the Book of Revelation, is, without question, quite comforting.

Christ himself speaks to the Apostle John, and thereby assures all of us that He remains in complete control of human events. Significantly, this prophecy informs us that the present-day function of Christian churches is to sit on the seat of judgment and to make just judgments; to prophesy; to preach "jeremiads"; and, if necessary, to suffer affliction, persecution, and martyrdom.

To that end, Christ reminds us that He presently reigns upon the earth, and that He does so partly through partnership with his servants (i.e., his churches).

Finally, this prophecy reveals the nature of the evil forces that plague the entire world today. It makes no bones about who they are: the Red Dragon who is Satan himself, the spirit of the Antichrist that is amongst the nations, and the

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<sup>193</sup> John 17:17 ("Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**") John 4:24 ("God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in **truth.**"); Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 645 ("For by consulting the Gospel we learn that **Christ is Truth.**"); and Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Noble Books (2007), p. 48 ("Your **law is truth** and you are truth.")

Beasts of lusts (i.e., Babylon the Great, which is an economic and commercial system).

In graphic terms, the Book of Revelation states that all nations of the earth have committed commercial and economic fornication with the “great whore” of Babylon. This is a sobering realization, particularly for those of us who live in the West and who may believe that, because our nation-states have adopted the most progressive and liberal constitutions since the hey-day of the Enlightenment, and that because those constitutions guarantee, at least in theoretical terms, nominal freedom to all our citizens, that our progressive nations in the West are not included in the condemnations set forth in the Book of Revelation.

But this would be a very sad, and tragic, conclusion, because all have sinned and come short; and because the churches of Jesus Christ must remain vigilant in their efforts to preach the Gospel and to heal the broken wounds of humanity.

The Book of Revelation is timeless. Its timeless themes have been echoed throughout history in all sorts of polemics and discourses, such as the Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith’s and M.I.T. economist Paul Samuelson’s life works and writings on economics and public policy.<sup>194</sup> Nay, the works of Karl Marx and the radical left may easily trace their critique of classical economics to biblical sources.<sup>195</sup> And, likewise, the works of classical conservative economists— e.g., the Roman Catholic economists, Protestant Christian economists and the Calvinistic-Puritan Brahmins, etc.— may also just as easily trace their critique to those same sources.

Hence, the Rev. John Wesley was absolutely correct when he concluded: “*The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness.*” Indeed, the Book of Revelation challenges present-day readers— especially pastors, theologians, lawyers, judges, and public officials— to come to terms with materialism, commercial injustices, and economic crimes, and the need for reform and social justice.

## THE END

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<sup>194</sup> See, e.g., John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society and Other Writings* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 2010); John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Economics of Innocent Fraud: Truth For Our Time* (Boston, M.A.: Houghton Mifflin, 2004); Paul Samuelson, *Economics* (New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1973).

<sup>195</sup> See, e.g., Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, N.Y.: Touchstone, 1972), pp. 363-364; p. 636 (“The true descendent of the doctrines of Aquinas is the labour theory of value. The last of the schoolmen was Karl Marx.”)

