

The Days
of the
Seventh
Angel

Book 5: The Seven Plagues

Study Notes
on the

Book of Revelation

by

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Milo Edition

Volume 5 (of seven volumes)

Plagues Section—Rev. 13-16

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

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Introduction

This is the fifth volume of a series of studies on the book of Revelation. If the reader is unacquainted with the first books a few recommendations are necessary from the author's perspective before one enters into this study.

It is the hope of the author, of course, that any reader will start with the first volumes, inasmuch as they contain the keys and interpretational tools that are used in the subsequent studies. It is really quite necessary in the pursuit of truth to have an understanding of the principles of proper prophetic interpretation. These principles are covered in the other books (especially vol. 1, or in the fullest treatment in vol. 6), and the reader is strongly encouraged to refer to them.

To begin with, this is not a "professional" work, nor does it pretend to be. Human error will often find its way into this document. For these I indulge the reader's patience as the editing procedure continues.

Second, this is not intended to be a commentary on every verse or topic in the book of Revelation. The purpose of this writing as stated at the outset is different than this. The focus of these pages is not to be a comprehensive commentary. Many others have done a more exhaustive and better job of that already. *The aim is to concentrate on troublesome passages or concepts that in the author's opinion are overlooked, understated, or misinterpreted by many students of the book.*

However, this fifth volume is somewhat different in approach from the other six volumes in at least one respect. Several teachings familiar to Seventh-day Adventists, and in no way new or original, are simply reiterated. Great light has already been allowed to shine on such passages as Revelation 13 and 14. Therefore the chapters on the three angels and their messages are largely a repeat of these familiar, yet important themes.

Introduction

To leave them out, or ignore them, would create gaps in the flow and development of the book, and might rob the reader unacquainted with these themes an opportunity to understand them.

Third, this book is not written with the general public in mind. Anyone is more than welcome to examine the following pages, but this work is written primarily to Seventh-day Adventist Christians who I believe need to have a better self-understanding of the awesome messages to found in the last-day book of Revelation.

Blessed are they who rightly read and understand the message of the great book of Revelation. The message of Revelation is so important that one should not remain silent about its contents. The writer of these few comments and notes does not claim to understand everything in the book, and does not claim that his opinion is always the one to be accepted. This entire effort, rather, is to inspire every Christian to study the book of Revelation for himself, and to examine each prophetic teaching as if his life depended on it. While the great themes of salvation, the life of Christ, the sanctified life, the spirit of devotion, are primary and necessary, the pure prophetic truths should never be ignored, to the danger of our souls. They give us the information pertinent to last-day living, and almost nothing else should occupy the current thinking of the Christian. For this purpose I wish to join others in calling attention to the last, and probably for our day, *most important* book of the Bible.

The sound of the seventh angel's trumpet will usher in the coming age. Jesus will return to this earth in all his splendor and glory. Every indication is that these days of the seventh angel are right upon us. Blessed is he who is watching and ready, possessing the righteous garments of knowledge and purity. Let him find himself always informed, covered, and ready, lest he be found in the embarrassing condition of shame and ignorance. Let him hold fast what he has, and watch, that no one take his crown.

The Validity of Revelation 12:18

Who is it who stands by the sea?

Predominantly all modern Greek texts and Bible versions add to Revelation twelve, verse seventeen, another phrase; commonly designated as verse eighteen. It says:

"And he stood (εσταθη) upon the sand of the sea."

Recognizing in the textual evidence the third person singular of the verb, "to stand;" i.e. "he stood;" the action is therefore applied to the angry dragon of 12:17. Thus the dragon is the one standing upon the sand of the sea.

However, the Authorized Version, taking the alternate reading of the *Textus Receptus* incorporates this phrase into 13:1. Thus:

"And I stood (εσταθην) upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea."

The difference hinges on one final Greek letter, "n," changing the rendering of the aorist passive from third person, to first person singular.

The Arguments for the Revised Reading:

The nearly overwhelming textual support for the revised reading ("he"--i.e. the dragon--stood on the sand of the sea) has led commentators to a nearly unanimous conclusion regarding its validity.

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This reading recommends itself thematically as well. It has become the preferred reading for the following reasons:

1. It seems to be supported by earlier and better manuscript evidence. (This always assumes, of course, the typical and subjective assessments of modern textual critics are accurate).
2. The "setting formula" or introductory statement offered in the traditional rendering of 13:1: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea and I saw;" is not found elsewhere in the book of Revelation. The author of Revelation never specifically reports his own physical position of standing except in this possible instance.
3. The dragon can be thought to stand in this way because he does so in 12:4; "And the dragon stood before the woman. . . ."
4. Finally, it makes a certain logical sense that when the dragon leaves the woman frustrated in his attempts to harm her; that he takes up a position to "summon his allies," or that he is "poised for conflict." Then would enter his collaborators whom he calls out of the sea and land. It is thus the completion of the false trinity; the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

The Traditional Reading

Before joining the popular majority who are going in haste to the execution of the traditional reading, however, it might be wise to consider for a moment the alternative position.

Though one may see no great consequence in whatever way this verse is to be viewed, a perspective may be missed which could enhance further understanding of the direction and import of Revelation's prophecies.

Let us look at some arguments for the traditional reading as well:

1. Though it is absurd to believe that textual transmission of the original autographs has been perfect down through the intervening centuries; the

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arrogance and freedom exercised by textual critics in revising the common text of Scripture is an issue in itself that should be examined.

To take the position that this text must be changed because of such manuscripts as the Sinaiticus; or because it renders better sense if we do, are still very subjective judgments. In authorizing this wholesale change, we are asserting thereby that the promised divine superintendence over the faithfulness of the biblical text endured a lapse here. The "majority" of manuscripts (ca. 90%), are witnesses of the traditional translation that was accepted for many, many centuries. These support the traditional *Textus Receptus* reading. Do we find agreeable that in this particular instance God permitted thousands of readers to believe the wrong rendition of this somewhat important verse for as many centuries? This textual variance is more than a minor "and" or "the;" for the meaning of the verse is changed entirely.

2. In other places we have noticed the thematic marriage between the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation. There is also a commonality between the book of Revelation and other apocalyptic writings in the Old Testament.

Though we are leaving the context of Revelation on this point, and must endure the hazards of such an estrangement, there are certain characteristic "setting formulae" found in other semi-related apocalyptic literature, that I submit should be found present in the *Revelation* as well.

a. First let us recognize that even in the Revelation we find in the very initial commencement of the vision (1:9,10) that John is by nature of his surroundings near the shore of the sea. He is "on the isle of Patmos," and hears the "voice of much water," typical to his austere setting. In fact, the long and narrow island makes it impossible to not be in the immediate presence of the sea.

As the second half of the vision or book commences it would therefore be consistent to place the author in this correlate setting. Many commentators agree that near this point in the book, there are markers of change. The most common determination is that somewhere between chapter 12 and 13 the themes change from historical to eschatological.

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One might even argue then that what we have here are two great visions: unbroken except here (and here only in the slightest). Each half is thoroughly connected and bound together without break by transitional phrases such as; "after this," and "after these things," etc. The two great visions, (7 parts ultimately), begin in the same setting, with the apostle on the lonely shore of Patmos. Yet this scenario is not entirely necessary to argue the strengths of the traditional, majority reading. Let us refer to other similar passages starting with the book of Daniel.

b. The Book of Daniel

Chapter 7:2 ff.

"I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea. . . ." (lion, bear, leopard, terrible beast).

Though Daniel is in vision, and does not specifically state his posture; where else can Daniel be "setting-wise" than at the seashore? And particularly which seashore? : "The Great Sea;" the proper name for the Mediterranean. This is, of course, the same sea over which the apostle John casts his eyes when he is on Patmos. Note that it is typically customary in apocalyptic visions for the vision to begin in such a setting; beside a great body of water.

Finally, notice also that this vision in Daniel 7 is the very vision from which Revelation 13:1 and the following parade of beasts in allusory fashion is indisputably drawn!

Daniel 8:2ff.

"I saw in a vision, and I was by the *river Ulai*." ("And I saw a ram. . . . a he-goat. . . little horn, etc.)

Daniel 10:4 ff.

"I was by the side of the *great river, which is Hiddekel*." (Immediately follows the vision of man clothed in linen; feet like brass, etc., which is the allusory twin of John and his vision of the exalted Christ in Revelation 1 on the isle of Patmos)

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In essentially EVERY vision that uses beasts and figures in the whole latter and eschatological half of the book of *Daniel*; Daniel is pictured "standing" beside a body of water. The only vision in which he is not is (Daniel 9); and there are really no signs, beasts, and figures featured there anyway, Daniel prays and Gabriel comes to *verbally* give him understanding regarding the previous vision (Dan. 8).

Is it mere coincidence that this consistent pattern emerges?

c. Ezekiel

A further example exists in the opening of the book of Ezekiel:

". . . I was among the captives *by the river Chebar*, that the heavens opened, and I saw visions of God." vs. 1

We conclude, therefore, that it is not unlikely for the prophets in some instances, at the beginning of a vision or a large series of visions, to be found "on the sand of the sea," or beside a significant body of water.

Only a remote few commentators are astute enough to observe the possible significance of the "beside much water" posture of the biblical prophets.¹

3. Further, the "revised" wording is not entirely without syntax problems. It can even appear contradictory. In essence it reads, "And the dragon went away and stayed." For a dragon who has supposedly left, it seems inconsistent, to find him still present at the very same place the author of the story must be, to witness what follows.

Further, "making war, and "standing" are not homogenous terms. Even "preparing" (for war) and "standing," are not homogenous.

¹ cf. (Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Fleming H. Revell, Westwood, N. Jersey, n.d., p. 269).

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In addition, we know that this dragon (Rev. 12: 3ff), "who primarily is Satan," is also, by symbol, an empire, the pagan/political Roman empire, which *did* "go away" as a result of the wounds inflicted by the barbaric and Islamic nations, etc. Rome as an exclusively political entity did disappear at about this time in history. The empire does come back in a metamorphic form; a religio-political power, but never as the very same worldly empire. In fact, this new form is the subject of Revelation 13:1ff. to whom the dragon (who is not physically in the picture anymore, one might notice) gives his seat and authority.

4. Finally, when applying the use of synonymic parallels, and in this case roughly balancing one half of a section against the other half we find corresponding figures of interest. For example, in 15:1ff one sees a victorious throng standing (on and beside; *epi*) the sea of glass and fire. Although the previous section does have a victorious throng standing upon Mt. Zion (14:1), the only significant parallel to standing "beside a sea" is here in 13:1 or 12:18. In fact there may be some resonance in the "sand of the sea" expression. This is precisely how glass is made, from sea/sand; thus one finds a figure of some kind, also in parallel, standing beside a sea of glass. The faithful apostle makes a better matching correspondence for this, than does the evil, wrathful dragon.²

5. Another important grammatical observation I have discovered, is entirely overlooked by commentators. This is the passive form of the verb itself, "to stand."

To explain, the verb is clearly parsed as an *aorist passive*, of the "mi" verb, ἵστημι. To correctly translate the passive sense, the subject, in this case the dragon, is not actively placed in his position, but is passively placed in his position. In other words he is under the control of another power.

² Note: The chief elements of glass formation are sand and fire, perhaps water also. A certain combination of elements are needed such as, sand (70%), soda ash and lime, etc. cf. *Our Wonderful World*, Vol. 13, p. 373.

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Consequently one must translate the verse: "and he was stood," or "he was caused to be placed," or "made to stand" on the sand of the sea. *What force or power comes over him is not materially present or clearly stated.* (The only one who could have power over the dragon would be God or Christ, of course).

This passive sense as applied to the dragon is not in agreement with the immediate context. For when the dragon in the preceding phrase goes away to wage war he is actively under his own control ("went away;" active verb). He goes away to make war on his own volition. Making war is not a passive motif but a very active one. Then why would the out-of-character passive form be chosen in 12:18? The passive form is really an impossible one for this verse.

It would make good sense if this could be a middle verb, for then he is "standing himself" or taking a strategic position for war. This would make the revised wording emphatic.

The trouble is that no middle voice use of this verb is found in the entire New Testament.³

In addition, in a very similar grammatical formation in previous verses where the dragon stands before the woman to destroy her child (12:4), the aorist passive form of ἵστημι is not used, but the perfect form (which should translate like a present verb) is used: ἕστηεν.⁴

In short, the corrective measures of textual emendation may have simply created a grammatical nightmare far worse than the traditional rendering.

But now on the contrary, if the same aorist passive form of the Majority Text is taken, being in that case the first person, thus: "I was placed or made to stand on the sand of the sea," there is no difficulty. For this is exactly what happens repeatedly to the apostle while in vision; (passively) being whisked away and about in the spirit; i.e. "I was carried away in the

³ (cf. Ray Summers, *Essentials of New Testament Greek*, p. 127)

⁴ (Cf. *Litke*, Vol. 1, p. 136, *Dana & Mantey*, p. 326, for forms of ἵστημι).

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Spirit," "I was caught up," "I was taken," etc. In this case John is placed by the Spirit where he can witness the unfolding drama of the rising beast.

CONCLUSION

Though it will still be argued that the revised reading is the correct one, and that later copyists capriciously changed the third person verb "he stood" to the first person "I stood" to agree with the first person verb for "I saw" in vs. 13:1, we must be more cautious and admit all the evidence to the equation. To take "hook, line, and sinker" the decided change offered us by the textual critics admits more trust in the system than some, at least, should have.

Hopefully enough evidence to the contrary is offered to keep us from authorizing, without reservations, such a change.

The strongest and best evidence overall leads us to the conclusion that the traditional reading is truest to all other biblical models and most consistent to the context and grammatical considerations inherent in the text. The passage marks an important division in the text of Revelation, and together with the ancient prophet on the shore of Patmos we are now introduced to the scenes comprising the eschatological showdown featured in the latter half of this great book.

Further Evidence:

An important question to ask is why in the biblical scenes noted outside the book of Revelation is the prophet positioned by the waterside?

Is it merely circumstance? Is there no significance at all?

At least two reasons exist for the prophet's position:

1. In every case noted above where we find this "beach setting formula" the prophet is an EXILIC prophet. The prophet is IN

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CAPTIVITY. Daniel and Ezekiel are both exilic prophets. The melancholy hopes of God's captive people are associated with these waters of separation, tears, and alienation. (Rev. 21:1="no more sea"; "by many waters"--Jer 51:13)

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For they that carried us away captive required of us a song . . ."

Psalm 137:1,2,3 first part.

The empires that are instrumental in bringing Israel into captivity were thought to be positioned beside much water (the Euphrates, the canals, the sea [Tyre] etc). Thus modern Babylon is so situated in the prophetic narrative (Rev. 17,18). Thus John on Patmos is so positioned, no doubt looking westward toward Rome, the center of the Roman state; beyond the Aegean, the Grecian peninsula, and the Adriatic. Out of the Great Sea came the great and terrible beast.

2. Secondly, waters represent people and nations. To be surrounded by water, or to be looking into the midst of the waters is symbolic of watching the rising and turmoil of the powers and nations of this earth. In the same way are the captives of Israel surrounded and influenced by the secular power of their captors.

Therefore the position of the prophet standing beside the sea is not accidental or insignificant. Holding to the traditional rendering preserves the significance of this.

The prophet John in Revelation 13:1, represents, as a prophetic representative, the condition of the contemporary Israel as being in captivity to earthly powers. He stands on the lonely isle of Patmos. He stands beside the restless sea. He is an "exilic" prophet.

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This allusion is further explicated in the following verses of chapter 13. For the persecuting power that oppresses God's people is doomed to be paid in the same way as it has paid:

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity" (Rev 13:10).

Thus this interpretation is true to its context, for John is positioned as a "captive" prophet is typically pictured. He is found in the exact place where his captor, the oppressive power who overcomes and persecutes the saints rises to do his work, and finally receives his ultimatum (13:10).

Thus we conclude that here lies further evidence for the traditional translation of 12:18/13:1. More importantly is recognized the significance of the prophet's physical position; that is, standing beside the Great Sea.

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The Two Beasts

(Revelation 13:1-18)

The First Beast

(13:1-10)

Little comment will be offered in this section on the identity of the beast of Revelation 13:1-8. Prophetic light has shone upon this passage in great measure, especially in recent years, and others have provided excellent exegesis and historical support for the meaning of these symbols. The reader is referred to the writings of Uriah Smith, C. Mervyn Maxwell, and others for a fuller understanding of this passage.

However a few words of comment are necessary to re-enforce the validity of the traditional views of Revelation 13. New interpretations have surfaced, most of which bear no resemblance to the actual meaning and intent of the passage. In addition, for centuries views have been promoted that pervert the focus of this powerful exposé, and effectively work to take the heat off of and excuse the true subject of Revelation 13. When the beast power, and the mark of the beast teaching is diluted or reduced to a philosophical and theoretical discussion, the book of Revelation is robbed of its prophetic purpose. This is serious and perilous manipulation, and does not receive the approval of God.

For centuries it has been understood that the beast power of Revelation 13:1-10 is identified with the Papal Roman system. That this interpretation is the correct one should be as clear as the morning sky. A

The Two Beasts

simple reckoning of the ten or so characteristics of this power leaves no other choice. Yet some insist on other interpretations. Such things as “atheism,” generic “evil,” and the like, appear as popular interpretations. Such determinations fly in the face of the principles of interpretation promoted in this study and in others. Especially is the principle of “direct association” violated in this respect.

The position in this commentary is that the beast is always, and consistently the Roman power, beginning in its imperial phase and changing to the papal phase later in history. This is the prophetic teaching of the Book of Daniel, a book that must be studied with Revelation. This is the position of thousands of responsible, sincere interpreters. This is the position demanded by the characteristics in the passage, and it is the position that is finding actual temporal fulfillment.

Only one power can be said to have:

- Existed for at least 1,260 years
- Received its throne from the great and terrible beast (Rome)
- Blasphemed God in its religious and secular claims
- Persecuted the saints by the millions
- Claimed itself to have the mark there prophesied
- Experienced “captivity”
- Received a “deadly wound”
- Rose up in the midst of the sea (nations)
- Had political ambitions and universal dominion
- Has risen in the order and times specified in the prophecies

The mere “survival” of this power, still with us today is in itself and argument that the interpretation is relevant.

This does not mean that it is ever fair and right to attack a church, its people, or some of its activities with personal vendetta. God has people in all faiths. The purpose of God’s prophecies is never to humiliate and accuse, but to warn and instruct Christians, and to guide them in the path they should walk.

However, God hates not the sinner, but the sin. Falsehood and diseased doctrine God greatly abhors, because it leads to suffering and to the loss of

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souls. Thus God has purposes in leading the sincere heart away from systems and ideas that are of satanic origin. It is right and proper to rise up and expose these things for the benefit of Christians who need to see sin and deception unmasked. It is through error that Satan takes captive the mind. The issues of prophecy are not for mere curiosity, or for blame. They are issues for life or death, eternal life or eternal loss.

More about the beast power is said on the discussion of the third angel's message. The reader seeking more information and verification is welcome to read in many works that are available about the rise of the papacy, its aims and purposes, and its place in the prophetic scheme. Any simple student, motivated by sincere interest will have no trouble seeing that the identity of the beast power with the papal power is valid. There can be no doubt, for God has mercifully left the reader with multiplied symbols, easy to understand, clearly marked, that the proper interpretation cannot possibly be missed.

The Second Beast

As in the case of the first beast, the second beast has made a clear entrance in the modern world. The marvelous fulfillment of prophecy in the identity of the second beast as the United States of America was first noticed by J.N. Andrews in the late 1800's. This interpretation has only found stronger verification as time has passed, and America has risen from obscurity to the most powerful nation on earth. It is only proper that such a power, with such significance would find a place in Bible prophecy.

The full fruition to the aims of this power is yet to be seen. But the evidence is that it is on track to fulfill its prophetic destiny. The evidence is manifest in great abundance.

The second beast rises out of the "earth," meaning it rises up away from the political history of the Old World. This is true particularly of America.

In Revelation 13 this beast or nation reaches the status of a world power, with world dominance. This, particularly in recent years, is also true of America.

The Two Beasts

The second beast operates a benign form of government. This is also true of America.

The Two Horns

The two horns are a particularly interesting symbol, and are as telltale of the power they describe as anything in the description. That this form of government was particularly predicted almost 2,000 years before its rise is simply marvelous and divine.

Horns in prophecy represent powers or governments. If the horns, emblematic of powers "emerging" from former super-governments, have crowns or diadems, they can represent monarchial powers. One would expect the rise of "single" horns to represent one nation or government. However, this is not the case in Revelation 13.

The horns of the two-horned beast have neither crowns nor diadems. They are "lamb-like," representing a milder form of government.

Furthermore they are of equal magnitude. This would be a conundrum for people of the former ages, for this would indicate a kingdom with "two kings." How could there peacefully and happily reign *two* kings, without absolute power? Yet the nation described is obviously a significant, world-dominant power at the very same time.

The only answer is that this dual power, correspondingly cooperative, and equally balanced, is best fulfilled in democracy. Such a self-limiting government, protecting itself through checks and balances, is perfectly described by the beast with two equal and distinct horns.

To say that these two horns represent civil and religious liberty is not the most defensible assessment of the symbol. Civil and religious liberties are rather one of the positive *results* emanating from the nature of this government.

The two horns could more accurately be represented in such forms as the "bi-cameral" legislature of American politics, or in constitutional

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separation of the church and the state. In the area of religion it is counter-balanced in the Catholic and Protestant forms of faith. In all this dualistic, representative, and democratic process, we find what is probably meant by this ingenious symbol.

The Mark

As in the case of the “seal” of God, the “mark” of the beast cannot so much be a literal mark as much as it is a symbolic mark. According to the principle of symbolism, God’s people do not wear a literal mark, but have God’s approval, and have “settled into the truth so that they cannot be moved.” The works of their character is impressed in their minds (foreheads) and in their hands (works).

In the same way, those of the beast power are found working in league with the false precepts promoted by earthly powers. The number of the beast, is the number of man (6, multiplied). The beast worshippers bear the marks of humanistic and evil design.

This does not mean that the mark of the beast will not have secular and real manifestations, practical or economic, but the principle of symbolism turns the focus to events and designs that will affect the religious minds of men, and not toward an actual mark or brand on their forehead. The Dragon (Satan--the false Father God--chap. 12), the First Beast (the false Christ), and the Second Beast (the false prophet or false Holy Spirit [fire, miracles]), will unite to win the allegiance of men. While real in its effects, the battle is chiefly a spiritual one, as it always has been.

The *charagma*, or mark, is intentionally different than a seal. It is the mark of submission, the mark of slavery. This is appropriate to the scenario that will play out spiritually, as the oppressive beast powers seek to control the minds and consciences of men in the future. More of this will be reviewed when studying the messages of the three angels.

144,000 on Mt. Zion

A fuller treatment on the identity of the 144,000 was given in volume 2 of this series of studies. However, since the 144,000 are treated in both Revelation 7 and 14, a few comments, mostly in review will be given in the following abbreviated section.

As suggested previously, by merging chapter 7:4-17 with 14:1-5, fourteen (2X7) characteristics of the 144,000 are noted. These are listed below:

- They are eschatological last day “Jews” or “Israelites.”
- They are from the “12 tribes of Israel.”
- They have the seal of God on their foreheads (names of God & Jesus).
- They are designated distinctly from a later and separate group taken from all nations and races of the world. (7:9)
- Their number is 144,000.
- They stand on Mt. Zion with the Lamb.
- They sing a new song.
- They have harps.
- They are “redeemed” from the earth.
- They are virgins; or chaste.
- The song they sing is unique to them.
- They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.
- They are “firstfruits.”
- They have no guile in their mouth.

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1. They are “Jews.”

It was determined according to the New Testament rule of enlarged understanding that they are not “literal” Jews, but “spiritual” Jews⁵.

The conclusion would be that they are a group who are *Christians*.

2. They are from 12 tribes.

Each tribe would be represented modernly as being taken from the various churches of Christendom. Today there are Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Christians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, and scores of others. It might then be noted that the 144,000 would necessarily consist of representatives *originally derived* from such subgroups or divisions.

3. This group has the seal of God.

The seal or mark of God, the sign of His ownership is clear (Ex 31:13; Ezekiel 20:20; Exodus 20:8-11). This group respects and keeps the seventh-day Sabbath.

4. They are distinct from a later group from all nations.

A proscribed progression is found in the glorified throngs in Revelation 7 and in Revelation 14 and 15, building from a “national” base/group into an “international” movement. This group consequently represents a group that moves from relative isolation to global recognition. This characteristic change in the two groups of Revelation 7 and 14 is a supremely important marker ignored by most everyone, especially those who falsely co-identify the two groups. This identifying characteristic must be recognized and acknowledged. It is very important.

⁵ Galatians 3:28,29:

“*And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.*”

The 144,000

5. They have a definite and specific number.

The number is too exact and suspicious to be absolutely literal. Yet at the same time it is measurable and specific. The number has purpose or else this group would be designated generally and more ambiguously than it is. They are 144,000, IN NUMBER.

6. They are seen on Mt. Zion.

This associates them with the ministry of God's temple⁶ or sanctuary. Mt. Zion was the home of the priests. It assigns this group a priestly role designating that they are:

- Religiously ardent
- Faithful to the Levitical precepts
- "Jewish" in their religious orientation and worship

7. They sing a "new" song.

Songs are always messages; expressions of the heart. Especially in Hebrew culture, the musical score was not so much important as was the lyric. This group therefore has a "new" message, unique to themselves, new to the world.

8. They possess harps

Harps⁷ were a lute-like instrument usually having 12 (!) (sometimes 11) strings. They are associated often with temple worship in the Jewish writings. Notably they are associated with the services for the re-dedication of the temple or sanctuary and the subsequent annual celebrations honoring that event.⁸

9. They were "bought" from the earth from among men.

⁶ Please read the following piece to this section for a fuller exposition of the theological and symbolic significance of the "Zion" motif.

⁷ (κίθαρα)(*guitar*)

⁸ (See IDB, Vol. 2, p.526.)

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- They are *men*, not angels, earthly not heavenly creatures.
- Christ's blood has made atonement for them.
- Inference is made that they are in a "lay away plan," "purchased to own."
- They are "sealed" or marked prior to or before others.

They are "bought" or "redeemed." "Redeemed" does not necessarily mean, "translated" as many mistakenly assume⁹.

- They are bought from the earth, implying that they were once "possessed" by the earth. (Technically, purchased from the earth, alludes to *death*; i.e., burial in the ground). Traditionally, expositors teach that the 144,000 are "translated" FROM the earth and are seen "proleptically" (seen now, but represented in their later, resurrected state) on Mt. Zion (Rev. 14:1 ff.). This assumed meaning, however, of only a later, glorified group, may cloud the true intention of Revelation's author in using this particular phrase "redeemed from the earth."

10. They are pure.

The King James Version says, "virgins" (chaste).

This is taken to mean that they are doctrinally and spiritually pure since they have not committed "fornication" with Babylon. However the symbolism surpasses this:

It does not necessarily mean that they are unmarried or that it is a virtue to not be married as some for centuries have read into this. What is referred to here, in fact, is "ritual" and "levitical" purity.

⁹In biblical times redemption was enacted by the closest of kin (the "goel," or redeemer) toward the person in circumstantial jeopardy. The redeemer would intercede for the person who owed a debt, or who owed a penalty that he could not pay. Since many of these legal transactions were monetary, the words "redeem" and "bought" are interchangeable. In an intercessory fashion the redeemer was the legal protector of that person's rightful property.

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The point is that they are “men/priests” who are *ritually* clean in preparation for a coming religious holy day.

Israelites were enjoined only in two circumstances to prepare in this way:

- At the giving of the Law on Sinai
- Immediately before the Day of Atonement

In addition, they were to prepare in the following ways:

1. Wash their garments (robes)
2. Temporarily abstain from sexual relations

This fasting and preparation was particularly observed before the Day of Atonement. This is well documented in Josephus and the Jewish writings. Biblically, another instance of this was before the giving of the law on Sinai. God told Moses; “consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments” (Ex 19:10). In verse 15 Moses instructed, “do not go near a woman,” or in the KJV, “Go not at your wives.” According to ceremonial regulations a man who had sexual relations with a woman was considered unclean for a short, yet specified length of time. To be “chaste” or “clean” required only momentary abstinence.

Therefore it can be concluded that this group is represented as having a religious experience that leaves them prepared for the coming (1) Day of Judgment and for (2) receiving the Law of God.

11. The song or message they sing is unique to them.

What this says is that this group’s song/message is “new¹⁰” and “reformatory” and is therefore not fully appreciated by the rest of Christendom. This characteristic has been clearly fulfilled in modern prophetic times.

¹⁰ Considering the “new song” of the 144,000, one can be sure that it is the message of the three angels that follow immediately in the text. To quote: “A new song is to be put into their mouths. They are to go forth to impart to others now in darkness the light of the third angel’s message.” 7T 40

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12. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

They are aware of the “movement” of the Lamb (in the temple on Mt. Zion, which was the focus, of course!) and they go with Him to the holy apartments.

13. They are “firstfruits.”

Firstfruits were offered before the general harvest. However, the 144,000 in being “redeemed” cannot expect that they will be “translated” before the rest of the faithful. Therefore it cannot mean that they are the first “translated. No, they are sealed first.

In the resurrection “*They are caught up together. . . to meet the Lord in the air,*” (1Thess. 4:16,17); i.e., together with the righteous dead.

- They will not then precede them. (Cf. RSV; Greek translation, etc.)

Therefore, the 144,000 appear to be a specially designated group, bought, sealed, and enrolled sometime prior to the coming and before the three angels have completed their work. And this is exactly the historical order in which they are placed in Revelation 7 and in Revelation 14.

14. They have or speak (“proclaim”) the truth.

This is not speaking only of basic “honesty.” This is regrettably where some expositors leave us. It is doctrinal and biblical honesty, for they are pure, on Mt. Zion with the Lamb. They have the “truth.” They have no “guile in their mouths.” They have the “Everlasting Gospel.”

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The Identity of the 144,000

Only one modern group can fit this profile in every respect. Only one group can claim to be an eschatological, reformatory movement; that arose out of several denominations, yet kept the Sabbath and experienced a preparation for receiving the law of God and for the judgment. Only one group has had a distinctly new (yet old--everlasting) message or song, that is given to the world, and as a movement has grown from a local organization to an international organization of truth. Only one group has claimed to teach altogether a “sanctuary message,” a “movement of the Lamb message,” a “commandment message,” and a “three-angel message.” *It is then largely indicative of the group of early Adventist pioneers, many of whom have now passed, yet who received the sealing message, and gave it to the world.*

Further Comment:

Some would object to this being possible, yet it consummately fits the biblical and prophetic data provided. In volume 2, it was demonstrated that the messages to the 144,000 were particularly given to the generation of early Adventists because it applied particularly to *them*. Ellen White’s first vision was given to the Advent band, who are pointed to the triumph of the 144,000, not to the triumph of the large international group later described. The characteristics of the 144,000 are not the characteristics of Laodicea, the last prophetic church; but are the characteristics of the church of Philadelphia, the “next to last” church that gives their message with “missionary” zeal. Further, the prophetic testimony, in instructing modern believers about the special resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus up to the time when Jesus comes, miss the fulfillment of NONE of the experiences promised to the 144,000.

