

The Book of Revelation

Decoded and Unveiled

What a mystery! Who can understand the book of Revelation? Scholars and ministers differ in their interpretations. Why is it that almost no one really seems to understand the prophecies of this book? Why are there so many different interpretations? Why do so many ignore it altogether? What is the real meaning, purpose and intent of this fascinating book – the last book of divine Scripture? What does it mean for us, today, in this hell-bent generation?

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The apostle John writes, "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which God gave Him to *show His servants -- things which must shortly take place*" (Rev.1:1).

Notice! This book was written for the Church of God -- to SHOW us things which are soon going to come to pass -- things which will occur in the last generation leading up to the second coming of the Messiah -- Jesus Christ Himself! The book is called a "Revelation" -- that is, a "revealing." It is not meant to be a "concealing," or hiding of the truth. Nevertheless, like all prophecy of the Bible, it is *hidden* from those who do not believe or obey God -- those who are not His servants! To them, it is "closed up and sealed" (compare Dan.12:9-10). They have no understanding because they do not obey! However, the arcane and mysterious "symbols" of the book of Revelation become plain and understandable to those who are yielded to God and who keep His commandments!

Let us read through this amazing book, now, and understand what it is talking about -- and what its message is for OUR generation!

The Story Flow of Revelation

To understand the book of Revelation, we must first understand that it is written as a story. It flows logically, from beginning to end. The first three chapters are introductory chapters, setting the stage, and providing warnings to the Church of God, given in seven letters to the seven (end-time) branches of God's true Church (Rev.2-3).

Chapter four begins the major part of the prophecy, introducing the throne of God, and chapter five reveals that the Lamb of God -- Jesus Christ -- is given the book of prophecy sealed with seven seals, for only He is worthy to open it.

Chapter six, then, begins the unveiling of the prophecy for the end-time -- the last days, just before and concluding with the return of the Messiah! Thus, the story-flow of the book of Revelation brings us through the opening of the seven seals (Rev.6), the first four of which are the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (Rev.6:1-8); the fifth seal is the great tribulation and martyrdom of saints (Rev.6:9-11); the sixth seal describes heavenly signs which will occur at the end of the tribulation period (vs.12-14); and the seventh seal constitutes the WRATH OF GOD which is poured out during the DAY OF THE LORD (Rev.6:15-17; 7:1-3; 8:1-6).

Now let's explore the opening of the first four "seals" that seal the prophecy of the book of Revelation.

The FOUR HORSEMEN of the Apocalypse

The book of Revelation holds chilling, spine-tingling descriptions of events which will occur in the last days of this present age, leading up to the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The time-sequence of events begins with the "four horsemen" of the apocalypse. Notice! We read here of four horses and their riders. They are, in order, white, red, black, and "pale." What are they?

"And I saw, and behold a WHITE HORSE: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev.6:2).

A parallel prophecy in Zechariah 6 tell us also of four chariots of horses -- red, black, white, and "bay." This prophecy identifies the four with the four parts of the earth -- the red is connected with the east, the black with the north, the white with the west, and the "bay" with the south (Zech.6:1-7; check the Tanakh and NIV). They walk through the earth. A "horse" is noted for its military prowess (Job 39:19-25). These, then, are four mighty military powers, in the four quarters of the earth!

"White" is a symbol of righteousness (Rev.19:8). The "white" horse is connected with the west (Zech.6:6, Tanakh and NIV). It represents a mighty military power in the "West" which has combatted the forces of fascism, Nazism, and Communism. Which nation or group of nations would that be? Why, the United States and Great Britain, and their allies! The United States, in the western hemisphere, was largely responsible for saving the world in World War I, World War II, fending off Communism in Korea and Vietnam, and leading the victory in two Gulf Wars.

"And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take PEACE FROM THE EARTH, and that they should KILL *one another*: and there was given to him a GREAT SWORD" (Rev.6:4).

The "red horse" is connected with the *east* (Zech.6:7, Tanakh). It is *Communism* -- remember "Red Square," in Moscow? The "red flag" of Communism? The red star, the "Reds," etc.? The Jewish Tanakh in Zechariah 6:7 shows the red horses are connected with the "east." Communism rose up in 1917, overthrew the Czars in Russia, and set about seeking to enslave and conquer the world. Millions lost their lives in Stalin's purges. Millions more lost

their lives in the purges of Mao Tse-tung, in Red China. And now, once again, the "red horse" in the East is threatening to rise up, and bloody revolution may well occur throughout the former lands of the Soviet Union!

"And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice . . . say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev.6:5-6).

The third horseman -- the black horse -- is connected with the north country (Zech.6:6) -- that is, modern Europe and Germany. The black horse -- Germany -- attacked Poland in 1939 and initiated World War II with the aggression of Adolph Hitler and the "Third Reich." Germany is today once again the political and economic powerhouse of Europe. This "horse" represents a United Europe -- the European Union -- which is "north" of Israel, or Palestine. When this horse rides, especially in the future, it is connected with famine, scarcity, and hunger.

