

INTRODUCTION:

Part-9 provided vivid insight into the fall of Babylon the great, which we have come to understand as representing both the religious and secular aspects of our society which put self above God. In chapter 17 we saw the demise of the “harlot,” representing the religious idolatry as people worship themselves and things rather than God. These people chose to be the “harlot,” putting themselves before God, rather than the “bride” of Christ, keeping themselves pure and right with God. In chapter 18 we saw the visible and worldly manifestation of this same orientation represented in the “great city.” This is the aspect that is focused on worldly self-indulgence and luxury, even at the expense of the poor and needy. The rich become richer and are indifferent to the demise of those who suffer at their expense. Merchants and leaders profit from the greed and wealth of the powerful. But the Lord reveals to us that all of this will come falling down quickly and violently at the time of judgment. Those who exalted themselves will be brought low, and the humble will be exalted. In the first verses of chapter 19 we first hear the fourfold hallelujah of the righteous as God brings down the wicked who have shed the blood of the righteous. We then hear the marriage of the Lamb and His bride proclaimed for it is finally time for all that God has planned to come to pass. Christ will now rule, the righteous will be rewarded, and the wicked will do no more harm.

Part-10 will be the last major section of our study followed only by the description of the New Jerusalem (Part-11) and the closing epilogue (Part-12). Part-10 will comprise the seventh and final set of seven visions. These visions will include: (1) the conquering Christ (19:11-16); (2) victory of Christ over the beast and Antichrist (19:17-21); (3) Satan being bound and his rule suspended for 1,000 years (20:1-3); (4) the reign of Christ—the millennium (20:4-6); (5) the defeat of Gog and Magog, and Satan being cast into the lake of fire (20:7-10); (6) the disappearance of heaven and earth, second resurrection, and general judgment (20:11-15); and (7) the new creation and beginning of God’s eternal age (21:1-8). Part-10 is very important and reassuring because it reveals to us how things will ultimately turn out, with the righteous being rewarded and the wicked being destroyed. God will make all things new and there will be eternal peace. Many of the things described were first introduced in 11:18, but here they will be revealed in greater detail.

CHAPTER 19:11-16: (The Coming of Christ / The Conquering Christ)

When the seventh trumpet sounded we heard proclaimed: *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever”* (11:15b). But a few verses later we learned that Christ’s reign would begin with violence and judgment for we are told in verse 18: *“And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”* Chapters 12 through 15 followed, providing us with broad view and context for the end, depicting the rise and source of evil’s influence leading up to and through the harvest of the elect. Chapter 16 illustrated the rapid destruction of the wicked as God poured out His wrath upon the world in seven bowls. What was proclaimed upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet we now witness, the second and final coming of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:11, states: *“And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.”* We know from John 10:7-9 that Jesus is the door through which we gain access to heaven. In Revelation 4:1, John was shown a “door standing open in heaven” through which he was summoned to “come up” so he could be shown “what must take place.” Now heaven is opened so that Christ can return to the earth.

Next we hear mentioned a “white horse” upon which a rider sits who is called “Faithful and True.” We are further told this rider “in righteousness He judges and wages war.” It might seem we are seeing the same scene as the riders of the first two horses of the apocalypse from Revelation 6:2-4. In 6:2 a rider on a “white horse” went out “conquering, and to conquer.” In 6:4 he was followed by the rider of a “red horse” who “was granted to take peace” so that men “should slay one another.” We came to understand that the rider of the “white horse” in 6:2 was the “antichrist” who comes striving to conquer mankind by separating us from God. The “red horse” then represented the war that comes as we struggle and compete against each other when God is removed from our lives. The antichrist is the wolf in sheep’s clothing that mimics Christ in appearance but not in purpose. The antichrist desires to divide and destroy us

while Christ desires to make us whole and give us eternal life. In Revelation 3:14, Jesus is described as “Faithful and True.” And it is Jesus who wages war “in righteousness.”