Like no other, the early Adventists “followed” Jesus, the Lamb, into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. They gave a “new” message, filled with the “everlasting gospel” truths that had really been forgotten: the Second Coming, the Sabbath, pure living, preparation for Judgment. The faithful have thus been “sealed,” and await the resurrection.

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Though no doubt all of God's people, including the great multitude from all times and places will in a sense be "sealed," the sealing work predominantly figures in the focus on the 144,000 in the book of Revelation. In fact, the verb forms indicate them as "already having been sealed," in the same context as the angel's still holding the winds. The sealing work has already been represented to them as *in progress*, and in fact "almost over."

A simple syllogism will equate that if the sealing work was begun *nearly over* a hundred or more years ago, and the sealing work *had already then begun*, that at least most of those sealed in that era can never be alive "**until**" Jesus comes.

But they certainly will be alive "**when**" Jesus comes. Those raised in the special resurrection will experience everything that is described as being the experience of the 144,000 in the visions. In Revelation 7, careful exegesis demonstrates that it is the "great multitude" who go through the "great time of trouble" (great tribulation) and who are there particularly arrayed in white robes, and about whom the elder of John's acquaintance speaks. But *all* these characteristics cannot be necessarily assumed of the first group, who many expositors carelessly co-identify with the great multitude group from many nations.

A consistent, "chronological," pattern emerges in both chapters 7 and 14:

- The First Group, (the 144,000) from Christendom
- The Great Multitude from every nation
- The Time of Trouble
- The Coming of Jesus

As formerly demonstrated, it fits quite appropriately that the 144,000 are a special group who had a special message for their time, whose works are not forgotten, many who have died in the Lord. "Their works do follow them" (14:13).

The Revelator indicates and recognizes that some will die before the final events because this is mentioned *post* the presentation of the 144,000 and

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post to the presentation of the three messages. It would seem that more than martyrs are included in this "first fruits" group¹¹.

Typology and History

Throughout *Salvation History* a consistent pattern has developed; it is this: God calls a people. Then he seeks to reach the world through them.

He started with Israel, and called them out as a nation. They were of one family. But God was not playing favorites. His plan was that they would evangelize the world. According to Isaiah they were to be a "light" to the Gentiles. When they failed he started over. This Jesus did by calling 12 apostles, (12 sons of Jacob), sending out 70 (seventy elders) and so forth. They were to first go to the lost sheep of the tribe of Israel. This is what happened. The first Christian converts were all Jews. If they had not been so prompted the gospel may have never gone to the Gentiles. But in time it was proclaimed "first to the Jew and then to the Greek."

It so happened with the Advent message. It went at first to the existing churches of Christians. But now the world is in a stage of proclaiming the gospel so that the "heathen" from all lands who are accepting it outnumber the original church-spawned group.

Israel that came out of Egypt was God's "firstborn." These firstborn were "redeemed" with shekels. They belonged to God. They are a type of the

¹¹ It is not the claim of this author that Ellen White herself understood the 144,000 in the way presented in this treatise. It is quite clear from her statements that she understood them to be of the generation of which she was a member, for she believed that the church was on the very verge of Canaan and that Jesus' coming was within only a few years. She did not envision that a whole century and more would pass, and that none of those living with her in the message would live to see Jesus come. No doubt, in vision she saw the triumphant Adventist throng; those raised to see Jesus come, and naturally assumed that those she saw in vision were those living at the end of time, or the like. God did not reveal to her the times, but only the outcome. Only with the time having now elapsed could any of us understand anything different than she did concerning the 144,000.

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firstfruits or *firstborn* in the final Exodus from Egypt, or the coming out of Babylon.¹²

The number 144,000 is not simply symbolic as so many propose; weakly laying it aside. God could be more general if he wanted, but he has purpose in the number. Yet it is too exact to be absolutely literal. Only God can know the true heart, and only he can reveal in the judgment who they individually are. It seems clear however, that they typify the genuine ones of those who first proclaimed the full Seventh-day Adventist message, beginning in the last century. It is a very realistic, symbolic number for that group of early Adventists who accepted the Sabbath and taught it with energy. Only one particular group on earth can fulfill all fourteen characteristics that are reviewed above.

The 144,000 also come chronologically in the prophetic narrative. It is important to notice that in both passages, Rev. 7 and 14, the 144,000 are mentioned *prior* to the later international group or the message that goes to them. This would seem to indicate that they come into prophetic history in that very order.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Regardless of what view is taken of the 144,000 it is important to avoid dogmatism. The above considerations are not conclusive and it is not the author's intention to make them so. At the very least, however, it does seem unequivocal that the 144,000 refer to the great Advent movement since no other movement can qualify under so many characteristics. This much is faith building and legitimate. Whether or not they are alive until Jesus comes or are a group marked and sealed beforehand is not a matter that should be insisted upon.

¹² For the interesting type of the 144,000 in Israel please read the chapter, "The Prodigious Numbers of the Israelite Encampment," in my book, *Hard Sayings for Adventists*.

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However, in some ways it makes wonderful sense to this writer, and explains away an exclusive favoritism often troubling some students of this subject. It seems incongruous, that at the end, God would have two righteous groups; one excellent group and then, one larger, yet inferior sub-group. It also is incongruous that God would limit the saved at the end to a pre-determined small number. This flies in the face of the New Testament teaching. It narrows the “whosoever will may come” idea elsewhere in the Revelation to a very narrow invitation at best.

What is important is to study what they are, in an effort to understand God's word for our own enrichment, and for the enrichment of others. Such subjects should never become a subject of pure argumentation.

Nor should anyone seek to identify specifically who compose or make up the 144,000 *as individuals*. Only God can judge who will be saved and lost, who is truly pure and who is not. This is a useless ambition. And this is probably what is meant in the cautions about not seeking to determine who the 144,000 are. But it is a noble task to understand God's word and it is God's desire that we understand as much as we can of it.

Mt. Zion and Eschatology

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” Revelation 14:1 (KJV)

Why is the Lamb seen standing upon Mt. Zion with the 144,000?

Within this symbol alone is found most pertinent information about who the 144,000 are and what beliefs they profess, and teach. The Lamb and his flock are not just somewhere, floating on clouds, or the like. They are upon Mt. Zion.

Too many pass over this identifying hint with so little regard. This author has been among them that do. Let us make an attempt to understand why God placed this factor in the equation.

It is obvious that Mt. Zion was biblically the rallying point of Israel, religiously and nationally. It is emblematic of the temple complex, the worship of Jahweh, and the Davidic hopes of Israel. But this does not go far enough. Not even near.

The words, “Mt. Zion,” bring to mind at least four major themes that need to be recognized. Let us take these on, one by one:

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Mountains and Religions

The first thing of note is the “mountain” motif.

Mountains in Revelation’s prophecies seem to be symbolic of powers (Rev. 17), but not just governmental powers in the secular sense. They seem to be representing powers that have particular “religious” connotations to them, thus they are equated with “religio-political” powers or movements.

Mountains in Old Testament culture are almost always equated with cultic and religious assemblies. The “high places” that recur in the prophetic narratives were actual mountain tops, in those cases places devoted to the worship of heathen deities with all their rituals and rites. It can probably be maintained that these places were situated thus in a symbolic effort to be closer to heaven and the God or “gods” that supposedly dwelt there.

The law was given on Mt. Sinai, while Israel was assembled about the mountain. Earlier in history, the first worship service, post-flood, was observed on the same calendar day of the year on Mt. Ararat. Elijah carried out his great reform on the summit of Mt. Carmel, to signify a gathering after true religious faith as opposed to the false notions and assemblies that were no doubt convened typically and regularly on the same mountain. To “call people to the mountain” was the equivalent of inviting people to worship, but particularly in the prophetic scenario, to a reformed mode of worship--revival and reformation. Mt. Zion represents the true, orthodox worship of God, and thus the 144,000 are pictured as true Levitical priests, clothed as such, ritually pure as such, and prepared for the *Day of Atonement* rituals.

The attempt of Babel, or Babylon of old, was to unify apostate religion, and they did so by building a “false mountain” (they didn’t have a “real” one!) so they could have a religious assembly there,

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around it. The counterpart to Mt. Zion, the assembly of the true and righteous, is the “Mountain of Assembly” found in Isaiah 14:13,14. (“Armageddon,” i.e. false religion)

Therefore, the context of Mt. Zion, is here presented as religio-centric and not secular. The beast powers and the threats to God’s faithful are the subjects at hand because the issues revolve around matters of religion, true and false religion, *per se*.

The Number “7”

The word “zion” actually can have several symbolic meanings closely tied to it because of its phonetic sound. The word “zayin” is the name of the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the language of Scripture. It is common knowledge that the Hebrew letters were equally considered to be numbers, and no one ever pronounced the name of one letter, at least the first ten or so, without thinking of the number associated with it also.

, ז "Zion," "7"

When one said, “Mt. Zion,” he not only thought of the place of worship and the centralized hopes of Israel in the temple complex, but his mind also “heard” with equal clearness: “Mt. Seven,” or the “mountain among the seven.” Translated symbolically along with the “mountain” theme this would mean: “The ‘Seven’ Religion.” In other words, a church, with the word “seven” in its name, or in association with it. This is not a reach, but is couched in direct symbolism related to the word, “Zion,” or “zayin.”

The English letter equivalent to the Hebrew “zayin” is the letter “Z.” Anyone can see that the letter, “Z” is actually a “seven,” that retains

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an ancient tail or base. Other forms of the letter *zayin* look almost exactly like a modern Arabic numeral, *seven*.

The number seven is often attached to God's church. In Revelation there are "seven" churches. Seven is God's "mark" or "trademark" because he formed the earth over seven days to mark it as his work. Seven is his creative mark. It is God's trademark, so to speak.

Of course, seven, as a symbol of cyclical completeness can also be used negatively, because the false church will always try to masquerade as the true church. But God does have a true faith and it is associated with the number seven and should be associated with it in many ways. As it was associated with the church of Jahweh of old under the dispensation of Israel; "Zion," or "Seven," so should it be associated with the modern church of spiritual Israel who are to be proclaimants of the "everlasting" gospel.

The greatest sign given the true 'seven' worshipper is in the "seal of God," the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, the seal of creation. The true Jew of old was intended to be sealed by it. So is the modern "Jew."

God created the world and then "sealed" the creation with the Sabbath. This is God's day of WORSHIP, true worship. As formerly observed, the word, "Sabbath," probably means: "sign of the Father." If the "Father's name" is "written in their foreheads," the word Sabbath is necessarily there mostly; for "Abba; Father" is found central in the word, "Sabbath."

Another number found in association with the number "seven" is the number "four." There is not time to discuss that here, but one prominent example is that the Sabbath commandment, is the FOURTH, and enjoins worship on the SEVENTH day. Fours and sevens show up particularly in the Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 14:6-12 interestingly enough, and THREE and FOUR

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make SEVEN. This is just basic numerology. But this we have also dealt with elsewhere.

Next, let us look at the geographical significance of the expression, "zion." This brings certain illusory parallels to the table as well.

The Hebrew Word for Geographical Zion

The Hebrew word for mountain of Zion, as a proper place name, is *tzityon*. According to one Jewish writer the lexical word *association* for this would be: "the righteous person."

The Hebrew root of the word Zion, *Tzityon* (*tzaddik, yud, hei*) possesses only one consonant, its initial letter-*tzadik*. *Tzityon* is basically just the letter *tzadik*, which means "the righteous one."

In the context of Revelation's prophecy (14:1) this would mean that the holy assembly found on Mt. Zion are denominated as "righteous ones," of course, appropriate to the setting. (Rev. 22:11)

Now, anyone would say, "Well, of course, they are righteous! They are the ones with God the Father." But look at the specificity of the word association:

Tzaddik is the same root word used for *cleansed, vindicated, made righteous*, and the like. It is repeatedly tied to the sanctuary service and complex of the Old Testament. It is tied to the Day of Atonement ritual. It is particularly the same word translated as "cleansed," in Daniel 8:14!

"*Unto two thousand three hundred days and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*" (i.e. the first angel's message—"hour of judgment," immediately following and in this context; the

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song/message that the group under consideration “gives” to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people). The parallel thus made to other dominant themes in this portion of Revelation is both powerful and appropriate.

Of the 144,000 it is said they are “not defiled,” and they are “without guile.” They are pure of faith, cleansed, and “righteous.” “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” And as discussed elsewhere, the puritanical cleansing is particularly associated with preparation for Day of Atonement rituals.

True students of the sanctuary doctrine are spiritually aware that God is not ultimately interested in cleansing earthly or even heavenly temples. The sanctuary is a symbol of the life and work of grace in the believer, creating a temple in which the Spirit of God is pleased to dwell. The work of the Lamb is to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement by His blood and Grace.

The early Adventist believers of the Great Awakening, who awaited Christ’s supposed coming had this very experience. They went through heartfelt confession and cleansing in order to prepare to meet their Lord. Their experience was at first most sweet as a result of this preparation, until it turned bitter due to the great disappointment. But this preparatory work was not wasted, for they *were* prepared to meet their Lord, and they will yet meet Him. It is of manifest importance that the modern Christian prepare in similar fashion for the Day of Judgment. The soul temple must be cleansed by confession and repentance for any Christian, SDA, or otherwise, to walk the streets of gold.

In a host of ways the themes of this section of Scripture when looked at under a microscope, though, keeps pointing to the Adventist experience with directness and power. It does time and time again. This can be no accident, and reveals no inordinate bias.

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It is just the way it is, and the honest in heart will quickly recognize it.

The Return to Zion

Finally, the word, "Zion" has huge connotations about the return of Christ and especially the earth made new.

When the Jewish captives returned from Babylon the word "Zion" was used to represent their dream of a restored Israel (Psalm 126). The very use of the word, "Zion" demands a thematic correspondence to this experience.

The following piece is included in this book, verbatim, because it cannot be improved upon in this regard. It is written by a modern Jew, Shira Cohen-Regev:

Everyone has dreams: a dream for a better life, for freedom, for self-fulfillment, for prosperity; a dream of living in your dream-home, for having loved ones around you. Dreams!

In some cases, many people share the same dream. They can be scattered around the world and carry that dream for many generations. They may be told that it is impossible, that their dreams are like a fairytale and will never come true. They may even believe this. But somewhere, deep in their heart, they know that this dream must become a reality. They keep it in their prayers, they look back to times in history when their dreams were fulfilled, and draw strength from the past.

This is the dream of the Return to Zion - שִׁבְתָּ צִיּוֹן -

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"Zion" is another name for Jerusalem and Israel. Its origin is found in Jerusalem's name, at the time that "David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David." (2-Samuel 5:7)

The phrase "Return to Zion" was first coined after the destruction of the Second Temple, and referred to the event in which the Jews

returned to the Land of Israel from the Babylonian exile, following Cyrus's Declaration (הַצְהָרַת כּוֹרֶשׁ – hatz'harat Koresh) in 538 BCE.

At the conclusion of the Yom Kippur prayers, and at the conclusion of the Passover Seder, Jewish people pray and express their wish to return to Zion, to Jerusalem.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

Leshana haba'a biy'rushalayim

Next year in Jerusalem

Song of Ascents

King David wrote Psalm 126, which prophetically describes the Jewish return from the Babylonian exile. The Psalm describes how, when the long-awaited return to Zion finally comes, the recollection of the harsh and bitter exile will seem like just a bad dream – and we will explode with joy at



Model of the Holy Temple - on the roof of the new Aish HaTorah building across from the Western Wall.

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the miraculous turn of events. (The verb tense of the Psalm indicates a vision of the future redemption, when "our mouths will be filled with laughter.")

This Psalm is recited as an introduction to "Grace After Meals" on Shabbat, holidays, and other joyous occasions.

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שיר המעלות - Song of Ascents

ו"תהלים קכ - Psalms 126

שיר המעלות בשוב יהוה את שביבת ציון	A Song of Ascents. When God will return the captives to Zion, we will be like dreamers
אז ימלא שחוק פינו ולשוננו רנה יאמרו בגוים הגדיל יהוה לעשות אלה-עם.	אז Then our mouth will be with laughter, and our tongue with singing. They will declare among the nations: "God has done great things with these."
הגדיל יהוה לעשות עמנו היינו שמחים.	God has done great things with us; we rejoiced.
שובה יהוה את שביתנו כאפיקים בנגב.	Return our captivity, O God, as the streams in the desert.
ברנה יקצרו הזרעים בדמעה	Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.
הלוך ילך ובכה נשא משה הנרע בא זבא ברנה נשא אלמתיו	: Though he goes on his way weeping that bears the measure of seed, he shall come home with joy, bearing his sheaves.

Upon the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE, the Jews were banished from Zion, thinking they would never return. This did not prevent them from yearning, praying, and hoping for the day when they would finally return. In 538 BCE, their dream came true. King Cyrus allowed these "yearners for Zion" to return to their land, and subsequently gave them permission to rebuild the Holy Temple. Led by the prophets Chagai and Zechariah, the first group of exiled Jews arrived back on the soil of their homeland, ready to begin life anew.

The Psalm was written during a great historical time period, one where the hand of God was readily apparent in certain ways, but hidden in others. The author of the Psalm pleads with God to restore Jerusalem to ALL its glory, to help bring a complete revival of Jewish life.

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The message applies equally today: The value of looking forward to the redemption lies in its power to help bring it to fruition. This is not a mystical notion, but a plain historical fact. Without a doubt, the modern return of the Jewish people to their homeland after thousands of years of exile could not have occurred without the continual yearnings and prayers over the centuries.

As the Psalm indicates, even the non-Jews praise the remarkable rebirth.

However, while we praise God for the beginning of redemption, our complete joy will come only with the final salvation.

(End quote)

The same hopes entertained by modern Jews can be simply transferred to modern Christians, who are now the Israel of God in the New Testament. (Galatians 2:28) But, of course, the local and ethnic restrictions are now removed, and transcend the temporal hopes of the Jewish Zionists in every way. "Adventists" and other like Christians are not looking for an earthly city, but for a city whose builder and maker is God. Their final salvation is in Christ, the true Messiah and Savior of mankind.

The Sabbath and Zion

Please make note of the fact that Zion and the Sabbath are directly associated also. This is not only because Zion is equated with the number "seven," but because it was on Mt. Zion where Sabbath worship took place for centuries. It was the locus center of the redeemed; the "First Church of Israel." It led and modeled Sabbath worship for all of Israel. It was at Mt. Zion that worship services happened. It was the central church. This is why Isaiah 66:23,24 says that in the glorified new earth that "from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come and worship before me." In

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biblical terms this could occur symbolically at no other place but upon Mt. Zion or in Jerusalem.

The Conclusive Meaning of Mt. Zion

The application is beyond obvious. The group pictured on Mt. Zion have these five principle tenets in their faith:

- They are a “church” or religious gathering, that assembles to worship and give God glory; a “Christian” Israel.
- They have the number “seven” directly associated with them
- They have experienced and taught about a “cleansing” process
- They teach and preach a hope of a return to the “new” Jerusalem
- They "worship" (Rev. 14:6,7) on the Sabbath

This is, and probably only in part, why the Holy Spirit employs the term: “Mt. Zion,” in Rev. 14:1. It is rich with meaning and hope, but particularly informative about the eschatological issues of worship, cleansing, the sanctuary, and most specifically the second coming of Christ, or shall we say: “Spiritual Zionism.” God’s true last day faith will not be without these tenets lifted high and shining brightly. They are the hallmarks of the Advent Hope, make no mistake.

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The Beginning of the End

The “First Angel’s Message”

“Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come and worship Him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters.” (14:7)

The following is a paraphrase of a prophetic dream that was received many years ago:

The first thing the person who received the dream noticed was a throne, and someone was on it, but was shrouded in so bright a light that she reasoned it had to be God, the Father. Jesus was also there, and according to this person had a very kind, powerful, and wonderful face.

There were some other people there and she knew them to be some of her Adventist friends. But there were two types. One group of people bowed down before the throne, deeply interested. The other group of people acted really careless and uninterested. They were kind of standing around.

Those that bowed down before the throne were praying, it seemed, and would look at Jesus. When they would do this Jesus would look over to His Father, and appear to be pleading with Him. A light would come from the Father to Jesus, and then it would go from Jesus to the praying company.

The next thing that came was a really bright light. It went from the Father, to Jesus, to the people. But not very many, she noticed, really wanted it. Many actually resisted it, and it moved away from them. But some really

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cherished it, and went and bowed down with the praying company. All that received the light were really happy and their faces shone very bright.

At that moment she saw a cloud of light which was the Father rising from His throne, and in a vehicle surrounded by angels, and that had wheels on it, He went through a door and sat down on the other side.

Then Jesus got up, and most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. But some of them didn't get up. And the ones that weren't bowing down at all, but just standing about, just went on doing what they were doing.

Those who got up when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him and followed Him a little ways. Then Jesus said to them:

“Wait here: I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom: keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself.” Then a cloudy chariot with wheels, surrounded by angels again, came to where Jesus was. He got into it and went to where the Father had gone.

Jesus was in robes like a High Priest is to wear, and stood before the Father. On the hem of the robe he had on, was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate.

Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest and pray, “My Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Then Jesus would breathe on them the Holy Spirit. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy and, peace.

...The other company were still back bowing before the throne. They didn't even know Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. They would look toward the throne, and pray, “Father, Give us Thy Spirit.”

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Satan would breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children.¹³

The Bright Light

What was the bright light in the dream that some rejected? Or maybe it was just a dream, and there is no answer. At least it should spur any person to study out the topic today for themselves and not refuse a light that seeks to cover them.

The writer of this chapter believes that the light that was received or rejected respectively was the "first angel's message." It is found in Revelation 14:6 and 7.

Even at this writing the church does not understand the messages of the three angels as they should. In this chapter the subject will not be completely covered. This is done better elsewhere. But the subject must be addressed for the reader who is not fully acquainted with the importance of the first message. It is a message for every nation kindred tongue and people.

In the book of Revelation angels always represent a message. But they don't really give them, of course. People do. So here is a message some people are to give sometime, somehow.

They are to tell the entire world with a loud voice to:

- Fear God
- Give glory to Him
- Worship Him

The reason: "for the hour of his judgment is come."

Now any Bible student knows that to fear God is the Bible way of saying that we should love God, and respect Him.

¹³ (*Early Writings*, p. 55, It was Ellen White, of course, who had the dream).

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It's absurd to think that God would want us to give glory to Him because we are afraid!

And to give glory to Him makes sense as something we should do toward God. For it says: "because the hour of His judgment is come."

The Meaning of the Message

Now getting to the bottom of the meaning of that is what intrigued the early Adventist believers.

During the early 1800's there was a great awakening throughout the United States and Europe.

There has really been nothing like it since.

Spectacular signs including the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755, the Dark Day of May 19, 1780, and the meteor shower of Nov. 13, 1833, announced to many the time of the end.

A resurgence of interest in the Second Coming of Christ was widespread. Men such as Edward Irving, Joseph Wolff, George Mueller, Henry Drummond, Emmanuel Lacunza, men of different particular faiths, even child preachers in Scandinavia preached energetically.

In the United States men such as Joshua Himes, William Miller, Josiah Litch, Charles Fitch, gave the message.

Putting the signs of the times, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation together, also Matthew 24, and especially the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, the movement climaxed in the expected return of Christ set for first March, and then October 1844.

When the long awaited event did not transpire in October 1844, there ensued what has been labeled, "The Great Disappointment." Thousands left the movement to never associate with it again.

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Others hung on, though severely shattered in hope, feeling that the light they had seen was genuine even though they did not understand where it had all led.

It was at this time that certain Adventists re-examined their prophetic scheme and soon realized that the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 predicted something different than the final end of the world. It was then that the sanctuary, and not the earth, was to be judged or cleansed. Their attention was turned to the sanctuary, and since there was no one on earth, to the sanctuary in heaven, where Jesus according to the Epistle to the Hebrews ministers as “our High Priest.”

They studied the subject intensely. They found that the wilderness church had a sanctuary with sacrificial services. During the year sacrifices were made, offerings given, and the blood was taken into the temple by the priests.

But the round of services was not complete until at the end of the year there was a day—or hour of judgment. This was a solemn time.

The Lord said to Israel on this day:

“You shall afflict yourselves, and shall do no work...for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever.”¹⁴

One source says that if one “failed to mourn he was threatened with the penalty of death, as a direct visitation of judgment from the hand of Jehovah.”¹⁵

A book of Jewish ritual says that on the Day of Atonement the very angels run to and fro in fear and trembling, saying,

“Lo, the Day of Judgment has come!”

¹⁴ Lev. 16:29, 31.

¹⁵ U. Smith, Daniel and Revelation, p. 635.

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“God, seated on His throne to judge the world...openeth the Book of Records; it is read, every man’s signature being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded; a still small voice is heard; the angels shudder saying, “This is the day of Judgment.”...On New Year’s Day the decree is written; on the Day of Atonement it is sealed who shall live and who are to die.”¹⁶

Therefore Adventists came to believe that a great cosmic *Day of Atonement* began in 1844. There would be a judgment, a time of repentance, preparation, and character building prior to the Second Coming of Jesus.

In this belief, and in this application of the first angel’s message Seventh-day Adventists are quite alone in the world. Other Christians do not believe there is a judgment time prior to the Second Coming of Christ. This message is currently being challenged. It has been many times over the past years. Wrote one about Ellen White, one of the leaders in the movement:

“Ellen White borrowed fallacious concepts...My question is: How long will it be before the theologians and administrators of our church are (similarly) honest regarding certain theological views adopted by Ellen White from contemporaries—views that continuing study has shown to be erroneous? *I refer to the traditional dogma of the pre-advent judgment beginning in 1844 in the newly-entered Holy of Holies in Heaven.* Ellen White, of course, did not originate this teaching but received it from Andrews, Smith, etc.”¹⁷

The complaint made by many uninformed Christians is that the idea of a pre-advent judgment is not found in the Bible. The response is made that men are already judged by the cross and need no judgment. Such thinkers charge that such an idea as a pre-advent judgment is “against the Gospel.”

However, none of the above complaints are really true. The Bible doesn’t see it their way, either. Pre-judgments are found nearly everywhere. Beside, the Revelator uses the two expressions “gospel;” that is, “good

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *Spectrum*, Vol 16, Number 1, p. 67,68. D. Ford.

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news,” and “judgment” in the very same verse—and sees absolutely no contradiction.

Daniel 7

At the beginning of this chapter a prophetic dream was referred to. The subject of the dream was the light of the “Midnight Cry,” or the experience of God’s people in discovering the “investigative judgment.” A similar dream is found in Daniel 7, vs. 9 and onwards. This passage deserves intense study.

In this passage, Daniel is having a dream. The dream, or vision comes in the night. What he sees is significant:

- Thrones are placed (thrones were used for judgment by the way)
- The Father is on it
- The Father is very bright and glorious
- His throne is wrapped in flames
- His throne has wheels on it (any “mobile” American or “moderner” ought to know what this means)
- A stream of fire comes out from Him (voice of judgment)
- (Daniel tells us outright that a judgment is going on)
- He comes with clouds (angels, perhaps)
- Jesus, the Son of Man goes to the Father
- He is presented before Him
- He receives dominion of the kingdom
- Judgment is made for or of the saints (vs. 22) “until the time came for the saints to receive the kingdom.”

Above are listed ten or so direct similarities between two dreams that seem to mean essentially the same thing. It is no accident that these dreams are so similar, because in the opinion of this writer they describe the same event and come from the same source. Anyone is free, of course, to form his or her own opinion about this. But further study will show that Daniel 7 very clearly teaches a judgment “before” the second coming and that this judgment exonerates the saints, and is not “against the Gospel!”

Judgments in the Bible

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We find many times in the Bible that God investigates before he acts. There is always a testing time. An engagement period.

- Before the flood there was such a time. It lasted 120 years. Then probation closed. The door was shut. There were seven days of silence. Then came the end.
- Abraham talked with God concerning the judgment of Sodom.
- God investigated at Babel

While at the theological seminary the writer of this book was trying to find a reason for explaining why in the story of the tower of Babel God is pictured as *coming down to see* the tower. I thought, “how absurd!” “Does the writer of *Genesis* really believe that God didn’t know what was going on and found out by sheer accident?” Then I noticed the observation of one astute Jewish commentary written by Rashi, a very old commentary, which said,

“He did not really need to do this, but Scripture intends to teach the judges that they should not proclaim defendant guilty before they have seen the case and thoroughly understand the matter in question.”¹⁸

- The book of Revelation itself teaches the doctrine of the investigative judgment. Much more so than many realize even now.

The message of the first angel speaks of “another” angel. This is a reference back to Chapter 10, which perfectly describes the experience of those who believed they were preaching the first angel’s message in the Great Advent Awakening.

Chapter 10 and 11

Chapter 10 and 11 envisions a perceived “coming of Christ,” obscured by clouds of mystery but announced to the entire earth. This is followed by a

¹⁸ Specific source at this writing, unavailable.

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bitter disappointment and the call for men to worship the Creator and prophesy again until the time of the seventh angel.

- Jesus too believed in a pre-advent judgment.

In a parable he told about a king who called a feast. Those invited didn't come. So he then sent for anybody who would come.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” (vs. 11-14)¹⁹

This passage teaches a pre-advent judgment. When the king comes in to inspect the guests, there is a work of investigation, of examination, of judgment. The wedding feast occurs *prior* to the coming of the bridegroom (Jesus), to claim His chosen bride (the church). This inspection takes place *before* the Second Coming.

Nor is it a coincidence that in the dream given to Ellen White that Jesus says to the faithful company:

“Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you unto myself.”

Many other evidences can be offered. It makes just plain sense that God will have to decide everyone's case BEFORE He comes. But more important than this is what this message means for people today.

¹⁹ Matt. 22:10-14

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The Meaning of the Message

What is the most important thing in the message? Is it to argue for the 2300-day prophecy? No. Is it to prove whether or not it is right to judge before the second coming? No. Is it to prove whether Adventists are right or wrong? No, not really. Then what does it really say?

It calls every man woman and child to fear God, to give glory to God, and to worship God. Now. Yes, if these are the last days of this world's history, right now!

Those living in the antitypical Day of Atonement must have cleansed robes (Exodus 19:10, 15)(Numbers 15), and an attitude of readiness. This is the call of the first angel's message.

