

Chapter 45: He That Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things

Reading Outline:

- Revelation 1-11
1. Introduction to the Book of Revelation
 - 1.1. Outline
 - 1.2. Chapter Summary
 2. Symbols and Interpretations
 3. Revelation Chapters 1-11
 - 3.1. Revelation 1
 - 3.2. Revelation 2
 - 3.3. Revelation 3
 - 3.4. Revelation 4
 - 3.5. Revelation 5
 - 3.6. Revelation 6
 - 3.7. Revelation 7
 - 3.8. Revelation 8
 - 3.9. Revelation 9
 - 3.10. Revelation 10
 - 3.11. Revelation 11
 4. Conclusions

1. Introduction to the Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation was written, prior to the Gospel of John and followed by his three letters.

1.1. Outline

“Written to:	It was written to the seven churches in Western Turkey (Rev. 1:4, 11); it may have been written to go to all churches. It was also written to the Saints living prior to the Lord’s Second Coming.
Author:	Revelation given to John the Beloved by Jesus Christ (JST, Rev. 1:1).
Where written:	While John was exiled on the isle of Patmos by Emperor Domitian due to John’s Christian beliefs.
When written:	It was written about A.D. 95.
Purpose:	Warning given by the Lord to the seven churches regarding their spiritual state. It also ‘presents a picture of Christ’s dealings with men throughout the ages of earth’s history.’ ¹ Also, to prepare the members of the Church of Jesus Christ for the events that will immediately precede the second coming of the Savior.
Major Themes:	(1) Several symbols representing parts of the Church of Jesus Christ; (2) The blessings

	promised to seven branches in Asia who overcome their weaknesses, and, (3) the symbolic vision of the War in Heaven and its continuation on earth; (4) The final judgment; and, (5) Coming forth a new heaven and earth.
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1.2. Chapter Summary

“Chap. 1-3:	John’s testimony of the truthfulness of the revelation; John’s instructions from the Lord, and John’s counsel to the [servants of] seven branches of the Church in Asia [now modern-day Turkey].
Chap. 4:	John’s vision of heaven.
Chap. 5-18:	He sees the first five seals (or first five thousand years of history), in rapid-fire, [in] encapsulated form. Then he sees the opening of the sixth seal, which includes the restoration of the gospel. (See Rev. 6:12-7:17). After that, John sees the seventh period of a thousand years, with great judgments poured out upon the earth... [Rev. 8-18 cover] ‘the events that immediately precede the second coming of the Savior’].
Chap. 19:	The Second coming of Jesus Christ.
Chap. 20:	The Millennium; The last great battle between the forces of righteousness and evil; and, the final judgment.
Chap. 21:	A new heaven and new earth are brought forth.”

Reference²

2. Symbols and Interpretations

The Book of Revelation is similar to the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament in regard to the Lord’s use of symbols in order to convey important gospel truths. In fact, I have almost as many commentaries on Revelation as I do Isaiah. The Lord uses symbols in order to:

1. Help the learner to understand and remember by comparing unfamiliar ideas or things to those that are more familiar;
2. They have different levels of meaning based upon the individual’s spiritual level of understanding; and,
3. Encourage the learner to think more deeply (inquire) about what is being taught.

Two examples are: 1) wheat and tares = two groups of people that appear to be similar, but over time become very different; and, 2) sun, moon and stars = three separate kingdoms, each with a different degree of glory.

Yet another reason for difficulty in understanding the book of Revelation may be related to the difference between Hebrew imagery from imagery and symbolism familiar to the Western mind.

Gerald N. Lund continues,

“Though the Western mind also uses imagery and symbolism, we tend to make our figurative language more concrete, specific, and aesthetically attractive. On the other hand, the Hebrews were concerned not so much with the overall beauty of the image as they were with whether it accurately portrayed spiritual realities.

“...sometimes we find John’s imagery to be jarring and even bizarre. An excellent example is his description of the one ‘like unto the Son of man.’ (Rev. 1:13). As he describes the figure clothed in a full-length robe, the whiteness of his being, the eyes like a flame of fire, the typical Western reader begins to build an image of the Savior in his mind. Then suddenly comes this phrase: ‘And out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword’ (Rev. 1:16)” Our tendency is to try to add that image literally to our mental picture, and we end up with a disturbing portrait.

“A Hebrew, on the other hand, might respond something like this: ‘Of course, there is no actual sword coming out of his mouth. But what *does* come out of the mouth of a man? Words. But this is not just any man. This is the Son of Man. So out of his moth comes the truth, the gospel, the word of God. The double-edged sword is an excellent symbol of the word, or the gospel. It cuts through error, pierces the heart, cleaves ignorance.”³

I pray you will not delay your study of John’s writing of Revelation due to his use of symbols, but instead seek to increase your understanding of their meaning through prayer and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As you do so, the spirit will enlighten you and bring increased understanding to your mind.

Bruce R. McConkie answers the question, “Are we expected to understand the book of Revelation?”

“Certainly. Why else would the Lord reveal it? The common notion that it deals with beasts and plagues and mysterious symbolisms that cannot be understood is just not true. It is so far overstated that it gives an entirely erroneous feeling about this portion of revealed truth. Most of the book—and it is no problem to count the verses so included—is clear and plain and should be understood by the Lord’s people. Certain parts are not clear and are not understood by us—which, however, does not mean that we could not understand them if we would grow in faith as we should. The Lord expects us to seek wisdom, to ponder his revealed truths, and to gain a knowledge of them by the power of his Spirit.”⁴

The following symbols are noted with their possible interpretations.

	Symbol	Interpretation	Scripture Reference
1.	Seven Golden candlesticks	Seven churches of Asia	Rev. 1:20
2.	Seven stars	Seven servants of the Church	JST, Rev. 1:20
3.	Double edged sword	Word of God.	D&C 6:2
4.	Three keys	Free all people from physical death; Righteous from spiritual death	B/M 2 Ne. 9:10-13
5.	Woman clothed with the sun.	Church of God.	JST, Rev. 12:7
6.	Red dragon	Satan	Rev. 12:9
7.	Serpent	Satan	Rev. 12:9
8.	Stars of heaven	Pre-mortal spirits	PGP, Moses 6:36
9.	Morning star	Christ	Rev. 22:16
10.	Man child	Kingdom of God: Political government of God during Christ’s millennial reign	JST, Rev. 12:7
11.	Rod of iron	Word of God	1 Ne. 15:23-24
12.	Flood	Flow of evil	Ps. 18:4

Reference⁵

3. Revelation Chapters 1-11

3.1. Revelation 1

Revelations 1:1-2	JST, Revelation 1:1-2
1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:	1 The Revelation of <u>John, a servant of God, which was given unto him of Jesus Christ, to show</u> unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass, that he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John,
2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.	2 Who bore record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

The Joseph Smith Translation, adds to the King James Bible, by making it clear this is a revelation given to John by Jesus Christ. It is a vision given to John in which he saw “things which must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1).

Revelation 1:4-5

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

John clarifies he is sending the vision he received from Jesus Christ while on “the isle that is Patmos,” to the seven churches in Asia. These churches are: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Revelations 1:9, 11). Why these seven? Sir William Ramsey, a renowned scholar of New Testament geography, notes that all the cities lay on a great circular road that anciently ran through Western Turkey. Others suggest that due to apostasy, these seven were the most faithful of the remaining churches. In Hebrew, the number seven is seen as signifying completeness, fullness, or perfection. The number seven may infer that the message was for all the churches.

Richard Lloyd Anderson states,

“Thus, the seven churches would represent the total church. John’s Revelation definitely contains accurate details suited to particular cities, but at the same time the Lord sent a message to the entire church through these typical seven.”⁶

Bruce R. McConkie clarifies, “washed us from our sins in his own blood,”

“From John’s writings we learn that the only way the saints can overcome the world and escape the wiles of Satan is ‘by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony’ (Rev. 12:11). It was John also who saw the angelic hosts around the throne of God, worshipping him and the Lamb, and heard the angelic elder ask: ‘What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence come they?’ He it was who then heard the heavenly pronouncement: ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’ (Rev. 7:13-14).”⁷

It is the desire of the Father and the Son that each of us will embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in His Church, make and keep sacred covenants, serve our fellowman, rise above the tribulation of this mortal life, and endure in faithfulness to the end of our lives. As we do so, we will be made clean from the blood and sins of this world through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:12-13, 16-18

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars:...