Revelation 19:12, states: **“And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.”** In the first vision found in Revelation 1:14, the risen and glorified Christ is described as having eyes “like a flame of fire.” Revelation 2:18 further clarifies the One with this description to be the “Son of God.” The emphasis is on the fact that His eyes see everything, every deed of every person, and nothing escapes His sight. Regarding the “many diadems,” these are crowns of authority. Christ we are told has many but we are not given a quantity, or perhaps better said, they are not limited to a specific number. The red dragon of Revelation 12:3 had seven diadems, a sign of complete authority, and the beast out of the sea in 13:1 had ten, symbolic for worldly authority. Jesus Christ returns with “many diadems” and ultimate authority, for Jesus tells us in Matthew 28:18, **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”** Regarding the name written upon Him that no one knows except Himself, there is only one other mentioning of such a hidden name other than that found in Revelation 2:17. In the letter to the church in Pergamum, and speaking to the faithful there who persevere and overcome, we are told they will be given a “white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.” This is a mystery and clearly “no one knows” either the name or names written upon the stones or the name written on the returning Christ. But we may find comfort in knowing that both Christ and those who remain faithful and overcome will share in an unknown and perhaps common name.

Revelation 19:13, states: **“And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.”** Jesus returns wearing a “robe dipped in blood” as a sign that He comes to judge the world, which means to punish and wage war on the wicked. He is called “The Word of God,” which takes us back to John 1:1, where John describes Jesus, saying, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** We may also be reminded of John’s first vision in 1:16, which described Him, saying, **“out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.”** The sword is also representative of the Word. There is power in God’s Word. God speaks and things are created. God speaks and the wicked are judged and evil destroyed. John 3:17

provides evidence that Jesus' first coming was not to judge but to save, saying, ***“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.”*** But regarding the Lord's return, the Apostle Paul proclaims in Acts 17:31, saying, ***“He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”*** Jesus now returns in judgment.

Revelation 19:14, states: ***“And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.”*** The “armies” in “heaven” that accompany Christ at His return are widely debated. To those who believe in the rapture, these armies are comprised of all who were removed from the earth prior or during the tribulation. Other scholars see them as angels. When Jesus spoke of His return in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, He states that He will be accompanied by angels. For example, Matthew 24:30b-31 states: ***“...and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”*** Luke's account provides evidence that God's elect will be gathered and will join Christ in the air, being gathered from both “heaven” and “earth.” Jesus in Luke 13:27 states, ***“And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of earth, to the farthest end of heaven.”*** Further evidence that the “armies” are angels is inferred from Revelation 12:7, used in conjunction with Daniel 12:1. Remember that in 12:7 we learned that the archangel, Michael, ***“and his angels waging war with the dragon”*** drove the dragon and his angels out of heaven and to the earth. Speaking of the end times, Michael is again referenced in Daniel 12:1 as the protector of God's people. Daniel 12:1 states: ***“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”*** The “rescued” here may be tied to the gathering of the elect at Christ's return. While the elect may also be with Christ upon His return, and also be clothed in white linen as a sign they have been

washed clean by His blood (7:14), the armies that accompany Christ are most likely His heavenly host of angels.

Revelation 19:15, states: ***“And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.”*** Here we have three important statements contained in one verse. First, we have the reference to the “sword” that comes from His “mouth.” Hebrews 4:10 states, ***“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*** In both Revelation 1:16 and 2:16 we also see references to a sword coming out of the mouth of Christ that will wage war. Revelation 2:16 states: ***“Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.”*** The Word of God, which is the sword that comes out of His mouth, will “smite the nations” of the earth, will strike those who are unrepentant.

Second, we hear that Christ will rule with “a rod of iron.” The first reference in Scripture is found in Psalm 2:9, which when speaking of the Reign of the Lord’s Anointed, says, ***“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.”*** Speaking of Jesus as the Son of the woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12:5 we are told: ***“And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.”*** Christ is the One who rules with an iron rod, which He uses to shatter the clay vessels of the wicked.

Third, here we are told that it is the returning Jesus who will tread the fierce winepress of God’s wrath previously mentioned in Revelation 14:19-20. Jesus’ return will not be the peaceful and loving event of His first coming when He came to save the world. This will be a horrible event in which He will deliver judgment upon the wicked.

Revelation 19:16, states: ***“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.””*** The title declares Christ’s absolute authority over everyone and everything. He is truly the King above all kings and the Lord over all lords. In Revelation 17:14 we heard how the Lamb will be victorious over all who oppose Him, saying, ***“These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will***

overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.” The Lamb, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, will return with great power and authority, greater power and authority than those who oppose Him. The Lord will be victorious over Satan and his followers.

