

**Commentary by Will Smee on
Revelation
The Lectio Continua
Expository Commentary on the New Testament
by Joel R. Beeke
05/02/2022**

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Introduction

This is a commentary on a book by Joel R. Beeke titled, *Revelation, The Lectio Continua, Expository Commentary on the New Testament*. Joel R. Beeke (PhD Westminster Seminary) is a Puritan minister of the Heritage Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and President of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary where he is also the professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics.

Homiletics is the practice and study of the art of preaching, and the rhetoric of the sermon. Joel will say that his book on Revelation is not an “academic or highly technical commentary”. Instead, his “aim is to provide lectio continua sermons”. We will explain what this means in the next section.

Joel will go through the entire book of Revelation, chapter by chapter, in 36 sermons. At the end of each sermon, he will make a call to the unbeliever to turn to Jesus Christ, and receive salvation.

In his Series Introduction on page XI, Joel will say that, “The greatest need of the church today is the recovery of sound biblical preaching.” But as we progress through his writing, we may find ourselves asking what is hindering him from this recovery. We may ask, “Is it his loyalty to his own Puritan reformed tradition?”

Joel Beeke does not believe that the numbers in Revelation are literal. He believes everything in the book of Revelation is symbolic, and that we must not interpret it literally. So Joel will say that we are already in the millennium, which he believes is symbolic of the church age. Joel also believes in a cyclical interpretation, and not a chronological interpretation, of the book of Revelation. So he is not premillennial in his thinking, but amillennial. He believes that everything is leading up to one final judgment.

In order to understand his thinking, we will begin reading one segment of his writing at a time, showing the page of his writing we are quoting from. Then a commentary will follow, comparing Scripture with Scripture. As we progress, we will see that, despite the errors in his thinking about the millennium and the symbolism in the book of Revelation, the saving grace of Joel Beeke is his passion for Jesus Christ.

Series Introduction

Page XII: “What is the *lectio continua* method of preaching? It is simply the uninterrupted, systematic, expository proclamation of God’s Word—verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book—that endeavors to deliver the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27). Christian discipleship is impoverished when large portions of Scripture are ignored. Carried out faithfully, the *lectio continua* method ensures that every passage is mined for its riches (even those verses which are obscure, controversial, or hard to swallow). Paul states that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).”

Commentary: Wikipedia says, “In Christianity, **Lectio continua** (Latin for *continuous reading*) refers to the practice of reading Scripture in sequence over a period of time. Each reading (which may take place every day or every Sunday) etc. begins where the previous session ended. For instance, every Sunday a section of the Bible can be read such that each reading resumes where the previous one ended.

The practice of *lectio semi-continua* may skip some passages in the sequence, while *lectio selecta* follows a selected sequence of passages in a specific order.

The use of *lectio selecta* goes back to the Jewish traditions that pre-date Christianity. Luke 4:16–21 refers to the practice reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah on the Sabbath when Jesus visits a synagogue.

In Early Christianity a practice developed to read the Scripture every Sunday or read specific sections of Scripture during festivals in a yearly sequence, and the sequences used for *lectio continua* and *lectio selecta* were established over the centuries.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lectio_continua

The book on Revelation by Joel R. Beeke is one of the books in the LECTIO CONTINUA COMMENTARY SERIES sponsored by Reformation Heritage Books.

Joel Beeke begins as he asks, “What is the *lectio continua* method of preaching? It is simply the uninterrupted, systematic, expository proclamation of God’s Word—verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book—that endeavors to deliver the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27).”

He refers to **Acts 20 (KJV):26** Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

He continues, as he says, “Christian discipleship is impoverished when large portions of Scripture are ignored.” We can agree with him here. He then says, “Carried out faithfully, the *lectio continua* method ensures that every passage is mined for its riches (even those verses which are obscure, controversial, or hard to swallow).”

He then refers in context to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

According to Joel Beeke, he aspires to give us “simply the uninterrupted, systematic,

expository proclamation of God’s Word—verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book—that endeavors to deliver the whole counsel of God”. Let us remember this as we proceed.