"And I looked, and behold, a PALE horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, TO KILL WITH SWORD, AND WITH HUNGER, AND WITH DEATH, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev.6:8).

The fourth horseman -- the pale horse -- represents the "king of the south" -- the Muslim world -- and the threat that it poses to the world (Zech.6:6). The leader of this world grouping would be Egypt, identified in the book of Daniel as the "king of the south" (Dan.11). Led by Egypt, fueled by the billions of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, this horseman will "push" at the king of the north, leading to a terrible round of World War. Notice!

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the SOUTH *PUSH AT HIM*: and the king of the north shall come against him like a WHIRLWIND, with chariots [tanks], and with horsemen, and with many ships [including the U.S. and British navies]; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over. He shall enter into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown" (Dan.11:40-41).

Note that by the time this happens, the Western and Northern kingdoms have "merged" and have become part of a New World Order! The "ships" referred to here can only be a reference to the ships of the world's greatest navies, today, those of the United States, Britain, and Europe! The implication is that by this time the New World Order has been established, but the Moslem world rebels against it -- and war breaks out in the Middle East!

In order for these things to happen, however, the United States in particular, must be brought into complete conformity with this new world thinking. America must be an integral part of the New World Order, if not the actual leader of it. Massive changes, therefore, are being orchestrated for the United States, to bring it into alignment with globalism.

What happens next in the prophecy of Revelation? Notice!

During the years ahead of us, it appears that the United States and other nations of the "lost ten tribes" of Israel, together with Judah (the land known as "Israel" in the Middle East), will somehow lose their national sovereignty, and become absorbed into the "New World Order." This has already begun to occur, with the passage of legislation forcing NAFTA, GATT, and trade agreements upon our nations, leading to loss of jobs, and suffering. We are becoming part of the end-time "Babylon the Great." Read my articles entitled, "Who Is Modern Babylon the Great?" and "Coming Soon – a Modern Roman Empire!"

Right in front of our eyes, the United States is being transformed into a part of this onrushing global world government system – this **tentacled** octopus. America is on the brink. Gargantuan national debt, growing unemployment, increasing federal power and tyranny, and anger and hatred, are fueling internal strife and violence, economic collapse, and a systematic political take-over or coup. National sovereignty will be a thing of the past. Our enslavement will become complete as our nations become trodden down by and merged into the New World Order. Our resources and military will then be used on the behalf of that World Government.

When that international New World Order is complete, its first order of business, following the conquest of rebellious nations, will be revealed in the mysterious "fifth seal" of Revelation. Notice!

The Martyrdom of Saints

After the four horsemen of the apocalypse begin to ride, dealing death and destruction, there will be great persecution upon Christians and Jews -- known as the "Great Tribulation." The book of Revelation continues the story:

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the SOULS OF THEM THAT WERE SLAIN *for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.* . . . And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, *until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be KILLED AS THEY WERE, should be fulfilled*" (Rev.6:9-11).

This great persecution and martyrdom and oppression will occur at the hands of the "Beast" power of Revelation -- the "New World Order" -- modern "Babylon the great" -- after it has come into existence! It will oppress and rule for three and one half years (Rev.13:1-5). The apostle John writes:

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to MAKE WAR with him? . . . and power was given unto him to continue FORTY AND TWO MONTHS. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God . . . And

it was given unto him to MAKE WAR WITH THE SAINTS, *and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"* (Rev.13:4-7).

This religious persecution and Great Tribulation is prophesied to last 3 and one-half years -- forty-two months. It will be a fiendish time of hellish torment for God's people.

Daniel 11 describes this time of persecution and tyranny and what will happen this way: "Ships from Kittim will come against him. He will be checked, and will turn back, RAGING AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT. Having done his pleasure, he will then attend to THOSE WHO FORSAKE THE HOLY COVENANT [apostate, renegade Jewish and Christian leaders]. Forces will be levied by him; they will DESECRATE THE TEMPLE, the fortress; they will ABOLISH THE REGULAR OFFERING and set up the appalling abomination [probably either a statue or the 'prince' himself]. He will flatter with smooth words those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people devoted to their God will stand firm. The knowledgeable among the people will make the many understand; and for a while they shall fall by sword and flame, suffer captivity and spoliation. In defeat, they will receive a little help, and many will join them insincerely. Some of the knowledgeable will fall, that they may be refined and purged and whitened until the TIME OF THE END, for an interval still remains until the appointed time" (Dan. 11:30-35).

This evil end-time tyrant, the head of a coming "New International Order" or modern version of the ancient "Holy Roman Empire" of the Middle Ages, will "do as he pleases; he will *exalt and magnify himself* [he has a terrible case of inflated vanity and supreme egotism!] above every god, and he will speak awful things against the God of gods. He will prosper until wrath is spent, and what has been decreed is accomplished" (Dan. 11:36). Do we know any world leader today who is so wrapped up in himself, cloaked in vanity and supreme ego?