CHAPTER 19:17-21: (Victory of Christ over the Beast, the Antichrist)

In this second of seven visions or scenes in Part-10, we see Christ’s victory over the beast and the false prophet, often also referred to as the Antichrist. Whether these entities are personifications of the religious (spiritual) and worldly (physical) influences of Satan, which caused many to elevate the creation above the Creator and worship themselves, or they are real people, they will be destroyed when Christ returns. Along with them, all who followed them, worshiping the false image and marking themselves through their thoughts and actions as belonging to the beast, will be killed. They become bird food.

Revelation 19:17-18, states: *“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”*” While in heaven there will be a great and wonderful wedding feast as Christ and His bride the Church will celebrate their joining, on earth there will be a terrible supper as birds feast on the remains of the slaughtered who opposed Christ. In both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke we hear of birds gathering where there are corpses upon the return of Christ. Matthew 24:28 says: *“Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”* Luke provides even greater insight through the context of the disciples’ question. After Jesus speaks of several situations upon His return when one is taken and one is left behind, the disciples ask the question, “Where, Lord?” Answering where they will be taken, Jesus says, *“Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered”* (Luke 17:37). Those who believe that these references to being “taken” refer to God’s people being raptured from the earth, I believe are mistaken. Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 24:37-39: *“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered*

the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.” Upon Christ’s return, He will gather and protect His elect and “take away” the lives of the wicked, those who are not His own. The corpses of those “taken” will become food for the birds. It will not matter if they were great or small, free or slave, in the end they will all be the same—dead.

Revelation 19:19, states: *“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army.”* With the pouring out of the sixth bowl of wrath we heard that the Euphrates River was dried up, clearing the way for the kings of the east to come (16:12). And then in 16:13-14 we were told that demons came out of the mouth of the dragon and the beast and the false prophet, which went out *“to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.”* And finally, in 16:16 we were told of the place where they were to be gathered for the great battle, a place called in Hebrew “Har-Magedon,” which we know more commonly as “Armageddon.” This place is believed to be situated north of Jerusalem between Mount Megiddo and Mount Tabor in the Jezreel Valley where the Kishon River flows. According to an account in Judges, chapters 4 and 5, the Canaanites came against the people of Israel with a vast army led by 900 iron chariots. God called His prophetess, Deborah, to advise His people to confront their enemy in this same location. And then God did battle for them, causing a heavy rain to fall, which flowed down from the mountains, causing the iron chariots and heavily armored Canaanite army to become stuck in the mud and easy to defeat. As part of Deborah’s song, she sings, *“The stars fought from heaven, from their courses they fought against Sisera [Canaanite leader]. The torrent of Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on with strength”* (Judges 5:20-21). She says “the stars fought from heaven.” To the ancients, stars were often equated with angels, implying that God’s angels did battle for them.

The prophet Joel seems to speak clearly of the final battle of Armageddon in Joel, chapter 3. Joel says this great battle will come about “in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem” (Joel 3:1). Many believe this means when God has restored Israel as a nation and Jerusalem as its capital, which happened respectively in 1948 and 1967. God speaks to Joel specifically against “Tyre, Sidon and

the regions of Philistia” (Joel 3:4), which today would be Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. We know these to be places where the terrorist group, Hezbollah, constantly launches attacks against Israel. Then Joel provides us with a series of signs, which are consistent with the symbolism we have seen in both Revelation, and the Gospel accounts describing Jesus’ return. Joel reveals to us that all of this will happen near Jerusalem and in Israel. Joel 3:12-16 states: ***“Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness. And the Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble. But the Lord is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel.”*** The sun and the moon grow dark. The sickle is ready for the harvest. The wine press is full. It seems the place and conditions are ready for the return of Christ. But take heart, “the Lord is a refuge for His people.”

Revelation 19:20, states: ***“And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.”*** We were introduced to the “beast” and the “false prophet” in chapter 13. This is also where the “image of the beast” and the “mark of the beast” were introduced and described. The “beast” came up out of the sea, and as we have previously discussed, was seen as a religious leader and/or influence. A second beast coming up out of the earth was identified as the “false prophet” and a world leader and/or influence. The “false prophet” caused the people of the earth to create an “image of the beast” and worship it. And the “mark of the beast” on the hand and forehead was understood to be a mark of ownership. As we have discussed, the beast and false prophet cause us to worship ourselves and the creation rather than the Creator. The image of the beast could be seen as an image of man worshipping himself. The mark of the beast on the head and hand could be seen as our marking ourselves through our thoughts and actions as focused either on God or self. The verse above would strongly suggest that the “beast” and “false prophet” are actual persons or entities.