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The man who spoke to John was Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the first and the last; The Alpha and Omega; The beginning and the end. He came to earth as a mortal, was crucified and after three days arose, a resurrected being never to die. By doing the will of His Father, He was able to bring about the release of all mankind from the powers of hell and death.

Revelation 1:20	JST, Revelation 1:20
<p>20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.</p>	<p>20 This is the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candle sticks. The seven stars are the <u>servants</u> of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.</p>

So that there is no misunderstanding regarding the symbolic meaning of the “seven stars” or “the seven golden candlesticks,” we are given their meaning. The “seven stars,” according to the Joseph Smith Translation, are not angels, but “servants” or leaders of the seven churches. The “seven candlesticks” represent “the seven churches,” previously identified. This does not however exclude the seven churches from symbolizing all the churches the Lord wishes to address, present and future.

3.2. Revelation 2

The first church the Lord addresses is Ephesus. It was visited by Paul at the conclusion of his Second Missionary Journey and he also labored there and in the surrounding area for three years [Acts 19:9-10; 20:31) during his Third Missionary Journey. He wrote a letter to the saints in Ephesus. It was also the home base of the Apostle John.

Revelation 2:1 (JST, Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18 uses “servant” in place of “angel.”)

1 Unto the angel [servant] of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Bryan Richards states,

“While the imagery of the Lord holding stars in his hand may seem strange, the meaning is significant. Joseph Smith translation teaches us that the seven stars represent seven servants. How is it then that the Lord holds his servants in his hands? The Lord’s servants are his sheep and the elect of God. He has promised, ‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand’ (John 10:28). The Lord will not drop the seven stars, nor does anyone—especially Satan—have the power to pluck them from his protective care.

“Similarly, the imagery of the Lord *in the midst* of the seven golden candlesticks is instructive. The candlesticks represent the seven churches, and the Lord is among his people even if they are not aware of his supporting presence. [See Matthew 18:20; D&C 29:5; 38:7; History of Church 2:381].”⁸

Revelation 2:2-3

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:
3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

The Lord begins His directive to His leaders at Ephesus by expressing His appreciation for their efforts where they have been valiant in following His will on behalf of the members. It is noteworthy the apostasy had reached the point where individuals were presenting themselves as apostles to the saints. This was a deceptive technique designed to enable them to gain authorized access to the members.

Revelation 2:4-6

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.
5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.
6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Sidney B. Sperry states,

“The reader will notice in this passage that men posing as apostles were going about in the Church. Though in this case the branch of the Church in Ephesus put the finger on them as deceivers and liars, we must view the situation as serious and aggravated—especially so when we remember that John accuses the Church as having left (or lost) its ‘first love.’ What is meant by this phrase? Some good scholars have differed materially in its interpretation. In view of the words which immediately follow, ‘Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent,’ I submit that the Church at Ephesus was itself in anything but a favorable spiritual condition. For the Church to lose or leave its ‘first love’ is nothing but an orientalism which expresses the strained relations existing between the members and God, who once had their love and affection.”⁹

Bruce R. McConkie adds,

“**Nicolaitanes.** Members of the Church who were trying to maintain their church standing while continuing to live after the manner of the world. They must have had some specific doctrinal teachings which they used to justify their course. In the counsel given to the Church in Pergamos, their doctrine is condemned as severely as that of Balaam who sought to lead Israel astray. (Rev. 2:14-16; 2 Pet. 2:10-22; Num. 22, 23, and 24). Whatever their particular deeds and doctrines were, the designation has come to be used to identify those who want their names on the records of the Church, but do not want to devote themselves to the gospel cause with full

purpose of heart. Thus, on July 8, 1838, the Lord said: ‘Let my servant Newel K. Whitney be ashamed of the Nicolaitanes band and of all their secret abominations, and of all his littleness of soul before me, saith the Lord, and come up to the land of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and be a bishop unto my people, said the Lord, not in name but in deed, said the Lord.’ (D&C 117:11).”¹⁰

Revelation 2:7

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Bryan Richards states,

“This phrase, ‘he that hath an ear, let him hear,’ accompanies the pose made to each of the seven churches (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Its meaning is important whether in this instance or elsewhere in the scriptures. It means, ‘You are about to be told something of great importance, eternal consequences, and profound significance. Yet, ye will not be able to comprehend it unless you lend a spiritual ear to hear and understand such a deep doctrine, for the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned.’ The phrase is like the Lord’s bookmark—his personal highlighting of deep doctrine. In the case of the seven churches, the bookmark highlights the great promises given to those who overcome.”¹¹

What is the meaning of “the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God?”

Bruce C. Hafen states,

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.’ (Revelation 2:7). When that comes, we will be given the quality or nature of life that God himself has, which is called ‘eternal’ [godlike] life. It is an endowment of pure grace, the greatest endowment of all: ‘And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end ye shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.’ (D&C 14:7).

“This tree of life is the same tree of which Adam and Eve were not allowed to partake until they had faithfully and obediently endured the trials of mortal experience to the point of offering God a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It is the tree described as growing from the seed of faith Alma describes in Alma 32. It is the tree whose fruit represents the final bestowal of not only all that the Father has but what the Father is. No wonder that, when Lehi partook of this ‘love of god, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men,’ he declared it was the most desirable above all things.’ And an angel added, ‘Yea, and the most joyous to the soul.’ (1 Nephi 11:22-23).”¹²

The second church to be addressed is in Smyrna.

Jay M. Todd states,

“Smyrna today: The site of ancient Smyrna is today’s metropolitan Izmir, major port and industrial center in western Turkey. The branch’s bishop, Polycarp, was martyred in A.D. 155.”¹³

Revelations 2:8-10

8 And unto the angel [JST: servant] of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Bryan Richards states,

“The Lord uses the term “Jews” to mean those who are of the house of Israel, the covenant people of the Lord. He is more than willing to adopt Gentiles into the House of Israel if they will come unto him and repent. With respect to the Jews, he doesn’t care about the purity of the Jewish lineage if their works are those of Satan. Hence the synagogue of Satan is full of individuals who can carefully trace their lineage back to Judah and his brethren, but whose hearts are full of wickedness.

“The ‘synagogue of Satan’ reference is instructive because the same application can be applied to the church of the devil spoken of in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 13:6). In spite of the many churches in the world, the Lord doesn’t recognize institutional affiliation as much as the affiliation of our hearts and souls (see D&C 10:67-68). Hence, in his mind there are only two churches—His true church and the church of the devil.”¹⁴

Bryan Richards continues,

“The saints in Smyrna were called upon to suffer great tribulation for a period of ‘ten days’ meaning a short season. We presume that most the saints survived the persecution but some did not. Martyrs from Smyrna include Metrodorus, Pionius, and Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna.”¹⁵

Revelation 2:11

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The second death spoken of applies only to those who are designated as “the sons of perdition” (D&C 76:32, 37-38). Those who choose not to repent may therefore qualify for this penalty.

The third church that the Lord addresses is Pergamos.

Jay M. Todd states,

“About fifty miles north of Smyrna is the locale of ancient Pergamos (Perganium):...In about 29 B.C. a temple for emperor worship was built here. Thus, the Lord called it ‘Satan’s seat.’”¹⁶

Revelation 2:12-13

12 And to the angel [JST: servant] of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

In these verses, the Lord is pleased that in spite of living in an area described as “Satan’s seat,” there are those who have remained true to the faith. One member, Antipas, gave his life as a martyr rather than deny his faith.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“Under Augustus a temple was built at Pergamum [Pergamos], probably 29 B.C., and dedicated to Rome and Augustus, and Pergamum became the center of the imperial worship and ‘Satan’s throne’ [seat].’ (Dummelow, p. 1075). Thus Satan dwelt in Pergamos and sat upon the throne in his own temple; and in like manner Satan dwells in every place and among every people where he, as the author of sin and the advocate of unrighteousness, finds those who open their hearts to him, who believe his doctrines, and who follow his ways; and similarly he reigns on the throne in every house of worship from which those doctrines flow which damn men and lead the carefully down to hell.”¹⁷

Revelation 2:14-15

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of Nicolaitans which thing I hate.

All is not well with the members in Pergamos. They have tolerated the presence of those who held to the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, both which the Lord hates.