Page XV: “This series is not meant to be an academic or highly technical commentary. There are many helpful exegetical commentaries written for that purpose. Rather, the aim is to provide *lectio continua* sermons, originally delivered to Reformed congregations, which clearly and faithfully communicate the context, meaning, gravity, and application of God’s inerrant Word. Each volume of expositions aspires to be redemptive-historical, covenantal, Reformed and confessional, Trinitarian, Christ-centered, and teeming with spiritual and practical application. Therefore, we pray that the series will be a profound blessing to every Christian believer who longs to “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).”

Commentary: So Joel Beeke’s “aim” or goal in his book, Revelation, “is to provide *lectio continua* sermons originally delivered to Reformed congregations, which clearly and faithfully communicate the context, meaning, gravity, and application of God’s inerrant Word”, and not “exegetical commentaries”, of which there are “many” that are “helpful”, and “written for that purpose”.

Now an exegetical commentary is “an explanation or critical interpretation of a text”.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exegesis>

If he wants to “faithfully communicate the context, meaning, gravity, and application of God’s inerrant Word”, he himself would have to utilize “helpful exegetical commentaries”. And he himself said in the previous section, that he aspires to give us “simply the uninterrupted, systematic, expository proclamation of God’s Word—verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book—that endeavors to deliver the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27).”

So what is the difference between “the uninterrupted, systematic, expository proclamation of God’s Word—verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book—that endeavors to deliver the whole counsel of God”, as he himself said in the previous section, and an exegetical commentary?

It seems that he aspires more to rely on “*lectio continua* sermons, originally delivered to Reformed congregations”. That is, it seems that he wants to be very loyal to his traditions. Let us continue to read his writing in order to understand more of his thinking.

Preface

Page XVIII: “My heartfelt thanks first of all to the Heritage Reformed Congregation of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who eagerly listened to these thirty-six sermons and gave me more encouragement than I deserve. I love this flock so much, and am humbled and grateful to be in my thirtieth year of serving them. What a joy they have been for nearly half of my life! Special thanks as well to Greg Bailey, Gary den Hollander, Ray Lanning, Paul Smalley, and Phyllis TenElshof for their valuable editorial assistance on this volume. I also thank Linda den Hollander for her expert typesetting work. As usual, I owe my greatest debt, under God, to my dear wife, Mary, who means far more to me than language can ever express. Except for saving union with Christ, her love for me, her commitment to be as involved in my ministry as I am, and her unceasing kindness mean more to me than anything else in this world.”

Commentary: So Joel Beeke’s book contains “thirty-six sermons” which compose the chapters in his book. A sermon is not usually an exegetical commentary. But let us continue to read in order to understand what he is saying.

Page 6-8: “In church history, five predominant ways of interpreting Revelation emerged. While these approaches have substantial overlap at points, they represent five distinct views of the message and themes of Revelation. Let us summarize those approaches.

First is the *preterist* approach. This view sees Revelation wholly in terms of the circumstances that transpired in John’s day prior to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70, without any reference to future events. The word *preterism* is derived from the Latin word *praeteritum*, meaning “that which is past.” Preterists believe that any interpretation of Revelation must be confined to the historic past rather than projected into the future. This view interprets Revelation’s opening words, “things which must shortly come to pass,” as events that happened in John’s own time. Preterists argue that, just as the churches of Asia were real first-century churches to which letters were addressed, so the entire book of Revelation contains only things that came to pass in John’s day or shortly thereafter, with the exception of chapters 21-22, which clearly refer to the time of the new heaven and new earth. The strength of this approach is that it strongly affirms the operative framework of the book as “things which must shortly come to pass.” Its weakness is that Revelation then has little to say to the church today in the midst of her struggles.

Second is the *historicist* approach. This view, which was held by most of the sixteenth-century Reformers, sees the book of Revelation as a symbolic representation of the panorama of church history, from the first coming of Christ to His second advent at the end of the world. A historicist might say that the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3 do not refer to seven particular churches in Asia Minor, but to seven ages of church history. They would then conclude that today we live in the age of Laodicea, or the era of the lukewarm church. They thus view Revelation as a chart of church history, offering a series of historical pictures moving from Christ’s first coming to the end of the present age. In Revelation 13, the beast rising from the sea could be the rise of Islam in the seventh century, while Revelation 17, several centuries further along, may refer to the Roman Catholic Church and the rise of the papacy. The strength

of this approach is that it embraces all of church history; its weakness is that it too easily assumes that Revelation prophesies a linear movement through church history, with no recapitulation of events seen from different points of view.