This may be, but they may also be personifications of the religious and worldly influences, corrupted by Satan, that cause us to worship ourselves and elevate created things above our Creator. In this case what is immediately removed and thrown into the lake of fire are the false spiritual and worldly beliefs that the creation is greater than the Creator. Let's face it. When God shows up in all of His power and glory, the first thing to fall will be the belief that He doesn't exist. The second will be that He is powerless, and our faith in Him is irrelevant. These notions will never exist again for all eternity.

Revelation 19:21, states: ***“And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.”*** Remove the deceiver's deception and the truth shines for all to see. In one respect, the Word of God kills all that is false, exposing lies and illuminating the truth. That is a spiritual understanding and truth. But in another respect, this also applies to the physical world. Sin and evil have always brought about death and destruction. Ultimately, that which is corrupt and unrepentant will die because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). As in the days of Noah, the wicked were taken away—killed. The same will apply when Christ returns. The wicked will be killed by the Word of God, and the birds of the earth will be filled with their flesh. But we are about to read about a 1,000 year period of peace, which will be followed by Satan again deceiving the nations and gathering a vast number of followers to come against God's people. Therefore, we must question if all who are wicked and all evil are destroyed at this time. Could it be that only the armies that gathered and came against God and His people are destroyed when Christ returns, and are eaten by the birds? This is supported by the fact that Christ will rule with “an iron rod.” Would such a stern rule be necessary if all evil and wickedness had been completely eliminated from the earth?

CHAPTER 20:1-3: (Satan Bound for a 1,000 Years)

In this third of the seven visions or scenes in Part-10, we see Christ's victory over the beast and the false prophet, often also referred to as the Antichrist. Whether these entities are personifications of the religious (spiritual) and worldly (physical) influences of Satan, which caused many to elevate the creation above the Creator and worship themselves, or they are real people, they will be destroyed when Christ returns. Along with them, all the armies who followed them, and perhaps even all who worshiped the false image and

marking themselves through their thoughts and actions as belonging to the beast. They have become bird food. We might ask why Satan was not also destroyed with the beast and false prophet, but instead bound for a thousand years. Why is Satan's demise delayed? What is the purpose of the 1,000 years of peace? These are good questions and we will seek answers to these questions as we continue through Part-10.

Revelation 20:1, states: ***“And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.”*** While we are told only that an angel coming down from heaven bears the key and the chain that will lock Satan in the abyss for a thousand years it is likely this is the archangel Michael. What is clear is that he comes from heaven, from God, with the power and authority to do God's will.

Revelation 20:2-3, states: ***“And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.”*** While made clear many other places in Scripture, here is made abundantly clear that the “dragon, serpent of old, devil and Satan” are all one of the same. From the Garden of Eden to the present, though he has appeared in many forms with many names, the one who was cast down from heaven for attempting to elevate himself above God and for rebelling against God is the same entity that has always worked to deceive mankind into doing the same. God creates and gives life. Satan destroys and takes life. Satan is now not only locked away in the abyss but “sealed” in so he can no longer deceive or influence mankind. We must ask the question why? Why the delay in Satan's destruction? Why must we wait another 1,000 years before the books are opened and all are judged before the throne of God?

CHAPTER 20:4-6: (The Reign of Christ—the Millennium)

In this fourth of the seven visions or scenes in Part-10, we see a partial resurrection of only those who have died in Christ, who were faithful and did not worship the beast or his image, and did not receive the image of the beast on their forehead or hand. This is called the first resurrection. The remaining dead are required to wait until the end of the 1,000 years when everyone will face judgment before the throne of God.