William Smith states,

“Balaam. the son of Beor, a man endowed with the gift of prophecy (Num. 22:5)...Balak, the king of Moab, sent for Balam to curse them [the Israelites]. Balaam at first was prohibited from God from going. He [eventually] was allowed to go. He yielded to the temptations of riches and honor...[and] suggested to the Moabites the expedient of seducing them to commit fornication. The effect of this is recorded in Num. 25.”¹⁸

See Revelation 2:4-6: Commentary by Bruce R. McConkie, for clarification of term: Nicolaitans.

Revelation 2:16-17

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

The directive of the Lord to the members at Pergamos is to repent. If they do not, they will receive yet greater and more personal rebuke for their actions. Those who do repent and remain faithful to their covenants, will receive “hidden manna,” and, “a white stone.”

Jay A. and Donald W. Parry state,

“Manna is the food that Israel received from heaven for forty years while they wandered in the wilderness (Ex. 16:15, 35). The hidden manna refers to Jesus, who is the ‘true bread from heaven’ (John 6:32) ...Jesus is ‘hidden’ or unseen and unknown by the wicked, but is revealed to him or her who overcomes.

“The phrase ‘hidden manna’ may also refer to eternal truths from and about Christ that are revealed only in the temple, ...

“The white stone is a urim and thummim for each individual who enter the celestial kingdom; written upon this white stone will be a new name. [D&C 130:8-11].”¹⁹

The fourth church to be addressed by the Lord is Thyatira.

Jay M. Todd states,

“Thyatira. Ruins of this busy commercial city are about 50 miles northeast of Smyrna.”²⁰

Revelation 2:18-19

**18 And unto the angel [JST: servant] of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;
19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.**

The Lord acknowledges the good works of the members in Thyatira including not only good works, but acts of charity, service, faith, and patience. In many areas of their lives, they have been faithful to the teachings of the gospel.

Revelation 2:20-21

**20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.
21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.**

The Lord is not pleased with His leaders when they knowingly allow those among their congregation to adversely influence their membership without taking necessary church action. Those in positions of leadership have the responsibility to ensure their members are protected from iniquity. When they fail in this responsibility, the spirit withdraws and the doctrine becomes polluted.

Revelations 2:24-25

**24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.
25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.**

David R. Minert states,

“...the Lord assures the saints at Thyatira that those of them who have not accepted the false doctrines of immorality and pagan worship (whose practices are inspired by Satan himself) will not be condemned.

“Those faithful saints are encouraged to hold tightly to gospel truths and endure to the end.”²¹

Revelation 2:26-27	JST, Revelation 2:36-27
26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over	26 And to him who overcometh, and keepeth my <u>commandments</u> unto the end, will I give power

<p>the nations:</p> <p>27 And he shall rule over them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.</p>	<p>over <u>many kingdoms;</u></p> <p>27 And he shall rule <u>them with the word of God; and they shall be in his hands as the vessels of clay in the hands of a potter; and he shall govern them by faith, with equity and justice,</u> even as I received of my Father.</p>
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It is not surprising there are those who are confused regarding the words of the King James Bible. They seem to infer those who are given power to rule over the nations will do so with a “rod of iron” and the vessels of a potter “shall be broken to shivers.” The additions provided by the Joseph Smith Translation make it clear those who are given power to rule over the “many kingdoms,” will do so by the “word of God,” and, like a potter who carefully molds the clay into a useable object, those who govern will do so based upon a firm faith in God, exercising both equality and justice. In this manner, they will follow the example set by Jesus Christ as He administers His Father’s will with His children.

Revelation 2:28

28 And I will give him the morning star.

Bryan Richards states,

“Jesus declared, ‘I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star’ (Rev. 22:16). For an individual to receive the morning star is the same thing as to receive the Second Comforter...It is to receive personal visitation from the resurrected Lord (see also 2 Pet. 1:19).”²²

Jay A. and Donald W. Parry add,

A second meaning, “God gives eternal life to those who overcome; they will become like Christ, who is the ‘bright and morning star.’”²³

3.3. Revelation 3

The fifth church to be addressed is Sardis.

Jay M. Todd states,

“Sardis today: Now in ruin, in the days of John this was an important city, located about 30 miles south of Thyatira”. (“The Seven Cities of Revelation,” in *Ensign*, August 1976, 49).

Revelation 3:1-2

1 And unto the angel [JST: servant] of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.
2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Julie Cannon Markham states,

“...perhaps there were, in the ancient Church in Sardis, members who should have been carrying in their hearts the name of the One who lived but instead had become dead to his lifestyle. To me it meant that these people called themselves Christians but were, in fact, spiritually lifeless.

“To take upon myself the name of Jesus Christ while not striving to make the necessary changes in my life through repentance was not only a misuse of the Savior’s name but a grave sin. I saw it was mocking God.”²⁴

It is not enough to have faith in Jesus Christ, repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, as important and essential as each of these ordinances are to our eternal salvation. It is to be changed. It is to bury the natural, instinctual individual we were, and become a man or woman like Christ. We will not achieve this process during our mortal existence, but it is here we begin our journey. It appears there were those in the Church in Sardis, who had begun the process of becoming like Christ, then they had stopped the growth they had begun and died, as it were.

Revelation 3:3

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

The word of the Lord to those in Sardis, and to each of us, is to remember the covenants we have made, and why we felt to do so. Remember what we received, and heard, and felt, and then hold fast to that spiritual prompting and repent. If we choose to procrastinate the day of our repentance, we will someday learn the words of an ancient American missionary, Samuel the Lamanite, are true.

B/M, Helaman 13:38

38 But behold, your days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly too late, ...

Now is the day for us to choose. If we do not choose to repent, the day will pass, and then comes the night.

Revelation 3:4-6

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

In the words of the Master, it is not yet too late for those who are currently unworthy to repent and become clean. If they will now do so, like the few others who are righteous, they may also be dressed again in white raiment. And more importantly, “they shall walk with me...” What a promise to the disobedient in Sardis, and to each of us. If we will begin our process of repentance, we may yet be made clean and be able to again walk with Our Lord.

The sixth Church to be addressed by the Lord is Philadelphia.

Jay M. Todd states,

“Philadelphia today: Located about twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis. Philadelphia was rich and powerful city in its time. It is still inhabited today.”²⁵

Revelation 3:7-8

7 And to the angel [JST: servant] of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth and shutteth and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Bryan Richards gives the meaning of “the key of David” as,

“The key of David is a priesthood key held by the Savior. What does it mean? King David’s life was a type of the Savior’s, especially with reference to the Lord’s Millennial mission. David’s accomplishments: ‘(1) he united the tribes into one nation, (2) he secured undisputed possession of the country, (3) the whole government rested upon a religious basis, and the will of God was the law of Israel.’ (Bible Dictionary: David). When the Savior exercises this priesthood key, he will destroy the enemies of Israel, reign as King of the Jews, and establish the government in righteousness.”²⁶

Chieko N. Okazaki states regarding the “open door,”

“...in this instance, there is no shadow of accusation or blame or guilt in the words of Jesus. He is speaking in comfort, in promise, in assurance, in might: ‘I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.’ (vs.8). Isn’t there a feeling of triumph in what he’s saying? He sets before us an open door that we are completely free to walk in and out of, as we choose. No one can close that door between us and the Savior. In fact, he himself is that door. We have total, complete access.”²⁷

Revelation 3:9

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Bryan Richards states,

“These members of the synagogue of Satan say they are Jews but are not. How is it that they are lying by saying they are Jews? Are they really Gentiles pretending to have a Jewish lineage? No. They are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who reject the Holy One of Israel. Spiritually speaking, they are not the covenant people of the Lord. They are liars who think they will inherit the blessings of the Father but really serve Satan and will receive wages from him.

“Is there a modern-day corollary? There are members of the Church who think they are in good standing by virtue of their membership alone—not realizing that the Lord doesn’t consider them members of his church, ‘whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church.’ (D&C 10:67-68).”²⁸

Revelation 3:10-13

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Orson Hyde states regarding “Him...will I make a pillar in the temple,”

“...If there is any thing in this world my soul desires the most, it is that I may overcome, and be made a pillar in the Temple of my God, and remain at home in the society that is continually warming my spirit, encouraging my feeling, with that which is congenial with every principle of my nature, let me bask in their goodly presence, live in their affections, dwell forever in the midst of their society, and go no more out. And may God in His mercy help us all to overcome every obstacle, endure hardships like good soldiers of the Lamb, and dwell eternally in the mansions of light; which may God grant for Christ’s sake. Amen.”²⁹

James E. Talmage defines “New Jerusalem,”

“The Church in this day teaches that the New Jerusalem seen by John and by the prophet Ether, as descending from the heavens in glory, is the return of exalted Enoch and his righteous people; and that the people of Zion of Enoch, and the modern Zion, or the gathered saints on the western continent, will become one people.”³⁰

The seventh church to be addressed by the Lord is Laodicea.