This flattering, insincere, very savvy "king," this end-time political figure, is also referred to in Daniel's prophecy as a "contemptible man" (Dan. 11:21), or "a vile person" (NKJV), a "despicable creature" (Moffatt translation), who will "come in unawares and seize the kingdom through trickery" – "intrigue" (NKJV) – he will gain the leadership of the coming New World Order by cunning wisdom and sleight-of-hand, using deceitful, underhanded and devious means (Dan. 11:21). Moffatt translates, "by means of specious promises he shall *pervert* those who bring guilt upon the nation" (Dan.11:32).

The Sixth Seal -- Signs in the Heavens

Jesus Christ foretold that after that great tribulation, great heavenly signs will occur. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," He declared, "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt.24:29). The prophet Joel, on the other hand, informs us, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE *the great and terrible day*

of the LORD come" (Joel 2:31).

These awesome occurrences in the skies and heavens will stagger mankind, causing terrible fright and anxiety. They are called the "sixth seal" in Revelation. Notice!

"And I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place . . ." (Rev.6:12-14,NKJV).

After this, then, comes the final "Day of the Lord" -- the time when God Himself begins to punish the nations, and bring His divine judgments of wrath and fury (Rev.6:15-17). It is called, "the great DAY of His wrath" (Rev.6:17).

The 144,000 and Great Multitude

Chapter 7 of Revelation is an inset chapter, showing that those who turn to God during the Great Tribulation will be sealed with God's protection during the remainder of the catastrophes and cataclysms which will befall the inhabitants of the earth. There will be 144,000 of each of the end-time tribes of Israel so protected, and an immense multitude of people from other nations (Rev.7:3-17). They will repent of their sins and come to know the Lord and follow Him, during the Great Tribulation. As Daniel says, "But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many" (Dan.11:32-33). During this time, 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel will be converted, and spared, and a "great multitude" from all nations (Rev.7:9-15).

These people will either be made immortal at the coming of Christ, or will become the *leaders among mankind* during the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ! After they live out their natural lives, they will be resurrected into the Kingdom of God, and will become the newborn members of God's Family! Be sure to read my article, "Who are the 144,000 of Revelation?"

Next -- the seven "trumpet plagues" of the wrath of God are poured out during the "day of God's wrath"!

The Awesome Trumpet Plagues

In Revelation, chapter 8, God says He will then send seven angels with seven trumpet plagues -- terrible ordeals -- which will in succession afflict the earth. Since a "day" is a year being fulfilled, and they are poured out during the "DAY of the Lord," it will evidently last one year (Num.14:34; Ezek.4:6).

Notice these awesome events. The first four of these will be incredible natural disasters, including hail and fire cast to the earth -- meteorite showers causing widespread devastation and destruction (Rev.8:7). The second plague will be a "great mountain" -- probably a "space

mountain, or asteroid -- falling upon the sea, causing a third part of the sea to become greatly polluted, destroying ships and killing one third of sea life (Rev.8:8-9). The third plague will be "a great star" or comet which will fall from "heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; . . . and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (v.10-11). The 4th trumpet plague – 1/3 part of the sun, moon and stars are struck (vs.12-13).

The First Two "Woes"

The last three of these trumpet plagues -- numbers 5, 6, and 7 -- are also known as the "three woes" (Rev.8:13). These represent the final three rounds of WORLD WAR, culminating in the return of Christ to settle the issue of who will rule the earth once and for all!

Notice! In Revelation 9, the first "woe" is described as "locusts" which utilize chemical warfare, "tormenting mankind for five months" (Rev.9:1-11). The head of this World Empire is Satan the devil, working through the "Beast" (v.11). "Locusts," in the Bible, are a type of soldiers (see Nahum 3:15). God compares the soldiers -- the military -- of this final World Government to "locusts," therefore. But these are peculiar locusts -- they use chemical and biological weapons to "torment" mankind. In appearance, these soldiers are described as "women" (Nahum 3:13; Rev.9:8). This world power will inflict awesome calamities everywhere -- it is the "king of the north" (compare Daniel 11:41-45).

Following hard on the heels of this round of World War III, initiated by modern "Babylon," will be another terrible plague -- the "second woe." Notice! This woe consists of a massive army from the EAST which will number *200,000,000 men!* (Rev.9:12-21). This huge army will undoubtedly consist of millions of soldiers from China and India, and surrounding regions, including the Persians and Russians. This massive army, like the hordes of Genghis Khan, will march westward, into Europe and the Middle East. These hordes come from "beyond Euphrates" (Rev.9:14-15; 16:12). They will slay the third part of men (Rev.9:15).