Theologically, the first angel's message is the doctrine that in fulfillment of the 2300 year prophecy (Dan. 8:14) terminating in A.D. 1844, Jesus, our High Priest, entered into the Holiest apartment of the temple in heaven, to judge the living and the dead, to cleanse it from the defilement of the sins of the world prior to His Second Advent.

Experientially, however, the message is one of preparation and readiness. It is not a message for the past, but a message for the present!²⁰

The message is both good news and warning. The first angel's message is an announcement of Christ's soon coming.

If it said the "century" of His judgment is come—we might say—
"We have time—it will not come while I live."

²⁰ *"The third angel is represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of the those who proclaim the first, second, and third angel's messages; all are linked together. The evidences of the abiding, everliving truth of these grand messages that mean so much to us, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, are not extinct. Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages, so that the remnant people of God shall not clearly discern their import- -their time and place- -but they live, and are to exert there power upon our religious experience while time shall last . . ." 3SM 405*

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If it said the “year” we would be urgent, but think, “I have some things I can do first.”

If it said, the “week” or “month,” we might even then dally.

Even if it said “day,” we might say, “Aha, there is yet a moment to repent and change.”

But the HOUR of God’s judgment IS come. It is here. Our cases are pictured as cases to be imminently considered. And though that be odious to some, why can it not at the same time be **the truth**? It is really a message of mercy.

Christ stands ministering His blood for our sins in the great cathedral of heaven. This work is not insignificant.

“The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death on the cross.”²¹

The message of the first angel brings Christ’s death to the modern Christian, personally. It comes in their day. He suffers for their sin today. The modern Christian need not feel that they have a disadvantage, though they live 2,000 years from the Cross. As the sacrificial lamb that was slain pointed forward, so Christ’s ministry points back to the cross and forward to the consummation of history.

Any day Christ may cast down the censer. Any day Michael will stand up. Any day will come the cry, “It is done!” He that is unjust will be unjust still, he that is filthy will be filthy still, he that is righteous will be righteous still, and he that is holy will be holy still.

The four angels are prepared to relax their grasp of the four winds. By divine direction they will let them go. But first the great High priests looks out over His people. Perhaps he sees a man—a father, a husband, he longs to save. He looks with compassion upon him. He cries, “My Blood,

²¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 489

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Father, My Blood, My Blood!” So the command is given to the angels. “Hold! Hold! Hold!”

Then it may be that the great High Priests sees a woman, a wife, a mother who yet lingers in the balance. And He cries. “Wait, is there no more time? My blood, Father; My blood, My blood.”

And there may be a boy—a girl, who is needing the righteousness of Christ in their life. For them He still pleads though the hour is almost spent...”My blood, Father; of such is the kingdom of heaven. Wait.”

What then is really the first angel’s message? Is it a somber message? Not entirely. It is a loud *call* to every Christian. For Jesus is not willing that any should perish.

The first angel’s message is “Get ready, Get ready, Get ready.” We have an high priest that is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities...who is set down at the right hand of God...and who ever lives to make intercession for us.”

Endnote:

“No other prophecy in the Bible is so important to Seventh-day Adventist as the twenty-three hundred days of Dan. 8:14. Our very being as a separate people is dependent on the accuracy of its interpretation. Undermine our teaching on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, and you undermine the cornerstone of our message. It is this that makes us distinctive.” RH, Jan. 6, 1944, p. 4 (Editorial)

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The Second Angel's Message

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 14:8.

What is the meaning of the message? The reader must first look carefully at the words and phrases in this one sentence message and ask the following questions:

1. What is represented by Babylon and its fall?
and...
2. How do we understand the words: “she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication?”

It is first evident that the words are in the past tense—though the Bible versions try to smooth it up a bit.

The words come from Is. 21:9.

In Isaiah 21:9 is found a prophecy of ancient Babylon's downfall. It was probably written at least a 100 years before the rise and fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II. The prophecy envisions a news-messenger carrying the message to the outlying nations that Babylon has fallen. This is typical of how the news was brought in those days.

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To understand modern Babylon one has to understand ancient Babylon. What is not often noted to modern readers is that in the Old Testament the word, “Babylon” is rarely used. In the Bible “Babylon” is really “**Babel**.” If one will look it up, he will find that the word used in Isaiah 21:9 is “Babel.” Babylon is the Greek form, which we more readily recognize.

Now if one would hear the announcement of the prophetic messenger as it actually reads it would translate more like: “It fell!, it fell!, Babel!” or “Babel fell!, Babel fell!” This provides an enormous inference as to the meaning of the passage when understood in this light.

(Refer to: Gen. 11:1-9)

- A. Therefore, one must look then at the first, the older Babylon. When this is done, one finds that it had the same character as the later Babylon—therefore they can be looked at as one.
- B. The story of the tower of Babel is the first real Biblical description of ORGANIZED opposition against God. The people of that kingdom rebelled against God and defiantly did exactly what God had counseled them not to do.

The Characteristics of Babylon:

Genesis 11 describes how men sojourning in the east found a fruitful plain and settle there. They built a large tower and city.

1. The Babel builders hoped to save themselves by their own works, apart from trust in God. They tried to build a way to heaven. They say, “Come. Let US build a tower.” They sought to avoid another flood, not by turning to God, but by a way of their own devising.
2. Further, they sought to band together, to standardize, to consolidate. They sought to restrict personal freedom and individuality.

God had said, “Be fruitful and multiply, and FILL the earth.”²²

²² (Gen. 1:28)

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And to Noah and his sons God said, “Be fruitful and multiply, and FILL the earth.”²³

On the contrary Babel said:

- “Let’s band together and make cities”
- “Let’s fraternize”
- “Let’s be ecumenical”

Why did they seek this?

“Lest,” they reasoned, “we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.”

3. Babel also sought self-glorification. They said: “Let’s make a name for ourselves.”

Instead of saying, “Fear God, and give glory TO HIM,” they say, “Come, let’s make a name for OURSELVES.”

And instead of worshiping the God who CREATED the heavens, the earth and the sea, they say, “we will ‘create’ for ourselves.”

“Let’s see... We’ll use brick for stone and asphalt for mortar, and we will burn them thoroughly...and we’ll make our own little secure world here, O.K?”

- “We’ll save ourselves through science and industry,” they said.
 - “We’ll make a name for ourselves. We will be a major influence in the world. We’ll make policies. We’ll seek our own security.”
4. Despite all of the talk and ambition Babel was a confused endeavor. They misunderstood each other. They talked a different language. They believed all different things. There was a lot of “babble.” Tongue-confusion. They ended up being in all sorts of conflicts.

However, Babel fell. It fell. And in the end all the Babylons have fallen. The messenger of the Lord and a few ancient sources say that “as an

²³ (Gen. 9:1)

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evidence of God's displeasure lightnings broke off the upper portion of the tower and cast it to the ground."²⁴

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Tradition reports that it fell into three parts.

5. Another characteristic of Babylon is that Babylon sought to be affluent, and was affluent. Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's time was the glory of kingdoms. It was the head of gold. The glory of Persepolis, the shine of Athens, the grandeur that was Rome, never could compare to it when it came to luxury. It was particularly known for its commerce and trade on the waterways of the ancient world.

History reports that the original Babel kingdom was probably started with a fellow by the name of Nimrod.

We can read about him in Gen. 10:8-10:

“He was first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter (warrior) before the Lord...The beginning of his KINGDOM was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar...”(also built Nineveh, and other cities).

1. Nimrod assumed authority and power “before the Lord,” actually, “in the face of Jehovah.” The phrase really means “against the Lord,” or meaning, “in the place of the Lord.”
 - a. The First Commandment literally says—“Thou shalt have no other Gods “before my face.” Nimrod distinguished himself by his exploits. He became a mighty warrior. Apparently he set himself up as king (king-dom) and as kings have ever since, accepted honor and worship. He put himself in God's place. He was the first major “antichrist.”

²⁴ Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 120.

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Of interest is what the syllables “Nimrod” mean in the Hebrew. They mean: “We will revolt!”²⁵

2. What happened after all of this, or in all of this is not absolutely clear from Scripture. Some books have been written on this historical subject. One thing can be sure, Satan has tried very hard to squelch any clear and documented accounts of this period of history.

According to some sources, Nimrod died. Now if behind every good man there is a good woman, the opposite can also be true. That’s where Semerimus comes in. She was the queen, and to hold things together she had to explain the death of this “god,” Nimrod.

It was “revealed” to her that Nimrod’s “soul” or “spirit” (sound familiar?) had gone to the sun, and that now he had been exalted as the sun-god.

The people thought at the time that the earth was flat, like a dinner plate, and that at the edge there were devouring demons creeping, and crawling up around the edge. So where did Nimrod go every day---to fight off the demons?---And when he came back in the morning he brought life and made things grow. He supposedly brought fertility to everything. He was a “god,” worthy of worship.

To add to this strange thing occurs. To complete the picture there has to be a “Madonna and her child.” And sure enough, Semerimis was found to be in the early stages of motherhood. And before long, in fact on December 25, Tammuz was born---a miracle child---a virgin birth (the conception supposedly took place from the rays of the sun).

The story was largely manufactured, of course. But it was a story well-calculated to pre-dispose away, in advance the birth of the true Christ, the glory of his incarnation.

Tammuz might have been a mighty hunter like Nimrod, but he wasn’t mightier than at least one wild boar. Somehow he was tragically killed. But it was later said that the son of the sun-god, Tammuz, was resurrected

²⁵ Keil and Delitzsh, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 165.

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three days later, by the power of the sun. This special day was honored as the first, “Suns-day.”

Conveniently this came at the time of the year (vernal equinox) when the days and nights were equal and celebrated the return of the sun and even longer days. This is around March and April of our year. The first Suns-day after the annual equinox was set aside as the day. This corresponds with the modern-day Easter.

But for the 40 days prior to this celebration, the ancient Babylonians observed the death of Tammuz by self-affliction, to imitate his suffering, “weeping and fasting 40 days before his resurrection day.” This period, requiring certain rules of abstinence---for 40 days---represents the root and formation of “Lent.”

Or one can take the Assyrian version of Semerimus. Her name was Ishtar. And of course if Nimrod is the sun-god, she then would claim to be the moon-goddess. But how did she get to earth? She miraculously fell to earth in an egg, landing in the Euphrates. She was “egg rolled” out and, “BEHOLD!, there was a goddess!” And she is also very proliferate. Her name is Ishtar, or Esther, or more clearly known to us as “Easter.” (The word “Easter” is decidedly not a Christian word). Because of fertility associations there were also rabbits and eggs.

Today rabbits and eggs have sadly become associated with Christ’s resurrection, of all things! Few Christians have stopped to ask what the source of these things is. Many Christians practice these things innocently. But Christians should ask if such things have their source in Scripture or from Babylon. The source in this case, is Babel.

In addition, there were yearly festivals calling the people out to early morning services, 3 days after the supposed death of Tammuz—the sun rising that morning was proof of his resurrection.

During such gatherings the people would bake cakes to the “queen of heaven” (Ishtar or Semerimus)—and they would put a mark on them—a “T” or “cross” for Tammuz—from whence we get “hot-cross-buns.”

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Some believe that humans were anciently sacrificed on such “T’s,” and we know how that was done to the true Son of God around, A.D. 31.

The Bible does make some reference to the degenerative inroads of Babylonian and Assyrian religion. Says the Bible:

“And the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven” Jer. 7:18

“Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the Lord; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.” Ez. 8:14

One can look at both the early and later Babylon in the Bible. Babylon rose up against God like Nebuchadnezzar who said, “Look at this great Babylon that I have built,” and can see the ultimate in false religion, self-made religion. We see its confusion of ideas and a little of how ancient Babel made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Babel is seen as the source of all false religion because:

- All nations originated from the dispersion at Babel.
- All nations drank her wine.

What does wine do? It impairs judgment, clouds discernment, brings confusion, and loss of moral restraint.

The phrase: “the wine of the wrath of her fornication”—is clumsy, and hard to understand. “Wrath” is the Greek word for any strong emotion or feeling. The word is *οργη*, from which we get the word “orgy.” It can be translated as either “wrath,” or “anger,” or “passion.” It should be “passion” in this case. The wine that leads to fornication. This is impure, intoxicating, wine.

3. And in a biblical sense what is fornication? It is the illegitimate union of parties, which do not belong together.

One might think the analogy is a little coarse and repulsive. It is, and is meant to be. It is an unmistakable term that describes the admixture of false beliefs and the confusion in Christendom. There are hundreds of

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denominations, promoting every belief possible! They are intoxicated. They are in many cases blind to truth. They are under the seductive influence of Babylon (DUI). They are “out of their senses.”

The Identity of Babylon

The modern identity of Babylon in a spiritual sense should not so much be a pointing of the finger at certain church organizations. Rather it is a call to self-examination of Christians of all faiths to find whether “Babylonian” religion is practiced and blessed in their midst.

Doctrines, such as the immortality of the soul, Sunday worship, forgiveness of sins through penance, false forms of baptism, righteousness by works, the pre-empting of the true Incarnation of Christ, are obvious forms of “Babylonian” dogma. They are “baptized” paganism.

But what really is “paganism?” What it is truly--- is **WORLDLINESS AND SELFISHNESS!!** Therefore it is possible for doctrinally correct Christians to still be subject to Babylon when they are not fully given over as the servants of Christ. True “Babylonian” religion is that religion that puts self ahead of Christ.

Satan doesn’t care if the church retains a “form of religion” as long as there is no true spirit of godliness, of stewardship, of love, of unselfishness, and forgiveness. In fact a “Laodicean” church fits his purpose even better than an openly “Babylonian” one.

Unfortunately, “the spirit of worldly conformity is invading the Churches throughout Christendom.”²⁶ God needs a people not in fellowship with the confusion of much of modern Christendom.

The report of Babylon’s fall is really a call for God’s people to exit the false churches. More importantly the Christian must break fellowship *with*

²⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p 388

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her sins. If one sins the same sins, it does not matter what church one is in. In fact, most of God's true people are yet in the other churches. But God calls his people out before the plagues are to be poured upon an unsuspecting world.

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The Third Angel's Message

Revelation 14:9-12

The Relevance of the Third Message

According to the following statements it is of deep importance to understand the nature of the Third Angel's Message:

*“The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll.”*²⁷

*“There are but few, even those who claim to believe it, that understand the third angel's message, and yet this is the message for this time.”*²⁸

*“The fourteenth chapter of Revelation is a chapter of the deepest interest. This scripture will soon be understood in all its bearings, and the messages given to John the Revelator will be repeated with distinct utterance.”*²⁹

²⁷ E. G. White, 6T 17

²⁸ White, MS 15, 1888

²⁹ White, RH October 13, 1904

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According to the prophetic testimony what then is the “mark of the beast”?

“John was called to behold a people distinct from those who worship the beast or his image by keeping the first day of the week. The observance of this day is the mark of the beast.”³⁰

“The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, the Lord’s memorial of creation. . . . The mark of the beast is the opposite of this---the observance of the first day of the week.”³¹

“The mark of the beast is the papal Sabbath.”³²

“When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday.”³³

“Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test but that time has not yet come.”³⁴

The Meaning of the Message

Now the question arises how one can get this determination out of the words of Revelation 14:9 and following? This cannot be fully answered in this chapter. It requires digging beneath the surface of all the symbols that are used. But a few of the evidences will be reviewed. All three messages need to be looked at together.

³⁰ White, TM 133

³¹ White, 8T 117

³² White, EV 234

³³ *The Seventh Day-Adventist Bible Commentary*, Review and Herald, Vol. 7, p. 980

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9777 (1899)

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So the question is asked again: “How does one get the Sabbath and Sunday issue out of all of this?”

First of all because of the inferences in the passage itself:

- a. The first message calls for human beings to “fear God.”

In the Scriptures the expression to fear God is many times used together with keeping the commandments:

*“Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.”*³⁵

*“That they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law.”*³⁶

*That you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all His statutes and his commandments.”*³⁷

Therefore we can assume that part of fearing God and worshipping him has something to do with honoring his commandments.

- b. Secondly, these worshippers are enjoined to “Give glory to Him” in the very context of the commandments and of creation.

c. Next man is called to “worship Him.” Stated simply the Scriptures are very plain on when and how this is to be formally done—on God’s holy Sabbath day.³⁸

d. In addition, the phrase “that made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water,” is essentially a quote from the fourth commandment.³⁹

³⁵ Eccl. 12:13

³⁶ Deut. 31:12

³⁷ Deut. 6:2 (Also 6:24, 8:6, 13:4, etc. etc.)

³⁸ Exodus 20:8-11

³⁹ Ibid.

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e. In the second message it is seen how ancient Babylon substituted “false worship” for the true worship of God. They created “Sunday”. It is inferred that this is how modern Babylon will do the same.

The basis of virtually all ancient religion, and particularly that of Babylon was the worship of the sun. This needs no verification. The sun and its creative, fertile powers was the central focus of heathen cult religion.

The claim was that the sun was responsible for life, for growth, for creation. Its rays brought life and immortality, and it was the life force that animated all creation. This counter-belief was specifically concocted by the enemy of souls to counterfeit the true Creator God. There is not found anywhere a more direct mark celebrating the usurpation of the prerogatives of God *in his creation*, than to honor the sun-god on his particular day.

f. Finally the terms “image of the beast” and “mark of the beast” are terms that readily identify the issue. The “image” to the beast betrays the idea of “Babylonian” idolatry; and the mark, the *charagma*, or mark of a slave, indicates a *sign* of submission to an oppressive and abusive religious power.

WHO IS THE BEAST? The direct answer: The Roman Catholic System dominant in the Middle Ages.

1. The power in Revelation 13 is a “religious” power because it demands worship.⁴⁰
2. The power blasphemes

Blasphemy is the illegitimate claim to be able to forgive sins. This has been the open claim of the papal system for centuries to the present day. Said Charles Everson, “For a man to claim to have the power to forgive sins is blasphemy.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Revelation 13:1-10

⁴¹ Charles Everson, *The Mark of the Beast*, p. 16.

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In the presence of Jesus, *“The scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”*⁴²

*“The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.”*⁴³

The Pope openly claims to be the vicar of God, “in the place of God.” No other power has openly, consistently, and continually claimed this power over the last 1,500 or so years.

3. The papal power was given his seat and authority by the pagan Roman Empire. This is an elementary history lesson.

Emperor Constantine moved out of Rome, and moved his capital to the east. In so doing he gave the city to the bishop of Rome. Said Charles Everson many years ago:

“If you were to go to Rome tonight, you would find, right in the Vatican itself, a large painting, possibly about seventy-five feet across, depicting Sylvester I, one-time pope of Rome, receiving a little figure—a statue of a warrior. Constantine is passing this little figure of a warrior into the hands of the pope just as he is getting ready to leave Rome. And underneath the picture is written, “The Donation of Rome From Constantine to the Pope.””⁴⁴

4. The papal Roman power, like no other, persecuted the saints labeling them as heretics. (Some estimate 50,000,000. One need not ask if that is enough to qualify for this dubious distinction)
5. This power held authority over many nations over a period of 1260+ years (year-day principle). This again limits the organization outlined in prophecy to only a remote few possible, if not only one.

⁴² Luke 5:21

⁴³ John 10:33

⁴⁴ Everson p. 15.

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6. The power received a deadly wound and entered into “captivity.” This prophetic marker can find actually several clear fulfillments, from the “Babylonian Captivity” or the Great Schism, the Reformation, or the captivity carried out by Napoleon’s general Berthier.
7. The power would “think to change times and laws”⁴⁵ (Perhaps interpreted the times of the law, but the Hebrew doesn’t seem to support this. Therefore it means seasons and laws, in general).

“The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.”⁴⁶

“And from a letter written for Cardinal Gibbons by his chancellor, Nov. 11, 1895, (we) read:

“Of course the Catholic church claims that the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical without her. And the act is a *mark* of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things.”⁴⁷
(Italics supplied)

8. Another indicator is that the typical title on pope’s miter adds up to 666 (VICARIUS FILII DEI).⁴⁸

Therefore it is clear that the persecuting power represented by the first beast in Revelation 13 is the papal power. Efforts to show otherwise wreak havoc with the whole system of prophetic truth and the rules of prophetic interpretation. There is no reason to deny the interpretation of these texts held by the reformers, and thousands of honest Bible students

⁴⁵ Daniel 7:25

⁴⁶ *Catholic Mirror*, Sept 23, 1893.

⁴⁷ Everson, p. 25,26.

⁴⁸ This claim of this said title on the mitre is now argued by many to be disingenuous. If true it changes the general facts but little. The title and claim that the pope is the "Vicar of Christ" is replete in Catholic literature over the last several centuries. Probably the term, (and other similar epithets) is used in the thousands of times both publicly and privately.

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for centuries. Those who attempt to do so willingly identify themselves with the false power here so clearly delineated.

9. Another evidence that the third angel's message is referring to the Sabbath-Sunday issue is the thematic approach of Revelation in the teaching about the "Seal of God," that is related repeatedly to the fourth commandment and the Sabbath teaching.

THE SEAL OF GOD IS THE CORRESPONDING COUNTER OPPOSITE TO THE MARK OF THE BEAST.

"And the Lord said to Moses, Say to the people of Israel, "You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you."

"Moreover I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them...and hallow my Sabbaths that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I the Lord am your God."⁴⁹

10. Of the beast worshippers it is said, "and they have no 'rest' day nor night."

Is it an accident that this expression is found here? Absolutely not. God's punishment always fits the crime. The text infers that the beast worshippers have attempted to disallow God's people their free Sabbath rest.

11. Verse 12 says: "Here is the patience of the saints."

The expression is awkward in modern parlance. However, patience is really "patient endurance, fortitude." It expresses the idea of enduring a trial or a test, or a contest. Paul speaks of running with "patience" the race that is set before us. Winning the contest. Passing the test—the test endurance.

If one takes the liberty to rephrase this so it can be understood better it says:

⁴⁹ Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:12, 20

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“Herein is the test of the saints!” This is the test! This is it.

And what are we told elsewhere?

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted.”⁵⁰

One should not be surprised. Endurance is required when rest and reprieve is disallowed.

12. Finally, the Sabbath issue is inferred in the summary statement, “Here are they which keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.”⁵¹

Satan hates God’s commandments—all of them. The first four speak of our relationship to God the next six of our relationship to man. The present religious society agrees that the last six are necessary to our society. And everyone agrees that the first three of God’s commandments are valid, but the fourth they ignore. Why? Satan, while attacking all of God’s commands seems to focus on the one commandment that he can effectively attack in that given generation.

- Early on Satan worked on the *first* command. Nimrod set himself as a god before the true God. The temptation given to Adam and Eve was that by eating the fruit they would “become as gods.”
- Then came the second commandment. It is a warning against the worship of idols. Satan could not use this one much, while Adam was still alive, and the earth was fresh from the hand of the Creator. But how he used it against Israel and the ancient world! The golden calf, Baal, Ashtoroth, Ishtar, Re, Amon-Re, Apollo, Zeus---there were thousands of false Gods---and images were used to represent them and to worship them. Israel fell for it so bad that God had to use the wicked against them to destroy their nation and take them to Assyria and Babylon and other places.

⁵⁰ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 605; (4T 251, EV 213, 7BC 976).

⁵¹ Rev. 14:12

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- However as a result of the Babylonian captivity Israel was effectively cured of crude idolatry. Iconography virtually left orthodox Judaism.

But a system of “vain” religion replaced it. If Satan could not get God’s people to worship “idols,” he would falsify religion itself. Jesus said of the Pharisees, “in vain do you worship me, keeping for doctrines the commandments of men.” Thus the third commandment was violated and the name of God was in this way blasphemed. To take God’s name in vain goes way beyond the careless mention of a sacred word.

During the Dark Ages the sin of blasphemy was carried on by the apostate church. It was predicted, and it was fulfilled. The name of God was taken in vain, and God’s prerogatives were assumed by a power that changed God’s laws, held blasphemous titles, took money for the forgiveness of sins, and made of mockery of the true apostolic faith. Images crept back into the church and all of the first four commandments were compromised.

- Today Satan is particularly attacking the fourth of God’s precious commandments (along with others of course). It is a direct attack on God himself as the Creator and Savior. The promulgation of evolutionary thinking is in direct ratio to the modern down-treading of the fourth commandment.

Most Christian leaders say that it doesn’t make any material or spiritual difference if one chooses to ignore the claims of the biblical Sabbath, and label it the “sabbath of the Jews.” This thinking is a delight to Satan, for his purpose is to get men to disobey God, even if it be over a small difference. That was all he needed to do with Adam and Eve at the first.

What really is the result---is that ignoring the claims of the Sabbath results in an effort to make sure that men do not spend additional time with God and with each other. De-emphasizing “God Time” and “Fellow-man Time” teaches the concept of self-absorption and flimsy obedience. It makes for a disposition that ignores God and his importance.

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- a. Any Christian would be horrified if it was proposed that we should add some other gods to our list for worship. Especially if some of these were to come before Jesus. Even one would not be accepted. If this were promoted, there would be a riot in Christendom.
- b. Every good Protestant would never bow before an image and pray to *it*. They know better than that. Even many Catholics know better than that. Just try to get any fundamentalist Christian to do that and see what happens!
- c. And every good Christian cringes if God's name is used vainly. If any TV evangelist, any pastor, got up and started to call God names; he would be immediately turned off. They would know that he wasn't of God. If he tried to set up his own religion and threw out the Bible how many conservative Christians would follow him? None.

BUT...what happens when the fourth commandment is referred to? Religionists either avoid the subject or downplay it.

The typical response is like that of evangelist Billy Graham who when asked glanced off of the subject and would not really engage the issue:

“Would you please give me scriptures as to which day is the day to worship?”

“Before Christ came religious worship was limited to one day in seven. Christianity, in contrast to the traditional teachings of Judaism, was not just a weekly affair—it touched all of life. The concept that we are to be religious just one day a week, whether that day be Saturday, Sunday, or Wednesday, is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ. To restrict fellowship with God to one hour on one special day of the week is nearer pagan than Christian in its concept.”⁵²

Graham does not answer the question asked of him, whatsoever. He cites no text. He even takes issue with the One who wrote the commandments. Finally, *no one* thinks that what God meant by giving the fourth

⁵² (Clippings, re: Sabbath, original source unknown)

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commandment was that one should only be religious one hour of the week! Yet, the 4th commandment remains in the heart of God's law.

Some say, "I don't like the commandments. That's legalism." Now it is agreed that commandment-keeping can come to that. But is it really legalism to honor God's commandments?

GOD'S COMMANDMENTS SIMPLY DESCRIBE THE RULES GOVERNING ANY RELATIONSHIP.

One can take marriage, for instance: Does it make any sense that if a marriage is to work ideally that there should be another spouse ahead of the one that person has? Such a marriage normally would never last very long. "Thou shalt have no other spouse before me" is a marriage commandment. But is this idea "legalism?"

Now what happens when one starts looking around at other images? Other men and other women. It destroys the original relationship often. This is what the cinema is very guilty of. The movie industry is based largely on the admiration and worship of human gods. It is nothing short of human idolatry. Immorality and pornography as found in our world is deadly as regards the marriage relationship.

The third commandment of a marriage relationship is to respect and speak well of the other. One can easily tell the state of the marriage by what one says about the other. Words react upon the speaker, and can damage the tender psyche of the hearer. No relationship can live in the environment of abusive words and criticism. Any pastor or marriage counselor (this writer is one) can testify to the truth of this.

It is also rather interesting, that in our world, it is considered important for married partners to remember each other in special ways. Love thrives on attention, the special days, the special things they have in common. The proverbial expectation is to remember and celebrate what? The wedding anniversary. To such a couple that day is special to them alone. God knows that a relationship with him needs to be honored and memorialized. This must happen often. Man *needs* the periodic reminder that he is a created being, owned and bought by his Creator-God. In marriage,

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honoring a wedding anniversary does not indicate that the couple is only married on that one day. It is a special reminder that they are married and committed every day of their married life. The Sabbath is given to constantly remind Christians of their Creator and Savior.

Seen in this light, such commandments are not “legalistic.” If even these four relational rules alone were followed, every marriage might be saved.” God’s commandments were given to preserve his relationship with his creatures, and to preserve the relationship between his creatures themselves.

Reinforcing Information that the Sabbath Will be the Test

Some, however find it difficult to believe that the Sabbath could really be this test? “Isn’t it really a minor point?,” they say. “Is it even reasonable to think that the Sabbath could be the issue? It looks like Adventists are saying this to reinforce their pet belief. How could this be an issue?”⁵³

Actually, it’s far from impossible.

Most observers would be shocked if they knew what movements were behind this very subject at the very time this is being read.

However, the reader is invited to look away from the prophecy for the moment and approach the issue from pure logic. Ask, “What would be the point most agitated if a movement for unification of the churches ever got underway?” Answer: The keeping of Sunday.

This can be demonstrated by the fact that of all the common practices of Christendom, Sunday observance is by far the most common to all denominations; more than any other doctrine. A close second is the belief in the immortality of the soul. On virtually every other subject there is a hopeless tangle. But the points most common include the doctrines of Sunday observance and the immortal state of the dead (Cf. chapter, *Ecumenism and Doctrine*, later in this volume).

⁵³ Cf. *The Great Controversy*, p. 608, “seems impossible.”

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The day is drawing nigh when the whole world is going to be against Sabbath-keepers on this issue. One must ask whether or not he will stand his ground. The issue will revolve on whether or not the believer thinks or does not think that this issue makes any difference.

Did it make any difference whether or not Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It was just another tree. What difference could it make? ---All the difference in the world! And what was the issue? The issue was obedience, loyalty to God. It was a test. The question was, "Who would they worship?"

Cain and Abel were tested. It was a test of worship. Did it make a difference to God how he was worshiped? Cain reasoned that a small change in the instructions was O.K. "I'll worship," he said, "according to my own ideas and my own convenience. I will substitute fruit for a lamb. And really why should it make any difference?" But did it? And what was the issue? WORSHIP.

The three Hebrew associates of Daniel were told to simply bow down and worship the golden image. Once was all that was expected. Everyone thought that they would do it. And why not? Everyone else was doing it. What would it hurt to simply bow down to it? No one would really know anyway. After all they didn't believe in the image. God knew that. He knew their heart. But to those three brave young men it did make a difference. And what a story we have about them—who wouldn't worship the beast or kingdom of Babel or his image. What was the issue? WORSHIP!

Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman (the issue was worship). He would not. Thousands of martyrs refused to even say the three words that would have saved their lives: "Caesar is lord." They would not because the issue was worship to God.

Thousands of sincere Christians were denounced as heretics, because they would not submit to the beast power that blasphemously claimed authority over the souls of men. They refused to worship at the peril of their earthly lives. The issue was not small to them. It was a life and death issue to them. To them it made a difference, to follow God's commandments in

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every detail. Why should modern Christians then adopt a spurious Babylonian system with no conscience toward the commandments of God?