Jay M. Todd states,

“Laodicea today: About 100 miles east of Ephesus, this ancient city was a banking center before being destroyed by an earthquake.”³¹

Revelation 3:14-16

14 And unto the angel [JST: servant] of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Sterling W. Still states,

“One of our most unfortunate situations comes about when we holdout on life, for when we hold out on life, life holds out on us. And by holding back in our faith, we become holdouts on God and members of the unfortunate group that someone called ‘life’s half-believers.’ They are those who believe just a part of the time, or they believe in just some of the issues. This makes us guilty of those great sins of fractional devotion and marginal moral, which produces a minimal performance.

“What miserable lives we lead when we can’t make up our minds between right and wrong, good and bad, obedience and disobedience, success and failure. Then much of the time remain as if we were wallowing in the

slime of the low tide. We are left straddling the fence and our dim understanding leaves us uncertain as to which way we should go.”³²

Unfortunately, the person who is uncommitted regarding their commitment to Jesus Christ has in fact decided regarding their discipleship. In response to their unspoken words, Jesus speaks the feelings of His heart, “He that is not with me is [in truth] against me;...” (Matthew 12:30).

Revelation 3:17-19

**17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.
 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**

It appears Jesus is speaking to those individuals who have spent their lives trying to accumulate the temporal goods of this world. They selfishly seek to fulfill the desire within to become completely self-sufficient and independent of others. In spite of how they may appear on the outside, within, they are spiritually destitute. They are “wretched [distressed], miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” (Revelations 3:17).

The Lord offers to them, and each of us, the priceless gold of inner peace; white raiment that their nakedness may be covered; and, eye salve so that their spiritual eyesight might be restored. They may freely obtain these items if they are willing to turn to the Master physician, and be made whole again. The way of repentance will not be easy, and will require great effort on their part, but full recovery for them and each of us, is possible because of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:20-22

**20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.
 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

We have an advocate with the Father who loves us and wants us to triumph over all the foes of our mortal probation. Jesus stands willing to help, to strengthen and to forgive. He asks only we open the door of our hearts and invite Him in. If we are willing to do so, He will help us to heal.

The Lord speaks to the seven churches in Asia:

Church	Commendation	Condemnation	Blessing
Ephesus (2:1-7)	For good works, diligence, patience, longsuffering, and rejecting apostates, Nicolaitans and false apostles	For forgetting their first love (God)	To eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God [See B/M, 1 Ne.11:21-22]

Smyrna (2:8-11)	For suffering tribulation and poverty	None	To receive a crown of life and avoid the second death [See B/M, Alma 12:16, 32]
Pergamos (2:12-17)	For remaining true to the faith	For tolerating the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans	To eat hidden manna [John 6:35, 49-51], to receive a white stone and a new name
Thyatira (2:18-29)	For works of charity, service, faith, and patience	For tolerating the false prophetess Jezebel and her teachings of idolatry and fornication	To receive power over the nations, to rule by the word of God, and to receive the morning star
Sardis (3:1-6)	For the few righteous which have not defiled their garments	For forgetting the Lord, becoming spiritually dead, and for works of wickedness	To be clothed in white and have their names written in the book of life [LDS Bible Dictionary, 626-627]
Philadelphia (3:7-13)	For faithfulness in spite of little remaining strength	None	To triumph over their enemies, be made a pillar in the temple of God, and receive a new name
Laodicea (3:14-22)	None	For being lukewarm and proud in their riches	To sit with the Lord in his throne [Romans 8:16-17]

Reference³³

Kent P. Jackson states,

“...If the messages of the seven churches of Asia paint a fair picture of the overall status of early Christianity, one cannot avoid the conclusion that the prophecies of apostasy were then being fulfilled. Of the seven churches, only two were not condemned [Smyrna and Philadelphia], and one of those was to suffer martyrdom [Smyrna]. One church was ready to die because of its sins [Sardis]; another was to be spit out of God’s mouth [Laodicea]. Of the rest, all were guilty of serious error, and each was told in strong terms that if they did not repent, they would be rejected.”³⁴

As we conclude this review of the seven churches in Revelation, we note the perspective offered by Jay M. Todd. He states,

“Perhaps few chapters in scripture afford such insightful glimpses into the spirit of the Lord’s judgment as do the first three chapters of Revelation. The Lord’s appraisal of the members’ faithfulness, endurance, patience, charity, and service—and their inactivity, cooling of love, tolerance of wickedness and false doctrines, lukewarmness, self-satisfaction, worldliness, and lack of zeal in his cause—have served for generations to motivate thoughtful readers to evaluate thoroughly their life-style.”³⁵

3.4. Revelation 4

As Revelation, Chapter 4 unfolds, we understand that John, the Apostle, is “viewing a vision of the glory of God the Father sitting on His heavenly throne with 24 Elders.”³⁶

We learn in Doctrine and Covenants 77:5,

“...the twenty-four Elders spoken of by John...were elders who had been faithful in the work of the ministry and were dead; who belonged to the seven churches, and were in the paradise of God.”

Meaning of Symbols:

1. Seven lamps	1. Seven servants of God (Rev. 4:4)
2. Sea of Glass	2. The earth in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state (Rev. 4:6). [see also D&C 77:1, and D&C 130:6-9).
3. Four Beasts	3. Four of most noble animals that had filled the measure of their creation and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect; they were like angels in their sphere (Rev. 4:6-9). [see also History of the Church, Vol. 5, 343-344].

Reference³⁷

3.5. Revelation 5

Revelation 5:1-4

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

Joseph Smith petitioned the Lord so he might be able to better understand the Book of Revelation. He received the following revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:6-7

6 Q. What are we to understand by the book which John saw, which was sealed on the back with seven seals?

A. We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and the works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.

7 Q. What are we to understand by the seven seals with which it was sealed?

A. We are to understand that the first seal contains the things of the first thousand years, and the second also of the second thousand years, and so on until the seventh.

The answer the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith regarding the meaning of the book and the seven seals, provides us with an improved understanding of the entire book of Revelation with the accompanying major events.

3.6. Revelation 6

In the following verses, we will address the events that occurred with the opening of the six seals. As noted previously, the “first five seals will be covered in 11 verses, the sixth seal is covered in 14 verses.”³⁸

Revelation 6:1	JST, Revelation 6:1
<p>1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it was the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.</p>	<p>1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, <u>one of the four beasts</u>, and I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder, saying, Come and see.</p>

According to the Joseph Smith Translation, it was not one of the four beasts that directed John to “Come and see.” It is reasonable to assume the one who directs John to “Come and see,” is not a beast, but Jesus Christ as it is He who was providing the vision to John.

Revelation 6:2

2 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.

Bryan Richards states,

“Adam was the greatest priesthood leader of the first Millennium. The white horse represents his righteousness and premiere position as a member of God’s cavalry in the fight against the powers of Satan. He is a type for the Savior who was also seen on a white horse.

“We remember that it was the archangel Michael who led the armies of God in the war in heaven (Rev. 12:7). The main figures on each side of the conflict remain the same, either before or after the Fall. If Michael led the fight against the dragon in the pre-mortal sphere, he continued this fight in mortality, and will again assume a premiere position when the powers of Satan are destroyed at the end of the world.”³⁹

Joseph Smith clarified who Michael is,

“The Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed, as in Genesis 1:26, 27, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures.”⁴⁰

Michael, who had a prominent position serving under the direction of the Father and the Son during the war in the pre-existence, became known as Adam during his mortal probation.