It is a fascinating fact, today, that the nation of China has an excess of men over women in the younger generation. Men outnumber women in that age group by *9 to 1 -- with an excess of almost 150,000,000 men!* This fact is due to the Chinese governmental policy of limiting each family to having only one child. Since most Chinese families, by culture and tradition, desire to have a male offspring, someone who can take care of them in their old age, young girl babies are often aborted, or killed shortly after childbirth.

Growing up lonely, frustrated, and miserable, these young men will become part of that huge army that will attack towards the West!

The "Third Woe"

This brings us through Revelation, chapter 9. Chapter 10 is an inset chapter, about a mysterious "little book" and the "seven thunders." For their explanation, read our article, "What Is the Little Scroll and the Seven Thunders of Revelation?"

In the beginning of chapter 11 of Revelation, John tells us that a future temple of God is to be rebuilt in Jerusalem (verses 1-2), and that God will raise up two prophets -- two witnesses - - who will preach and prophesy in Jerusalem for 3 1/2 years, during the same 3 1/2 years that the "beast" will rule the earth, causing the Great Tribulation (Rev.11:2-13). This will complete the "second woe" (v.14).

Now we come to the "third" woe -- the final woe that is prophesied. John records:

"Then the *seventh angel* sounded: And there were voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! . . . The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth" (Rev.11:15-18).

This is the second coming of Christ! This is the *seventh* trumpet plague -- the final woe - - and the culmination of the seventh seal of the book of Revelation!

Inset Chapters

We have gotten a little ahead of ourselves, perhaps, in exploring the book of Revelation. In the story flow, we have covered through the seventh seal (Rev.7-9), and the 7 trumpet plagues (Rev.9-11).

Chapter 12 is another inset chapter, dealing with the history of the Church, and Israel, and culminating with the church being persecuted during the Great Tribulation (Rev.12:13-17). This chapter describes a final "war in heaven," in which Michael and his angels cast the devil and his angels out of heaven to the earth, whereupon they initiate an onslaught of mayhem and persecution against God's true people on the earth (Rev.12:1-9).

Chapter 13 is another inset chapter, describing the end-time beast power -- one world government -- New World Order -- which will persecute the saints, and cause people to receive a "mark" of identity permitting them to buy or sell during that time (Rev.13:1-18).

Chapter 14 is another inset chapter, filling in more of the "blanks," left out in the portrayal of the "seven seals," from chapter 6 to chapter 11. In this chapter, we read of another group of 144,000, standing on Mount Zion, with Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. They are called "the firstfruits" of the Lamb and of God -- those who will be in the first resurrection! (Rev.14:1- 4). They are the "redeemed" (v.4). This chapter goes on to describe the destruction of this end- time world system, the punishment upon its followers, and the judgment Christ will pour out upon His enemies (vs.14-20).

Now we come to chapters 15 and 16, which describe the return of Christ accompanied by seven mighty plagues which strike the earth at that time. These fulfill the wrath of Almighty God upon the nations of the world because of their wickedness and corruption.

The Seven Last Plagues

The apostle John writes, "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the SEVEN ANGELS, Go your ways, and pour out the VIALS OF THE WRATH OF GOD upon the earth." Notice, first of all, these vials contain the undiluted WRATH OF GOD -- that is, they ARE, they CONSTITUTE, the wrath of God! (Rev.16:1).

Now, continue: "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (v.2). This is, of course, a mighty plague of God. It is important to note, at this point, how these end-time plagues of God parallel, and were typified, by the ancient plagues of God on Egypt, just prior to the Exodus of Israel!

In Exodus 9 we read of one of those ancient plagues: "And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a BOIL BREAKING FORTH WITH BLAINS UPON MAN, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a BOIL breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon ALL THE EGYPTIANS" (Exo.9:8- 11). Now notice!

This plague upon ancient Egypt was not merely of a few hours duration. Undoubtedly, it lasted for several days, while the Egyptians suffered pain and torment from this noisome disease and its excruciating pain. Then, the *next morning* God told Moses to tell Pharaoh He would smite his people with additional pestilence (verses 13, 14, and 15) and plagues. Moses was to tell Pharaoh, "Behold, TOMORROW about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail. . . ." (v.18).

So, just from the time the plague of boils was sent till the coming of the plague of hail, was at least *three days* duration! Yet, these plagues were TYPES or FORERUNNERS of the end-time plagues! Therefore, this implies that the end-time plagues will also cover a span of time lasting at least many days and weeks, and will not all be poured out in one single day, as Herbert Armstrong thought!

But there is much more evidence of this new truth!

Comparison of Ancient and End Time Plagues

Let us proceed through the chapter of Revelation 16, and discern exactly what God is telling us through His servant John. John writes, "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood" (Rev.16:3-4).

The first plague God sent upon ancient Egypt was the plague of blood. We read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt" (Exo.7:19-21).

How long did this particular plague last? "And *seven days were fulfilled*, after that the Lord had smitten the river" (Exo.7:25). For the effect of the plague to sink in, and to be appreciated, and properly felt, it had to last for many days -- an entire week! God wanted to give the people a chance to REPENT, before sending another plague!