Satan took Jesus onto a high mountain and showed him the entire world he came to die for and save. Can one even begin to fathom the potential of that temptation? Satan told Jesus he could have the world---free of charge---glory like he had in heaven---and he wouldn't even have to suffer for the sins of man. He said, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and WORSHIP me!" What was the issue? Worship. One minor act.

The Christian must ask, "where is my allegiance?" Is it to stand with the Lord of the Sabbath? Should he not keep God's Holy Day in a way that indicates that he really loves him?

It is important to be a worshipper of the Creator God. It is a privilege of every Christian to worship God in his way and according to his precepts.

Endnotes:

"Our people have been regarded as too insignificant to be worthy of notice, but a change will come. The Christian world is now making movements which will necessarily bring commandment-keeping people into prominence.

....Every position of our faith will be searched into; and if we are not thorough Bible students established, strengthened, and settled, the wisdom of the world's great men will lead us astray." 5Testimonies, p. 546

"The forms of religion will be continued by a people from whom the Spirit of God has been finally withdrawn; and the satanic zeal with which the prince of evil will inspire them for the accomplishment of his malignant designs, will bear the semblance of zeal for God." GC 615

"The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh-day Adventists, because they will not yield homage to the papacy, by honoring Sunday.... " Ibid., p.23

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“The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which all the world will act a part.” 6T 352

“It is true that there are real Christians in the Roman Catholic communion. Thousands in the church are serving God according to the best light they have...” GC, p. 565

“Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome.” GC 588

“When the leading churches of the United States, *uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them the common*, shall influence the state to enforce their degrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image to the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.” GC 445

“The seven angels stood before God to receive their commission. To them were given seven trumpets. The Lord was going forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. . .” *Maranatha* 284.6

The Altar Scenes in Revelation

It is important to note the meaning of the altar scenes in Revelation. The principle association is that the altar is the record place of the **BLOOD** and the **PRAYERS** of the *martyrs* and the *righteous* and *justified* saints. The altar scenes must be interpreted according to their composite teaching. Much more can be learned and understood from collating the several references than to explicate them according to their individual and specific contexts only.

There is one altar in heaven, because the brazen altar was the **earthly** place of killing and sacrifice, located in the court that according to sanctuary teaching clearly represents the **earth**.

The earthly altar (court) was a **COUNTERPART** of the heavenly altar (the one found in the holy place).

In heaven there is no killing and blood, yet the blood of sacrifice is mediated there and “registered” there, just as the sprinkling of blood in the holy places of the earthly tabernacle clearly represents. However, the lives; the life-blood of the martyrs is **represented** as being “under that altar,” their voices are crying from the horns of that altar, and their prayers are found in the smoke of incense and fire about that altar.

The Altar Scenes

Following is a progressionary summary of the altar scenes:

<u>TEXT</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>OUTCOME</u>
Rev. 6:9-11	Souls slain for the word of God	Vengeance <u>requested</u>	[But Delayed]
Rev. 8:1-5	Prayers Mingled with incense	Pleas of righteous for vengeance again <u>requested</u>	[Action Pending with announcement of close of probation]
Rev. 9:13	Voice From horns (locus of atonement blood) of altar	Vengeance is authorized ; angels released	[Probation's restraints are removed; prepared to be loosed]
Rev. 11:1	Altar is measured	Investigative Judgment of righteous closing	[Last judgments made]
Rev. 14:18	Angel and voice sending judgment on the wicked	Vengeance promise is fulfilled	[Wicked punished; plagues, etc.]

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In Revelation (esp. 14:18), the angel who tends the fire of the incense, is a *recording angel*, who has for centuries kept record of the horrors and injustice done against the saints (Really this represents Jesus, who says to the churches, "I know"); who has heard and catalogued every prayer of the faithful saints for judgment and vindication. Appropriately, this angel gives the command that the righteous be avenged. For the fire of mediation, becomes the fire of destruction (Revelation 14:18, 19:20, 20:9, etc.)

The Winepress Outside the City

- A winepress, like the threshing floors and oil presses, would typically be outside of a city, near the agricultural fields and vineyards.

But it is important to inquire regarding the Old Testament significance of being "outside the camp," or "outside the city."

Outside the Camp

Bible Passages. . . .

(Provided for convenience)

Exod. 29:14 But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire **without the camp**: it is a sin offering. (flesh, skin, and dung of bullock for priests sacrifice)

Exod. 33:7 And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it **without the camp**, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was **without the camp**.

Lev. 4:12 Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth **without the camp** unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt. (sin offering)

Lev. 4:21 And he shall carry forth the bullock **without the camp**, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is a sin offering for the congregation.

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Lev. 6:11 And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes **without the camp** unto a clean place. (ashes of the burnt offering)

Lev. 8:17 But the bullock, and his hide, his flesh, and his dung, he burnt with fire **without the camp**; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Lev. 9:11 And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire **without the camp**.

Lev. 13:46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; **without the camp** shall his habitation be. (leper)

Lev. 16:27 And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth **without the camp**; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.

Lev. 24:14 Bring forth him that hath cursed **without the camp**; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. (the blasphemer; the one who cursed)

Num. 5:3 Both male and female shall ye put out, **without the camp** shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell.

Num. 5:4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them out **without the camp**: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Num. 15:35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones **without the camp**. (man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath)

Num. 15:36 And all the congregation brought him **without the camp**, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Num. 19:3 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth **without the camp**, and one shall slay her before his face: (Red Heifer sacrifice)

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Num. 19:9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up **without the camp** in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

Num. 31:13 And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them **without the camp**. (Captured Midianite women and spoil)

Num. 31:19 And do ye abide **without the camp** seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

Deut. 23:12 Thou shalt have a place also **without the camp**, whither thou shalt go forth abroad: (for every wicked thing, for a man with an emission, for a public restroom)

Josh. 6:23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them **without the camp** of Israel.

Hebr. 13:11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned **without the camp**.

Hebr. 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him **without the camp**, bearing his reproach.

.....

“OUTSIDE” THE DOMAIN OF ISRAEL WAS THE PLACE OF:

1. Burning and burying of refuse. (Deut. 23:12,13)
2. The burning of the remainder of the offerings and sacrifices (Heb. 13:11)
3. The execution and punishment of the wicked (A blasphemer; Lev. 24:14)
4. The physically and ceremonially unclean (Lev. 13:46)(Deut. 23:12)
5. The diseased (lepers; Num. 5:3,4)(Miriam)

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6. The slaves and foreigners (Josh. 6:23)(Num. 31:13)
7. The dishonored and shamed (Hebrews 13:13)
8. The Red Heifer sacrifice (Num 19:3)

"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."⁵⁴

THE ALTAR FOR OUTSIDERS

"We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For we have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come."⁵⁵

(Jesus in his great condescension took the place of the foreigner and sinner, becoming sin for us, that he might reach us. The altar referred to is likely the altar of the red heifer on the Mt. of Olives (East) where in sight of the temple, but at a prescribed distance, the burning of the "extras" and the burning of the "red heifer" took place.)⁵⁶

The city = Jerusalem, "the one to come."

•In Revelation, the wicked are outside (22:15) the "camp;" (παρεμβολην), and are burned up there (20:9) at the end of the Millennium.

"And blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Rev. 22:15.

⁵⁵ Heb. 13:10-14

⁵⁶ Cf. E.L. Martin, *Secrets of Golgotha*.

⁵⁷ (Rev. 14:20)

The Winepress Outside the City

Exegesis is critical involving the commonly misunderstood phrase "by the space of" or "for the space of" (1,600 furlongs).

This is typically understood to mean a river of blood that goes for the distance of 1,600 stadia. Since this distance (Roman stadia, about 184 miles total) is not associated with any particular geographical distance mentioned in secular and religious writ, many conjectures are made. One instance is that this is the approximate length of Palestine. This does not add much to the meaning.

Fortunately, through comparison with the similar grammatical constructions, used at least two other times in the New Testament, and not surprisingly by the same author (woe unto those who unwisely insist on non-apostolic Johannine authorship of Revelation!), the meaning of this phrase can be more clearly elucidated. The phrase is literally "from (apo) stadia thousand six-hundred."

The Gospel of John uses similar wording in other contexts:

Jn 11:18

"Απο σταδιων δεκαπεντα," "fifteen furlongs off" (Bethany was near Jerusalem).

Jn 21:8

" απο πηγων διακοσιων, " (Two hundred cubits from *land*).

All of these constructions use "*apo*" followed by an accusative. They denote a certain sense ignored by commentators on the *Apocalypse*.

A case can be made that the expression "from a distance of," or lit. "from," refers indeed not only to the intervening and *linear distance*, but rather isolates the distant source. To explain, one could gather from this expression that blood flowed for a distance of 1,600 stades. But more specifically the expression can also be taken to mean that blood flowed

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from a winepress that was 1,600 furlongs distant, *and which in no way implies how far that blood actually flowed.*

Likewise Bethany lies fifteen stades away, and the disciples' boat lies two hundred cubits away, with no inference of anything between or toward the position of the observer. The focus is beyond the distance separating the observer from the object in view.

Therefore let the temporary hypothesis be alleged that the winepress in Revelation is seen at a distance of 1,600 stades *from the city.* And, obviously this is Jerusalem, the holy city of the *Apocalypse* (*Cf. Revelation 20*).

The western direction sends us into the middle of a large sea, the east into expansive desert, and the north to nowhere of significance. But southward, or southwest, places one at a very significant site for the history of Israel.

But first it is necessary to examine an Old Testament source passage and a scripture often cited as being allusive, or perhaps even having a more direct relationship to Rev. 14:20, and especially the white horse figure of chapter 19.

Isaiah 63:1-6:

Isa. 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Isa. 63:2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

Isa. 63:3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

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Isa. 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

Isa. 63:5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.

Isa. 63:6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Where is Bozrah? Obviously, it is a parallel name for the region and kingdom of Edom (vs. 1).

- It is well known that "Edom" means "RED." Edom was the kingdom of Esau whose name meant (red). In certain places the Edomite kingdom is associated with the Red Sea, for like Amelek, it is one of the ancient kingdoms closest to it. Israel came near Edom upon leaving Egypt. In addition, the nearby body of water known as the Gulf of Aqaba, the Bible identifies also as the "Red Sea." *In other words the Red Sea is equated with the general environs of Edom, Amelek, and the wilderness areas surrounding them, where Israel most likely wandered during the forty years following their eviction from Egypt.*

It is not known which "stade" the apostle John envisions in the Revelation, but being a prophetic book, like Ezekiel, he may be using the greater cubit that is there defined as the standard measuring unit (a stadia was 400 cubits). The biblical common and greater cubit has no definite modern equivalent, but whether the stadia used was Jewish, Greek, or Roman, the distances are quite similar. If the 1,600 stadia are multiplied using just under 20 inches for the cubit, the distance from Jerusalem to the Nile Delta area is for all practical purposes exactly perfect.

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An arrow has been roughly placed on the modern map of Palestine and Egypt. The exact distance of 184 miles reaches precisely to the site of the ancient “Bitter Lakes,” or better yet to the delta area farther north where the marshy ground anciently was considered part of the Red Sea, or the *yam suph*, sea of reeds.⁵⁸ This area is better associated with the Exodus story than any other, corresponding to ancient Migdol, Baal-zephon, and the land of Goshen.

⁵⁸ The probable location of the Red Sea crossing is greatly debated and is subject to many opinions. It is a large subject, and many experts will not agree with this conclusion. The author of this study feels, however, that even the book of Revelation indirectly identifies the general site that is corroborated by the specific environs noted in the wilderness wanderings of Israel and by the meaning of the biblical “Sea of Reeds,” or the *yam suph*. The present Gulf of Suez and the Sinai Peninsula are actually very unlikely locations for the biblical wilderness wanderings. For a host of reasons this author places Sinai in the area of Oreb, or Orev (in Horeb) just north and west of Elath on the Gulf of Aqaba. In this same area is found Mt. Shani, (i.e. Sinai).

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The popular teaching of the wilderness wandering of Israel in the southern part of the Sinai peninsula is a myth without archaeological or biblical foundation. In all of Israel's wanderings the Bible associates the wanderings of Israel with the southern Negev and the wilderness regions that bordered the regions of ancient Edom, Amalek, and the Gulf of Aqaba (right ear of modern Red Sea). Mt. Sinai may be best identified with sites deep in the Negev and on the southern borders of the Promised Land. Mt. Hor is still marked today and is in this general area, not many hundreds of miles away!

Thus it seems this specified distance is a direct allusion to the historical Israelite Exodus from Egypt and the Red Sea Crossing:

This is further corroborated by the context of Revelation. Chapter 15 starting with verse 1 and the next verse after 14:20 (remember chapters are artificial divisions), begins to allude to Israel's Red Sea crossing, the victorious throng singing the song of Moses, beside a sea mingled with "fire" (actually the word is *purros* [*fiery, red*], translated in 12:3 as "red"). The Exodus motif therefore also explains 14:20.

Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh and his army and the deliverance of Israel is here typified by the final battle of good over evil. The Red Sea deliverance typifies and parallels the Battle of Armageddon.

The actual geographical places (i.e., the map) are not *modernly* important, but are symbolic of the final deluge of blood which will come both when Jesus comes and harvests the earth and judges the vintage of the earth, and when at the battle of *Gog and Magog* Satan and his forces are again defeated in a sea of blood, and where the riders of those "Egyptian" horses are again swallowed up and lost beneath the bridle-high flow.

However a much greater victory through blood has been accomplished by the blood-stained garment of one who tread the winepress alone and of the people there was none with him. (19:11ff.) Luke even stylizes it as an "exodus" (Luke 9:31 "decease," [KJV] or "departure" but actually; gr. *ἐξοδος*), which Jesus accomplished by his death on Calvary.

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Of note is the work of Dr. Ernest Martin, who argues convincingly that the "place of the skull" or "head" was not at any of the traditional crucifixion sites but rather on the summit of the Mt. of Olives directly to the east of the temple. The "head" or summit of Olivet is where the red heifer sacrifice (a type of Christ's sacrifice) was repeatedly offered, being the altar "outside the city," placed for the burning of the ashes and parts of the sacrifices.

It was placed there also at the appropriate distance from the temple altars, and about, 1,600 *cubits* (from the wall), or 2,000 cubits from the holy place of the temple, the specified distance for the unclean and the dead. This is near where Jesus *had* to have died, *typically*, fulfilling the meaning of the entire sacrificial system, including the red heifer sacrifice, and the taking of his place among the wicked "outside the city" (Hebrews 13:10-13)--though he himself was perfect and righteous. Simon of Cyrene, probably a Syrian, met the crucifixion procession coming in from that country, from the Northeast, perhaps.

Temple rituals demanded that the sacrifices were slain on the north side of the altar. Therefore it seems most likely that Jesus was crucified somewhere to the northeast of the Temple complex, and just outside the city. Whether this was the case or not, or whether the "place of the head" is here referred to, and was indeed near this spot, is a matter of intense conjecture. The traditional sites are mainly to the west.

Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives

- According to maps of the environs of the temple and of Jerusalem, the distance from the temple complex to the summit area of the Mt. of Olives on the East measures this approximate distance, not in "stadia," of course, but in "cubits."

- Of further significance is that the general areas at this specified distance and on the summit of Olivet marks the sites of several modern sacred precincts, especially the "Ascension Mosque" and the "Men of Galilee" Chapel, etc. Here or nearby, Jesus departed at his ascension, and would have paused on his triumphal entry just days before (and wept at the very

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spot in anticipation of his required sacrifice). At least Jesus would have been able to view where he was to be offered as a sacrifice.

•In addition the distance from the wall to the holy place (the Dome of the Rock) is by as close a reckoning as one could deduce from the maps, 400 cubits (ca. 20" standard Egyptian cubits). This together with 1,600 totals 2,000 cubits, the typical "Sabbath day's journey" and the specified distance for ceremonial reasons (Acts 1:12; Joshua 3:4).⁵⁹

Thus the cross of Christ could therefore be symbolically and directly related to the final victory over the wicked at the end, as demonstrated in the passage. He whose vesture is stained in blood will bring vengeance upon his foes, but this vengeance is colored rather with the knowledge of One who has "trodden the winepress alone" and shed His own *blood* for the "sins of many" (Isa 53:12).

Wherever these momentous events happened we can be sure that they happened in harmony with a divine plan and came about with perfect precision in time and place. None of the above determinations should be insisted upon. But without a doubt the cross of Christ stands directly behind these rich symbols. At a place of winepresses and oil presses (Gethsemane) the Son of God trod the winepress alone. Someday in the future, the vintage of the earth will be trodden down well outside the heavenly city come down from heaven, and sin and sinners will be no more.

⁵⁹ Josh. 3:4 "Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore."

Acts 1:12 "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."

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The Song of Moses and the Lamb

The content and historical rendering of the song of Moses is well known. It is found in Exodus 15 and was sung in celebration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage through the experience at the Red Sea. The Exodus motif is found several places in the context of Revelation, but here in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the book it is especially typical of the final deliverance of God's people. Present in the picture are the plagues and the evil forces, a victorious throng beside the sea, the song of deliverance, and deliverance through the (Passover) Lamb.

But in actuality the Song of Moses and the Lamb is a song that has two parts. **It is a double song.** One song celebrates God's providences in the Old Testament dispensation, the other is deeper and more comprehensive in that it celebrates the greater deliverance wrought by the Son of God at Calvary; that of redemption and salvation, given to all men of all ages. The first song signifies deliverance from the earthly and temporal, the second celebrates the spiritual and divine deliverance of Salvation. This is the rapturous song of the redeemed.

“There is a day just about to burst upon us when God's mysteries will be seen, and all His ways vindicated; when justice, mercy, and love will be the attributes of His throne. When the earthly warfare is accomplished, and the saints are all gathered home, our first theme will be the song of Moses, the servant of God. The second theme will be the song of the Lamb, the song of grace and redemption. This song will be louder, loftier, and in sublimer strains, echoing and re-echoing through the heavenly courts. Thus the song of God's providence is sung, connecting the varying dispensations; for all is now seen without a veil between the legal, the prophetic, and the gospel. The church history upon the earth and the church redeemed in heaven all center around the cross of Calvary. This is the theme, this is the song,--Christ all and in all,--in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten

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thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is a new song, for it was never before sung in heaven.” TM 433 (a unique reference)

The fascinating appropriateness of this all is that the Song of Moses and the Lamb, being a celebration of redemption, comes when the throng has a victory over the beast, his image, his mark or sign, and over the number of his name. For there is another particular celebration of redemption given to mankind, which finds some of its roots in the dispensation of Moses, but which has much deeper significance as a “sign” of sanctification and redemption. This is the Sabbath of the Lord God. It is the celebration of rest from our works, in the justifying and sanctifying work of our Redeemer.

A certain discovery is particularly remarkable when realizing how Seventh-day Adventists have taught that the mark of the beast and the victory over that mark will involve Sabbath observance. The discovery is noted in the helpful work of Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple; Its Ministry and Services*.⁶⁰

"At the evening sacrifice *on the Sabbath* the song of Moses in Exod. xv. was sung."

Exodus 15 then is a **Sabbath Song!** It was divided into six parts for as many Sabbaths and sung interspersed three times, **by three trumpet blasts**. Therefore it was at the **close of the Sabbath**, at the evening sacrifice when at the temple the priestly choir sang the Song of Moses, appropriately celebrating the **completion** of redemption and the saving activity of God. What better time than at the conclusion of the giving of the third angel's message and the coming of Christ could possibly be found in all of salvation history for the repeating the Song of Moses and also the Song of the Lamb? God's people, refusing to bow to the decree of a spurious Sabbath are at last delivered (at Passover midnight) threatened by the angry and plague-ridden worshippers of the beast and his image. The Sabbath of the world has come, and the Sabbath of final deliverance has

⁶⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple; Its Ministry and Services*, p. 188.

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arrived. Not only will the sealed sing the song of deliverance, but they will sing the song of redemption of which the Sabbath experience is truly representative.

There are enormously important connections between the Sabbath and the Exodus.

Additional Comments Addendum to The Song of Moses and the Exodus Motif.

"In their bondage the Israelites had to some extent lost the knowledge of God's law, and they had departed from its precepts. The Sabbath had been generally disregarded, and the exactions of their taskmasters made its observance apparently impossible. But Moses had shown his people that obedience to God was the first condition of deliverance; and the efforts made to restore the observance of the Sabbath had come to the notice of their oppressors."⁶¹

The Scriptures themselves indicate the background issue precipitating the Exodus:

Exod. 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

Exod. 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Exod. 5:3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

Exod. 5:4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, **let the people from their works?** get you unto your burdens.

⁶¹White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 260.

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"In what way were Moses and Aaron hindering the Israelites from their works? It cannot be supposed that they were teaching them not to work at all. No; they were teaching them to keep the Sabbath."⁶²

Exod. 5:5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them **rest** (Heb. *Shabbath*) from their burdens.

Exod. 5:6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,

Exod. 5:7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

Exod. 5:8 And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

Exod. 5:9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and **let them not regard vain words**. (i.e. the law of God, cf. Andrews, p. 51)

NON-BIBLICAL TESTIMONY REGARDING THE SABBATH ISSUE IN EGYPT

Note: Book of Jasher, a book twice mentioned in the Bible; Josh. 10:12,13 and 2 Sam. 1:18)

"And the day arrived when Moses went to Goshen to see his brethren, that he saw the children of Israel in their burdens and hard labor, and Moses was grieved on their account. And Moses returned to Egypt and came to the house of Pharaoh, and came before the king, and Moses bowed down before the king. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, I pray thee, my lord, I have come to seek a small request from thee, turn not away my face empty; and Pharaoh said unto him, Speak. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Let there be given unto thy servants the children of Israel who are in Goshen, one day to rest therein from their labor. And the king

⁶² J.N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, pp. 50, 51.

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answered Moses and said, Behold I have lifted up thy face in this thing to grant thy request. And Pharaoh ordered a proclamation to be issued throughout Egypt and Goshen, saying, To you, all the children of Israel, thus says the kings, for six days you shall do your work and labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest, and shall not perform any work; thus shall you do in all the days, as the King and Moses the son of Bathia have commanded. And Moses rejoiced at this thing which the king had granted to him, and all the children of Israel did as Moses ordered them. For this thing was from the Lord to the children of Israel, for the Lord had begun to remember the children of Israel to save them for the sake of their fathers. And the Lord was with Moses, and his fame went throughout Egypt. And Moses became great in the eyes of all the Egyptians, and in the eyes of all the children of Israel, seeking food for his people Israel, and speaking words of peace regarding them to the king."----Book of Jasher 70: 41-51

(For the sinister reversal of this by the next Pharaoh, one may read Jasher 77: 7-13,21) (Quoted from Andrews, History of the Sabbath, pp. 49,50).

The Song of Moses *and* the Song of the Lamb

The song itself is great and marvelous!

Several features should not be overlooked concerning its purpose, theme, and structure:

1. The first observations regard its structure:
 - It can be divided into either four complete thoughts—
 - (1) Great and Marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty
 - (2) Just and true are thy ways, O King of Saints
 - (3) Who shall not fear thee and glorify thy name for thou alone art holy
 - (4) For all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest

or

The Song of Moses

- It can take the form of seven⁶³ stanzas:
 - (1) Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty
 - (2) Just and true are thy ways, O King of Saints
 - (3) Who shall not fear thee--
 - (4) And (who shall not) glorify thy name,
 - (5) For thou alone art holy.
 - (4) For all nations shall come and worship before thee,
 - (7) For thy judgments are made manifest.

The only place where the numbers four and seven coincide is in the Sabbath commandment. It is the fourth commandment that exonerates the seventh day. This association of numbers occurs elsewhere in the Revelation (7:1 ff.).

- Further, the song is composed of exactly 49 words, 7 X 7, the number of sabbatical completion:

Μεγαλα και θαυμαστα τα εργα σου κυριε ο θεος ο παντοκρατωρ δικαιαι και αληθιναι οι οδοι σου ο βασιλευς των εθνων τις ου μη φοβηθη **σε** κυριε και δοξασει το ονομα σου οτι μονος οσιος οτι παντα τα εθνη ηξουσιν και προσκυνησουσιν ενωπιον σου οτι τα δικαιωματα σου εφανερωθησαν.⁶⁴

⁶³ Expositors typically find 6, 8, or 9 stanzas. This is not a matter to insist upon. Each expositor is encouraged to make one's own determination. However, being in the context of the seven plagues, and the many sevens of Revelation, the number seven cannot ultimately be separated from this passage.

⁶⁴ The forty nine words can be counted in the *Textus Receptus* quoted above. Westcott and Hort, and the modern Nestle/Aland texts provide only 48 words, omitting the word *se*, =“you,” underlined in bold. The intention must have been 49, the jubilee number, for the number seven dominates the context. The word “saints” is also assumed to be the correct one, owing to the consistent integrity of the Received Text. Other manuscripts, influenced by familiar OT passages, probably substituted the words, “ages,” and “nations.”

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- The form of the poem is chiasitic, or mirror-like:
 - The **great works** of God are acknowledged
Appreciation for the works of God are recognized by **mankind**
 - The **holiness** of God is acknowledged
 - All are called to **worship** him
 - All are called to **worship** him
 - The **holiness** of God is acknowledged
 - Appreciation for the works of God are recognized by **mankind**
 - The **great works** of God are acknowledged

2. The second group of observations regard the **theme** of the song:

- The overall theme is WORSHIP OF THE CREATOR.
- The content of the song is correlate to the messages of the THREE ANGELS. Some of these parallels appear below:

The Song of Moses

THREE MESSAGES	SONG OF MOSES
Fear God	Who shall not fear thee
Give glory to him	Glorify thy name
Judgment is come	Judgments manifest
Worship him (Creator)	Shall come and worship
Who made heaven, earth. . .	Thy works
Babylon makes nations fall before it.	God causes all to fall down and worship him.
Struggle with beast and mark	Victory over beast and mark
144,000 sing three (new) messages (harps)	Victors sing same messages (harps)
Givers of three messages seek rest from labor	Victors attain rest (placid sea) from their works
Patience required of holy ones	God is king of holy ones , etc.

- Not only are the themes of the three angels' messages repeated in the Song of Moses and the Lamb, but they are repeated in roughly the same order:
 - The Creatorship of God is first *acknowledged*
 - The Victory of God over the nations is *predicted*
 - The call to worship God due to his greatness and power is *recommended*.
3. Finally, the sources and purpose of the passage are to be considered:

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- All of the inherent ideas in the song can be found in the Psalms, the songs of Israel. If one tries to do direct redactive criticism he will be greatly disappointed and confused. None of the passages are direct quotes. There are strong allusive ties, however.

The purpose of this apparent discontinuity is important and intentional. It is presented as such because the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb is a NEW song. It has never been heard before. Its themes are biblical, prophetic, and right, but it cannot have an exact precedent.

Each passage that can be found to be similar in the Old Testament passage does not find complete resolution in the modern song. In fact, the passages bleed one into the other, until one cannot specifically attach them to only one part of the song. For example, the phrase “great and marvelous are thy works,” has no exact parallel. In one Psalm is found “great are thy works,” and in another the idea is expressed that God’s “work is marvelous.” The other phrases demonstrate the same pattern. The term “Lord God Almighty” does not appear distinctly in other Bible books, but the term “Almighty” is a favorite of the books of Moses, where almost all of its use appears.

However, there are particularly direct ties with the Psalms and other OT passages. These are listed below. My study has indicated SEVEN particular Psalms of interest. These Psalms demonstrate (1) the same themes as found in the Song of the Lamb. In fact, it is suspected that these particular Psalms were customarily used as (2) Sabbath liturgy. This is especially the case of Psalm 92. They also are Psalms that often turn to the (3) Exodus motif, or the Red Sea experience of Israel. These Psalms are:

The Song of Moses

- Psalm 105:1-7 (Ps. 104 and 106 are thematically connected with)
 - Psalm 86:8-10, 12
 - Psalm 89:5- 7
 - Psalm 145:1,5,10,12,17
 - Psalm 66:1-7
 - Psalm 22:3-5, 22, 27
 - Psalm 92: 1-9 ⁶⁵
- The Song also resonates with at least SEVEN specific Bible books including the book of Psalms. These passages are:
- Exodus 15:11 (entire chapter)
 - Psalms (several, as noted)
 - Jeremiah 10:17
 - Deuteronomy 3:24
 - Hosea 6:5
 - I Chronicles 16:14
 - Isaiah 26:9 and the entire chapter (a song).

According to Edershiem, the Song of Moses⁶⁶ in Exodus 15 was sung on Sabbath, and divided, like the messages of the Three Angels, into three parts. These were interspersed with the loud voice of the trumpet. These parts were Exodus 15: 2-5, 6-10, and 11-18. There is purpose in all of this.

Another tie comes in the final verses of the book of Isaiah, (66:23), where one can easily compare the theme of “all flesh coming to *worship* before God” (thus the Sabbath) and the final part of the song which says that all nations will come and worship before God, because of God’s “works” or “creation(s).”

⁶⁵ (Cf. also Psalm 136:10-15, 139:14, and others)

⁶⁶ Another “Song of Moses” is found in Deuteronomy 32, and is commonly confused with the “Song of Moses” in Exodus 15. It too was sung at the morning service on the Sabbath day. It was divided into six parts for six Sabbaths, yet each particular Sabbath day the passage was further classified into three sections complete with trumpet blasts.

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The purpose of the song is to show the ultimate victory of faithful **Sabbath-keepers** over the false mark, and the nations that array themselves against them. This grand theme is everywhere apparent in the passage. It shows itself in the preoccupation with the number seven, the preoccupation with God's creatorship and the worship thereby due him, in the source passages, in the immediate context, and in the traditions associated with the Song of Moses. Those associated with the messages of the three angels, and with the worship of God as creator need not be ashamed of these beliefs, for they are the defining characteristics assigned to the victorious throng standing beside the sea of glass.

The Seven Plagues and “Believer’s Fear”

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1

Many “righteous” people are in dread of the time of trouble. Some leave the church, or at least say that they have, because of a fear of persecution. They avoid eschatological subjects because it paralyzes them with apprehension.

Enormous mistakes have been committed by those who have presented these subjects in such a way as to invoke terror upon God’s people and upon others. In an effort to counter-act some of the damage done by this view this chapter is included, both to address this need, and to make comment relative to the general meaning of Revelation 15 and 16.

The greater and more “dangerous” problem, however, is that the world in general isn’t worried about the plagues at all. One really has to wonder if there are many at all, when looking at the total of humanity, who is really worried about them. The plagues certainly are not anticipated on the news. The world is concerned more about elections, political issues, football scores, celebrity behavior, current disasters, crime, and the like. But few are really worried about the seven last plagues.