Revelation 6:3-4

**3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.
4 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 unto him a great sword.**

Bryan Richards states,

“The second thousand years was a time of great righteousness and great wickedness. Noah and his sons walked with God, but most of humanity had turned to corruption and violence.”⁴¹

Bryan Richards continues,

“It is not a coincidence that the wicked riders described in the second and fourth seals have power given to them. Of the righteous messengers of the first and third seals, no mention is made of their source of power. The reason is that the righteous angels mentioned have priesthood power of an eternal nature. By contrast, the wicked riders serve Satan and hold no priesthood of their own. They perform their work through Satan’s power, but their power is temporary. Neither Satan’s priesthood, nor their power, is permanent. Because of the Fall, the Father allows Satan and his hosts to afflict and torment man. Satan may boast, ‘Now is the great day of my power,’ but that day will shortly come to an end.”⁴²

Revelation 6:5-6

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And behold, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.
6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts 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.

Jay A. and Donald W. Parry state,

“The time represented by the third seal was an era of great famine. John sees a black horse, black being the color of extreme hunger and famine (Lam. 4:8-9). In the hand of the rider he sees a pair of balances, which are used to measure the food during the famine, a practice known from earlier times (Lev. 26:26).

“During this thousand-year time span, Abraham records, ‘a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea, and my father was sorely tormented because of the famine...Now the Lord God caused the famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that Haran, my brother died’ (Abr.1:30; 2:1).

“We recall that Joseph, the great-grandson of Abraham, interpreted Pharaoh’s dream of a famine that would last seven years and would ‘consume the land’ (Gen.41:30).”⁴³

Revelation 6:7-8

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the beast say, Come and see.
8 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.

Bryan Richards states,

“The fourth horse has two riders. Death and hell, the twin enemies, are represented by these soldiers of Satan. When hell is understood to mean spiritual death, we see that these riders carried both physical and spiritual death. The second is worse than the first. We are reminded of the warning of the Master, ‘fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both the soul and body in hell.’ (Matt. 10:28).”⁴⁴

Richard D. Draper states,

“Surely no period before this saw more vicious generals and armies. It was the time when some of the world’s greatest empires rose and fell: Babylon, Assyria, Persia, and Macedonia among them. As armies marched, men died in droves, and Hell gaped wide its jaws to receive them.

“Caught up in all this strife were the people of Jehovah. Palestine was often a hotly contested area. Pulled by the forces of the day, its political leaders tried to play power politics to their shame and destruction. The great prophets, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and later Jeremiah and Lehi, tried to warn them of their folly. They would not heed. Too caught up in idolatry to repent, too licentious to reform, too hard-hearted to feel, they warred among themselves and weakened their nation. As a consequence, they left Jehovah and life eternal. Hell was truly their reward.”⁴⁵

Revelation 6:9-11

**9 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 of for the testimony which they held:
10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doest thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?
11 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.**

Richard D. Draper continues,

“At the breaking forth of the fifth seal, no horse thunders forth. Instead the Revelator sees the fulfillment of a prophecy given for his own day. The fifth seal represents John’s era, the era in which the Son of God was born, ministered, and atoned for all mankind. It was the era during which the new covenant was established and the keys of resurrection were first manifested. Interestingly, John depicts none of these things. The event on which the vision focuses is the deliberate destruction of those who stood as witnesses of the Word of life...John already knew the way his dispensation would end. The Lord had made it abundantly clear. He told his disciples that after he departed, ‘then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another’ (Matt. 24:9-10, KJV). John viewed the terrible fulfillment of that dire prophecy. Those men and women he saw in vision who had died for the Word’s sake were in reality yet giving up their lives.

“John saw the souls of the righteous under the altar of heaven. The images of the altar suggests sacrifice. The direct association of these saints with the altar implies that their lives had been given in sacrifice because of their loyalty to God. Their position under the altar suggests that they were martyrs, their souls resting there only because their lives had been offered, as it were, upon it.”⁴⁶

Revelation 6:12-13

**12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;
13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.**

Richard D. Draper states,

“With the sixth seal, we enter into the modern era. As the Lamb broke it, a terrible scene of cosmic proportions met the eyes of the Seer [John]. A tremendous earthquake rocked the planet, affecting every mountain and island. The sun ceased to shine, the moon hung blood red, and the stars seemed to fall from heaven.

“Thus, by use of the earthquake, the Lord shows his incredible power as he begins to warn the nations. Such power will be sufficiently terrifying to drive men to wish for death rather than face vengeance. John’s forceful symbols dramatically convey the great natural disasters that bring the sixth millennium to a close and act as forerunners to the final catastrophes.”⁴⁷

Revelation 6:14	JST, Revelation 6:14
14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.	14 And the heavens <u>opened</u> as a scroll is <u>opened</u> when it is rolled together; and every mountain, and island was moved out of <u>its</u> place.

From the Joseph Smith Translation, we learn the heavens will not depart, but will be opened. Also, every mountain and island will be moved out of its place. The events that will occur during this time period will affect not only the relationship between heaven and earth, but also there will be a rearrangement of the geology of this planet.

Revelations 6:15-17

- 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains;**
- 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**
- 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

Richard D. Draper states,

“The Seer [John] notes seven consequences to the wickedness of mankind: (1) the earthquake, (2) the darkened sun, (3) the reddening of the moon, (4) the stars falling, (5) the heavens rolling up, (6) the mountains and islands moving out of their places, and (7) the universal consternation of mankind. Further, he notes seven classes of men who will be affected: (1) kings, (2) great men, (3) rich men, (4) chief captains, (5) mighty men, (6) bondmen, and (7) free men. Such numbering seems deliberate on his part. It emphasizes the idea of completeness; no enemy of God, not matter how high or low born, will escape the wrath of the Lamb. He will move in his fury when patience ceases to be a virtue: ‘It shall come to pass, because of the wickedness of the world, that I will take vengeance upon the wicked, for they will not repent; for the cup of mine indignation is full; for behold, my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not’ (D&C 29:17).”⁴⁸

In view of the terrible calamities John the Revelator saw in a vision that are about to occur, the question of “Who shall be able to stand?” is an important one for each of us to consider.

Wilford Woodruff states,

“Can you tell me where the people are who will be shielded and protected from these great calamities and judgments which are even at our doors? I’ll tell you. The priesthood of God who honor the priesthood, and

who are worthy of the blessings are the only ones who shall have this safety and protection. They are the only mortal beings. No other people have a right to be shielded from these judgments. They are at our very doors; not even this people will escape them entirely. They will come down like the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah. And none but the priesthood will be safe from the fury...Calamities and troubles are increasing in the earth, and there is meaning to these things. Remember this, and reflect upon these matters. If you do your duty, and I do my duty, we'll have protection, and shall pass through the afflictions in peace and safety...It's by the power of the gospel that we shall escape."⁴⁹

These words by Wilford Woodruff on June 24, 1894, remain as valid today as when they were given. If we want to avoid the calamities and afflictions coming, now is the time for us to keep the commandments and to continue to follow and obey the words of the living Prophets and Apostles.

3.7. Revelation 7

Byran Richards states,

“Chapter 7 describes two distinct groups. First are the 144,000 (v. 1-8), second are those whose robes have been made white in the blood of the Lamb (v. 9-17). Both are righteous. Both are exalted. Both enjoy the blessings of the Millennial reign of Christ. But the first group is sealed up unto eternal life.

“Some students of the gospel have privately wondered if receiving one’s calling and election in mortality was prerequisite for exaltation. However, this scripture teaches us that the vast majority of exalted saints will *not* have been sealed up unto eternal life during their mortal lives. Rather, they join the group ‘arrayed in white robes...[having] made them white in the blood of the lamb.’ (v. 13-14). The promises made to this second group exceed mortal comprehension—they are the blessings of the exalted.”⁵⁰

Spencer W. Kimball observes,

“It would seem that these people had not always been perfect. They had had soiled robes and many weaknesses, but had now overcome and had washed the soiled raiment in the blood of the Lamb. They were now clean and purified, as is indicated in the blessings promised.”⁵¹

Revelation 7:1-2

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

David R. Minert states,

“After being shown in vision the destruction that awaits the wicked in the last days, John now sees four heavenly angels hovering over the four points of the compass. It is they who have authority concerning the destruction of the kingdoms of the earth. These angels will hold in check their power to destroy the things of the earth while the restored gospel spreads across the world (D&C 77:8).