Do you think God has changed? Is He any different, today? Do you think He will send one plague right after the other, all within one 24-hour period, in the end-time? Of course not! Each plague will be a measured punishment from a loving God, followed up by a chance or opportunity for those people to repent who are willing to do so -- even if the vast majority do not decide to repent, but become even more hardened, as Pharaoh himself did (Exo.7:22-23).

The Purpose of the Plagues

John records: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory" (Rev.16:8-9).

This verse implies plainly that the purpose of these plagues is, in part, to bring men to repentance -- to give them an opportunity to repent. This would be impossible if all the plagues were poured out in one day! The people would still be numbed, reeling, and bewildered by the preceding plagues -- they would hardly be able to even think, let alone repent, if all these plagues were poured out within a 24-hour period. They would be dazed -- stunned -- stupefied -- too numb to even think. They would be in a catatonic state of mind, the full impact of what was happening unable to register in their febrile minds. Time is required for repentance, and for the full meaning and import of each plague to sink in to its recipient!

The plague of the scorching sun may parallel the plague of "very grievous hail" which God sent upon Egypt. We read, "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the FIRE RAN ALONG UPON THE GROUND; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt" (Exo.9:23).

"So there was HAIL, AND FIRE MINGLED WITH THE HAIL, VERY GRIEVOUS,

such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation" (v.24). What was this fire, mingled with hail-stones?

As I explain in the article "Who Was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?", this was very likely a terrific meteor bombardment, a meteor shower, which fell upon the land of Egypt. It may well have been accompanied with great heat, causing fire to even run along upon the ground -- something never before seen in the earth! This was certainly not your normal, everyday thunderstorm with hail!

This coming plague of scorching heat from the sun is also prophesied in the book of Isaiah. The prophet declares, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be SEVENFOLD, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound. Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from afar, BURNING with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a DEVOURING FIRE: and his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err" (Isa. 30:26- 28).

The Plague of Darkness

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of DARKNESS; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Rev.16:10-11). This plague, also, was paralleled by the plagues upon ancient Egypt. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be DARKNESS over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a THICK DARKNESS in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Exo.10:21-23).

Again, I discuss this plague more fully in the article, "Who Was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?" In that article, I quote ancient Egyptian sources which were eye-witnesses to the plagues upon ancient Egypt! Suffice it to say that this "thick" darkness lasted three days, but other sources show that the entire period of darkness was seven days in duration. Regardless of the total length of darkness, however, the plague of darkness which will be poured out in the future will also last several days. Of what point would a plague of darkness be if it were only a few hours in duration? Yet if all seven of these plagues in Revelation 16 were poured out in one 24-hour period of time, obviously these severe plagues would be greatly shortened and ameliorated in power and severity. It makes no sense for them to all occur at once -- in fact, the very fact that they are given *consecutively, one after another, shows that they are NOT simultaneous!*

It makes no sense whatsoever for the rivers and water to be turned to blood for only a few hours; and the sun to scorch men for only a few hours; to be followed by a plague of darkness for only a few hours! It should be obvious, by now, that each of these plagues is of several

days or even weeks duration, or even longer.

The Time Element of the Sixth Plague of Revelation

An expanse of time is obviously indicated by the sixth plague of Revelation 16. Notice!

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the **KINGS OF THE EAST** might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils (demons), working miracles, which **GO FORTH UNTO THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, AND OF THE WHOLE WORLD**, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . *And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon*" (Rev.16:12-16).

Notice! This sixth plague is essentially "human"-caused, in that it is not supernatural devastation from heaven, but rather signifies **WAR** and the convergence of armies to **BATTLE**. It involves the gathering of nations, their mobilization, and marching across hundreds, or even thousands of miles, to come together at Armageddon, or Har Megiddo, to the north of Jerusalem. This plague alone would very likely involve at least several weeks or months of time -- not just a few hours!

These "kings of the east" represent the vast hordes of Asia and Russia, and their allies, including Japan and China!

Historically, it is very interesting that after the supernatural plagues which God showered on the ancient Egyptians, destroying their country and devastating their crops, leading up to the **EXODUS** of Israel from that ruined land, the "kings of the east" -- the Hyksos, who were the infamous Amalekites of the Bible -- invaded Egypt. They were a "type" of the kings of the east," and after the destruction of Pharaoh's armies at the Red Sea, Egypt -- a "type" of modern "Babylon" -- lay prostrate and helpless before them!

Therefore, even the sixth plague of Revelation had its counterpart in the plagues which befell ancient Egypt which was a type of modern "Babylon"!

The Seventh and Final Plague

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a **GREAT EARTHQUAKE**, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague of it was exceeding great" (Rev.16:17-21).

A "light" talent equaled 60 manehs, and a maneh was equivalent to a Roman pound. Thus a "light" talent, used in weighing metals, was about 60 pounds. A "heavy" or double

talent was 120 pounds.