Third is the *futurist* approach. This was the most popular view of evangelicals at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially premillennial dispensationalists, but it has lost ground in recent decades. The futurist believes that the visions of Revelation 4-22 refer to events that are still future, but that they will transpire immediately prior to and along with Christ's second coming at the end of history, ushering in the millennial age. Most futurists are premillennial; that is, they believe that Christ's return will precede the millennial age. The problem with this view is that it reads the book as almost entirely without reference to the needs and struggles of the churches to which John first sent this book. It also affords little consolation for the suffering church at any other point in church history, including today, because it is exclusively focused on events surrounding Christ's second coming. The strength of this view is that it emphasizes the ultimate victory of Christ and His elect over the world at His second coming.

Fourth is the *idealist* approach, sometimes called the *poetic* or *inspirational* approach. This position is sometimes called *iterism*, from the Latin verb *itero*, meaning "to repeat," because idealist interpreters hold that the events described in Revelation are repeated from time to time in the experience of the church from age to age. This approach teaches that Revelation is relevant for everyone, since it deals with principles and symbols that are always valid in our personal history and experience. The idealist scarcely wrestles with the problem of chronology in Revelation, preferring to see this book and its symbolism as a tract written for persecuted Christians of any period. The symbolism is interpreted loosely, in a very general way, to give comfort and encouragement to persecuted Christians. The strength of this approach is its applicability to the church of all ages; its weakness is that it is difficult to affirm this view exegetically, based on the description "things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1).

Fifth is the *eclectic* approach. It embraces the apparent strengths and rejects the apparent weaknesses of the other four approaches. This approach acknowledges that there are elements of truth in all of these approaches. Personally, I believe this is the best and safest approach to take. Though there are serious problems with each of these approaches, we can also glean something from each."

Note: eclectic: one who uses a method or approach that is composed of elements drawn from various sources: one who uses an eclectic method or approach. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eclectic>

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, "In church history, five predominant ways of interpreting Revelation emerged. While these approaches have substantial overlap at points, they represent five distinct views of the message and themes of Revelation. Let us summarize those approaches."

He then goes on to summarize these approaches, and lists the strengths and weaknesses of each. He then says, "First is the *preterist* approach. This view sees Revelation wholly in terms of the circumstances that transpired in John's day prior to the destruction of the temple

in Jerusalem in AD 70, without any reference to future events.”

And he concludes, “The strength of this approach is that it strongly affirms the operative framework of the book as “things which must shortly come to pass.” Its weakness is that Revelation then has little to say to the church today in the midst of her struggles.”

The words, “shortly come to pass”, are found once in **Revelation 1 (KJV):1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must **shortly come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

And we continue to read in **Revelation 1 (KJV):2** Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The prophecy of the book of Revelation had importance for those who were receiving it in John’s time. But is this the “operative framework of the book”, for we read also as in **Revelation 1 (KJV):19** Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

The word “hereafter” is a translation of the Greek words, **μετὰ ταῦτα** (pronounced meta tauta), which are translated as “after these things” in **Revelation 1 (NASB):1** Therefore, write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

The “the things which will take place after these things” clearly refer to the future, making “the *preterist* approach” invalid because it argues that “the entire book of Revelation contains only things that came to pass in John’s day or shortly thereafter, with the exception of chapters 21-22, which clearly refer to the time of the new heaven and new earth.”

Joel Beeke then summarizes the second approach, as he says, “Second is the *historicist* approach. This view, which was held by most of the sixteenth-century Reformers, sees the book of Revelation as a symbolic representation of the panorama of church history, from the first coming of Christ to His second advent at the end of the world. A historicist might say that the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3 do not refer to seven particular churches in Asia Minor, but to seven ages of church history. They would then conclude that today we live in the age of Laodicea, or the era of the lukewarm church. They thus view Revelation as a chart of church history, offering a series of historical pictures moving from Christ’s first coming to the end of the present age.”

And he concludes, “The strength of this approach is that it embraces all of church history; its weakness is that it too easily assumes that Revelation prophesies a linear movement through church history, with no recapitulation of events seen from different points of view.”

Joel is correct in that he says that this approach “embraces all of church history”. But he does not explain its weakness. He simply says that it “too easily assumes that Revelation prophesies a linear movement through church history, with no recapitulation of events seen from different points of view.”