“John next sees an angel descending from heaven with the authority to give a message to the four angels, having the sealing power of God that will bind families together throughout eternity. This angel came in the spirit of Elias, and his visit to the earth was part of the restoration of the gospel. This angel loudly proclaims his message to the four destroying angels as follows (D&C 77:9; 128:132).”⁵²

Bruce R. McConkie clarifies the angel who will restore all things,

“By revelation we are...informed that the Elias who was to restore all things is the angel Gabriel who was known in mortality as Noah. (D&C 27:6-7; Luke 1:5-25; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1976, [1977], 157).”⁵³

Joseph Fielding Smith adds,

“This is the same Elias who held the keys of the dispensation of Abraham and who came to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple and restored the keys of Abraham’s dispensation.”⁵⁴

Revelation 7:3-4	JST, Revelation 7:3-4
3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.	3 Saying, Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads. 4 And the number of them who were sealed, were an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

David R. Minert continues,

“Do not bring your scourges and punishment upon the wicked inhabitants of the world until the servants of God are protected from the calamities by being sealed to their families in the Lord’s temple and have their calling and election made sure” (Revelations 9:4).

“John was given to know that the number of righteous saints who would be sealed up unto the Lord would be innumerable and that these members of the church would come from all the nations of the earth and from throughout the generations of man (symbolically 144,000). Among them will be high priests ordained after the holy order of God to administer the principles of salvation (D&C 77:11).”⁵⁵

Revelation 7:5 [6-8]

5 Of the tribe of Juda [Judah] were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

[6-8] Continues with (vs. 6) Aser [Asher], Nephalim [Naphtali]; Manasses [Manasseh]; (vs. 7) Simeon; Levi; Issachar; (vs. 8) Zabulon; Joseph [Ephraim]; Benjamin; [Dan is excluded].

David R. Minert states,

“He sees that all worthy priesthood holders (and their families) are to be sealed or protected by the coming judgments of the wicked in the last days. John is also shown that each of the tribes are to be included in the priesthood blessings of the Lord. (This was in contrast to the practice anciently which allowed only the tribe of Levi to be given the opportunity to hold the priesthood and officiate in the duties of the temple.)”⁵⁶

Doctrine and Covenants 77:8

Q. What are we to understand by the four angels, spoken of in the 7th chapter and 1st verse of Revelation?

A. We are to understand that they are four angels sent forth from God, to whom is given power over the four parts of the earth, to save life and to destroy; these are they who have the everlasting gospel to commit to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; having power to shut up the heavens, to seal up unto life, or to cast down to the regions of darkness.

Section 133 of the Doctrine and Covenants provides yet further information regarding Revelation 7, Verse 1.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:7-19

7 Yea, verily I say unto you again, the time has come when the voice of the Lord is unto you: Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

8 Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations, first upon the Gentiles, and then upon the Jews.

9 And behold, and lo, this shall be their cry, and the voice of the Lord unto all people: Go ye forth unto the land of Zion, that the borders of my people may be enlarged, and that her stakes may be strengthened, and that Zion may go forth unto the regions round about.

10 Yea, let the cry go forth among all people: Awake and arise and go forth to meet the Bridegroom; behold and lo, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord.

11 Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.

12 Let them, therefore, who are among the Gentiles flee unto Zion.

13 And let them who be of Judah flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord's house.

14 Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon.

15 But verily, thus saith the Lord, let not your flight be in haste, but let all things be prepared before you; and he that goeth, let him not look back lest sudden destruction shall come upon him.

16 Hearken and hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth. Listen, ye elders of my church together, and hear the voice of the Lord; for he calleth upon all men, and he commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

17 For behold, the Lord God hath sent forth the angel crying through the midst of heaven, saying: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight, for the hour of his coming is nigh—

18 When the Lamb shall stand upon Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads.

19 Wherefore, prepare ye for the coming of the Bridegroom; go ye, go ye out to meet him.

Richard D. Draper states,

“The signs associated with the sixth seal—the earthquake, the plagues on the sun and moon, the stars falling—play a major role in the objectives of the sixth seal. Their function is primarily destruction. They represent additional effort on the part of God to bring all men to him. The four angels symbolize the spiritual forces that oversee and assist in fulfilling this objective. But one must keep in mind that the same power that can ...[destroy] the nations also can...[save] them. That power is Jesus Christ. During the sixth seal, the fullness of

his gospel will be restored to the earth and both natural and supernatural forces will combine to see that it spreads to all lands and cultures. Those who respond with fullness of heart will enter into the rest of the Lord and find peace and safety. Those who reject it will find vexation and misery.”⁵⁷

Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

“The house of the Lord is a house of purity. Those who serve therein dress in spotless white. They participate in sacred ordinances. They are instructed in the eternal plan of the Lord. They make covenants enjoining personal morality and rectitude, unselfishness and service.”⁵⁸

Charles W. Nibley adds,

“This is not an easy religion. ‘Blessed and holy are they who come up out of much tribulation.’ Don’t forget that. And they did not do it themselves; honor and glory of it was not to themselves, but they had washed their robes white with the blood of the Lamb. He was their Savior. He it was they had held to, as to the iron rod; and it was through the trouble and trial, the sweat, and experience in every form that they gained knowledge, and added line upon line and precept upon precept. Every day and every year they so lived that they became molded a little more into the likeness of the Son of God Himself.”⁵⁹

These are they who came up out of much tribulation; had washed their robes white with the blood of the Lamb; had made and kept sacred covenants; had served their fellow men and women; had striven each day to repent of their sins; had given their all to build the kingdom of God on earth, and in the process had become more and more like their Beloved Savior. These are they who will find their place in the Kingdom of God and be numbered among His servants forever.

This concludes our review of the events of the six seals as seen in John’s vision. There are times in the earth’s history when the only way God is able to get the attention of His children is through His display of the forces of nature. As we stand helpless in view of these disasters, often our hearts are softened as to our own nothingness in view of God’s majesty. It is also during these times our hearts are often more sensitive to the whisperings of His Spirit for guidance and direction. It may be that we will choose to make changes in our lives so we may be in a better position to find the peace and happiness that has so far alluded us. As we turn to God to seek His divine intervention in our lives, the disasters we have experienced may be a blessing in disguise. If instead we choose to ignore the impressions, it is likely, based upon John’s vision, that our mortal journey is going to be even more difficult.

3.8. Revelation 8

Revelation, Chapter 8, describes the sequence of events that will occur following the opening of the seventh seal. It is noted these events will occur prior to the Second Coming of the Lord.

The events include: (1) The opening of the seventh seal; (2) A period of silence in heaven about the space of half-hour, followed by the actions of seven angels” (Rev. 8:2).

The following graph is provided in order to simplify the actions of the seven angels. It addresses, what is destroyed or harmed; the destroying angel, and possible interpretation.

The Seven Angels:

Angel	What Is Destroyed or Harmed	Destroying Agent and Possible Interpretation
First angel (Revelation 8:7)	Third part of trees and all green grass are burnt up.	“Hail and fire mingled with blood . . . were cast upon the earth” (Revelation 8:7). “Speculatively, most of the plagues and destructions here announced could be brought to pass by men themselves as they use the weapons and armaments they have created” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>The Millennial Messiah</i> [1982], 382).
Second angel (Revelation 8:8–9)	Third part of the sea becomes blood; third part of living creatures of the sea die; third part of ships are destroyed.	“A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea” (Revelation 8:8). “Perhaps the turning of the waters of Egypt to blood was in similitude of this great latter-day plague. (Ex. 7:19–25.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Doctrinal New Testament Commentary</i> , 3:499).
Third angel (Revelation 8:10–11)	Third part of rivers and waters are made bitter; many men die.	“There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp” (Revelation 8:10). “Could this result from atomic fallout or pollutions from the factories of the world? Or will it be brought to pass by some law of nature beyond our control?” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Millennial Messiah</i> , 383).
Fourth angel (Revelation 8:12)	Third part of the sun, moon, and stars are smitten and darkened.	No destroying agent mentioned. “Perhaps a merciful God withholds from us the ways and the means whereby the very luminaries of heaven will cease to serve their ordained purposes” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Millennial Messiah</i> , 383).
Fifth angel (Revelation 9:1–12)	The sun and air are darkened; those without the seal of God are tormented for five months.	“There arose a smoke out of the pit. . . . And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth” (Revelation 9:2–3). “Lucifer opens the doors of hell, and every vile influence ascends from its evil depths as does smoke from a great furnace. So dark is the smoke and so widespread is the evil that the sun and the air are darkened” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Millennial Messiah</i> , 384).