Says one prophetic writer:

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“Then I saw that the seven last plagues were soon to be poured out upon those who have no shelter; yet the world regarded them no more than they would so many drops of water that were about to fall.”⁶⁷

Are the plagues real?

“When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9,10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God’s people.”⁶⁸

Some try reason that one way to avert the fear of these plagues is see them only as symbolic. While the language of Revelation is almost purely symbolic, the events it describes are not. According to the principle of “direct association” advocated in this book, the plagues are to be understood as definite realities. The symbols stand for actual historical events, people, and places. The plagues of Egypt were real, and God’s judgments at the end are real.

How dreadful are these plagues?

The pen of inspiration is starkly clear on this subject:

“These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals.”⁶⁹

“It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.”⁷⁰

So what are these plagues? Let us review their descriptions:

⁶⁷ E.G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 64.

⁶⁸ *The Great Controversy*, p. 628.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 628,629.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 622.

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First Plague

The first plague is an outbreak of “noisome and grievous sores” upon the beast worshippers. The Greek word, *κακον*, is given the definition of “evil, bad, foul, troublesome.” This would mean that they are foul in the sense of decomposition, or rotting. They would stink and be ugly to the sight, full of infection and disease.

Another Greek word used is “*ponaros*.” This word is associated with malignant and painful, and is used of sores.⁷¹

These sores are reminiscent, of course, to the boils that came upon man and beast in the Egyptian plagues. However, their description is also very similar to the medical description of burns, or the result of excessive fever or heat.

Second and Third Plagues

In the second and third plagues the sea and natural water sources become like blood. This would naturally lead to excessive thirst. However, blood is typically in Revelation a symbol of bloodshed, war, and violence. This is probably the fullest meaning. War and violence will be seen between people groups in both populous areas, as well as mountainous and relatively sparsely populated regions.

Fourth Plague

The fourth plague is heat and fire that come as a result the sun’s increased radiance, or because of celestial aberrations. The burning caused by this phenomenon is related in the text (fifth plague description) to the suffering of the first plague. This alludes to the fact that the “heat blisters” of the first plague may be partly caused by the fire and brimstone that falls upon the worshippers of the beast.

⁷¹ (According to Dictionary to the UBS Greek Text)

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The Fifth Plague

The fifth plague is the direct opposite of the fourth. When certain of the wicked complain of light and heat, they will be rewarded with darkness and cold.

This plague is particularly directed toward the throne of the beast, which would find literal fulfillment in Rome.

The Sixth Plague

The Sixth Plague is the gathering of Armageddon. This plague is described in the following section entitled, “What is Armageddon?”

The Seventh Plague

The seventh plague brings the final fall of Babylon, the voice of God, and great hailstones, about the weight of a talent. Commentaries estimate these to be between 70-120 lbs.

Who is the cause of these plagues?

The clearest indication is that the “wrath” of God is really the “work” of Satan. God is “passive aggressive.” He withdraws his protecting Spirit and allows Satan to work his will upon his subjects.

“Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy. . . they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God’s people shall be accomplished.”⁷²

“The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.”⁷³

⁷² *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 96.

⁷³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

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“This earth has almost reached the place where God will permit the destroyer to work his will upon it. . . .”⁷⁴

“The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent.”⁷⁵

“...I was shown that the seven last plagues will be poured out after Jesus leaves the sanctuary. Said the angel, “It is the wrath of God and the Lamb that causes the destruction or death of the wicked.”⁷⁶

“Another extreme which Satan has led the people to adopt is entirely to overlook the justice of God, and the threatenings of His Word, and to represent Him as being all mercy, so that not one will perish, but that all, both saint and sinner, will at last be saved in His kingdom.”⁷⁷

“Then I saw that the seven last plagues were soon to be poured out on those who have no shelter; yet the world regarded them no more than they would so many drops of water that were about to fall. I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God. I saw that His anger was dreadful and terrible and if He should stretch forth His hand, or lift it in anger, the inhabitants of the world would be as though they had never been, or would suffer from incurable sores and withering plagues that would come upon them, and they would find no deliverance, but be destroyed by them. Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel and begged of him to cause the sight to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful. Then I realized, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which that Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. It was a wonder for me that any could transgress the law of God and tread down His holy Sabbath, when such awful threatenings and denunciations were against them.”⁷⁸

But what is the real message in the seven last plagues?

⁷⁴ *Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 7, p. 141.

⁷⁵ *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

⁷⁶ White, *Early Writings*, p. 52

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 219

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64,65

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Does God use “scare tactics” to save people? Should young and old find themselves in dread of the time of the end?

The answer is “no.” God’s purposes are always salvific and informational. He does not enjoy threats, but he does in mercy give WARNINGS.

Before the plagues are poured out a deliberate picture is FIRST presented. There is a *victorious* throng seen standing beside the sea of glass mingled with fire.

Who is the victorious throng? They are the faithful worshippers of God. What is the song? It is the song of deliverance (Exodus 15;1-21).

Why are the faithful standing beside⁷⁹ the sea of glass?

As noticed heretofore, this passage is reminiscent of the Exodus experience. *This group has come safely through the plagues!* They have the harps of victory. The sea is a “Red”(fiery) Sea. (Note: fire and ice/glass terminology is found in both the Song of Moses and this passage.)

The first, primary, message in all of this passage *is that God delivers his people.* The primary purpose of the plagues passage is not to strike fear into the heart of believers or unbelievers but to encourage the believer with the fact that God will bring his people safely through. The message is that God always delivers.

- It was this way with Noah
- It was this way with Jacob and the angel
- It was this way with Israel beside the sea
- It was this way when Israel left Babylon
- It was this way when God saved the Jews through Esther and Mordecai

⁷⁹ “The phrase could mean ‘standing on’. . . or ‘standing by.’” R.H. Charles, *Revelation*, Vol. 2, p. 34. The term is appropriate to setting. If one pictures an earthly deliverance, the multitude would be beside the sea. If seen in heaven, they would be on the glassy sea.

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How many saints will be slain by the death decree?:

“God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation, and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark. I saw that if the wicked were permitted to slay the saints, Satan and all his host, and all who hate God, would be gratified. An oh, what a triumph it would be for his Satanic majesty, to have power, in the last closing struggle, over those who had so long waited to behold Him whom they loved.”⁸⁰

“If the blood of Christ’s faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God.”⁸¹

Many are the promises that the saints of God will be specially protected and provided for. They will be sustained, as was Israel in the flight from Egypt.⁸²

Some will no doubt be persecuted or slain between the present day and the close of probation. But not after. If anyone should dread anything, it should be the immediate prospects and not the time of the end. Even today, we should not anticipate our trials, or teach others that they should anticipate theirs. As long as we are in the world, we will have tribulation. This should be no surprise to any righteous person. But to “dread” the last days should never be the case for the secure Christian. The last days are the signal of his deliverance!

Psalm 91 should be required reading, or better memorization for any Christian experiencing fear about the last days and the plagues. No evil will befall the righteous when the worse things happen, and no plague will come near to them. That is God’s promise.

The verses outline deliverance from every plague:

⁸⁰ *EW*, p. 284

⁸¹ *GC*, p. 634

⁸² (bread and waters sure) Isaiah 33:16

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- (2,3) snare of the fowler---wicked setting traps for the righteous
- (1) noisome pestilence--the diseases of the first plague, that of epidemic or disease
- (5) terror of darkness (fifth plague), threatening weapons of bloodshed
- (1,5) pestilence in darkness (first and fifth plague)
- (4) destruction at noonday--midday sun, in its strength, heat (fourth plague)
- (1-7) The threat of war, thousands falling to the scourges all around (second, third, sixth, and seventh plagues).

The “secret place of the most high,” the refuge and sanctuary of the saints, is in verity the most holy place of the sanctuary. This temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is the subject of Revelation 15. It is the place of deliverance and safety. Prayer is the way in which the saints now dwell in this secret place. The Christian is to trust in God--NOW. If he does that he will be delivered at the future time. *“Because he has known my name I will set him on high, because he trusts in me, therefore will I deliver Him,”* says the Lord God.

Psalm 91:1 is providentially the “911” emergency call number (verse) of the Bible. It can be dialed by any Christian. Such a Christian can dwell under the protecting shadow of the almighty. He should never fear the last days or any day, knowing that whatever happens to him, will work somehow in God’s plan to accomplish some righteous purpose.

A thousand times more fearful will be the position of those who do not know God. They will receive the full effect of the plagues. But anyone, making any sincere effort to love and trust God will be spared. The only fear of the Christian should be that he might *willingly* find himself without a Savior. Jesus said, “Do not fear those who can kill the body, but fear him that can kill both body and soul in eternal death.”⁸³ The fear God desires is the fear that is really love and devotion. In place of the fear of dread, God gives the fear of love. This is his wish. “Perfect love casts out fear.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Matthew 10:28

⁸⁴ I John 4:18

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God's wrath is nothing other than God allowing the sinner to reap the results of his own choice. God does not get angry, nor does he punish sinners with delight. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."⁸⁵

What is the meaning of the smoke filling the temple?

Further evidence that the plague scenario is meant primarily for the purpose of encouragement and warning rather than threatening is the fact that *before* the plagues are poured out the temple is filled with smoke. What actually is the meaning of this?

The following facts are evident from this symbol:

First, the smoke is a symbol of God's *presence*. The pillar of fire and cloud was the "shekinah" or manifestation of God's presence. It indicated that God was *there*, and that he was leading.

Second, the smoke is symbolic of God's ACCEPTANCE of the penitent sinner's offering. When the temple of Solomon was dedicated this divine gesture was given to indicate God's acceptance of the edifice and the sacrifices of his people. The smoke is quite simply stated, God's sheltering Grace.

Third, the temple is filled with smoke because the prayers of ALL saints have come up before God. They have reached their full complement. The temple is full. God is *remembering* his precious saints and their cries for vindication. Rather than a symbol of terror and plague, the reader of the Revelation is first invited to view a picture of security and acceptance to be found in the secret place of the most high.

⁸⁵ 2 Peter 3:9

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Without an Intercessor?

Of further significance---and great misunderstanding---is that “no man” is able to enter the temple to be absolved of his sin during this time. This is a clear reference to the cessation of mediatorial access after the close of human probation.⁸⁶

Some reason that it is only the wicked that are without a mediator. However, Revelation 15 says “no man”---period.

While the righteous (or anyone for that matter) could never live one moment without the ongoing shelter of God’s grace before or after the close of probation, this is not the aim of this teaching. The purpose of this teaching is to indicate that when God’s saints are sealed and marked in the pre-advent judgment, it is a final and genuine sealing. They can have *assurance*. “He that is righteous is righteous still, he that is filthy is filthy still.” When probation closes, mediation ceases because it has no purpose. The righteous are so settled into “God’s Grace” that they will never leave it. The wicked are so settled into their wickedness, that they will not change. The decision is made and final.

Certain concepts are particularly taught by the clouds that were within and over the tabernacle of God:

“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. . . . For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and the fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeyings.”⁸⁷

“And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there

⁸⁶ It is also indication that the idea of the faithful passing through a time without a mediator is not the *invention* of some “dubious” prophet. It comes straight from the teaching of Scripture and the book of Revelation.

⁸⁷ Ex 40:34,35,38

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shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.”⁸⁸

“And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.”⁸⁹

“When he leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a Holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. Gods long suffering has ended.”⁹⁰

No Mediator?

The idea of living without a mediator, at any time is troubling to many. They charge that man is so dependant upon Grace that he cannot live for one moment without a mediator, and this is fundamentally true.

This again, however, is not the lesson that is taught.

Mediation is an ongoing process---continuous, over time. But when mediation is ended, and judgment is reached, mediation ceases. The benefits or results, negative or positive, of the mediation process, however, *continue* following the verdict or outcome of the mediation process.

Any person who has had "mediated" a home mortgage arrangement knows this. The couple must wait, sometimes for months, for the deal to close, and for the loan to be approved. But when the loan is approved, the rights to the home can be claimed with certainty. There is no longer any mediation process. It is approved, or denied, and that is that.

Of course, the benefits of Grace are more certain. These can be obtained even now. But the final outcome cannot be verified until a person's probation period has been completed.

⁸⁸ Isaiah 4:5,6

⁸⁹ Isaiah 6:4

⁹⁰E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 614, #1

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In the case of living without an intercessor after probation closes, it is not that the righteous person does not *need* the Grace of Christ. The fact is he HAS it! He possesses it, even with the assurance that it cannot be taken from him. He has been “approved,” and in this sense he does not require further mediation. “Let him be righteous still.” The benefits of Grace are eternally assured to him because he has been found fit to possess them.

As the prophet Isaiah pictures above, and as the Psalmist pictures in Psalm 91, the righteous person after the close of probation is living under the shadow of the Almighty, the protecting shadow of God. This cloud of smoke is almost synonymous with the covering “grace” and protection of God. The temple filled with smoke symbolizes this very shelter from the storm and the heat. As the cloud covered and protected the Israelites from heat by day, cold by night, even protection from enemies (Red Sea experience), so God will protect his people from the plagues.

It was at the Exodus that this pillar of cloud, really the protecting presence of God, was given to Israel. It brought them through the Red Sea and led them in their flight through the wilderness. This is the very theme found in these passages. The Exodus motif is largely present and given not for the purpose of inciting fear, but for the purpose of ASSURANCE.

As God’s people in the final conflict flee into the wilderness from “Babylon,” they are promised the sure benefits of Grace. They are “under the cloud” and thus “under Grace.”

The ungodly, however, are in a precarious position. They are in dire need of a mediatorial process, yet even if they might come to realize their need of a Savior, it is then unavailable to them. They have made their decision, their fate is set. They did not formerly appreciate the available benefits of salvation and of Sabbath deliverance; therefore they have no mediator to hold back the winds of strife and to shelter them from storm and plague. They are left to the full reward of God’s “wrath,” “unmediated,” or as the message says, “unmixed” with mercy.

Why is it even presented to “Christians” that the time will come when the mediatorial process will cease? Why does Revelation picture a time when

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“no man,” righteous or wicked, is able to enter the temple and receive pardon for his sins?

The reason is that God wants to teach us that preparation and spiritual growth is a process which last-day Christians should embrace. It is to teach that preparation and sanctification is necessary.

If God can merely declare the sinner righteous, whether he IS righteous or not, people could enter the kingdom who are not transformed by Grace. While justification is the gift we all need today, sanctification is the gift we will all need tomorrow. An impure man or woman cannot be safely saved or taken to heaven. If a person is “inclined” to sin and ready to do so, we will be returned to the very situation created by Adam and Eve in Eden.

If Christ’s righteousness is not effective in the believer, and cannot actually change him in mind and body, then that believer cannot be safe to save. That believer then merely wears the garments of Christ’s righteousness as a cloak, and is still leprous underneath.

Furthermore, in the judgment then, we might best side with Satan. He would argue that since he is not allowed to enter heaven, neither should other sinners be allowed to enter. It would not be fair to allow such a person into the kingdom, for he would simply be a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

The argument that Satan cannot win over is the argument of a changed heart and a changed life. When the believer is no longer a slave to sin, but has all his allegiance to Christ and his commandments, Satan has no legitimate claim. When justification is not just “claimed” by the believer, but is “experienced” by the believer it changes him. This change, being born anew (continuous), is necessary. Its fruit will be a life that is fulfilled in keeping all of God’s commandments.

This is why it can be said that the “fine linen IS the righteous deeds of the saints” (19:8). One immediately objects, saying that the fine linen is the righteousness of Christ ONLY, and not the good works of the saints. But no, the fine linen is the righteous works of the saints because it is Christ’s righteousness fulfilled in them. They have a faith that “works.” It is their

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righteousness, not because they are the source of it in any way, but because they are indeed righteous through the blood and saving grace of Christ. This righteousness is not only offered and imagined, but it is POSSESSED.

This is the righteousness that allows a believer to stand in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. He is so filled with “Sanctifying Grace” that God has pre-approved him for heaven.

Probably the doctrine understated more than any other doctrine in present Christendom is the necessity for character development and purity of lifestyle. In saying we are not saved by behavior and by our works, the other extreme is promoted that no effort should be made to behave correctly, and that character development will be automatic. The thought is that if one “knows” Christ, he will automatically keep the law. This can be 100% true if rightly understood. But some who claim to “know” Christ readily engage in and practice the very things Christ hates. Knowing Christ, therefore, means more than legal acceptance of his Grace.

By being perfect, God does not mean absolute sinless perfection. This may never be reached in this mortal life. Nothing less than the “ideal” should be the goal, however. Think what it would teach if it were not!

What perfection means is that the Christian, knowing Christ through his Word, and through prayer, and through experience, reaches a maturity and a trust that is “valid enough” to allow him entrance into heaven. His character is transformed to the point that it is largely his nature to do as God asks. This person, who is totally committed to his true Master, is safe to take to heaven, for he will always listen to and obey the dictates of heaven. When he is changed at the coming of the Lord, he will no longer humanly err and foul up his best intentions. But his character will remain basically unchanged because he has allowed God to do that work beforehand. Thus the work that saves is totally all of GOD’S *work*, with all of MAN’S *cooperation*.

Therefore, it needs to be the present endeavor of every man and woman to come to know Christ in such a way that they are being continually

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transformed by the renewing of their minds. Saved by their faith, they can also be safely judged by their works.

Today---now---every believer needs to be entering into that perfect trust. They need to be “under the cloud.” They need to send their pleas to their great High Priest, who ministers in the tabernacle of the testimony, the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. They need to find refuge in him and prepare today to meet their Lord. When they do this they will find wonderful shelter from storm and from tempest, and will have wonderful assurance through the vindicating merits of their Savior. They should not be afraid of the plagues. The twelfth commandment then is: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

What is Armageddon?

The place referred to in John's *Apocalypse* as "Armageddon" is one of the world's most widely recognized biblical terms. Yet, at the same time, it qualifies as a geographical site in which practically nothing conclusive has ever been established. Armageddon has become famous, no doubt, largely because of the mystery that surrounds it and because of its relation to the climactic prophetic events described in the pouring out the seven bowls of Revelation 16.

To be sure, some have made bold and explained its identity and meaning with an air of certainty. The positions are many and varied, none of which are wholly satisfactory to some exegetes. Many are simply tired of the subject, for good reasons, and cannot be blamed for not listening to another view. The one common denominator is the view that Armageddon refers to a large-scale battle. Beyond this the interpretations vary. The diverse views mainly line up along the issue of the battles nature, from purely physical to solely spiritual.

Textual Analysis

The United Bible Society Greek text offers no significant variants of the Greek word for *Armageddon*. However, Bruce Metzger's *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* offers many listed manuscript variants.⁹¹ These variants do not seem to offer any superior solution, however.

⁹¹ Αρμαγεδων (a A E and about 95 minuscules), μαγεδδων or μαγεδων, (about 80 minuscules) αρμαγεδδων, αρμαγεδων, αρμεγεδων, αρμαγεδω, αρμεγεδων, αρμεγεδωμ, μαγεδωδ, μαγιδων, μακεδδων.

What is Armageddon?

Harmagedon, or *Harmageddon* is a Greek expression that transliterates a *Hebrew* word or words. What word is represented in the Greek is the subject of diverse opinions. The majority of scholars it seems have accepted the view that *Harmageddon* is cryptic for the Hebrew word, "har," "mountain," and the Old Testament geographical site of Megiddo or Megiddon, a Palestinian locale lying at the base of the Carmel ridge in northern Israel. The literal plain of Megiddo, a strategic battleground over the centuries is assumed by many to be the site of this famous battle.⁹²

Another possibility lies in the Hebrew expression found in Isaiah 14:13 which the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* says is possible, but not probable, yet doesn't explain why. The word "mo'ed," is the Old Testament word for "congregation," or "assembly." In Isa. 14:13 this word is joined by a *maqeph* with "har," הַר, "mountain," translated: "the mountain of assembly" (KJV).

Joachim Jeremias describes the problems of an identification with Isa 14:13 as follows:

"The problem with b. (mountain of assembly), which would make *Har Magedon* the demonic counterpart of the mountain of God (cf. Heb. 12:22ff.), is that it is not an exact transliteration of the Hebrew of Isaiah."⁹³

DIFFICULTIES WITH "MEGIDDO" INTERPRETATION:

Finally, whether Armageddon represents Megiddo, or mo'ed, or neither of these at all, it must be recognized that any view is problematic. The traditional view (the plain in Palestine) really has no more to recommend it than the others, if not less, except its sensational nature and traditional popularity with free-lance expositors and evangelists. That the plain of Megiddo is the site of a future battle leaves several problems:

⁹² (1 Kings 9:5; 2 Chron. 35:22; Zech. 12:11)

⁹³ The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged, Kittel, p. 79.

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1. The point must not be missed that Harmageddon lexically means "mountain of Megiddo," and not "plain of Megiddo." There is no possible way, respecting any textual responsibility, to make a mountain out of a plain.

2. Though the plain of Megiddo is a famous battleground and could in this case be reminiscent of Israel's victory by the "waters of Megiddo" (Judges 5:19), it is not an overwhelming choice by the Seer at this point. Megiddo, instead, is perhaps most famous in the Old Testament for a rather embarrassing *defeat against* Israel. Josiah, against prophetic counsel went up to try to stop the advance of Pharaoh Neco of Egypt, was mortally wounded, died, and as a consequence brought sorrow and mourning to all of Israel.⁹⁴ In addition, this battle can best be interpreted as a gesture of friendship to Babylon by Israel (allies in this venture), which is antithetical to the purpose of the book of Revelation. The Revelator intends to picture Israel as victorious *over* Babylon. Needless to say, one encounters a difficulty if he tries to place at least this connotation of Megiddo into Revelation 16! The plain of Megiddo, then, appears to be a weak symbol of God's signal victory over the Beast, the Dragon, and the False Prophet.

3. The tenor of John's reference to the place called in the Hebrew, *Armageddon*, is given as the only evidence of where the place is. His explanation he considers adequate. The place then should be well known and not obscure. This in itself demands a search for superior types. The plain of Megiddo and the history connected to it is not *that* prominent biblically.

MOUNTAIN OF SLAUGHTER INTERPRETATION:

Another popular explanation for Armageddon is that the expression represents etymologically, "mountain of slaughter." This is gathered from an incidence of usage in the LXX (Septuagint). Three times in the LXX, Megiddo is transcribed as in Rev. 16:16.⁹⁵ In Zechariah 12:1 "magedon" is transcribed, but a few verses later (12:11) the same word is not

⁹⁴ (2 Kings 23:29,30; 2 Chron. 35:20,24)

⁹⁵ (2 Chron. 35:22; Judges 1:27, and Zech. 12:11)

What is Armageddon?

transcribed but rather translated: "to cut down," taken from the root *gadad*. The explanation is a reasonable one, in that the idea of slaughter is appropriate for a battle setting, and when compared with Rev. 9:11, *Apollyon* and *Abaddon*; both a Greek term and a Hebrew term is found meaning respectively, "destroyer." It is likely that the Hebrew expression denotes also the character of the place, a place of cutting down, slaughter, and destruction.

But this explanation by itself is not entirely satisfactory either. First it tells us very little, in fact, nothing that we wouldn't assume already by examining the passage. In addition, it doesn't explain why John doesn't give an alternative Greek expression as he does in Rev. 9:11. If the name is merely a term denoting the significance of slaughter, why not use one of the many appropriate Greek terms to accomplish the same thing?

Further, by referencing the synonymic parallels brought to light in this series of studies; under "hurting and destroying," we find that John has several appropriate words for destruction at his command. It seems fair to assume that the writer is *interested in a particular Old Testament source*, and because of this he uses a specific term. The expression must have a richer significance, and the apostle is likely referring to a specific, biblical locale, that will symbolize types particularly pregnant with meaning and history.

MOUNT CARMEL INTERPRETATION:

One of the most compelling suggestions is mentioned by Dr. William Shea, and others, who see correlations in the Mt. Carmel/Elijah episode, to Armageddon. This certainly would add richness to the symbolism. Mt. Carmel is in the general area of the town or plain of Megiddo, and could have perhaps born the name of Mt. Megiddo. However, the specific locales are actually separated by the distance of miles.

The problem would be why John doesn't simply refer to Mt. Carmel as does the Masoretic Hebrew text. In addition, there are no definite markers or contextual allusions to the Elijah story in Revelation 16. However, the eschatological nature of the personage of Elijah, and his message is found elsewhere in the book (Rev. 2,11,13), and the typological showdown

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between religious powers demonstrated at Carmel makes a compelling symbol for a final eschatological battle.

BABYLON and ARMAGEDDON

Another suggestion is now represented as follows, which this author feels has not been promoted adequately heretofore, beyond perhaps, general allusion. This view we now attempt to explain with an effort to be exegetically responsible. Admittedly there is also an interpretive side and the reader can be the judge. However, let us observe some key points concerning Revelation 16:12-21.

1. The prophetic setting and context is Babylon and not Palestine.

From the "drying up of the river Euphrates" (a symbol taken most likely from the conquering of Babylon by Cyrus the Great of Persia, which was accomplished exactly this way), to "the city (Babylon the great, v.19) fell into three parts," the description has never left Babylon!⁹⁶ There is really no particular or corollary hint that Armageddon is located in Israel. Instead we find a gathering of forces at a "place" where the forces of evil experience the wrath of God against their city by hailstorm and earthquake. Context is a golden rule of Bible study. There seems no reason to abandon it here.

2. John would most likely find allusions to Babylon in the Old Testament types of Babylon.

It would seem logical that John would prefer using an Old Testament idea within the context of "Babylon"(Babel), and not from another prophecy about another nation or city (Though admittedly he does this some times).

3. John often calls upon Isaiah.

The writer of the Revelation alludes to the writings of the prophet Isaiah almost more than any other biblical source. Since John alludes widely to

⁹⁶(Why has anyone ever suggested or insisted on Palestine?)

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the book of Isaiah and it should be no surprise to find that a text already referred to (Isaiah 14:13) is within one of the most conspicuous oracles against Babylon in the Old Testament. This same and very oracle contains the singular expression "har mo'ed." The transliteration problem has steered investigators away from this passage, but it does not seem impossible that John is transliterating this very expression. The consonants correspond reasonably well.

The thinking of Joachim Jeremias dismisses the validity of the transliteration on the basis of vowel correspondences. But is this not imposing the modern system, or even the Masoretic system on the writer? We need to be following John's own rules, and not the stringent and choking demands of later language experts. Though inspired, it is not fair to make the humble apostle a language expert. Perhaps he didn't know the rules of transliteration. Patmos had no university library.

However, John probably was not remiss, but had a design in the way in which he wrote his work, and we must be open to all possibilities and not be influenced away from a particular word association because of the opinions of a few exegetes. The reader is particularly invited to examine the following point.

4. Why does John refer to the Hebrew?

A look at the LXX, or the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, may indicate why. The LXX translates the phrase based on an entirely different word, "great" mountain, rather than the mountain of "assembly."

The LXX translators obviously thought that *mo'ed* was a copy error of *mged*, great, and thus translated it "high mountain," or "great mountain." But the Masoretic text retains *mo'ed* and this configuration is attested by the Dead Sea Scrolls. This textual anomaly is incredibly significant.

When this is considered the transliteration problem of *mo'ed* is entirely changed or even solved.

It appears that John is acquainted with the Greek word found in the Septuagint, *mged*. John was probably a reader of the Septuagint, the

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common bible for early Christians. But he spoke Hebrew, or Aramaic. To tell the reader the source of his idea he simply transliterates the word back into the Hebrew tongue as he thinks it would appear in the Hebrew text. However, the Hebrew text in some versions used the word *mo'ed*, "assembly" instead!

Or it may be that John is openly disagreeing with the Septuagint or LXX (or Theodotian), and is referring back to the "correct" Hebrew text. This is significant because the correction would make sense if the Bible of the early Christian centuries was the LXX. This makes it reasonable that the Revelator inserts a Hebrew reference when usually he might be comfortable with the Greek Old Testament. At least, this changes the transliteration problem, entirely. In any case, it is the position of this writer that Isaiah 14:13 is what John the prophet has in mind. When retranslating from the LXX, the term "harmegedon" finds perfect consonant/vowel correspondence.

5. What is the "Mountain of Assembly in the far north?" (or "Great Mountain")

Most commentators are steeped in the cultic significance of this expression saying that "the sanctity of the north as the dwelling place of the gods is widely attested among the Semites," but the text often referred to for support is Isa. 14:13. The result is circular reasoning. The idea that the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Palestine believed that the gods dwelt in the high mountains in the north could very well be true. But this is not necessarily the entire significance of this phrase.

Babylon and the North:

"The mountain of assembly in the far North," can mean the above or it can mean far north from the perspective of an Israelite living in Palestine. The oracle against Babylon in Isaiah 13 and 14 is written from Israel and is about Babylon where it is believed to be from an Israelite's perspective. The king of Babylon in Isa. 14:13 is not himself ruling from the mountains of the north, but was thought to be ruling in the direction of the North. To the modern reader Babylon is east from Jerusalem, but this was not considered so to the Judean.

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The prophets picture the enemies of Israel, the Babylonians especially, as coming from the north. The invaders invade from the north and are conceived of as being from the north due to the customary travel route via the Fertile Crescent.⁹⁷

"Sides of the North"

This expression appears only one other place in the Bible, namely Psalm 48:2. It reads:

"Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great king."

Roland R. Loasby in his book, *What is Armageddon*, stands as one of the few commentators who even many years ago openly favored the "har-mo'ed" alternative and probably came the closest to what is discussed in the following pages. However, because of the above text and the centrality of Jerusalem in the Biblical/prophetic wars he places Armageddon at Jerusalem. This fits very well with the "valley of Jehosaphat" description of Zechariah and in itself is a plausible scheme. However, from an exegetical standpoint we don't seem to find Jerusalem in Revelation 16 and the passage in the Psalms is likely referring to more than the temple complex which was situated in northern (northeast corner) side of Jerusalem.⁹⁸

It is possible, then, that to Isaiah, in his oracle against Babylon , the far north is the direction of distant Babylon.

⁹⁷(SDA Bible Dictionary, s. v. "north," says, "see East.") (See Jeremiah 1:13,14,15; 4:6; 6:1,22; 10:22; 13:20; 15:12; 16:15; 23:8, 25:9; 25:26; 46:6; 46:10, 20,24; 47:2, 50:3 which usually refer to Babylon. (See note on Jer. 1:13,14, in SDA BC). Cf. also Ezekiel 26:7; Zech. 2:6.

⁹⁸ (There exist some common equations between Mt. Hermon, the highest mountain in Israel, (in the north) and "Mt. Zion." Isaiah 14:13 may also bear some contrasting relationship with this "Mt. Zion of the north.")