Thus these "hail stones" will weigh from 60-120 pounds! As in the case of ancient Egypt these hail stones could also refer to meteorite showers peppering the earth at the time when Christ returns!

An example of such a meteorite shower, which destroyed an army fighting against God's people, occurred in the days of Joshua. We read: "And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the Lord **CAST DOWN GREAT STONES FROM HEAVEN UPON THEM** unto Azekah, and they **DIED**; they were more which died with *HAILSTONES* than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (Josh.10:10-11).

A portion of this final mind-defying plague will be a parallel phenomenon -- a massive, earth-wrenching orogeny -- an incredible earthquake that will cause the entire planet to ring like a bell, and shake like a house in a hurricane. Mountain ranges will be leveled; islands will sink beneath the waves of the sea; new islands will rise up. Volcanoes will outflow lava on massive scales.

Just as in the days when God led Israel out of Egypt, and God Himself -- the One who became Christ -- descended to Mount Sinai, to speak with Moses and to give the Ten Commandments, and the mountains melted -- so it will be when Christ returns to the Mount of Olives. Notice these two *parallel* accounts:

"Lord, when thou wentest *out of Seir*, when thou marchedst out of the *field of Edom*, the EARTH TREMBLED, and the heavens dropped (meteor showers), the clouds also dropped water. The MOUNTAINS MELTED from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel" (Judges 5:4-5).

Isaiah prophesies,

"Who is this that *cometh from Edom*, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 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. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isa.63:1-4).

Seven Last Plagues Not Same as Seven Trumpet Plagues

When Christ returns, the seven vials of plagues will be poured out *in His presence*, as He returns, as is shown in Revelation 16. The seven trumpet plagues listed in Revelation 8-9 are not the same plagues at all, but forerunners of the last seven. The plagues of Revelation 8-9 constitute the punishments of God which comprise the seventh "seal" of Revelation. Christ

returns only when the seventh trumpet is blown (Rev.11:15), so the previous six trumpet plagues occur prior to His coming. I believe they will comprise roughly one month for each of them, and they will be poured out during one solar year – i.e., the “DAY” of the “Lord” will be one year in actual fulfillment. The fifth trumpet plague, however, will constitute a period of 5 months as it will torment men “five months” (Rev.9:5). It is concurrent with the attack of the Beast power on the Eastern bloc (Dan.11:44) after hearing “bad news” from the East and Northeast (Russia and China, etc.). The next “woe,” the sixth trumpet, will be the counterattack of the Eastern nations against Europe and America, and the “Beast.” Two hundred million men will be involved in the attack from the East (Rev.9:16) and a third of mankind will die during the conflict, which will no doubt involve a nuclear exchange.

The seventh trumpet will then blow (Rev.11:15) and at that time the wrath of God Himself will be poured out (Rev.11:18), and the saints will be resurrected, and Christ will set foot on the mount of Olives (Zech.14:4). The nations at that time will be struck by seven final vials or bowls of plagues – those listed in Revelation 16, which constitute “the wrath of God upon the earth” (v.1). These are in certain respects similar to the previous angelic trumpet plagues, but more extensive. For example, when the second angel trumpet plague occurs, ONE THIRD of the ships sink and ONE THIRD of sea life is destroyed. But when the second angel pours out his bowl on the sea and it becomes like blood, ALL living creatures in the sea will die (Rev.16:3). In the fourth trumpet plague, a third of the sun will be smitten and darkened (Rev.8:12), whereas the fourth bowl of wrath in chapter 16 will be a vast increase in solar radiance, causing a solar flare or nova explosion, scorching men on earth with “fire” (Rev.16:8-9) and “great heat.”

The fifth trumpet plague is the Beast coming out of the abyss, a condition of inaction, and beginning World War III, including chemical-biological weapons (Rev.9:1-11). The fifth bowl of wrath in chapter 16, however, will be a plague of darkness and pain “on the throne of the beast” (Rev.16:10), a very different plague.

The sixth trumpet plague is the attack and invasion of the Eastern nations against Europe and the Beast power, the Western Alliance (Rev.9:13-16). But the sixth bowl of wrath poured out in Christ’s presence when He returns will be a final gathering of all the nations to fight Him, when He begins to intervene personally with the armies from heaven, and the nations will gather at Har Meggido (or Armageddon – Rev.16:16), in the valley of Jezreel, and they will march to the valley of Jehoshaphat, the Kidron valley, east of Jerusalem, to fight against Christ.

God says, “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. . . Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision . . . The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again” (Joel3:12-17).

When Christ returns, and sets foot on the Mount of Olives, there will be a great earthquake (Zech.14:4), dividing the mountain asunder. This is the same quake that is the final

seventh bowl of wrath poured out in His presence (Rev.16:17-19, 20), accompanied with a great hail storm from the sky – probably meteorites – crashing down upon mankind (Rev.16:21) Afterwards the blood of the armies will fill up to the horses’ bridles in the valley of Jehoshaphat—the Kidron valley, between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem itself, which extends southeastward and into the Dead Sea, and on into the Gulf of Aqaba.