Sixth angel (Revelation 9:13–21)	Third part of men are killed.	Four angels who are prepared to slay one-third of men. “Four angels of the devil, demons from the depths of hell, are given free reign to lead the armies of men in destroying a third of the population of the earth” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Millennial Messiah</i> , 386).
Seventh angel (Revelation 11:15–19)	Those who destroy (corrupt, waste, pervert) the earth are destroyed.	The Lord Himself. “Lo, the Great Millennium cometh! And Christ reigneth! ‘And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.’ (Zech. 14:9.) In that day he shall make ‘a full end of all nations’ (D. & C. 87:6), as he said: ‘I will be your ruler when I come’ (D. & C. 41:4); and, ‘Ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come, for I am your lawgiver.’ (D. & C. 38:22.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, <i>Doctrinal New Testament Commentary</i> , 3:512).

Reference⁶⁰

Revelation 8:1-2	Doctrine and Covenants 88:95-96
<p>1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.</p> <p>2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.</p>	<p>95 And there shall be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; and immediately after shall the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll is unfolded after it is rolled up, and the face of the Lord shall be unveiled;</p> <p>96 And the saints that are upon the earth, who are alive, shall be quickened and be caught up to meet him.</p>

It would appear the preceding sequence of events will occur after the silence in heaven and at the beginning of the Seventh and final period of a Thousand Years of the earth’s existence.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:12

12 Q. What are we to understand by the sounding of the trumpets, mentioned in the 8th chapter of Revelation?

A. We are to understand that as God made the world in six days, and on the seventh day he finished his work, and sanctified it, and also formed man out of the dust of the earth, even so, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man, and judge all things, and shall redeem all things, except that which he hath not put into his power, when he shall have sealed all things, unto the end of all things; and the sounding of the trumpets of the seven angels are the preparing and finishing of his work, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years—the preparing of the way before the time of his coming.

Gerald N. Lund states,

“The plagues, the famines, the thunderings and lightings, the hail and the earthquakes are all necessary, for the children of men will not otherwise heed the warning voice of the Lord. In these times of chaos and catastrophes which are coming, the missionaries of the Church will be called home, and the Lord will preach his own sermons to the people.”⁶¹

Brigham Young states,

“Do you think there is calamity abroad now among the people? Not much. All we have yet heard and we have experienced is scarcely a preface to the sermon that is going to be preached. When the testimonies of the Elders ceases to be given, and the Lord says to them, ‘Come home; I will now preach my own sermon to the nations of the earth,’ *all ye now know can scarcely be called a preface to the sermon that will be preached with fire and sword, tempests, earthquakes, hail, rain, thunders, and lightnings, and fearful destruction.* What matters the destruction of a few railway cars? You will hear of magnificent cities, now idolized by the people, sinking in the earth, entombing the inhabitants. The sea will heave itself beyond its bounds, engulfing mighty cities. Famine will spread over the nations and nations will rise up against nation, kingdom against kingdom and states against states, in our own country and in foreign lands; and they will destroy each other, caring not for blood and lives of their neighbors, or their families, or for their own lives.”⁶²

These words were spoken by Brigham Young spoke on July 15, 1860. Today, we are much closer to these events occurring. It is even more important for us to now put our lives in order if we are to survive these catastrophic events.

3.9. Revelation 9

John in Revelation, Chapter 9, continues to address the vision he saw. This chapter addresses the actions of the fifth angel. It begins with the opening of the bottomless pit which is the abode of Satan and his legions.

Revelation 9:1-2

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.
2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

The first event that occurs is “the sun and the air were darkened.” It is understandable for Satan and his legions always seek to extinguish light and truth.

Next, John saw locusts “that came out of the smoke.... upon the earth.” (Rev. 9:3). As they come forth, they will be constrained from “hurt[ing] the grass...neither any green thing neither the tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.” (Rev. 9:4). In other words, their power will be limited. Their mission is “not to kill,” but to torment.

The beasts John sees --“faces were as the faces of men,... hair as the hair of woman,... teeth were as the teeth of lions,... breastplates of iron,...wings...tails like unto scorpions and their stings in their tails.” (Rev. 9:7-10).

Joseph Smith states,

“The beasts which John saw and speaks of being in heaven, were actually living in heaven, and were actually to have power given to them over the inhabitants of the earth, precisely according to the plain reading of the revelations. I give this as a key to the elders of Israel.”⁶³

Who are the subjects of those from the underworld?

Richard D. Draper states,

“As amazing as it seems, those that are not killed continue to worship the very forces that worked for their destruction. They refuse to give up their materialistic idolatry. Their hearts continue to crave gold, silver, brass, and other material objects that, as John points out, ‘neither can see, nor hear, nor walk’ (Rev. 9:20). Though their world is collapsing because of it, these wicked souls sell themselves as the lackeys of the Never-living and the Destroyer-doomed-to-destruction. Thievery, murder, and fornication, specifically prohibited in the ten commandments, all continue apace.”⁶⁴

It appears God allows the very forces of the underworld to punish the wicked who remain upon the earth. These are those who despite the torment they experience, they do not seek repentance, but are content to drink freely of the gall of bitterness.

3.10. Revelation 10

Revelation 10:1, 5

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

The mighty angel whom John saw is Michael or Adam. He stands next to Jesus Christ in authority and power. (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1976, [1977], 168).

Doctrine and Covenants 88:110

110 ...the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet; and he shall stand forth upon the land and upon the sea, and swear in the name of him who sitteth upon the throne, that there shall be time no longer; and Satan shall be bound, that old serpent, who is called the devil, and shall not be loosed for the space of a thousand years.

Revelation 10:8-10

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

From modern revelation, we learn yet further details regarding John’s mission.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:14

14 Q. What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation?

A. We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things.

Bryan Richards states,

“Perhaps it seems strange to eat a book. The imagery is symbolic of accepting an assignment from the Lord. Ezekiel was also asked to eat a book. His mission was the same as John’s, “when I looked, behold...and lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me, and...said...eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So, I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat the roll” (Ezekiel 2:3-3:2). The roll is both bitter and sweet—sweet because so many souls will be saved by his ministry among the house of Israel—and bitter because many others would reject the gospel of Jesus Christ and suffer the judgments of God.

“What was John’s mission? It was to gather the twelve tribes of Israel. This began with his mortal ministry and continued with his appearance to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood. Furthermore, he has worked as a translated being among the lost ten tribes—preparing them for the Second Coming of Christ. His mission has been to restore the priesthood to the earth and to restore the House of Israel according to the great promises made to their fathers.”⁶⁵

Prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, it is necessary that Israel be gathered.

President Russell M. Nelson states,

“My dear young brothers and sisters, these surely are the latter days, and the Lord is hastening His work to gather Israel. That gathering is the most important thing taking place on earth today. Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty. And if you choose to, if you want to, you can be a big part of it. You can be a big part of something big, something grand, something majestic.

“Just think of the excitement and urgency of it all; every prophet commencing with Adam has seen our day. And every prophet has talked about *our* day, when Israel would be gathered and the world would be prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior. Think of it! Of all the people who have ever lived on planet earth, we are the ones who get to participate in this final, great gathering event. How exciting is that!

I testify that the gathering is now, and it is real.”⁶⁶

What a special experience it is to be alive and to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. We are guided by a living Prophet of God, Russell M. Nelson. The gathering of Israel, which is noted in Revelation, Chapter 10, is part of these latter days.

3.11. Revelation 11

Because of the writings of Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, and others, including modern-day revelation, our understanding is enhanced of the events addressed in Revelation, Chapter 11.

Revelation 11:1-2

- 1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.**
- 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**

Prior to the commencement of the final and great battle that will conclude in Jerusalem, the temple for which the Jews had been praying, will be built in Jerusalem. The battle is known as the battle of Armageddon. (see

Holy Bible, [1979]. LDS Dictionary, 614). The siege upon the city of Jerusalem will last for “forty and two months.” The time period is the equivalent of 3.5 years.