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With this established let us think typologically of such phrases as:

- The Mountain of Assembly
- I will ascend above the heights of the clouds
- I will be like the Most High (note Most High) (cf. Isaiah 14:1, 13,14)

It is paramount to remember that in the biblical messages Babylon is never really the Anglicized "Babylon," but is rather, and always, Babel. Babel is the Hebraic spelling and Babylon is simply "Babel" with a typical Greek ending.

It is difficult to imagine that in the Hebrew mind such a name could be mentioned even without recalling with it its ancient significance as described in the Torah itself. A reference to it would naturally call the mind to focus back to its origin and roots. This would be especially true of Isaiah who could only look forward to the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar--Neo-Babylon. If this text is not a distinct echo of old Babylon on the plain of Shinar, that built a tower "to ascend above the heights of the clouds," and "be like the Most High," then there could hardly be a more perfect allusion coming by accident. The characteristics of Babylon remain the same from its origin.⁹⁹

It is a point of interest that the aim of the Babel builders was to build a city, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). There is an ecumenical purpose in their building. As well there is an element of pride; "Let us make a name for ourselves," by building "a city and a tower with its top in the heavens," above the heights of the clouds (Cf. Gen 11:4). Their purpose is therefore, to arrogantly engineer assembly.

Numerous times in the ancient rabbinical literature the story known to us as the "Tower of Babel" is referred to uniquely as "the age of the dispersion," the "generation of separation," or the "generation of the

⁹⁹(Some may have to be reminded that there is a historical meaning to this text. It has been popularly applied it to Satan himself, to whom it ultimately points [the dragon], and this is a valid *application*. But this text was not commonly thought of thus for centuries. The first time it was so applied according to the writers we have on record today was by Jerome in the fourth century, A.D.)

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division."¹⁰⁰ For as Genesis repeatedly reads, "the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."¹⁰¹ Assembly is the opposite, of course, to separation or division; the difference due to perspective and purpose. Man's purpose was to group together and organize against God, and apparently to standardize idolatrous religion; to assemble. God's purpose was to scatter, to replenish or "fill the whole earth."

Temple Towers

Temple towers, know as ziggurats, are still found in the Mesopotamian plains in abundance. Unfortunately, not enough is known about the significance of these.

Some things have been determined, however. They represented **mountains**.

Nebuchadnezzar's and Nabopolassar's temple complex in Babylon had the respective names of the temple of Marduk, *Esagila*, "house of the high raised head," and the temple tower, a very impressive structure at one time was called *E-teman-en-ki*, "house of the foundation of heaven and earth." It is believed that these towers were conceived of as mountains, since the plains of Shinar offered no heights from which to worship and meet with the gods.

The *Hanging Gardens of Babylon*, one of the wonders of the ancient world, was built by the Babylonian king for his wife and queen who missed the northern mountains.

It is not an obscure idea among the ancients of the Near East to associate the ziggurats or temple towers with mountains. Desmond Ford's commentary on Daniel cites some pertinent information on this account:

"The sacred edifices of Babylonia were intended as a matter of fact to be imitations of mountains. . . . (This was the) . . . ideal of the Babylonian temple. According to Babylonian notions. . . the earth is pictured as a huge mountain."

¹⁰⁰ (AZ 18b-19a, Pes 505, Ta 145, BM 262, etc.)

¹⁰¹ Gen. 11:8,9

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Jensen has shown that the Babylonians regarded the earth as a huge mountain. In fact, the earth was actually called "E-kur," "mountain-house." Later they began to identify one particular part of the earth, a mountain peak preferably, as the dwelling of the god, so that temples which were built later were known as "mountain houses." The height of the temple which formed the dwelling-place of the god thus symbolized the mountain which formed his original home."

All great civilizations continued the fundamental symbolism of orientation and the total cosmic imagery in their temples. . . .

The temple-tower of Enlil, the chief of the Babylonian gods, was called also Ekur, "the mountain house." This tower was located at Nippur, the tower for centuries equated with the tower of Babel.¹⁰²

As mentioned previously the famous temple tower completed by Nebuchadnezzar called E-teman-en-ki meant "house of the foundation of heaven and earth" representing the cosmic mountain.

This was because the earth was conceived of as a "hemispherical mountain with gently sloping sides."

This was part of the temple complex, Esagila, i.e. "house of the high raised head."¹⁰³

As we must quickly note, from the above references, there is easy association made between the spirit and idea found in these later Babylonian towers and the one we know as the tower of Babel. Furthermore, it takes no stretch of the mind to find the same inferences and thought when referring to the "mountain of assembly in the far north," mentioned in the prophecy concerning Babylon in Isaiah 13 and 14.

¹⁰² D. Ford, *Daniel*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

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JEWISH TALMUD

The writer of this study believes that many answers to biblical problems can be largely solved by referencing the ancient Jewish writings. In this case in particular we find astonishing light upon the subject at hand:

The *Babylonian Talmud* applies Isa. 14:13 in a few places to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, no doubt because the rabbis felt he comprehended by his pride-filled acts a fit demonstration of this text. In the same text Nebuchadnezzar is nearly co-identified with Nimrod. To quote:

"I bestowed greatness upon Nimrod, and he said, Come, let us build a city, . . . upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he said, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."¹⁰⁴

Nebuchadnezzar is considered as re-incarnating the "spirit" of Nimrod. Both in history are struck down for pride represented and associated with edifices and cities of their making.¹⁰⁵

Again notice the thinking of the rabbis who lived near the same time *Revelation* was written:

(Prior note: A *Bath Kol* is the Hebrew way of denoting a voice from heaven.)

"Come and hear: For R. Jahanan b. Zakkai said: What answer did the *Bath Kol* give the wicked man (Nebuchadnezzar) when he asserted "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High?" A *Bath Kol* came forth and rebuked him: "Thou wicked man, son of a wicked man, descendant of the wicked Nimrod, who incited the whole world to rebel (himrid) against me during his reign!"¹⁰⁶

At the very least, we find here in Jewish thought, a continuity between Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁰⁴ Hullin 89a

¹⁰⁵ (Thus: Gen. 11; "a city and a tower," and "this great Babylon I have built," Daniel 5)

¹⁰⁶ Pes. 94 a, b; (notes accompany passage on the word play)

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To the Hebrews the episode on the plain of Shinar was not forgotten and the new Babylon only reiterated and comprehended the old. Even within the book of *Daniel* we may find direct allusions to the old Babylon that Nebuchadnezzar and his predecessors revived. Writes the author Herman Veldkamp:

“The author of the book of Daniel deliberately uses the old name *Shinar* (Dan. 1:2) to remind us of the origin of this world power that arises in opposition to God. It was on the plain of Shinar that mankind declared, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens" (Gen. 11:4). Shinar was where man sought to make a name for himself by building the great tower of Babel."¹⁰⁷

And perhaps it might even be re-echoed in the "to and fro" expression.

In the Midrash on Gen. 11 one rabbi applies Ps. LIX. 12 to the "generation of the separation of races."

"Israel said: Slay not the generation of the separation, lest my people forget. Make them to wander to and fro by thy power." "Cast them away, and bring them down from above to below (i.e. top of the tower.)"

Again the original Babylon (tower) is remembered for its famous scattering "to and fro" and such is appropriate symbolism for the future scattering of similar forces in the final days of this earth's history.

Daniel 2

In the great prophecy of Daniel 2 there was seen a "stone that smote the image (and) became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35).

The Aramaic word for mountain (this appears in the Aramaic section of Daniel) is *tur*, similar to the modern word, "tower." Lexically, this word has two alternative translations, one "mountain," the other, "tower," or

¹⁰⁷ Veldkamp, p. 9.

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"round tower, height."¹⁰⁸ This mountain, or tower in God's supreme design fills the whole earth (Isaiah 2:2).

It is interesting to note that God's original purpose and the most significant command given to Adam and to Noah was "to replenish the earth."¹⁰⁹ On the other hand the purpose of the apostate Babylon is to rebelliously congregate, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." It is twice repeated in Gen. 11 that God thwarted this purpose at Babel and "scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth (11:9). In God's restorative kingdom, the earth is again peopled and governed, as it should be. This kingdom, i.e. this city and tower; this "mountain-house;" shall never be destroyed, in contrast to the fate of the evil course of those building on the plains of Shinar.¹¹⁰

The *City of God* ultimately fulfills God's final purpose of "filling" the earth whereas man in opposition to God uses urbanization and assembly to war against him. Through his own building and works man tries to religiously and politically usurp the sovereignty that alone is God's; like "Nimrod, a mighty hunter, against (prob. "in the place of") the Lord."

The City Fell into Three Parts

The apocalyptic writer, John, reports that "the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered great Babylon. . ."

What is meant by this phrase is almost entirely ignored by commentators and has been difficult to exegete. However, it is felt that a great debt is to be owed to the ramblings of the rabbis, who have strangely been ignored far too much by Christian scholars.

¹⁰⁸ *Young's Analytical Concordance*, p. 675

¹⁰⁹ Gen. 1:28; 9:1

¹¹⁰ Incidentally, there are many similarities functionally, architecturally, and dimensionally, between ziggurats and John's description of the Holy City: Square; and high as wide, the perfect pyramid, etc. That the tower was itself considered as a city or part of the city see discussions on Gen. 11)

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Because on this subject some fascinating light emerges out of passages taken from the rabbinical writings concerning the falling of the tower of Babel into three parts. Some quotes follow. These quotes are removed from their contexts and are inferential in nature since the Talmud chronicles rabbinical arguments that we are not fully inside of. But the reader is called to examine these closely for their relationship in thought to the Babylonian tower, which by the way is easier to see falling into three parts as explained by the sages, than is a typical city so explained by moderns:¹¹¹

"And they said: Come let us build a city, and a tower (xi.4) R. Judah said: The tower they built, but they did not build the city. An objection is raised: But it is written, And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower (ib.5)? Read what follows he replied: And they left off to build the city (ib.8), the tower however not being mentioned. R. Hiyya b. Abba said: A third of this tower which they built sank (into the earth), a third was burnt, while a third is still standing. And should you think that it (the remaining third) is small---- R. Hura said in R. Idi's name: When one ascends to the top, he sees the palm trees below him like grasshoppers." Midrash, Vol. 1, p. 307.

•Midrash on Genesis xxxviii.7-8.

(Also in this passage the "generation of the separation" is referred to)

"The generation of the dispersion have no portion in the world to come, What did they do?-- The scholars of R. Shila taught: They said, "Let us build a tower, ascend to heaven, and cleave it with axes, that its waters might gush forth." In the West (Sc. Palestine academies) they laughed at this: if so, they should have built a mountain!

R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar said: They split up into three parties. One said, "let us ascend and dwell there; the second, "let us ascend and serve idols; "and the third said, "let us ascend and wage war (with God). The party which proposed, "let us ascend and dwell there----the Lord scattered them; the one that said, Let us ascend and wage war were turned to apes, spirits, devils, and night demons; whilst as for the party which said, Let us ascend and serve idols--for there the Lord did confound the language of all the earth. It has been taught, R. Nathan said: They were all bent on

¹¹¹ In Genesis 11 the "city and tower" are associated together. This expression is a "hendiadys"(used only once). However, the city and the tower is combined in one thought, as one unit.

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idolatry. (For) here it is written, Let us make a name; whilst elsewhere it is written, and make no mention of the name of other gods: (Ex 23:13) just as idolatry is meant, so here too. R. Johnathan said: A third of the tower was burnt, a third sunk into the earth, and a third is still standing. R. said: The atmosphere of the tower causes forgetfulness. R. Joseph said: Babylon and Borsif are evil omens for the Torah. What is the meaning of Borsif?---R. Assi said: An empty (shaft) pit (bor).”¹¹²

Where the rabbis received this tradition that the tower fell into three parts, or the idea of the three parties that resulted is a mystery. So is some of the reasoning of the rabbis! But it seems compelling that we find similar elements in Revelation 16, both before and after the reference to Armageddon; the city falling into three parts, and unclean spirits (demons) coming out of the mouth of the beast, out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (16:13).

The three unclean spirits well represent three philosophies or powers at cross-purposes to the God of heaven. "Spirits" are synonymous with "tongues" and "languages." And the most significant characteristics of frogs are their tongues. They also are "unclean," and they "babble."¹¹³

The confusion of languages is probably best illustrated by the cacophony of croaking one hears at night “down by the pond.” What is most certain, is the ready allusion and identification of the gathering at the Babylon of old, and the confusion of Babel (the Hebrews twisted the word Babylonian word “Babilu” (gate of the Gods) to mean "Balal," Hebrew for “confusion”).

John, we contend, throughout this passage is consistently using Babel imagery, not the imagery of a plain in Palestine!

This is manifestly important to realize. The themes correspond quite well; mountain-towers, the confusion of tongues, unclean spirits, human pride, false worship, idolatry and images, war against God, and particularly

¹¹² Sanhedrin 109a

¹¹³ The Greek words, “frog” and “abomination;” have similar roots, in fact, almost sound identical.

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ecumenism. The tower of Babel is the polar opposite and the contrasting counterpart to the Holy City, Jerusalem---Mt. Zion.

Seventh-day Adventists have taught for over a hundred and more years that religious ecumenism is taught by Revelation 16:13,14. Not so strangely do we then find further evidence, even from the rabbis of old, of this same truth confirmed. The beast, the dragon, and the false prophets in the forms of Roman Catholicism, Satanism, and such apostate Protestant powers as those we find in the United States of America, are to unite in their efforts against God. The result will be Babel confusion, out of which God's people are called (18:4). The Babel builders sought conformity, one language and one people, based on the premise of idolatry and self-made forms. But they were finally confounded and scattered.

What a magnificent illustration of man trying to save himself is found at the tower of Babel! Likewise, in the latter times, the same aim is manifest. When man, the kings of the earth, come together to war against God and his people, God will strike a scattering blow again to make their plans come to naught. Their tower is split, earthquake and lightning (Rev. 16) from God end their designs for the present. It is the "age of the dispersion" all over again. The real and final battle comes later at *Gog and Magog*.

Armageddon is a **place**, and not so much a "battle." It is a symbolic place where men seek to wage war with God, to make their own name (and number), and to build their own kingdom. But Babylon is dealt a decisive blow. Babylon, whose sins "are heaped as high as the heaven" (Rev.18:5), "shall be thrown down with violence" (18:21).

The Place

Largely overlooked by most expositors is the very word, "place." The typical generic sense of the word is reckoned differently by modern readers who are unaware of the word's ancient sense and significance.

The word is "topos," from whence the word "top" is derived. It denotes a "high place," or acropolis. In this word alone the idea of Armageddon being a "low" plain in Palestine reaches its complete demise.

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The parallel and righteous counterpart to the false system of religion, Babylon, is that found on Mt. Zion, the high place, beautiful for situation in the “sides of the north.”¹¹⁴ In attempting to substitute false religion in the place of the true, the rival power attempts to build, through its own humanistic and idolatrous power, a “high-mountain” of its own. It is pathetically inadequate. It is called Armageddon, the “mountain of assembly,” or the “great mountain.” It is a humanistic “high” place whose builders say, “We will ascend above the heights of clouds, we will be like the Most High.”

The warning that “Babylon is fallen,” present tense, is first found in Isaiah 22, and was written before the demise of Babylon in exilic times was yet a full reality. It is obvious that the writer of this prophecy (God through the prophet, of course) is giving warning on the basis of the previous and historical “fall” of Babylon at Shinar. The horse rider is pictured as a messenger bringing news. Any reader in the time of Isaiah could not have avoided the allusion to the *fall of the tower*, especially when the Old Testament word for Babylon was not Babylon at all, but was the pure Hebrew, BABEL. Thus, “Babel fell, Babel fell!”¹¹⁵

That this interpretation steers away the expositor from Palestine to Babylon does not mean that Armageddon is now therefore to be fought at literal Babylon. Babylon was according to God’s prophetic view, never again to be inhabited, a place of destruction and nakedness. Babylon is used in Revelation in symbolic fashion for a similar power or powers but is not bound by the same geographical and cosmological restrictions. The “once removed” principle of symbols does not allow Babylon to be the *very same* as the old, yet it would also be as mistake to make Babylon “only” a “spiritual” non-entity, and remove it entirely from the real world.

¹¹⁴ This correspondence is signally evident through the study of synonymic or bi-sectional parallels found in this section. The comparison is intentional, judging by the literary arrangements of the passages.

¹¹⁵ The expression is repeated twice for emphasis. It is also repeated twice because ancient Babylon fell twice. Finally, it is repeated twice because the message of Babylon’s fall is repeated twice “eschatologically;” first in the great Advent Awakening and lastly in the Loud Cry or Latter Rain.

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More of the actual identity of modern Babylon, which is also key to the understanding of Armageddon, is addressed in succeeding sections.¹¹⁶

CONCLUSION

We therefore conclude that “Armageddon” as a term is largely reminiscent of the very expression given in the prophecy concerning Babylon, especially Isaiah 14:13. This passage and others re-create in the newer Babylon the very spirit of the original Babylon on the plain of Shinar (and the Babylon that fell to Cyrus as well). The Babel story typifies characteristically and historically, Babylon; that through the centuries has said, "I will be above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Armageddon, at least in part, has to be symbolic of the tower of Babel. In this way it symbolizes the rallying point, the "assembly," the "gathering" of last day Babylon. This is why the enemies of God are "**gathered** together to place called. . . . Armageddon."

We do not think the plain of Megiddo is as significant as this is. That the very term can mean "mountain of slaughter, or destruction" may not be accidental, however, and the symbol is perhaps broad in its meaning, by design. There can even be found illusionary likeness to Elijah and the Mt. Carmel incident as well. But the symbolic base is infinitely larger than a mere term, or Palestinian locale. It is wrought out in the whole history of Babylon, its arrogant claims in the face of God and its consequent falls, at Shinar, and later when Cyrus, the servant of God, dried up the river, and the city took its punishment according to the prediction of the prophets. Modern Babylon is reminded of the fall of the previous Babylons, in the statement "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." In this phrase can be seen the fall of at least two Babylons....is fallen, is fallen. The two ancient Babylons, or ancient Babylon and modern "Babylon."

In this interpretation we find in “Armageddon” a symbol worthy of its place in Scripture. It is suddenly much richer in meaning than before.

¹¹⁶ The reader is referred especially to vol. 6 of this series of studies, *The Days of the Seventh Angel*.

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Connected to the whole history of Babylon it incorporates its story and character, its attempts at ecumenical and world order, its pride, its affluence, its image worship, its confusion and fall. Babylon's character has not changed with the rising up and falling of many earthly kingdoms. Its character is found in all earthly powers; *rebellion against God*. This spirit of pride and rebellion will soon be crushed as the Rider on the White Horse comes to earth to set up his kingdom that will never be destroyed. The stone will become a great mountain/tower that will fill the whole earth. The time is near. As the prophetic writer so appropriately warns:

*"The time of God's investigation is at hand. The **Most High** will come down to see that which the sons of men have builded. His sovereign power will be revealed; the **works of human pride will be laid low.**"* White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 124

"Armageddon is fallen, is fallen!...."

Further References

"Lightnings from heaven, as an evidence of God's displeasure, broke off the upper portion of the tower and cast it to the ground." PP 120

"The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Rev. 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days." PP 124

The Structure of Revelation 13-16

The obvious sequential numbering of the seven plagues of chapter 16 leads the less particular observer to conclude that the previous sections, especially chapter 14, are not so particularly ordered. This is probably not the case in that seven angels appear in Revelation 14 as well.

The center of the plagues section (13-16) comes at the grape harvest. There are seven angels acting their parts on both sides of the equation. This approximate division comes exactly where needed when considering synonymic or bi-sectional parallel patterns as well.

The angels are as follows:

- The first (another) angel and his message (14: vs. 6)
- The *second* angel with his message (vs. 8)
- The *third* angel and his message (vs. 9-11)
- The “fourth” angel, one “like a son of man,” is seen sitting upon a cloud, with a sharp sickle.
- The “fifth” angel comes out of the temple with a sharp sickle to harvest the grain of the earth.
- The “sixth” angel also comes out the temple, and also with a sharp sickle
- The “seventh” angel comes out from the altar, who has power over fire and instructs the “sixth” angel to complete the grape harvest.

In reality there are seven angels with seven messages. Seven angels act their part before the close of earthly probation, followed by seven angels who pour out their bowls upon the wicked earth after the close of earthly probation. Three of the first angels have warning messages. The next three have sickles. The seventh angel closes the sequence.

What is Armageddon?

The angel that has power over fire is the “seventh angel.” He is the angel that offers the fire and incense and remembers the prayers of the martyrs and saints. This angel is paralleled by the seventh angel of the seventh seal, who was seen offering the incense representing all the prayers of the saints before the altar. This angel calls for retribution and justice to be poured out on the perpetrators of evil for their crimes against the saints.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Bi-Sectional Parallels

The Plagues

(13:1-16:21)

Side A	Vs.	Parallel Type	Vs.	Side B
Stood on sand of sea	13:1	To stand on or beside	15:2	Stand on the sea of glass
Beast <u>rise up</u> seven heads	13:1 13:1	To rise up Seven	16:12 15:1	the "sun-rising" seven angels; seven plagues
ten horns	13:1	Ten	14:20	1 M, 6 hundred= 10X10
names of blasphemy	13:1,5,6	Blasphemy	16:9,11	blasphemed the name of God; blasphemed God
leopard	13:2	To have spots	16:13	Unclean spirits; Frogs
feet of bear (five claws)	13:2	Five	16:10	Fifth angel
gave him his power (<i>dunamis</i>)	13:2	Might	15:8	from his power (<i>dunamis</i>)
gave him his seat (throne)	13:2	To sit upon	16:10	seat (throne) of the beast
great authority	13:2	Authority (pol. dominion)	15:3,4	All nations fear and worship the king of the nations; also authority (14:18) over fire (εξουσία)
head wounded; deadly wound	13:3	Wound: deathly sick	15:1 ff	plagues, first plague features wounds (16:2)
Wondered or marveled after beast	13:3	Awe; worship	15:3,4	works are great and marvelous; demands everyone's respect
"who is like unto the beast?"	13:3	Expression of awe	15:3,4	"Who shall not fear thee. . ."
dragon	13:4	Evil power: Satan	16:13	out of the mouth of the dragon
a mouth spewing evil things	13:5	Proceeding from mouth	16:13	three unclean spirits from mouth
opened his mouth	13:6	To open	15:5	temple opened
tabernacle (tent)	13:6	Temple (dwelling place)	15:5	tabernacle (tent) of testimony
them that dwell in heaven	13:6	Heaven dwellers	15:1	angels??
to make war (πολεμος)	13:7	To war	16:14	To battle (πολεμος)
to overcome them (νικαω)	13:7	To overcome	15:2	gotten the victory (νικαω)
Power over all	13:7	absolute dominion	15:3,4	God has absolute

What is Armageddon?

kindreds, tongues, nat.				dominion over all nations, etc. vintage of the earth
kindreds (tribes or families)	13:7	offspring	14:19	
tongues	13:7	language	16:13	"spirits"
nations	13:7	nations	15:4	all nations
two horns	13:11	duality	15:3	double song (Moses and the Lamb)
the Lamb	13	Lamb	15:3	Lamb
sword	13:10 14	sharp	14:17	sharp sickle
life unto the image of the beast	13:15	life (ψυχη)	16:3	living soul (ζωη, ψυχη)
foundation of the world	13:8	stone (manufactured)	15:2	Sea of glass, winepress (14:19,20)
foundation of world, who made (14:7)	13:8	creatorship	15:3	Are thy works (see the Psalms)
Fire came down from heaven	13:13	fire from heaven	16:18	lightnings
Fire	13:13	fire	16:8	scorch men with fire
doeth great wonders	13:13	signs, miracles	16:14	working miracles
should be killed	13:15	killing, destroying	16:6	shed the blood of saints and of prophets over his mark, etc.
mark in right hand and forehead	13:16	incisive mark	15:2	
name of the beast	13:17	name	15:2	name (number of)
Six (hundred)(sixty)	13:18	six	14:20	six (hundred)
six				
hundred	13:18	hundred	14:20	hundred
Thousand (144,000)	14:1	thousand	14:20	a thousand
four beasts, four thousand	14:3	four	15:7	four beasts
mount Zion	14:1	mountain	16:16	mount Megiddo
mount Zion (Zion means baldness)	14:1	barrenness	16:15	naked
deceiveth them that dwell on earth	13:14	deceit	16:13	false prophet
no man might buy or sell	13:17	commerce	16:12	drying up the river Euphrates
name on forehead	13:16; 14:1	name	15:2	name and mark and number
many waters, thunder, harps	14:2	rumbling sound	16:18	thunder/earthquake
harps	14:2	harps	15:2	harps of God
harps, sung a new song	14:2,3	celebration	15:2	sea of glass victory song
a new song	14:3	song	15:3	song of Moses
no man able to learn song	14:3	inability	15:8	no one able to enter temple
fly in the midst of heaven	14:6	locomotion	16:15	walk naked
gospel	14:6	public proclamation	15:5	testimony; (song (15:3), crying aloud (14:18))

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glorify	14:6	glory	15:4	glorify thy name
fear God	14:6	fear	15:4	Who shall not fear thee?
hour	14:6	short time	16:15	like a thief (hour? 14:15)
heaven	14:7	firmament	16:17,21	air; hail out of heaven
sea	13:1; 14:7	sea	16:3	sea
rivers & fountains of waters	14:7	water (fresh)	16:4	rivers and fountains of water
judgment	14:7	judgment	15:4	judgments are made manifest
Babylon	14:8	Babylon	16:19	Babylon
Babylon is fallen	14:8	fall; descending	16:19	Babylon falls; and cities of nations
wine of wrath	14:8	red	16:19	wine of fierceness
cup	14:10	bowl-shaped object	16:19	cup of wrath
drink	14:8	drink	16:6	blood to drink
fornication	14:8	fornication;uncleanness	16:13	unclean spirits
firstfruits	14:4	green plant	14:19	vine of the earth
firstfruits	14:4	offspring	14:19	vintage of the earth
wine	14:8	sweet taste	14:18	fully ripe grapes, (Euphrates) 16:12
wine	14:8	bitter taste	16:19	wine of God's fierce wrath
tormented with fire & brimstone	14:10	suffering; torment	16:10,11	pains and sores, etc.
poured out without mixture	14:10	poured	16	angels pour out vials
presence of holy angels and Lamb	14:10	shame; dishonor	16:15	walk naked
brimstone	14:10	white stone	15:2	glass; variant=white stones (15:6); also hailstones (16:21)
brimstone	14:10	foul odor	16:2	foul and evil sores
lion's mouth; wrath unmixed (14:10)	13:2	fierceness	16:19	wine of fierceness and wrath
smoke	14:11	smoke	15:8	smoke
day and night	14:11	darkness	16:10	darkness
Zion	14:1	<i>foursquare</i>	15:5	most holy place; altar (14:18)
everlasting gospel	14:6	eternal	16:5	art and wast and shalt be
fire and brimstone	14:10	mingled/mixed	15:2	glass mingled with fire
patience of the saints	14:12	endurance	16:15	watcheth and keepeth garments
commandments	14:12	word of God	15:5	the testimony
keep commandments	14:12	keeping; guarding	16:15	keepeth his garments
dead which die in the Lord	14:13	death	16:3	a dead man
from henceforth, works follow them	14:13	remnant	15:1	seven <u>last</u> plagues
white cloud	14:14	white	15:6	white linen

What is Armageddon?

like the son of man	14:14	men persons	16:2	the men (men also in 16:21)
came out of the temple	14:15	depart: go out	14:18	out of the altar
sat on cloud	14:15	to sit upon	14:17	the throne (horses 14:20?)
golden crown	14:14	golden	15:6	golden belts
sharp sickle	14:14	iron (made from)	14:18	also a sharp sickle
thrust in (throw in)	14:15	to throw	14:18	thrust in sickle
crown	14:14	headgear	14:20	bridles
mouth was found no guile	14:5	not found	16:20	mountains not found
loud voice (several instances)	14:6	loud voice	16:1	loud voice from temple, etc.
angels	sev.	angels	sev.	angels
harvest of the earth is ripe (dried up)	14:15	dried up	16:12	Euphrates dried up
fountains of waters	14:7	depth	16:4	fountains (wells) of water
sat on cloud	14:14	to bear or carry	15:7	angels having or carrying vials
with him 144,000 (see EGW)	14:1	surrounding	15:6	breasts girded with golden girdles
in his hand a sharp sickle	14:14	in the hand	15:7	vials
not defiled with women	14:4	corrupted	16:13	unclean spirits
night	14:11	cold	16:10	darkness
fire and brimstone	14:10	hot	16:9	scorched with great heat
hour	14:6	twelve	16:6	the prophets
commandments, Yes (væt) says Sp.	14:12,13	truthful words	16:7	Even so, (væt) Lord God Almighty
reap	14:15	pick up/remove/snatch	14:18	gather the clusters (of grapes)
without fault (spot)	14:5	pure	15:6	pure and white linen
without mixture	14:10	full, complete	15:7	vials full of wrath of God
hour	14:6	unit of time	16:14	great day of God Almighty
harvest (grain) of the earth	14:15	to trample underfoot	14:18	grapes
fire and brimstone	14:10	descending from heaven	16:21	Hailstones

Seven Themes in the Book of Revelation Important For Seventh-day Adventists

- **The Sin and Subterfuge of the World**
- **The Seal of God and the Sabbath**
- **The Signs of the End and the Second Coming**
- **The State of the Dead and Spiritualism**
- **The Sanctuary and Sanctification**
- **The Savior and Salvation**
- **The Spirit of Prophecy and the Spirit of Christ**

1. The Sin and Subterfuge in the World

A sentiment promoted in the world over many centuries is that there are several roads to heaven; there are many paths, and it doesn't really make a difference what one believes as long as he is sincere and believes in the Gospel or some facsimile of the Gospel.

This is, however, not the message of the book of *Revelation*. Thematic to the whole work, is the premise that there are two major forces in the world, good and evil, and that eternal destinies hang upon one's allegiance to one concept or the other.

The book of *Revelation* tells us that it is entirely possible to lose one's way to the kingdom, to fall, to be deceived, or to be lost. Revelation teaches no universalism; no "once saved, always saved" doctrine. Believers are encouraged to hold fast that no man take their crown. They are warned of many things that pose more than a mere artificial threat to their salvation.