“And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs [about 200 miles in all]” (Rev.14:19-20). Joel says, “Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down, for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great” (Joel 3:13). Zechariah says, “Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths” (Zech.14:12).

After this great battle, Christ will march through the Middle East, from Sinai and Arabia (Hab.3:3), and measure the earth (v.6), scatter the mountains and bow the hills, march through Africa (Cush) and India (eastern Cush) and divide the earth (Hab.3:7-9). “You marched through the land in indignation; you trampled the nations in anger” (v.12). Mountains will shake and tremble, volcanoes will erupt and lava will flow, at His Presence, and the seas will storm, overflow, and roar in mighty winds and violent disturbances, and the sun and moon will stand still, as the earth’s rotation ceases for a time (Hab.3:11), as it was in the days of Joshua, son of Nun, who was a type or forerunner of Christ (Josh.10:11-14). “And at that time the slain of the LORD shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground” (Jer.25:33). The whole earth will feel His wrath and His judgment.

Isaiah says, “Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah [modern Iraq], this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? —I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Why is Your apparel red and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come” (Isa.63:1-4).

During this time, after His return, Christ will put down rebellion around the world, punish people, discipline nations, and set up His rule. “And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev.19:15). During this time, He will also regather Israel to their homeland in the Middle East. “I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pull and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD . . .” (Isa.66:19-20).

At that time, “He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa.11:12).

Daniel's 1260, 1290 and 1335 Days

How long will this take? Daniel seems to give us the answer. He is told, that after the final 3 ½ years, or 1260 days, when the Beast rules the earth, which ends with the coming of Christ to depose him and take over the rulership of the kingdoms of man, that there will be an extended time for the fulfillment of related prophecies. Counting from the time of the middle of the final week of years, when the abomination of desolation is set up, Daniel is told— “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY DAYS” – 1290 days. Thus, after the 1260 days are fulfilled, by the coming of the Messiah, there will be an ADDITIONAL 30 DAYS. “Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE DAYS” (Daniel 12:11-12).

So here is an extra 30 days, after Christ sets foot on the Mount of Olives; and then another 45 days, in addition to that. Or, a total of 75 extra days. What are these? We are told that those who “wait” for this fulfillment are “blessed.” How? First, they live through all the carnage and death and slaughter of the Day of the Lord. Second, they live to experience the setting up of the Kingdom of God and the government of Christ. Third, they live on into that blessed period of peace and righteousness.

But in addition, John hears the voices of a great multitude in Revelation, speaking of the events to occur after the return of Christ, saying, “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB has come, and His wife has made herself ready” (Rev.19:7). Then the angel says to John, “Write: BLESSED ARE THOSE who are called to the MARRIAGE SUPPER of the Lamb!” (Rev.19:9-10).

The wedding of Christ and the church, the wedding supper, a Feast of joy and rejoicing, will be held! As Isaiah says, “And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a FEAST of choice pieces, a FEAST of fat things, a FEAST of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering over all people, and the VEIL that is spread over all nations” (Isa.25:6-7).

When Will Christ Return?

There has been much discussion as to what time of year the Messiah will come. Some say He will come on the Feast of Trumpets, others on the Day of Atonement, and some on Passover. Interestingly, many of Israel's great deliverances have been at the Passover season, in history, including the Exodus from Egypt, the deliverance of Lot from Sodom, Israel from Midian during the time of Gideon, and Jerusalem from the Assyrian king Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah. See my article, “Will Christ Return at Passover?” for the many indications that Christ may return around Passover.

It is certainly possible that Christ may return around Passover, and go out to fight the armies of the world, and overthrow the end-time Beast even as He overthrew ancient Pharaoh of Egypt, and delivered His people Israel. He may then continue fighting the nations of the world,

bringing them into subjection, and escorting His people in captivity to the land of Israel, where He will establish His government in Jerusalem. During this time, the time of the Omer count, He will fight for His people, and deliver them, and punish the nations around the world, ruling all nations with a rod of iron, and inviting those who remain to come to Jerusalem, to celebrate with Him, the “marriage supper” of the Lamb of God—the WEDDING FEAST—ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, THE DAY OF “FIRSTFRUITS,” THE DAY THE LAW OF GOD WAS GIVEN AT MOUNT SINAI, THE DAY HE “MARRIED” ANCIENT ISRAEL—AND THE DAY OF THE NEW WEDDING SUPPER OF THE CHURCH WITH THE LAMB.

History often repeats itself. God made the patterns in the Old Testament. Will He re-enact them, in the future and final fulfillment?

It is also possible, of course, that He could return in the fall of the year, or that the cleansing of the earth could take from Passover till the Day of Atonement, or that the great Feast could coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles. We will have to wait and see.