Revelation 20:4, states: ***“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”*** This verse begins with John seeing thrones set up, and “they” sat upon them and judgment was given them. The first question that comes to mind is who “they” who sit upon these thrones and are given the power to judge. The answer might be found in Matthew 19:28 and also found in Luke 22:28-30. Matthew 19:28 states: ***“Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*** While Revelation 4:4 and 11:16 reference twenty-four elders sitting on twenty-four thrones in heaven there is no evidence that these are the thrones being set up on the earth for Christ’s 1,000 year reign. Some scholars interpret Matthew 19:28 to imply that all of the faithful, both those of the Old Testament before Christ’s first coming, and those who have lived and died after Christ’s coming are included in the first resurrection. They believe this based on the fact that Jesus said His disciples would judge “the twelve tribes of Israel.” This belief is also at least partially supported by the understanding that those who died believing in God’s “promise” of a Messiah, actually believed in Him before He was revealed. This view is reinforced by Jesus’ words to Thomas in John 20:29, when Jesus says, ***“Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”*** Here Jesus is saying those who believed in Him even though they did not live to see His coming are blessed because of their belief. While we may not know for certain the full extent of who is included in the first resurrection, it is certainly clear that those who have died for their belief in Christ and remained faithful through the tribulation will be raised and will reign with Him.

Revelation 20:5, states: ***“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.”*** This verse raises another important question, “Is anyone still alive when Christ returns or is everyone dead?” If those who died in Christ are raised at the first resurrection, and the remaining

dead must wait until the end of the thousand years, then is anyone alive? The judgment before the throne of God in 20:11-15 mentions only “dead” being judged, but upon Satan’s release we are told that a vast number will gather against the saints and be “devoured” (killed?) by fire that comes down from heaven. Perhaps the answer is that all those who were faithful to Christ, whether dead or alive, will be lifted up and begin to reign when Christ returns. This seems to be supported by both 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, and 1 Corinthians 15:50-55. There appears to be faithful Christians still alive when Christ returns because 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, ***“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*** Paul clearly assumes there will be faithful still alive when Christ returns but notice that both the dead and the living are “caught up in the air.” We are removed from the earth, presumably to escape the wrath that will rain down upon the wicked. It also seems apparent that all faithful Christians will be changed upon the Lord’s return, and this is when we will take on immortality even if we are still alive. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, saying, ***“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?””*** Paul clearly states that we cannot inherit the kingdom of God in our perishable, mortal bodies, but must first put on our imperishable, immortal bodies. Those who are still alive will be changed instantly. Clearly, all faithful Christians will begin their immortal lives upon Christ’s return and share in His 1,000 year reign on earth. But what about those who are not in Christ, or those who believed in the “promise” of God and lived before Christ first came? We will discuss this further after the next verse.

Revelation 20:6, states: ***“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection: over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”*** We know from Revelation 20:14 that the “second death” is the “lake of fire” where those whose name does not appear in the “book of life” will be cast for eternal punishment. We are now being told that the “second death” has “no power” over those who partake of the “first resurrection.” This seems to imply that if you are not included in the “first resurrection” you either will or at least might be included in the “second death.” This would suggest that perhaps everyone whose name is written in the “book of life” might be included in the “first resurrection.” This would then certainly include both those who believed in God’s “promise” of Christ before He first came, and those who lived after Christ and believed in Him. It is also possible that the people who lived before Christ first came will not be raised until after the thousand year reign of Christ when the books of deeds, and the book of life are opened.

CHAPTER 20:7-10: (Satan Freed and End of the Age)

In this fifth of the seven visions or scenes in Part-10, we see Satan released from the abyss for a short time and allowed to again deceive the nations. He again gathers them for war and surrounds God’s saints and beloved city. This time there is no great battle, but God simply sends down fire from heaven and devours them all. Satan is then cast into the lake of fire where he will be punished for all eternity, and never deceive or cause trouble again.

Revelation 20:7-8, states: ***“And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.”*** Here we have the key to a great mystery that is unlocked by the names, “Gog and Magog.” We are told that when Satan is released he will deceive the nations and gather them from the “four corners of the earth,” which are defined as “Gog and Magog.” The following verse, 20:9, says they will surround the “camp of the saints and the beloved city” indicating that God’s people are gathered in one location, and likely that location is Jerusalem, which has always been called God’s “beloved city.” Zion is identified with Jerusalem and God proclaims in Psalm 87:2-3,

saying through His servant David, ***“The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God.”***

Therefore, “Gog and Magog” will come from four directions, which means from all directions to surround God’s people who have lived for a 1,000 years in peace in Jerusalem. Now let us look at the only other place in all of Scripture where the names “Gog and Magog” are used, which is Ezekiel 38:2. The verses which immediately precede the mention of “Gog and Magog” describe God’s restoration of Israel into a nation, and the beginning of an everlasting kingdom ruled by David, God’s prince.