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In other words sin is real, it exists, and its consequence is death. The wicked receive punishment for their sins, and the issues involve life and death. “The wages of sin is death.”¹¹⁷

The warning repeated most is that caution is to be observed toward false religion and false practices and doctrines. The greatest threat comes from within the very walls of Christendom. This, sometimes surprising phenomenon, must be recognized. Some of the many warnings toward falsehood are listed below:

- Those who say they are apostles and are not
- The synagogue of Satan
- The existence of Balaamites and the Nicolaitans
- The teachings of Jezebel
- The deep things of Satan
- Those who say they are Jews and are not
- The plague of false messiahs (white horse)
- Those who have not the seal of God
- The fallen stars, and the demonic locusts
- Those who overcome and deceive them that dwell on the earth
- Blasphemous powers, names of blasphemy.
- The serpent, the devil who deceives the earth dwellers
- Those who receive the mark of the beast
- The work of the second lamb-like beast
- Fallen Babylon and the Great Whore
- The spirits of devils working miracles
- Those deceived through the power of the beast
- Those deceived through the power of the false prophet
- Those deceived by the Devil
- The city that will accept no deceiver, nothing false, or those who love a lie.

The first sin was committed through the avenue of deception, and Satan was the first great deceiver who fell and thereby authored the art of deception. It is through error and deception that Satan takes captive the

¹¹⁷ Romans 6:23

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mind. Thus sin and deception are themes that thread their way through the *Apocalypse*. Christ, the Redeemer and Lamb, provides truth and salvation away from these antagonistic foes.

The purpose in Revelation's exposé of these false powers is to warn people everywhere of their genuine threat. While the purpose the book of Revelation is not to focus on sin, yet the depiction of sin is provided in most graphic terms, and is supplied for the necessary reasons. Jesus in his Olivet sermon repeated many times the danger of false prophets and the pitfalls of spurious doctrine even among Christians. It is consistent that in the book of Revelation this same theme is evident. God wishes to inform his people lest they be caught in the pitfalls that Satan and his forces have concocted to take down God's church.

The outcome of the story will be that sin and deception will finally be rooted out and that the Faithful and True Lamb will overcome the hated enemy. In no book is the outcome of the conflict so clearly depicted as in the book of *Revelation*. Christians, and especially Seventh-day Adventists, should be extremely thankful that such a prophetic document exists and that victory for the people of the Lamb is assured. God will emerge the clear winner, and the book of *Revelation* supplies the scenario in graphic terms, where other biblical books largely exploit other themes.

The final chapters outline the resolution of the sin problem and provides the solution to the inroads of sin. The problems of sin are destroyed in the Lake of Fire. The great controversy, the conflict of the ages, and the story of the victory of God over evil, are themes that writes themselves into every chapter and verse. The story is written so that God's people can be informed and ready for what is about to happen.

II. The Seal of God and the Sabbath

The charge made by general Christendom is that to interpret the Sabbath as the "seal of God," and as a theme in the book of *Revelation* is opportunistic. They observe that the Sabbath is nowhere mentioned specifically in the book, and this is true.

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However, even very rarely is Jesus Christ directly mentioned in the book of *Revelation*, at least by that title. Does this mean Christ and his plans for humanity are not in the book? Such a position would be ludicrous.

Since the book of *Revelation* is written in symbols; almost entirely signified in code; the themes of Revelation are actually intended to be ascertained and exposed from a “mysterious” and “secretive” base. How the symbols are unlocked and interpreted is where every issue and theme hinges.

When the symbols are carefully explicated there can be no doubt as to what they are intended to mean. Patterns, allusions, and prophetic references all come together to explain the symbol. Put together with the others symbols, also carefully explained, the complete story of prophecy emerges in graphic detail. The fulfillment of the prophecy in history confirms the interpretation.

It is this way with the Sabbath in the book of *Revelation*. Indeed the Sabbath “conceptually” appears almost everywhere in the book of Revelation.

One is no more than ten verses into the *Apocalypse* when reference is made to it: “the Lord’s Day.” The perpetration of the idea that this day is the pagan day of the sun, Sunday, is simply the typical propagation of the very falsehoods predicted and described in this very prophetic book. Such an “after-interpretation” is another of the Romish fables readily adopted by modern Protestantism.

The work of Dr. Samuele Baccocchi, written from within the very walls of the Vatican and receiving the imprimatur of its most prestigious scholarly institution, clearly explains this issue. As a result of anti-Judaistic sentiment, persecution, practical and political expediency, agitation over Easter, and the influence of certain pagan practices, Sunday was sometime after the writing of the *Revelation* adopted as the Lord’s Day, taking the place of the biblical Sabbath. Consistently, the best authorities teach that this change took place later as part of an evolutionary chain of events, largely orchestrated by the Roman church. But for centuries after the time of Christ, the biblical Sabbath was kept by

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Christians in many nations; in Africa, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, and even in the British Isles.

It was kept by the apostles and by the Lord himself. It is “his” day, a specific mark and token of his creative power. It is he who created the day in the first place (Genesis 1:1ff.; John 1:1). The voice heard behind the prophet is that of a trumpet, a *shofar*, the instrument used to usher in the holy days and especially the Sabbath.

The real issue of the Sabbath is not and never has been about the right day. The real issue is what the day stands for. What the day of the Sabbath stands for cannot be legally separated from the issue of Creationism. The issue of Creationism, is forgotten even by Seventh-day Adventists, as the most important aspect of the Sabbath. The commandments, loyalty to God, devoted practical observance, have their place. But these aspects are miniscule compared to the issue of God’s creatorship and his ownership of the globe and all upon it. Keeping the Sabbath is specified by the Sabbath commandment itself to signify the unique belief that God is the Creator of the heavens, earth, sea, and all that in them is. Sabbath keeping is God’s idea of how a Christian is to tell the world that he believes that God *is* his Creator and Redeemer, and that he, as man, is not the result of evolutionary matriculation or cosmic accident.

This is why Jesus appears to the Laodicean Church, the last church of prophecy, the subject of the “seventh angel’s message,” directly in these terms. He comes to the final church as the *Amen*, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD, for a reason. It is because it was foreseen that among the greatest needs of this last generation was the crucial need to see that God through his agents Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, made the things that are. For Seventh-day Adventists, and other creationist Christians to sell out, or to be admmissive on this issue toward the ridiculous claims of modern science is tantamount to a denial of the faith.

In the fourth and fifth chapter of the Revelation, the four living creatures, the symbols of creation, praise God day and night. This unrelenting vigil was known by Israel. These four covering cherubim were recognized as never keeping the Sabbath, or rather never resting. They are so featured partly for this reason:

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Why do they not keep the Sabbath, giving unceasing praise? It is because the universal creation never ceases speaking of its Creator. Men and angels may rest, but the trees and the flowers, the mighty sea and the heavens, continue to pour forth praise toward their maker.

Because these creatures represent creation and all created beings, wild, domestic, wise, or strong, they appear in settings that exonerate and highlight God's creatorship. They fall before the throne saying to God, "You are worthy to receive honor and praise, because for thy pleasure all things are and were created."

In chapter seven an angel is seen in the dawn's light having the seal of the living God. What is of particular note, and ignored by commentators, is what is meant by the added expression, "the living God." The expression, "living," is anartharous and is usually translated in the running sentence as a participle.

However, this translation, while grammatically pure does not convey the intention invested in this expression. It determines to say more than the fact that God is "living." Everyone who believes in God thinks he is alive anyway. To mention that he is alive would be simply superfluous.

The word for "living" is the word "ζωον," (pronounced, "zow-on"), from whence comes the word "zoo," thus indicative of living creatures and creation. It is a word for life, the animating principle that drives the plant and animal kingdom. What is particularly meant by this expression is that the seal of the living God is the seal of the "God of Life;" living things; creation. In the very expression, "Seal of the Living God," is clear inference to the sign of God's creative power. Signs and seals are almost synonymous. No one needs to go far in Scripture to discover that that the clear and unmistakable sign of God's creatorship is the Sabbath.¹¹⁸

The same four angels who were also known to never "keep the Sabbath," are told to give unceasing attention to the holding of the four winds. They cannot rest (*sabbat*) until God's people receive his seal.

¹¹⁸ Ex 20:8-11; Ex 31:13; Ezek 20:20

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The Seal of God must contain God's name. Even in modern English, and especially Hebrew and Greek, the word "Sabbath" has at its very center, the word "abba," a word used even in Scripture to represent the Father God.

Some linguists, have defined the etymology of the word "Sabbath" as meaning "the sign of the Father's house," or quite simply, "The sign of God." The initial "S" is often affixed to words to indicate such meanings as "at the sign of," or "to the person of." The Hebrew suffix, "th," is thought to be part of the word "beth" or "house." Whatever it means, enough evidence exists to verify and equation between the Seal and the Sabbath of God. The "oth" sound at the end of the word is phonetically similar to the English word "oath."

Practically, if not linguistically, at least, the Sabbath is meant to be an "oath" and "sign" of God's transcendent creatorship. He is the first cause, the sovereign guide, of all living things.

Of course, the seal of God is much more than the Sabbath. It is the approval of God placed by His Spirit upon the sanctified believer. It cannot be placed upon an impure man or woman. It includes the sealing and settling into the entire counsel of God. It far surpasses the observance of a day. But the conscientious believer, informed by God's commandments, will never intentionally violate any of the wishes of his God. He or she will joyfully do whatever God asks, acknowledging God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

In Revelation 10, a message, as in the first angel's message of Revelation 14, is symbolically related by an angel that takes an oath, and swears by him *who has created all things in all heaven, earth, and sea*. This very emphasis on creation comes at the very time when it was historically fulfilled. For following the proclamation of the soon return of Christ in the great awakening of the 19th Century, the Sabbath truth was essentially rediscovered and proclaimed. It started in the "east" and has moved around the world. It started as the gentle aura of dawn and is now beginning to attain to the brightness of noonday.

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Inferences to the commandments of God appear repeatedly through the book of Revelation. While all the commandments of God are important, the fourth is the one ignored by Christendom as being important. When the commandments are “remembered” especially should the commandment that says, “remember” be considered. But what commandment of all commandments did God believe would be most easily forgotten by the Christian world? Obviously the one that God instructed men to remember. Consequently, the targets of persecution predicted in *Revelation* are those who keep God’s commandments, and particularly the fourth one.

The fourth commandment is the “seal” of the commandments for it is found positioned in the very center of all the commandments. As one writer has expressed, it is in the very bosom of the Decalogue. Not only is it at the center, but the central words are “the seventh day is the Sabbath!”

Normally, why would those who honor parents; who don’t steal, kill, commit adultery, and who are honest, become targets of religious persecution? Such behavior averts persecution, from even the secular world. However, the persecution comes from “religious” powers also. Thus it can only mean reference to practices such as the keeping of the fourth commandment. It is only such a doctrine that agitates and ignites such a response. The response is a mark of slavery, identified clearly by the false powers themselves, as the worship of God on a spurious day.

Clustered in several places around the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14 are references or inferences to the Sabbath. These are not new discoveries. They are repeated next for the sake of review.

1. The 144,000 have the seal of God. If they have the “father’s name” written upon their foreheads (and they do), then the word “Sabbath” in essence appears there also.

2. The first angel’s message is a call to “worship him that made the heaven and the earth, and the sea and the fountains of water.” As many commentators have mentioned, here is the clearest and most direct reference to the fourth commandment found in all of remaining Scripture. It is near to an almost direct quote.

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The four things “heaven, earth, sea, water-fountains” are given to indicate the universal coverage and intent of this message. The message is intended for more than “Jews.” It is meant for every nation, language, tongue, and people (4). The Sabbath too, “was made for man (mankind, Heb. “Adam.”¹¹⁹) and not just for the Jews. The idea that the Sabbath was intended only for the Jews is such an inglorious “cop-out,” not to mention a result of sloppy, dismissive, biblical scholarship. Nearly the entire Bible was written to and for the Jews. Yet, this does not invalidate its use and application to every modern Christian.

3. The worship and reverence due to God is given in the context of creatorship. The concept that ties worship, reverence, and creatorship is quite perfectly, the Sabbath.

4. The fall of Babylon is featured in these passages. The cornerstone of Babylonian and all false worship began with the veneration of the Sun. The sun was honored as the source of “living.” Inference everywhere exists on the relationship of sun worship and its counterpart, worship of the true “living” God.

5. The worshippers of the beast and his image “have no rest day.” The central thought of the third angel’s message is that there is no opportunity given those punished for having the mark, to rest. So severe is this penalty that with unceasing regularity, continuously, day and night (in the daily cycle!), there is no opportunity given to rest. This goes on without respite.

Why such a punishment? Because they did not allow God’s saints their Sabbath (which means rest). God’s punishments always fit the crime. Literally translated the passage should read, “And they have no sabbath, through day to day, continuous time, because they accepted the false mark and worshipped in that way instead.”

6. The following phrases (vs. 13ff.) constitute another reference to the Sabbath. “That they may **REST FROM THEIR LABOURS** for their works do follow them.” This is a clear reference to Sabbath rest. The

¹¹⁹ Mark 2:27,28

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commandment says, “in it, thou shalt not do any work.” The other days are work days. In the saints’ reward, they are allowed to finally rest, *inferring that this privilege had been taken from them*. From this verse alone one can determine that the mark of the beast is directly related to law and the oppression that disallows the observance of Sabbath rest!

7. Then, of course, the Sabbath is naturally found in the phrases “Here is a call for the *patient endurance* (exertion without the privilege of proper rest) of the saints. Here are they THAT KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD and the faith of Jesus.”

The weekly Sabbath is also inferred through the replete usage of the number seven in the book of Revelation. The number seven weaves its way into the entire document, and it cannot be that the author never refers to the sacred, seventh day. With seven used in numerous and various fashions throughout the book, the author would not be able to resist an inference to the seventh day, or the standard seven day week. In the background, while never specifically mentioned, the symbolic representations of heavenly things in the *Apocalypse* are intended to be deciphered by the mind of the reader focused on unveiling the hidden mysteries of prophecy.

In the seventh section of the book comes the description of the millennium. In the sabbatical system, time was to be allotted for the land to rest. In the seventy years of captivity for Israel (and Judah) in Babylon, were fulfilled the need for the land to receive the Sabbaths that were largely ignored through the time of the Israelite kings. The millennial Sabbath for this world is inferred in the concept that the wicked dead rest, Satan is bound, and this earth is left to “lie fallow” for 1,000 years. The millennium itself is an enormous reference to the sabbatical system, and to the Sabbath. Because the Sabbath has not been appropriately honored in the six thousand years of this earth’s history, a sabbatical period is *demande*d for this earth. This, it is about to receive.

The celebrative mood of life attributed to the Holy City and the renewed earth is typical of the Sabbath festivity, the rest and joy associated with the Sabbath. In Jewish practice, it was forbidden to make the Sabbath a day a fasting. It is described by modern Jews in the same terms as represented in

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Revelation 21 and 22; as a bride (Abraham Joshua Heschel). Those inside the city are they that “do” God’s commandments, which, of course, includes the Sabbath. Creation, and recreation are the order and process of the restored earth.

Therefore, creationism and the Sabbath are not opportunistic themes chosen by Adventists and others, but are integral and everywhere present in the message of the Revelation.

III. The Signs of the End and the Second Coming of Jesus

Another germane theme of the book of Revelation is the signs of the end and the Second Coming of Jesus. The very purpose of the book is stated as being given “to show to his servants the things which must suddenly come to pass,” and to indicate “the things that are, and the things to take place after this.”

Sign after sign occurs in the historical plot. The seven seals are really seven “signs”---- for a seal is known as an “insignia” or a “sign.” All the seals, especially the sixth, supply descriptions of eschatological wonders, natural phenomena characterized in Matthew 24 as signs of the final age, or the ages leading to the end.

The Second Coming is so important to the text of the Apocalypse that its story could not be properly written without it. “Behold, he comes with clouds” is where the book begins. “Behold, I come quickly. . . .Even so come, Lord Jesus,” is where it ends.

The sage comment made of an old man, a lifetime student of the book of Revelation, was that every series of the book ends with the second coming of Christ. This position is not difficult to justify:

- The churches section ends with the earnest and quickly coming Christ verily knocking on the door.
- The seventh seal ends with silence in heaven, eschatological phenomena, and the final throwing down of the censer for this earth.

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- The seventh trumpet narrates the time when God judges the earth, the wicked are destroyed, and the time arrives for this earth to receive its retribution or reward.
- Revelation 12 describes the final eschatological war with the remnant and the desperate movements of the enemy who has but a short time.
- The seven plagues end with the final earthquake, the fall of Babylon, and the cry, “It is done.”
- The seven lamentations are followed by the appearance of a white horse, and all the hosts of heaven returning to earth in brightness and glory to end the order of this earth.
- The final section ends with an invitation from the Spirit and the Bride, and the wish “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

The book in every way is a prophetic exposé pointing toward the culmination of the conflict between good and evil finalized in the appearance of the Lord from heaven. *Revelation* assumes the doctrine of the second coming, and in every way lends itself to the propagation of this glorious truth.

IV. The State of the Dead and Spiritualism

Another theme particularly noticed by Seventh-day Adventists and others, is the state of man in death, and its associated subject “Spiritism.”

A superficial look at the Revelation has led many to find argumentative material in places that seems to exonerate the view that man is conscious in death, and that he will, if unfaithful, burn eternally in the fires of hell.

However, the Revelation is actually counter to this erroneous concept. Consistently, it repudiates the idea of conscious souls, and eternal suffering when the texts are closely examined according to the tenets of biblical truth and Hebrew thought.

The “souls under the altar” cannot be literal people, for God would not confine his righteous martyrs within and under such a small box in heaven for centuries on end. The language of Revelation is symbolic, therefore

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the idea cannot be directly literal. The remembrance of the faithful, their shed blood, their innocence, their memory, is what is conjured up in this apocalyptic picture.

Nor is it even the wicked who burn forever and ever. It is the smoke, the evidence of their final demise, that remains; in symbol a testimony to their final and complete end. It is not people who receive eternal torment at the end of the millennium, but the Dragon, with the Beast, and False Prophet, direct symbols of non-living entities that will never again arise to plague the earth. The perfective forces evident in the Greek words and grammar indicate that these things are to be understood according to the law of ETERNAL RESULTS, and not in terms of actual, eternal, punishment. As Sodom received the punishment of eternal fire, so do these entities. The fire is not eternal, but the results of the fire are very much so. After its work is done there will be no change, reprieve, or resurrection. The worm does not die.

The millennial chapter provides us with the phrase, “and the rest of the dead lived not again.” If man has a soul existence outside his body, how could it ever be said that all the wicked lived not again? Is their torment interrupted for a thousand years? If so, they do not receive eternal torment! What illogical stupidity do men put themselves into when they adopt the spurious doctrine of the immortality of the soul!

What also is the purpose of the resurrections if both entities, righteous and wicked, already have an existence in heaven or in hell?

And what is the “second death?” Of what use is this penalty? If both the first death and second death still leaves one with a “living” soul, there was no death, and they are blessed with eternal life along with the righteous. The truth is that the dead are just that; dead. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not PERISH (the word for final and ultimate destruction—the fate of the wicked) but have everlasting life” (the ultimate, opposite, and future reward only of the righteous)[John 3:16].

The practice of “spiritism,” or “spiritualism,” is based on the premise that the soul is immortal. This specious error is now believed and embraced by

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Christendom. But the *Revelation* gives the complete answer. What are these “departed spirits of the dead?” “They are spirits of devils, working miracles” who go about to deceive them that dwell on the earth.

The doctrine, when properly understood is abundantly clear, especially because of the blessed book of Revelation. The righteous who have died, “rest from their labors until the second coming.” They are “remembered” and their blood, not they themselves, cries for remembrance. They are not all spared from the first death. To them is rewarded the “first resurrection.”

The wicked also experience the first death. They die or rest through the millennial Sabbath. Upon the earth, or even in “hell” they are not seen. Jeremiah (chapter 4) sees a desolate earth where there is “no man.” But at the end of the millennial Sabbath, they are called forth for judgment. Persistently evil they receive the punishment of fire, the second death. When they receive their just reward, sin and sinners are no more, and creation returns to its holy and happy estate.

This scenario makes complete sense, and only in the Revelation does it become so clear and undistorted. But it is through the propagation of the falsehood of “living death” that Satan has and will take captive the Christian world. This doctrine will continue to be embraced by those who “love” a lie, and the world will become embroiled in conflict over these issues. No doctrine in Christendom is “loved” and “cherished” like the doctrine that the dead go to heaven or to hell at death. It paves the way for every kind of deception and contributes greatly in the misrepresentation of the character of God. It is in reality a form of spiritualism.

Spiritualism shows up in other raw and even more direct forms in Christianity today. Satanic cults, New Age teaching, astrology, and other forms of spiritualism while at first ignored or avoided by Christians, are currently making inroads in education, the media, and even in Christian institutions. Even some religious and political authorities seek horoscopes, or engage in séances and paranormal enquiry. Revelation predicts these final efforts of Satan as he makes desperate moves against God’s people on earth.

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IV. The Sanctuary and Sanctification

The skeletal theme that holds together and unifies the vision of the *Apocalypse* is the doctrine of the sanctuary. To properly interpret the passages of *Revelation* with no reference to this germane doctrine is impossible. Superior treatments of this doctrinal theme throughout the book have been written by others. However, a few comments must be made to insure that the importance of this truth is not overlooked by the reader.

From the opening vision to the final vision, the prophetic student's eyes are taken behind the veil of the sanctuary. The temple of God, its meaning and its services, provides the necessary backdrop for the heavenly drama. If angels are the actors, and this world is the stage, then the sanctuary is the "set" and the "backdrop" of the great vision.

The locus of Revelation's drama is the heavenly version of this temple, the primary form or building of which the earthly temple was an inferior counterpart. As the temple was the center and focus of the Jewish economy so is the temple the center of heaven's economy.

Like the doctrine of the second coming, the forms of the sanctuary appear in every major series and especially in the transitional scenes, and the various excurses.

- In the section of the churches Christ is seen in the holy place of the sanctuary ministering to and for his churches. He stands in the midst of the seven lampstands, a direct reference to the "menorah," the seven-branched candelabra that stood in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. This introductory scene is the basis for the seven messages that follow; and every church's particular message relates back to the initial vision. Sanctuary objects and practices are used repeatedly and generously:
 - The seven golden lamps
 - The foot-reaching priest's garment (ποδηρη)
 - The trumpet or *shofar*
 - The golden belt of the high priest

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- The veil (a “revelation”--pulling back the veil)
- The white stones of the shoulder and breastplate
- The hidden manna (in the ark)
- The myrrh of the anointing oil
- The Key of David (breastplate)
- The Urim (morning star)
- The pillars of the temple
- Name inscriptions as found on the precious stones and miter plate of the priests.
- The word of patience (ten commandments)
- The robes or στολη of the priests
- The “doors” of the sanctuary apartments
- The Seals section turns the eye toward and expansive and super-scaled sanctuary of heaven. The throne room of the One who sits enthroned among the cherubim, surrounded by multiple groups of elders, cherubim, and angels, reminds one of the arrangement of the wilderness sanctuary of Israel, located in the center of its Levitical and tribal standards.
 - The vision begins in the holy place, where seven lamps of fire are seen, along with a sea of glass, the pavement of which is associated with the throne rooms of the kings and of God himself.
- The Seals end and the trumpets begin in the sanctuary in heaven, and a “priest/angel” throws down the censer. The altar of incense appears in the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Plagues. The horns of the altar are even mentioned. The Trumpets end with a view into the Holy of Holies, and the Ark of the Testament therein.
- The Plagues section chronicles action, all which proceeds from the sanctuary and from the altar. Angels leave the heavenly headquarters to do God’s bidding. The shallow vials or bowls used in the wilderness sanctuary for removing and tending to the fire are used to pour out devastating plagues. The shekinah glory fills the inner, or most holy place.

The 144,000, dressed in Levitical array, singing, and worshipping God, are seen on Mt. Zion, the site of the temple. This is reminiscent of the Levites and temple singers and musicians, as well as the entire priesthood and its service.

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- At the end of the book, God himself and the Lamb become the temple of the restored New Jerusalem. Indeed, God has been the “dwelling place in all generations” (Psalm 90:1), the temple or tent in which men and angels find refuge.

The sanctuary services, and the feasts associated with them are background to the entire drama, and cannot be fully understood without recognizing the allusions to these feasts and services.

Christ is called the Lamb, because he is the sacrificial lamb of the temple services. Recurrent references to blood, incense, washed robes, general cleansing, fire, sacrifices, and worship all allude to the temple rites.

As others have noticed there is a progressive movement in the book through the Jewish festivals or through the Jewish calendar.

- The Seven Churches are addressed in the setting of the Passover. There are references to the slaying of the Lamb, the blood of deliverance, the calling of Israel as a nation of priests at the Exodus, and many other allusions to the Passover festival.
- The section relating to the Seals is reminiscent of the feast that followed the Passover fifty days later, the feast of Pentecost. Tongues of fire, covenant symbols (rainbow, etc.), the welcoming of risen Christ back in heaven are themes of Pentecost.
- The next feast was the feast of Trumpets observed on the first day of the seventh month. The feast of Trumpets is alluded to throughout the Trumpets section.
- Following the feast of Trumpets by ten days was the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement rituals occur particularly in chapter 14. In these passages, people who are pure and chaste are prepared as all souls were to be on the Day of Atonement. It is in this context that the “hour of judgment” comes. It was on this day that the Israelites were ritually “sealed.” The 144,000, sealed and cleansed, appear exactly when they should in the heavenly drama. They appear on the antitypical Day of Atonement.

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- The book ends with celebrative themes associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast of light and color, of joy and rest, is appropriate for the mood of the saints upon reaching the heavenly realms. The saints serve at God's table (table of showbread) and bask in the light of God's glory. The tabernacle (booth, tent) of God is with men. The cycle is completed.

There are many such allusions catalogued in other works on this subject. The subject of the sanctuary is everywhere present in the book of Revelation.

Why does God use sanctuary symbolism so much? The reasons can be varied. However the study of the sanctuary and its services are not an end in themselves. The sanctuary is a divine illustration of the redemptive process. More important than rites and ceremonies, buildings and furniture, is the work of salvation, the redemption of men.

The sanctuary message supersedes in every way the sanctuary building. What makes the doctrine of the sanctuary important is the call to every Christian to make himself a temple in which God dwells. The word "sanctuary" comes from the same root as the word "sanctify," "to set apart," "to make holy." The teaching of the sanctuary is the teaching that God wants to cleanse the soul temple of sin. The sanctuary services were all designed to teach how God deals with sin, and how he sanctifies the believer.

Every Christian ought to be interested in this aspect of the sanctuary if he cannot be interested in the "curtains and boards." He or she ought to be interested in finding refuge in the sanctifying power of Grace. This is truly the doctrine of the sanctuary; the truth in verity, of this heavenly symbol. It is the purpose of *Revelation* also, to call every man to holiness, to prepare for judgment, and to prepare for heaven. Therefore the doctrine of the sanctuary is used in the book in so great a fashion to accomplish God's purpose in thus preparing his people spiritually for his return.

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VI. The Savior and Salvation

Martin Luther and other reformers did not find Christ in the book of *Revelation*. They are not the only ones who down through the centuries have struggled with this dilemma. However, such a conclusion is puzzling to the modern reader, and it is hard for this author at least to see why they could find Christ nowhere within the book. Apparently they did not look.

The fact is that this “revelation of Jesus Christ” finds Christ EVERYWHERE in the book. He comes as the Lamb of God (a Johannine theme), the one taking away the sin of the world.

Critics have charged that the *Apocalypse* teaches a form of righteousness by works. Because the righteous deeds of the saints are mentioned, and because the cross of Christ is not specifically mentioned in those particular terms, evangelical enthusiasts get nervous. The fact is that salvation by faith, the work of Christ for man, the victory over evil is the very fabric of the *Apocalypse*.

In the earliest parts of the document comes the reference to the blood of Christ, which is credited for “releasing” or “washing” men from their sins. Every time blood appears in a salvific formula it is referring to the forgiveness and cleansing afforded by Grace.

The white robed throngs are not made white by their own works, but by the blood of the Lamb. The enigma of garments washed in blood, a staining formula, miraculously turning the garments white, is intended to indicate the miracle of Grace, which mysteriously does for man what he could never do for himself. The garment of Christ’s righteousness, “woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising.”¹²⁰

The heavenly throngs exonerate this position repeatedly. In chapter seven they say, “Salvation belongs to our God,” meaning that God is the absolute and uncompromised source of this privilege. He gets the credit; all of it.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 311

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The heavens cry out in chapter twelve, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ.” It is all about Christ, his authority earned by his precious sacrifice. The faithful overcome, not by their own strength, “but by *the blood* of the lamb.”

That the Christian is judged by works should be no surprise, for this is a New Testament doctrine. “We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”¹²¹ While saved by faith, works will judge the Christian, because works are the fruit of faith, yea, in verity the proof of faith. Any believer who comes under the blood of Christ will not be found in iniquitous rebellion, breaking the Law of God, and crucifying the Son of God afresh. To “do” God’s commandments is the natural response of one who has washed his robe (character) in the blood of Christ. A righteous man *will* keep God’s commandments.

The error of Christendom is the creation of an untidy imbalance between justification and sanctification. God wants more than to save man in his sin. He wants to save him “from” his sin. When justification truly takes root in the soul it produces sanctification, a concept too readily forgotten by most modern Christians. Sanctification, holiness, is experiencing justification on a daily basis until it changes the believer and fits him for heaven. While the righteousness of Christ does all the work, it accomplishes something. If it does not, the Christian is receiving a false righteousness, defined by James as a work that is without faith, and is dead. In other words, his faith is not a genuine faith. A faith that does not produce righteous works is a spurious faith. It is mere presumption.

The book of *Revelation* is all about how God deals with sin. Chapter 20 is the explanation of how the resolution of the sin problem plays out. The preoccupation in the book of *Revelation* with the “judgments” is commentary on the fact that God has a progressive plan and formula for dealing with sin, and in investigating what should be the fairest verdict to be pronounced upon every man and upon every spiritual entity.

The work of salvation is the glorious outcome of the book. While the wicked person is destroyed for his sins, the righteous is saved through the

¹²¹ Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10

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intervention of Christ. He is invited, repeatedly, to take of the water of life *freely*. This is the water promised to the thirsty in Isaiah (55), water without price. It cannot be bought. It is the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Savior is everywhere in the book. He is the life-giver. He is the Lamb of God. He is the only one “worthy” or deserving of honor. He is the seed of the woman come to earth to save. He is the High Priest of heaven. He sits at the right hand of God ever living to make intercession for the saints. The Angel of the Churches, is in close proximity to every gathering, and is never far away in *any passage* in the glorious vision of John.

VII. The Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of Prophecy

Another theme resident in nearly every passage of Revelation is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit counteracts the “unholy spirits” that appear over and over again in the text.

The messages to the churches are not only messages from the risen Lord. They are messages containing “what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” The Seven Spirits that reside before the throne represent the work of the Spirit and the work of angel emissaries.

Periodically the Spirit utters his voice. In the last scene, the Spirit gives an invitation for all to come and be part of the Holy City.