In the meantime, let us rejoice, and look up to heaven – for indeed, the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand, let us rejoice, and welcome our King with open arms and radiant joy and excitement and delight, rapture and ecstasy! What a glorious day that will be! Praise the LORD—Halleluyah!

The Millennial Reign

Chapters 17-18, also insets, describe in more detail the evil nature of modern Babylon the Great, and its punishment. Chapter 17 shows the religious side of the Beast Power, which persecutes the saints. Chapter 18 shows the economic power and might of the Beast -- the "New World Order" which is coming together before our very eyes at this moment!

Chapter 19 once again picks up the story flow, detailing the majesty of the second coming of Christ, when He returns from heaven on a white horse, with armies of angels, to "smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (verse 15). The bodies of those who oppose Him will be eaten by the fowl of the air and the beasts of the field (verses 17-18), and the beast leader dictator, and his sidekick the false prophet, will be cast into the lake of fire to perish (verses 19-20).

Chapter 20 brings us to the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ over the world. He will rule the nations from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4). The apostle John declares, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev.20:4).

What will the Millennium be like? Some think it will be a period of chaos, and the earth will be desolate and in ruins, empty and uninhabited, for that time. However, this is clearly not

the case.

What Will the Millennium Be Like?

The millennium will be a time of unfettered joy and peace, where the nations will dwell in peace and safety, and the law of God will go forth from Jerusalem. “And it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains [over the nations], and shall be exalted above the hills [smaller nations]; and peoples shall flow to it. MANY NATIONS shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion the LAW shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-4; see also Isaiah 2:1-4).

At that time the earth will be ruled by Christ and the resurrected saints, who will serve Him as kings and priests around the world (Rev.2:26-27, 5:10). As John says in Revelation, “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and REIGNED WITH CHRIST FOR A THOUSAND YEARS” – which is the “MILLENNIUM” (Rev.20:4).

Christ will rule the whole world and every nation will serve and obey Him. “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth” (Zech.14:9) All the nations will come up to Jerusalem to observe the feast of Tabernacles (Zech.14:16-19).

That will be a time when, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them” (Isai.11:6). “The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play on the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain [kingdom], for the EARTH WILL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:7-9).

Ellen G. White (7th Day Adventist) taught that the earth will be desolate and empty for 1,000 years. She was wrong. She misinterpreted a verse in Isaiah 24 where God says “Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned” (verse 6). There, she ended the verse. And she said the earth would be desolate and empty for 1,000 years, with no human occupation. But she ignored the last part of the verse. The verse goes on, and says: “Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, AND FEW MEN ARE LEFT.” She left out the “and few men are left”!!! In other words, the earth would NOT be emptied completely. Millions, and billions will die, yes – but not everybody!

Isaiah and Amos both indicate that a tenth of the population will be spared, and they will repopulate the earth, and there will definitely be human nations on the earth during the millennium for the saints to rule over. Amos says, “For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that

went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel” (Amos 5:3). Isaiah declared, “Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the LORD have removed men *FAR AWAY*, and *there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land*. But yet it shall be a *TENTH*, and it shall return . . .” Isaiah 6:11-13).

The earth today has some seven billion people inhabiting it. When God’s judgment and fury are past, the indication is that one tenth – about 700,000,000 people will be left alive, around the world, and these are the people who shall be spared, and who will repent of their sins, and turn to God, and they will comprise the human nations of the earth who will be ruled over by the returning Christ and His resurrected saints.

After the Millennium

The book of Revelation, chapter 20, goes on to describe a short-lived rebellion on the earth after the millennium, led by the devil who is loosed from his prison for a season, and the fate of Satan (verse 10) and those who follow him in rebellion (verses 7-10). At that time, the devil and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire and destroyed (see my article, “What Is Satan’s Fate?”).

Chapter 20 then goes on to describe the period of the Great White Throne Judgment which follows the millennial utopia (verses 11-15), the time when all mankind will be resurrected to experience final judgment. Be sure to read our articles, "A New Look at the Resurrection from the Dead," and "The Holy Days of God Reveal the Plan of Salvation."

The story-flow then continues with Revelation 21, which depicts the New Heavens and New Earth, and the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven above.

Chapter 22 summarizes the theme and purpose of the whole book, and gives a final warning of God's judgment and an exhortation to God's people to remain faithful and true. Christ declares, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev.22:12). Each of us will be judged according to our works -- our deeds -- and not just according to our profession of "faith"!

Jesus says to all of us: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that DO HIS [GOD'S] COMMANDMENTS, that they may have right to the tree of life [eternal life!], and may enter in through the gates into the city" (verses 13-14). Jesus concludes: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (verses 16-17).

What about you? Will you come to Christ, the Messiah? Will you repent of your sins, before judgment falls? Will you believe these final words of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, recorded for us as a FINAL WARNING and admonition in the book of Revelation?