Ezekiel 37:21-28, says: ***“And say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them. And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever. And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.”*** The above speaks of there no longer being a divided kingdom, but one kingdom in Israel. While we know that God’s people were once divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, the joining of the two kingdoms here may imply not only Israel being restored into a single nation, but also Jews and Christians being restored into a single fellowship believing in the same Lord and Savior. Jesus is the descendant of David and we can clearly see how the above passage of

Scripture could be a vivid description of Jesus' reign on earth, with both Jews and Christians living together and finally serving the same Lord, Jesus the Christ.

Now let us look closely at the passage which begins with the reference to “Gog and Magog.” Ezekiel 38:2-10, says: ***“Son of man, set your face toward Gog and Magog of the land of Rosh, Mechech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Mechech, and Tubal. And I will turn you about, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords; Persia, Ethiopia, and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you. Be prepared, and prepare yourself, you and all your companies that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them. And you will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.” Thus says the Lord God, “It will come about on that day, that thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil plan, and you will say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages, I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls, and having no bars or gates, to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.’”*”** The evil prince of the nations that come against Israel and God’s people comes from the region of Russia, but the other nations listed comprise historic enemies of Israel that lie on all sides. We are told that a day will come in the later years when it “will come into your mind” to go against the “gathered people” who “live securely without walls.” This could clearly represent God’s people gathered to Israel and Jerusalem, and having lived there in peace for 1,000 years under Christ’s reign, they have no need for walls or bars to protect them.

These two passages from Ezekiel also provide further evidence that those raised in the “first resurrection” will include both faithful Jews and Christians alike. We still do not know with certainty if those who do not believe in Christ are all dead or some remain alive. The following verses perhaps shed light on this question and provide an answer.

Revelation 20:9, states: ***“And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.”*** We have ample evidence that the “camp of the saints” is in Israel, the location of Jerusalem, the “beloved city” of God. Here we are told that those who Satan now deceives “came up” on the “broad plain of the earth.” The Greek word translated as “came up” literally means to “arise,” to come up from a lower to a high place. They “came up” onto the “broad plain of the earth,” which might be interpreted as rising to the surface of the earth from below it. You will note that we were told about the “first resurrection” but nowhere in Scripture is a “second resurrection” mentioned. Is this the second resurrection? Is it the raising of the dead who oppose Christ? Or, are these people who were not believers but were not killed when Christ returned? Again speaking of “Gog and Magog” and those nations and peoples that surround and come against God’s people in Israel, Ezekiel 38:22, says, ***“And with pestilence and with blood I shall enter into judgment with him; and I shall rain on him, and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire, and brimstone.”*** As in our verse above, God will rain fire on those who come against His people. They will be “devoured by fire.” Does this mean they are mortal and will be killed? Or, does this fire refer to the “second death” they will receive in the “lake of fire.” Because only the “dead” are mentioned regarding those who appear before the throne to be judged in Revelation 20:11-15, it seems clear that none of the wicked will be alive after the “devouring fire,” but this does not inform us of their status before the fire. There is some basis for arguing either case, but ultimately it doesn’t matter. All whose names are not written in the “book of life” will end up being cast into the “lake of fire.”

Revelation 20:10, states: ***“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”*** Finally, the one who deceived and tempted mankind to rebel against God has been permanently removed. The unholy

trinity is gone and will suffer eternal punishment. Now it is time for mankind to be judged based on who they made lord of their lives, and who they followed. If they followed Satan then they are destined to his fate, eternal punishment. If they were faithful to God and His Deliverer and Shepherd, then their life will continue in Him, and they will not face the “second death,” which is the “lake of fire.”

CHAPTER 20:11-15: (Judgment at the Throne of God)

In this sixth of the seven visions or scenes in Part-10, we see the dead standing before the “great white throne” where they will receive judgment. We are told that the sea, death and Hades give up their dead so they can receive judgment. The dead are judged based on what is written in books, and are judged according to their deeds. Only those whose names are written in the “book of life” are spared the “second death” in the “lake of fire.”