The presence of the Spirit in the document brings to the forefront the issue of inspiration and revelation. John sees visions in the Spirit, he is caught up in the Spirit, and he hears the voice of the Spirit. Because the Spirit is connected with the mechanics of the John’s vision, a level of inspiration is indicated beyond normal devotional thought. The book of *Revelation* at least *claims* to be “inspired.” It is truly a biblical book and is representative of inspired material.

The book of *Revelation* teaches that there is such a thing as “inspired” writing. Inspiration is not perfection. But inspiration is material thought sent directly from the heavenly realms. Such material demands respect,

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and it is incumbent upon those who deal with these materials to maintain and promote the integrity of the messages sent directly from God himself.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (19:10). What this means is that the word given to the prophets is the word of Jesus. It does not say that it “was” the spirit of the prophets. It “is” the spirit of the prophecy. The book of Revelation teaches that the prophetic gift is contemporary and continuing. The words given through the Spirit must not be added to or taken away from. Those who twist the meaning to their liking are not subject to the Spirit.

God’s last day church is indeed identified as “having the testimony of Jesus” (12:17). It does not identify in whom this Spirit resides. But it does teach that it will be evident, and infers that this prophetic gift will be instrumental in unlocking and explaining the book of *Revelation*. This phenomenon has received a remarkable fulfillment in modern times.

The work of the Spirit and the real work of the prophets is not only to predict events and elucidate doctrine. The real work of the Spirit is to bring revival and spiritual renewal. This work of revival and reformation is the principle work of God’s people of the remnant. This is what the book of Revelation is for. When God’s people truly see what the book of Revelation means to them there will be a revival of the Spirit that will surpass many if not all former revivals. Seventh-day Adventists and other Christians need to see this. Church leaders need to see this. The world needs to see this.

It is not a revival of excitement, miracles, and spiritual phenomena that we need to see. The counterfeits of these abound in the modern world. What is needed is a calm, fervent, return to the Word of God that will bring anticipation, joy, brotherhood, and true reformation of life and lifestyle. The emphasis should not be on numbers, on sensational advertising, or church promotion. There should be seen a return to sincerity and truth by the grassroots of the church, a filling of the Spirit, who will himself do the work through simple means and natural administration. The revival can’t be planned. It is rather the work of the Spirit on the heart, working in one individual, and then the other, to embrace the truths of a soon coming Lord, and a righteous Savior.

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Despite the certain claims of some who teach that there will never be another pure prophetic voice, such as Ellen White, in the last days, the return of the “spirit of prophecy” in this regard is entirely possible. It will never be given if the former voice is not heeded. However, if God sees fit, many men and women, young and old, will yet testify to the work of God. It is the work of Christians to heed the counsels they have been already given and to pray for a further outpouring of the prophetic spirit. Such a scenario is clearly predicted for the last days.

The voice of the Spirit, and the Spirit of the prophets are necessary elements for the church in these last days. Without the work of the Spirit, there can be no real revival, and there can be no true understanding of the book of *Revelation*. What the church needs is not better organization, ambitious planning, or tireless evangelism. What it needs is the infusion of the Spirit. When the Spirit of the *Revelation* takes hold of the modern church, there will be seen a revival not seen since apostolic times. This is the real message of Revelation. It is not beasts, and locusts, marks and dragons, kings and popes. It is a last warning message for God’s people and the world to prepare for the last great conflict by heeding the messages of the Spirit. Mere profession of Christianity is not enough. The Spirit must pervade the life if it is to be valid. “If any man hath an ear, LET HIM HEAR what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches.”

Ecumenism and Doctrine

Below is a chart attempting to represent the general stand of Christian denominations on various major doctrines. A check mark indicates general acceptance of the doctrine, and “X” indicates general dissent from the doctrine as stated above. The chart does not claim to accurately represent all of the divisions of Christendom but attempts to show which issues find the most uniformity and which ones do not.

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Church	The Bible an infallible guide	Salvation by Faith	Baptism by Immersion	Symbolic Communion	Literal Six-day Creation	Sunday Worship	Immortality of the Soul
Assemblies of God	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Baptists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Churches of God	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Nazarene	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Churches of Christ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Congregational Christian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Disciples of Christ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Eastern Churches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Ev. United Brethren	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Jehovah's Witnesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Latter Day Saints	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Lutheran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Methodists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Presbyterian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Protestant Episcopal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Unitarian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Roman Catholic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Salvation Army	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Seventh-day Adventist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						

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Further notes are necessary to further elucidate the picture represented in the above chart. The chart does not claim to represent every religion with perfect accuracy and indulgence is asked where any person or denomination is misrepresented. Some areas are little more than an estimate. The chart was assembled from the author's common knowledge and research of church creeds. Its purpose is to show trends in Christendom and cannot represent every individual's particular brand of Christianity.

The Bible

While most religions officially hold a high position of the Bible's inspiration, the exceptions to the primacy of the Bible are what are significant. Roman Catholics and the Eastern Churches who represent the large majority of Christians place tradition above the Bible. There is not likely going to be unity over this doctrine. In addition, certain Protestant churches only hold the New Testament and not the entire Bible as truly valid. Even this division presents an enormous gulf in bringing Christendom together.

Then there are fringe faiths such as Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses who either have their own Bible or have literary works that in practicality supersede the Bible. Therefore it seems almost impossible to melt away these differences in the interest of ecumenical unity.

The Nature of Salvation

The same story largely occurs with the doctrine of how man is saved. While Protestants are quite unified as a whole that man is saved by faith in Christ and his Word, the greater part of Christendom, Catholic and Eastern-slanted or Orthodox churches, in effect require that man is also to be saved "through" the church and its priesthood, or by works.

Further complicating the scenario is the Presbyterian insistence on "election." The opposite extreme is promoted by fundamentalism in the form of "once saved, always saved." Christendom has been divided for

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centuries over these things and huge concessions are necessary from significant religious movements to harmonize on even the basic subject on how man is saved.

Baptism

On the biblical concept of baptism by immersion there is a wide divergence in Christendom. Many churches accept many forms of baptism within their own ranks.

Nazarenes according to some practice immersion, but admit at times some sprinkling and pouring. Congregational Christians generally use sprinkling. Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians permit sprinkling and sometimes even the sprinkling of infants. Episcopalians use pouring and also require the baptism of infants. Catholics and Eastern Orthodox churches pour and baptize infants, in direct contradiction to the biblical precepts. Baptists, Assemblies, and Seventh-day Adventists insist on baptism by immersion.

Therefore there cannot be expected any kind of uniformity on the mode of baptism, or even the purpose of baptism. The administration of baptism represents one of the widest and most diverse rites of belief within the Christian faith system.

Communion

The practice of communion, recommended by Jesus as the symbol of church unity is actually a practice that separates millions of Christians one from another. Scores of denominations require closed communion, yet many others allow open communion.

More distinct is the rift between Protestants and Catholics. While Protestants quite consistently take the bread and wine as having symbolic value, Catholics and Orthodox communities have for centuries believed in “transubstantiation,” or the idea that the bread and wine becomes the literal body of Jesus. Lutherans have adopted a compromise known as “consubstantiation” which does not agree in certain respects with the traditional Protestant position. Therefore the unifying of Christendom on

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even the Eucharistic celebration is not imminent. The subject would have to be largely ignored to accomplish ecumenical unity.

Literal Creation

A doctrine of supreme importance for Christians in the last days is the doctrine of a literal, six-day creation by God. The stand of most churches of Christendom is quite pathetic on this central issue. In most cases, church leaders have avoided the subject, or sold out to the claims of modern “science.”

The greatest corruption is not limited to the denial of God’s absolute creatorship, but in the various compromises with the sometimes-preposterous claims of scientific inquiry. Some “bible-pounding” Baptists even take the days of creation as extended time periods, as in the popular belief of 1,000-year “days.” Jehovah’s Witnesses even succumb to the notion of 1,000 year time periods.

Quite common is the doctrine of “theistic evolution,” which makes God the “source” of creation, but evolution the “process” of creation (some Methodists, Lutherans, and Episcopalians). Certain churches take a stand even toward pure evolution (many Presbyterians, and other denominations).

While Catholics have through the centuries taught a literal creation, millions of Catholics now embrace evolution. This is even done with the blessing of the Pope, who has very recently made startling statements exonerating the possibility of an evolutionary genesis of all living things. This is a daring stand for any church, which at the same time for the sake of credibility, tries to uphold to its constituency the sacred value of the Bible.

The intellectual fringe of even Adventism has gone soft on this issue as well. While scientific honesty and inquiry is to be recommended and fostered, it is tantamount to a denial of biblical faith to remove God from his place as genuine and direct creator, a theme repeated so often and so clearly manifest through all the Scripture. Such a position turns out to be neither scientific nor theologically honest.

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Therefore Christendom is hopelessly divided on God's literal agency in creation. Because the Sabbath is the memorial of creation, Satan is most interested in undermining its validity by attacking God's creatorship and ownership. In this he has been largely successful. Disparity in this area is to cause an even greater gulf in Christendom than experienced heretofore, and it cannot be expected that any human power is going to alleviate this "mess" in an attempt to bring Christians together.

Sunday Worship

Sunday worship is dramatically the most common practice and belief in all of Christendom. Taking into account the top 20 or so major denominations there is but one dissenting vote. That vote is found coming from Seventh-day Adventists.

From a *scientific* standpoint, if one were to attempt to unite Christendom, this is where one would logically start. Win over the one errant Christian body, and that a small one, and the first giant leap toward unification is complete. This is exactly what is predicted. The effort will be to unite Christendom on those doctrines that they hold in common.

The Immortality of the Soul

The doctrine of the immortal state of the dead is the second most common doctrine in Christianity, according to the accompanying chart. This is no surprise, and thus exonerates the prediction of one who has said that on two particular doctrines, Sunday sacredness, and the immortality of the soul, the world will be brought to the test. This doctrine, like no other pervades not only Christendom, but the other major religions as well.

There are but two major dissenting votes to this false doctrine, coming from Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, both of which, are often labeled as "cults." While Adventists have been exonerated as genuine Christians by some, their small numbers in comparison with general Christendom, is but a small deterrent to the overwhelming support felt for the doctrine of the immortal soul.

Ecumenism and Doctrine

The spurious doctrine of “spirit life” is a unifying factor in Christendom. It comes from Greek dualism, paganism, and the Church of Rome, and is, like observance of Sunday, a distinguishing mark of her apostate system. Protestantism has stubbornly held on to this doctrine and unfortunately will continue to do so until the coming of the Lord.

The incursion of “new-age” thinking into the world, and the open popularity and tolerance of Satan or spirit worship, and religious “Spiritism,” are forces affecting the Christian world. These movements, based largely on the belief of the soul’s immortality, are having their effect on the world, and have actually contributed to the popularity and acceptance of the immortal soul doctrine by Christians themselves.

The doctrine of the immortal soul would be one of the easiest of all doctrines to be accepted as uniformly valid for all of Christendom. It almost already has.

Other Doctrines

The chart given above does not represent all tenets of faith or all religions. But it does represent the tenets that have largely divided Christendom in the past, and does so at the present.

Doctrines receiving large followings today are such doctrines as the “secret rapture” and the manifestations of the “gifts of the spirit” or “tongues” and the like. However, Christianity is not united on these doctrines either. In many cases, followers of Christ abhor these doctrines and others, and consider them a blotch on the Christian faith.

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Conclusion

Therefore, it is entirely logical, that the prophetic scheme understood by Seventh-day Adventists will find the fulfillment predicted. While other Christians think such a scenario would be impossible, statistics and reason point to such a likely possibility. The light given on these events is entirely valid and stands up to the scrutiny of investigation.

Appendix A

Ten Quotations on the Change of the Sabbath

1) “The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was only a human ordinance and it was far from the intentions of the apostles and from the early apostolic church to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.” General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Vol. 1, p. 186. August Neander

2) “The seventh-day Sabbath was solemnized by Christ, the apostles and the primitive Christians until the Laodicean Council in Rome in 364 A.D. did in a manner quite abolish the observance of it. . . . The council in Laodicea first settled the observance of it.” Dissertation on the Lord’s Day. Dr. William Pryne

3) “The Catholics allege the Sabbath changed into Sunday contrary to the Ten Commandments, it appears. Neither is there any example more boasted of than the changing of the Sabbath day. ‘Great,’ say they, ‘is the Catholic Church who can dispense with one of the Ten Commandments.’” Augsburg Confession, Article 28, par. 9. Martin Luther

4) “Now there is no testimony in all the oracles of heaven that the Sabbath is changed or that Sunday came in its place.” Dr. Alexander Campbell, founder of the Christian Church.

5) “It is true there is no positive command (in the Bible) for keeping holy the first day of the week.” The Methodist Episcopal Theological Compendium, p. 103. Dr. Binney

6) “Jesus, after his resurrection, changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. When Jesus gave instruction for this change we are not told, but very likely during the time when He spoke to the apostles of the things pertaining to His kingdom. This is probably one of the unrecorded things which Jesus did.” Binney’s Theological Compendium Improved, page 171. Methodist Book Concern

7) “There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath was not Sunday. It will, however, be readily said, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for years, I ask: where can the record of such

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a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament---absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week. . . . Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism and christened with the name of the sun-god, then adopted and sanctified by the Papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism.” Baptist Manual. Dr. E.T. Hiscox

8) “Let me address myself. . . to my dear Protestant reader: you believe the Bible alone is a safe guide in religious matters. . . . I have read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and have found no reference to the duty of sanctifying Sunday, the first day of the week, but Saturday, the last day of the week.” Faith of Millions. Published by *Our Sunday Visitor*. Father O’Brien

9) “The keeping of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) Church.” Plain Talks About the Protestantism of Today, p. 213. Father Segur

10) “A New York minister proposed yesterday that Protestants and Roman Catholics join in observing Saturday instead of Sunday as the Sabbath. The Rev. Dr. Ernest R. Palen said in making the proposal at the Middle Collegiate Church, Second Avenue and Seventh Street, that ‘It should not be too great a break for us to observe the same Sabbath Day that Jesus Himself observed!’”

“A spokesman for the National Council of Churches said that the loss of the traditional Sunday as the day of worship would not be catastrophic and might be healthy. He pointed out that Sunday was not sacrosanct (inherently sacred) Sunday as a day of Christian worship was picked rather arbitrarily because the resurrection was believed to have occurred on that day.”

He took as his sermon text the Fourth Commandment, which we read earlier. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

Dr. Palen went on to say, “Our sick society needs the quietness engendered in a day kept holy. Our madly rushing, neurotic society needs the therapy of the silence and quietness that flows from a day kept holy, really holy. A day our thoughts are of God, our actions are tempered by a desire to serve God and our families, a day that is so different from other days that it could make us different in our relationships to God and to our fellow man.”

Appendix A

“Dr. Palen proposed that Pope Paul VI take the initiative. He predicted that if the pontiff designated the seventh day--the historical and Biblical Sabbath--as a day to keep holy, that most of the major protestant bodies would go along.” Acts 5:29. *New York Times*, Monday, March 14, 1966.

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Appendix B

Ten Quotations on the Mark of the Beast

- 1) “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God.” Extracts from Ferraris’ Ecclesiastical Dictionary, article on the Pope.
- 2) “The Pope is as it were God on earth . . . entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom.” History of the Councils, Vol. XIV, col. 109. Labbe and Cossart
- 3) “The Pope is the vicar of Christ The claims of the Pope are the same as the claims of Christ . . . Christ can forgive all sin. SO CAN THE POPE.” Syracuse Post-Standard, March 14, 1912, Rev. Jeremiah Prendergast
- “This power is not only to be claimed by the Pope, but by the parish priests.” The Catholic Priest, 1866. Michael Muller.
- 4) “That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history.” History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, vol. 2, page 32. William Edward Lecky
- 5) “The Church Has Persecuted. Only a tyro in church history will deny that.” The Western Watchman, December 24, 1908. Catholic Magazine.
- 6) “The Church may, by divine right, confiscate the property of heretics, imprison their persons and condemn them to the flames.” “There is no graver offense than heresy. . . It must be rooted out with fire and the sword.” Institutes of Public Ecclesiastical Law, Vol. 2, p. 142. P. Marianus de Luca
- “When she (the Catholic Church) thinks good to use physical force, she will use it.” The Western Watchman, December 24, 1909.
- 7) “The Roman question tonight was a thing of the past and the Vatican was at peace with Italy. . . In affixing the autographs to the memorable document HEALING THE WOUND which has festered since 1870, extreme cordiality was

Appendix B

displayed on both sides.” San Francisco Chronicle, February 12, 1929. “Mussolini and Gasparri Sign Historic Roman Pact”

8) Sunday is OUR MARK OF AUTHORITY! The Church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is PROOF OF THAT FACT.” Catholic Record, London, Ontario, September 1, 1923.

“The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant. . . CHANGED THE DAY FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY. . . The Christian Sabbath (Sunday) is therefore to this day the acknowledged offspring of a Catholic Church. . . without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.” The Catholic Mirror, September 23, 1893, 1.29.

9) “How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days? Answer: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.” An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine, page 58. Rev. Henry Tuberville, S.D.

10) “Questions: Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer: Has she had not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her--she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday for the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a CHANGE FOR WHICH THERE IS NO SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY.” A Doctrinal Catechism, p. 174. Rev. Stephen Kennan

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Study Guide ---Vol. 5

The Validity of Revelation 12:18

1. Most scholars teach that it is the _____ that stands on the sand of the sea in Revelation 13:1.
2. The traditional reading of Revelation 13:1 purports that _____, the apostle, stands on the sand of the sea.
3. When _____ stands beside the sea, he sees four great beasts come up out of the sea, a _____, a _____, a _____, and a great and terrible _____.
4. This vision in _____, chapter 7, is the very same vision from which the scene in Revelation 13:1ff. is drawn.
5. When God gives a vision to a prophet, it is often given beside _____ of _____.
6. Ezekiel stands by the river _____.
7. Daniel, Ezekiel, and John are all _____ prophets.

The Two Beasts

8. The “beast” in the book of Revelation best identified with the _____ power.
9. The second beast in Revelation 13 is “nationally” best identified with _____.

Study Guide

144,000 on Mt. Zion

10. There are at least _____ characteristics given for the 144,000.
11. The 144,000 are not _____ “Jews,” but rather, according to the principle of enlarged fulfillment, they are _____ “Jews.”
12. The “new” song that they sing is really a “_____.”
13. The “firstfruits” were selected and offered _____ the general harvest.
14. To have “no guile in the mouth” means that one speaks the _____.
15. Mt. Zion is where the “levitical” _____ lived.
16. To be “chaste” in a biblical sense is to possess pure _____.
17. In the Bible men and women were enjoined to temporary sexual abstinence for what two types of occasions:
 - _____
 - _____
18. The 144,000 are best equated with the early _____ believers.
19. In New Testament times the gospel went first to the _____ and then secondly to the _____.

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20. Probably more than 144,000 living saints will be saved at the _____ of time.

21. One should not argue about who is to “_____ the 144,000.”

The Beginning of the End

“The First Angel’s Message”

22. The bright _____ that shown in Ellen White’s vision of those bowing before the throne was the _____ angel’s message.

23. Angels in the book of Revelation represent _____s.

24. The Great Advent Awakening of the early 1800’s culminated on Oct. _____, 18_____.

25. The “sanctuary being cleansed” meant that the _____ judgment had begun and not that the world was coming to an end.

26. The day on which Israel was “judged” annually was called the _____ of _____.

27. It is grossly incorrect to teach that the idea of a _____ advent _____ is not taught in the Bible.

28. The Old Testament passage that teaches a judgment before the coming of Christ is _____, chapter _____.

29. In this passage, _____ sees a dream almost identical to the one seen by _____.

Study Guide

30. List at least three examples of an “investigative” judgment in the Bible:

31. The real message of a judgment period is to teach God’s people to _____ for the time of the end.

32. The “good news” of the first angel’s message is that _____ is _____ing.

The Second Angel’s Message

33. In the Old Testament “Babylon” is really “_____.”

34. Gen. 11:1-9 is the first real biblical description of _____ opposition against God.

35. God said to Adam and Eve, “Be fruitful and multiply, and _____ the earth.” Gen. 1:28

36. And to Noah and his sons, “Be fruitful and multiply, and _____ the earth.” Gen. 9:1

37. Babel said in effect, “Let’s band together in a city, lest we be _____ abroad upon the face of the earth”

38. Babylonian religion is based on the worship of the _____.

39. “The spirit of _____ is invading the Churches throughout Christendom.” (GC 388)

The Third Angel’s Message

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40. "The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the _____ of the _____." 6T 17

41. "There are but few, even those who claim to believe it, that understand the _____ angel's message, and yet this is the _____ for this time." MS 15, 1888

42. "The _____ chapter of Revelation is a chapter of the deepest interest. This scripture will soon be _____ in all its bearings, and the messages given to John the Revelator will be repeated with distinct utterance." RH October 13, 1904

43. What is the mark of the beast? _____

44. "John was called to behold a people distinct from those who worship the beast or his image by keeping the first day of the week. The observance of this day is the _____ of the _____." (TM 133)

45. "The sign, or _____, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, the Lord's _____ of creation....The mark of the beast is the opposite of this---the _____ of the first day of the week." 8T 117

46. "The mark of the beast is the papal _____." (EV 234)

47. "When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of _____." (7BC 980)

48. "Sundaykeeping is _____ yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test but that time has not yet come." (7BC 9777, 1899)

49. For a normal human being to claim the ability to forgive sins is biblically considered _____.

Study Guide

50. History is very clear that _____ moved out of Rome and gave his seat or throne to the _____.

51. List at least five characteristics of the beast power that can only apply to the papal system:

52. Revelation 14:12 could be rephrased to say, “Here is the _____ of the saints!”

53. The tests placed upon the saints down through history have usually revolved around the subject of _____.

54. What two doctrines have the most uniform acceptance today in Christianity?

- _____
- _____

55. “The whole _____ is to be stirred with enmity against _____, because they will not yield homage to the papacy, by honoring Sunday.... (p.23)

The Altar Scenes in the Book of Revelation

56. The principle association is that the altar is the record place of the _____ and the _____ of the *martyrs* and the *righteous* and *justified* saints.

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57. The altar in the court was a countertype to the altar in the _____ of the sanctuary. This inner altar is the altar usually pictured in _____.

58. The _____ under the altar represents the _____ of the saints.

59. In Revelation the angel who tends the fire of the incense, is a _____ *angel*, who has for centuries kept record of the horrors and injustice done against the saints.

The Winepress Trodden Outside the City

60. A winepress, like the threshing floors and oil presses, would typically be _____ of a city, near the agricultural fields and vineyards.

61. Outside the camp was the place of:

- a. The _____ and burying of refuse. (Deut. 23:12,13)
- b. The burning of the remainder of the _____ and _____ (Heb. 13:11)
- c. The execution and punishment of the _____
- d. The physically and ceremonially _____ (Lev. 13:46)(Deut. 23:12)
- e. The diseased (lepers; Num. 5:3,4)(Miriam)
- f. The slaves and _____ (Josh. 6:23)(Num. 31:13)
- g. The dishonored and shamed (Hebrews 13:13)
- h. The Red _____ sacrifice (Num 19:3)

62. Jesus suffered _____ the gate.

63. The wicked will be destroyed _____ the city.

64. Blood is pictured coming out of the winepress “for” or “from” a distance of 1,600 stades? (Select and circle either “for” or “from.”)

Study Guide

65. The probable _____ crossing site is _____ “stades” from the ancient city of Jerusalem.
66. The context of the winepress that is trodden outside the city is that of the song of _____ that was sung after the crossing of the _____.
67. There was a special _____ outside the city of Jerusalem, likely placed on the summit of the Mount of _____.

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

68. The song of Moses and the Lamb is a song with _____ themes.
69. The Song of Moses was ritually sung on _____ evening at the temple.
70. In Egypt Pharaoh did not want Israel to keep the _____.
71. What non-biblical book (though mentioned in the Bible) gives testimony to battle between Pharaoh and Moses and the Israelites over the Sabbath? _____.

The Seven Plagues and “Believer’s Fear”

72. Sometimes even believers _____ the time of _____.
73. The seven last plagues are _____ just as the Egyptian plagues were _____.
74. The plagues are/are not universal? (Select your answer).

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_____ is usually a symbol of war, death, and violence.

75. The sixth plague centers around a place called _____.

76. _____ is the real cause of the plagues even though the plagues are called the “wrath” of *God*.

77. God does not tell us about the plagues to strike fear into us. He does not enjoy threats, but he does in mercy give _____.

78. The first, primary, message of Revelation 15 and 16 is that *God* _____ *his people*.

79. How many saints will be slain by the death decree? _____.

80. If anyone should dread anything, it should be the _____ prospects and not the “time of the end.”

81. No _____ will befall the righteous when the worse things happen, and no _____ will come near to them.

82. The “secret place of the most high,” the refuge and sanctuary of the saints, is in verity the _____ of the sanctuary.

83. Psalm _____: _____ is providentially the “911” emergency call number (verse) of the Bible

84. What is the meaning of the smoke filling the temple?

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85. To live without the benefit of a mediator means that the righteous have been fully covered by the _____ of Christ.

86. The argument that Satan cannot win over is the argument of a _____ heart and a _____ life.

87. Saved by their _____, believers can also be safely _____ by their works.

What is Armageddon?

88. The word “har” in “(h)ar-mageddon” is the Hebrew word for _____.

89. The term “Armageddon” is usually equated with what plain in northern Palestine? _____

90. This plain is relatively near what famous mountain mentioned in the Old Testament? Mt. _____.

91. The setting and context of Rev. 16 is _____ and not Palestine.

92. From what book of the Bible and from what text does the author of this study feel John draws the symbol “Armageddon?” _____: _____

93. In the above passage the Septuagint (LXX) calls this mountain the mountain of _____.

94. This text is most likely alluding to the famous tower of _____.

95. The purpose of the builders of ancient Babylon (Gen. 11:1ff.) was to _____ the people of the earth into one place with one language and one religion.

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96. Temple towers, know as ziggurats, are still found in the Mesopotamian plains in abundance. They were intended to represent _____.

97. Ancient Jewish writings equate the ancient tower of Babel with the Neo-_____ Empire.

98. The ancient Jewish writings also teach that the tower of Babel fell into _____ parts.

99. The first principle “anti-christ” was a mighty man named _____.

100. Babylon is a symbol of the _____ of languages, and thus is modern symbol for the _____ (same word) of religion.

101. This confusion is typified by an abominable and unclean creature that makes a “babbling” noise. What creature is this? _____ . This creature is particularly known for its _____.

102. The attempt to gather men to one standard and to one religion is called _____.

103. The significance of the word “place,” is found in the root that means “_____.”

104. Armageddon is really about the anti-typical fall of _____.

Seven Themes in the Book of Revelation Important For Seventh-day Adventists

105. List seven themes as presented in this book that are important to the mission and purpose of Seventh-day Adventists:

The _____ and _____ of the World

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The _____ of God and the _____

The _____ of the End and the _____ Coming

The _____ and

_____.

The _____ and _____

The _____ and _____

The _____ of _____ and the _____ of

Prophecy.

106. The book of Revelation does not teach that there are many _____ to heaven.

107. One of the great purposes of the book of Revelation is to expose _____ powers and _____.

.....

108. Exact references to the Sabbath are not seen in the book of Revelation because the book of Revelation is written with the use of _____.

109. The Sabbath is a memorial of _____.

110. Which of the seven churches needs to see a more direct connection between Christ and his ability to create? _____.

111. The _____, _____ creatures, are symbols of creation.

112. The cherubim never keep the Sabbath because _____ never ceases to give God praise.

113. The _____ of God is directly tied to God's creatorship.

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114. The first angel's message is a call to "worship him that made the _____ and the _____, and the _____ and the fountains of water." As many commentators have mentioned, here is the clearest and most direct reference to the _____ commandment found in all of remaining Scripture. It is near to an almost direct quote.

115. The four things "heaven, earth, sea, water-fountains" are given to indicate the _____ coverage and intent of this message. The message is intended for more than "Jews." It is meant for every nation, language, tongue, and people. The Sabbath too, "was made for _____," and not just for the Jews.

116. The worshippers of the beast and his image "have no _____ day."

117. The "Sabbath" is naturally found in the phrases "Here is a call for the patient endurance of the saints. Here are they THAT _____ THE _____ OF GOD and the faith of Jesus.

118. The millennium itself is an enormous inference to the _____ system, and to the Sabbath.

.....

119. The _____ _____ is so important to the text of the Apocalypse that its story could not be properly written without it.

120. Every series of the book essentially ends with the _____ coming of _____.

.....

121. It isn't even the wicked who burn forever and ever. It is the _____, the evidence of their final demise, that remains; in symbol a testimony to their final and complete end.

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122. It is not _____ who receive eternal torment at the end of the millennium, but the Dragon, with the Beast, and False Prophet, direct symbols of non-living entities that will never again arise to plague the earth.

123. The “perfective” forces evident in the Greek words and grammar indicate that these things are to be understood according to the law of _____ and not in terms of actual, eternal, punishment.

124. No doctrine in Christendom is “loved” and “cherished” like the doctrine that the _____ go to heaven or to _____ at death.

.....

125. The skeletal theme that holds together and unifies the vision of the *Apocalypse* is the doctrine of the _____.

126. The _____ services, and the _____ associated with them are background to the entire drama, and the drama cannot be fully understood without recognizing the allusions to these _____ and services.

127. The teaching of the sanctuary is the teaching that God wants to cleanse the _____ temple of sin.

.....

128. The fact is that the “revelation of Jesus Christ” finds Christ _____ in the book.

129. To “do” God’s _____ is the natural response of one who has _____ his robe (character) in the blood of Christ. A righteous man *will* _____ God’s commandments.

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130. The work of _____ is the glorious outcome of the book. While the wicked person is _____ for his sins, the righteous is _____ through the intervention of Christ.

131. The repentant sinner is invited, repeatedly, to take of the water of life _____.

.....

132. The book of Revelation teaches that there is such a thing as “_____” writing. But inspiration is not _____.

133. God’s last day church is indeed identified as “having the _____ of Jesus”

134. The real work of the Spirit is to bring _____ and spiritual _____.

135. It is not a revival of _____, miracles, and _____ phenomena that we need to see.

136. When the Spirit of the Revelation takes hold of the modern church, there will be seen a _____ not seen since _____ times. This is the real message of Revelation.

The Structure of Revelation 13-16

137. In Revelation 13-16 there are seven angels acting their parts on _____ sides of the equation.

138. The angel that has power over fire is the _____ angel. He is the angel that offers the fire and incense and remembers the prayers of the martyrs and saints.

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139. List at least seven distinct ideas that correspondingly appear in both the first part of Revelation 13-16 and in the last part of the same section (Bi-Sectional Parallels):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____