Bruce R. McConkie,

“Armageddon is the final great battle in a war that covers the earth and involves nations. We suppose it will be the first and only time, until the armies of Gog and Magog clash for a second time after the Millennium, when no nation in any land will be neutral. This coming conflict will be universal, and out of it will come the final day of destruction and burning. It will exceed in horror, intensity, and scope all prior wars.”⁶⁷

Revelation 11:3, 5-6

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Doctrine and Covenants 77:15

15 Q. What is to be understood by the two witnesses, in the eleventh chapter of Revelation?

A. They are two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers.

Were it not for the presence of the “two witnesses,” and the power they were given by the Lord, the time period for the conquest for Jerusalem would have been brief. The stand-off between the conquering armies and the two witnesses or prophets will instead last for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days,” or forty-two months or three and a half years!

Revelation 11:7

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Finally, the siege will be ended. The armies of the earth, with Satan at their head, will be victorious and the two prophets will be killed. There will be a great celebration by the armies regarding the death of the two prophets.

Revelation 11:8-10

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

As a last gesture to the defeated prophets, their enemies will let their dead bodies lie in the street as a message to all who dare to confront their power. At the conclusion of three days and a half, a great miracle will occur before the eyes of the people.

Revelation 11:11-13

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.
12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.
13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The two prophets will ascend up to heaven while their enemies are watching! This will be followed by an earthquake that will result in the death of seven thousand men. We may assume that this latter group consisted of the leaders of the conquering armies. In one final gesture, at the conclusion of the calamities, the remaining forces will seek to destroy the last inhabitants of Jerusalem as their way of escape is blocked.

Zechariah 14:3-4

3 Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.
4 ¶ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Just when it appears the oppressing armies will be successful and the remaining inhabitants of the city will be completely destroyed, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World appears. By His power, the mount of Olives parts and the inhabitants are able to make a final escape. Only when they are safe, will they notice the wounds in His hands and feet.

Zechariah 13:6	Doctrine and Covenants 45:51-53
6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.	51 And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet? 52 Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God. 53 And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king.

When Jesus Christ lived upon the earth, many failed to accept Him though His life had been prophesied by the prophets. Even the miracles He performed were discounted and instead attributed to the power of Satan. Finally, they crucified Him. When the citizens of Jerusalem were in their time of greatest need, He appeared

and, saved them as a nation, from certain death. He kept His promise and did not forsake them. Hopefully, they will now accept Him as the Son of God, their Promised Messiah.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“Wars come because of sin. They are born of lust and evil...So shall it be at Armageddon. The whole world will be wallowing in wickedness, but Jerusalem, will be, as it were, the capital of all the wretched evils of the world. [page 463]

“Armageddon is in process; all nations are at war; some are attacking Jerusalem and others are defending the once holy city. She is the political prize. Three world religions claim her—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Emotion and fanaticism run high; it is a holy war as such have been called through the ages. [page 464]

“...we should here observe that Armageddon is a holy war. In it men will blaspheme God. They will be in rebellion against Jehovah. The armies that face each other will have opposing philosophies of life. It will be religious instincts that cause them to assemble in the battle. And the plagues poured out upon them will not cause them to repent. [page 398]

“...There will be political overtones, of course. Wars are fought by nations, which are political entities. But the underlying cause and the moving power in the hearts of men will be their views on religious issues. The grand desideratum will be whether they are for Christ and his gospel or against him and his cause. [page 478]

“We repeat: It is a religious war. The forces of antichrist are seeking to destroy freedom and liberty and right; they seek to deny men the right to worship the Lord; they are the enemies of God. The one-third who remain in the land of Israel are the Lord’s people. They believe in Christ and accept Joseph Smith as his prophet and revealer for the last days [pages 465-466].”⁶⁸

Bruce R. McConkie continues,

“We have set forth, thus, what the inspired writers say about the blood-soaked scene of gore and corruption that is yet to be. It makes us wonder why it has been revealed in such detail in at least three dispensations. Certainly, it will be a literal event in the coming day. But more than this, it surely bears witness of other truths that men should know. It testifies that wickedness shall cover the earth in the last days; that all nations shall take up the sword in the final war of the ages; that men in uncounted numbers will die of plagues and pestilence and by the edge of the sword; and that the dead bodies of all, kings and rulers included, heaped as dung upon the ground, shall, in death, have no more worth than the carcasses of the beasts of the field. Perhaps, above all else, the horror of it all stands as a call to wayward men to repent, to cease their warfare against God, and to seek an inheritance with his people, many of whom will be preserved in that dread day.”⁶⁹

4. Conclusions

The Life and Teachings of Jesus and his Apostles (Institute) Student Manual states,

“The book of Revelation presents a picture of Christ’s dealings with men throughout the ages of earth’s history. In particular, for modern man it mirrors the second coming of Jesus, the judgment of mankind, the destruction of the wicked, the Millennium, and the ultimate celestialization of the world.”⁷⁰

Our focus has been limited during this chapter to the first eleven chapters in Revelation.

We were introduced to the Lord’s teaching by the use of symbols. We noted three possible reasons: 1) To help the learner to understand and remember by comparing unfamiliar ideas or things to those that are more

familiar; 2) The symbols can have different levels of meaning based upon the individual's spiritual level of understanding; and, 3) The symbols can encourage the learner to think more deeply (inquire) about what is being taught. A chart was provided in order to assist our understanding regarding some of the symbols.

Revelation Chapters 1-3: We are introduced us to the vision the Apostle John received from the Lord while he was confined to the Isle of Patmos. In these initial chapters, using symbolic language, seven churches in Asia are identified for introspection. As noted, these seven may be the only remaining churches or they may be representative of all the churches and the problems they were experiencing as the predicted apostasy of the Church of Jesus Christ intensifies.

Christ notes for many of these churches' words of commendation, as well as condemnation, and blessings they may yet receive if they will repent.

Jay M. Todd observes,

"Perhaps few chapters in scripture afford such insightful glimpses into the spirit of the Lord's judgment as do the first three chapters of Revelation. The Lord's appraisal of the members faithfulness, endurance, patience, charity, and service—and their inactivity, cooling of love, tolerance of wickedness and false doctrines, lukewarmness, self-satisfaction, worldliness, and lack of zeal in his cause—have served for generations to motivate thoughtful readers to evaluated thoroughly their life-style."⁷¹

Revelation Chapter 4: We learn of John's vision regarding the throne of God and of 24 Elders. We also learn of the meaning of three symbols. They are Seven lamps, a Sea of Glass and Four beasts. Symbols and their meaning will be an important aspect in enhancing our understanding of the Book of Revelation.

Revelation Chapter 5: We were introduced to the seven seals which only Christ could open. We learned they represent seven one-thousand-year-periods of time. We learn of the honor that Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God received in heaven as a result of His sacrifice and atonement upon the earth.

Revelation Chapter 6: We learn that each of the seals do not receive equal consideration.

New Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"The first five seals are covered in eleven verses; sixth seal [our day is] covered in fourteen verses. The seventh seal covers 216 verses... [It is apparent that Jesus Christ, through John's vision] gave the most attention to the events of our time period and the one to come."⁷²

Revelation Chapter 7: We learn of the calamities that will occur during the sixth seal. These include earthquakes, plagues, and further destruction. We also learn of the restoration of the Gospel and the spreading of the word by the missionaries across the world. It is also a time of Temple work and the sealing of families in preparation for the events to come.

Revelation Chapter 8: It describes the sequence of events that will occur following the opening of the seventh seal. These events will occur prior to the Second Coming of the Lord. We are introduced to seven angels who will perform specific actions that will be addressed in Revelation, chapters 8, 9, and 11. The chart entitled "Seven Angels" provides further insight regarding their actions and their possible meanings.

Revelation Chapter 9: John continues to address the actions of the fifth angel. We gain further insight regarding the level of wickedness that exists upon the earth during this time.

Revelation Chapter 10: We learn of the role of a “mighty angel” that came down from heaven. It is Michael or Adam who stands next in authority to Jesus Christ. We also gain further insight regarding the mission of John the Apostle and the part he will play in gathering the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation Chapter 11: Here we learn of the battle of Armageddon. This battle will occur in Israel and will be the final conquest for the city of Jerusalem. It will involve the armies of the world and will include the role fulfilled by two prophets as they protect Jerusalem’s remaining inhabitants. It will conclude with a personal appearance by the Savior.

The battle for the hearts and souls of man continues here on earth. It is the devil’s goal to corrupt and destroy the souls of all those who seek to follow the Father’s plan of happiness while they are on earth.

Our final chapter will continue our effort to understand the Book of Revelation and its value in our lives.

Footnotes

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