Revelation 20:11, states: ***“And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.”*** White is symbolic for purity and righteousness, therefore the “great white throne” can be seen as the seat of righteous and fair judgment. Jesus is the one who will sit upon the throne and pass judgment. There are many places in Scripture that speak of this but John 5 may be the best. In John 5:22 Jesus says, ***“For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.”*** More specific to the final judgment, Jesus says in John 5:25-29 that He will judge the dead according to His Father’s will, saying, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”***

This simple passage also provides us additional evidence that the “first resurrection” will include all those who were faithful to God, and the “second resurrection” will be for those who were not faithful and therefore deserve judgment because of their evil deeds. The reference to earth and heaven having “fled away” from the Lord’s presence, and there being no place “found for them,” could mean there will be “no place” for anyone to

hide. Everyone not clothed in Christ and still wearing their shame will stand naked before the Lord. There will be no place to hide.

Revelation 20:12, states: ***“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”*** Notice that “books” were opened that contain “deeds” and a separate “book of life” is opened that we will learn in 20:15 contains names. The dead are judged according to their “deeds.” This is not simply a judgment between good and bad. It is a judgment that ranks people fairly based on how much good or evil they did. Remember Jesus’ words to the unrepentant cities where He preached and wasn’t received. In Matthew 11:22, Jesus said, ***“Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.”*** And again in Matthew 11:24, He says, ***“Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”*** Jesus is showing us in these examples that some people will be judged harsher than others based on their deeds. Many visionaries who have been granted to see images of hell, or perhaps the lake of fire, have witnessed that there are levels of suffering, with the torment of those on the surface being less than those who are held deeper in the fire.

Revelation 20:13, states: ***“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.”*** Here we see the “sea, death and Hades” give up their dead so that they may be judged. The word “death” literally means not physically or mortally alive. The word “Hades” literally means the “world of the dead” or “place of the dead,” but most scholars see it as a sort of “prison for the dead not yet judged.” It is important that we remember that Jesus said in John 11:25-26, ***“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.”*** This means that when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior we obtain a life that does not die when our physical body dies. Our life continues. Therefore, the dead that are raised are not in Christ, and will all be judged based on their deeds, and then cast into the lake of fire. They are not being judged as worthy for heaven or condemnation to hell. They are judged to determine how much suffering they deserve.

Revelation 20:14, states: ***“And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”*** Looking ahead, Revelation 21:4 says that after the judgment “there shall no longer be any death.” We see above the end of death and Hades. No one else will ever die, and there is no longer need for a prison or place to hold the dead who have not been judged. All are now judged and cast into the lake of fire, which is the second and final death.

Revelation 20:15, states: ***“And if anyone’s name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*** We have previously been told both in Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 that those whose names have been written in the “book of life” have been written there from “the foundation of the world.” God has always known who would be saved, and which of us would ultimately chose Him over Satan as our lord. He has always allowed us our freedom of choice, but He knew us even before we were born and knew also the choices we would make. Only those who are His, as evidenced by their choosing Him, and remaining faithful to Him, will be saved from the lake of fire. All others, regardless of how good or bad their deeds, will face the second death. We who belong to Christ also sin, make mistakes, and fall short of the glory of God, but we are not saved by our own merits, but by the perfection and merits of Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER 21:1-8: (The New Heaven and Earth)

In this seventh of the seven visions or scenes in Part-10, we are told of the creation of a new heaven and earth, and that God is “making all things new.” This means everything from the old order, including sin and death, has been abolished. There will be no more tears or crying, but only the joy of being in God’s presence for all eternity. It is finished, everything is as God always planned and intended. That portion of mankind that has chosen to live in a relationship with God, their Creator, will now do so in peace and in paradise forever. Those who chose otherwise will burn forever in the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:1, states: ***“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”*** In Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33, Jesus tells us: ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”*** The apostle Peter also tells us in 2 Peter 3:10, saying, ***“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth***

and its works will be burned up.” As God did in the beginning, creating a heaven and earth for us to live in, He will do so again at the end. God will create a new heaven and earth, without a sea, and this shall be our new home forever.

Revelation 21:2, states: ***“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”*** In addition to this newly created heaven and earth, God will replace also His beloved city, Jerusalem, with a “new Jerusalem.” This new city will be described in great detail in 21:10-27. This new city comes down out of heaven, making it clear that it is created by God as a place of dwelling for His people to share and live with Him.

Revelation 21:3-4, states: ***“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”***” This is the final and complete fulfillment of God’s Word. Now Emmanuel, which means “God with us,” is not limited to the short time Christ dwelled in the flesh and walked among men, or the sending of God’s Holy Spirit to be with us for guidance and comfort and strength. No, now God and man will both spiritually and physically dwell together as we did in the beginning in the Garden of Eden before we sinned and fell from grace. Knowing of good and evil, we have chosen God and He has adopted us as His children. The evil influence and temptation of Satan are no more. Never again will we suffer death, mourning, tears or pain. All these things have passed away and are no more.

Revelation 21:5, states: ***“And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”***” This is the third time in Revelation that we have heard that God and His Word is “faithful and true.” God is making all things new. This is a new beginning that will last for all eternity. Everything from before is gone. The slate is washed clean. A new adventure and an eternity of discovery await everyone who has remained faithful to God.

Revelation 21:6, states: ***“And He said to Me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.”*** All that God planned and intended is complete—it is

done! What God began in the beginning has reached its end. God created the beginning and He has created the ending. God provides the thirsty water from the spring of the water of life without cost. God provides! God will always provide for every need of those who dwell with Him. God is the source and sustainer of all life.

Revelation 21:7, states: ***“He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”*** Now God turns His attention to the readers of Revelation. He reminds us all, that if we overcome the temptations of Satan and trials of this world, remaining faithful to the Lord, that we too will inherit all these things. We too will become the children of God, and live with God for all eternity.

Revelation 21:8, states: ***“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*** Likewise, as in verse 21:7 above the faithful are reminded of the promise of their reward, here the wicked are warned of their fate if they do not repent and continue to live in sin and separated from Christ.

Summary:

Part-10 is powerful. It reveals the ultimate fate of those who chose Christ and those who do not. Clearly, all those who claim Christ as Lord and Savior, and live their life as best they can in accord to His will, their life will never end. And equally clear, all who remain unrepentant and never accept the life that comes through a commitment to Christ as their Lord and Savior will die and suffer for all eternity. We see that even the end of the world as we know it, and even after a new heaven and earth are created, the consequences of our decisions and choice for or against Christ will live on. We will all face all eternity either in paradise with Christ, or suffering in the lake of fire and separated from God. The choice is ours. We have been given clear and adequate warning of the consequences of our choices. It is not God that forces us to live our eternity in paradise or hell, but our free choice of who we will serve and have as our Lord. May everyone choose Christ, and may everyone bear witness to those who do not realize the dire consequences of the choices they are making every day. Everyone will face their “end of time” and will be judged by God. May we be judged by the merits of Christ rather than our own inadequate deeds. We all fall short of God’s glory.

Reason for the 1,000 Years prior to the Judgment?

While it might be impossible for us to understand the mystery of the 1,000 years, God invites us to seek answers to our questions as we seek a deeper relationship with Him. This is not to say we may question if God is right or wrong, for we must trust God that whatever He does and for whatever reason, He knows best and His judgment is perfect. We have previously wondered why God would not destroy Satan outright, and delay for 1,000 years His final judgment and ultimate destruction of all unbelievers. We can only speculate on why God chooses to do what He will certainly do. We should find comfort in the fact that upon Christ's return our life with God will begin and no longer with temptations and interference from Satan. For a thousand years we will live with Christ in the "camp of the saints" and then in the New Jerusalem for the rest of eternity. Even when Satan is released to "tempt the nations" and bring "them" against God's people, God will destroy "them" with fire before they can harm "us." Perhaps a clue to why we are given this 1,000 years before the final judgment can be found in Revelation 17:8b, which says, ***"And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come."*** We are not told if "those who dwell on the earth" are limited to the saints of God, or also include people that might still be alive outside the "camp of the saints." But it seems evident that those who dwell on the earth will be aware that they live in a limited time period before Satan will be released and there will be a final judgment. Perhaps the thousand years is given as a time for mankind to reflect on all that has happened and the judgment that awaits. Perhaps the thousand years is to provide us with a period of transition between life on earth and eternity in the New Jerusalem. Some might believe that the thousand years is another expression of God's mercy, providing "the nations" outside of the "camp of the saints" with an opportunity for repentance. We simply don't know, but I believe God has given us the "freedom of choice" so that each of us may choose between two lords—God or ourselves. If Satan and his influence are removed then there is no opposition to God. On the other hand, perhaps the thousand years is provided as a final faith test. Will people continue to be faithful to God when they no longer need His protection? Only God knows the answers.

(End of Part-10)