The seven churches mentioned in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, were literal churches in John’s time. But the messages to these churches also contain prophecy that can only relate to a future time, as we read in **Revelation 3 (KJV):7** And to the angel 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. 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. 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.

The “hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” refers to the tribulation that Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):**21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

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

Joel then summarizes the third approach, as he says, “Third is the *futurist* approach. This was the most popular view of evangelicals at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially premillennial dispensationalists, but it has lost ground in recent decades. The futurist believes that the visions of Revelation 4-22 refer to events that are still future, but that they will transpire immediately prior to and along with Christ’s second coming at the end of history, ushering in the millennial age. Most futurists are premillennial; that is, they believe that Christ’s return will precede the millennial age.”

And he then lists the weakness first, as he concludes, “The problem with this view is that it reads the book as almost entirely without reference to the needs and struggles of the churches to which John first sent this book. It also affords little consolation for the suffering church at any other point in church history, including today, because it is exclusively focused on events surrounding Christ’s second coming. The strength of this view is that it emphasizes the ultimate victory of Christ and His elect over the world at His second coming.”

But is it really a problem with this view “that it reads the book as almost entirely without reference to the needs and struggles of the churches to which John first sent this book”, or is that just the way it reads? Regardless of which approaches predominate, we must rightly divide the Scriptures in order to find the truth.

Joel then summarizes the fourth view, as he says, “Fourth is the *idealist* approach, sometimes called the *poetic* or *inspirational* approach. This position is sometimes called *iterism*, from the Latin verb *itero*, meaning “to repeat,” because idealist interpreters hold that the events described in Revelation are repeated from time to time in the experience of the church from age to age.”

And he adds that, “The symbolism is interpreted loosely, in a very general way, to give comfort and encouragement to persecuted Christians.”

And he concludes, “The strength of this approach is its applicability to the church of

all ages; its weakness is that it is difficult to affirm this view exegetically, based on the description “things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1).”

The fact that in this view the “symbolism is interpreted loosely, in a very general way” should be a red flag to readers. The Bible interprets all of its symbols leaving nothing to one’s own private interpretation as we shall see.

Joel then summarizes the fifth approach, as he says, “Fifth is the *eclectic* approach. It embraces the apparent strengths and rejects the apparent weaknesses of the other four approaches. This approach acknowledges that there are elements of truth in all of these approaches. Personally, I believe this is the best and safest approach to take. Though there are serious problems with each of these approaches, we can also glean something from each.”

So Joel will utilize the strengths and reject the weaknesses of the other four approaches. However again, regardless of which approaches predominate, we must rightly divide the Scriptures in order to find the truth.

Page 9-10: “In accord with many Reformed theologians, I propose an eclectic approach that accents the idealist or iterist approach. This approach has also been called the *parallel* or *cyclical* view of Revelation. Imagine a man with a video camera who is recording a church congregation. He pans over the people, starting on one side of the church and going all around. Then he goes up into the gallery and does the same thing. Then he goes to the back, comes from behind, and pans over everyone again. That is what we see in Revelation. The book offers us views of the entire history of the church, but seen from different vantage points.

I believe there are seven parallel sections in Revelation. Each section offers a different view of the church in history, as we will see as we make our way through the book. With this parallel or cyclical view of the book, we will see how each section spans the entire dispensation of the gospel, from the first coming of Christ two thousand years ago down to His coming again at the last day.

The great theme of Revelation is the victory of Christ and His church over the old serpent, his helpers, and all the kingdoms of this world. We will track that theme through each of the seven sections and see how this book accomplishes its purpose: to inspire, to comfort, and encourage God’s people in the church in every era to press on in the face of persecution and amidst all our struggles, knowing we are on the winning side in this anti-Christian world. I believe this is the right way to interpret Revelation. It puts Christian warfare into proper perspective. God pulls back the curtains to offer us a glimpse behind the events we read and hear about in the news media or learn about in history, so we can see what unseen but powerful forces are shaping reality in the world around us. Such insights from Revelation help us fight the good fight of faith and endure to the end. I hope this revelation of Jesus Christ will strengthen our faith and afford us greater hope and comfort.

Here are the seven sections of the book of Revelation, each dealing with the entire present age or dispensation, from the first to the second coming of Christ:

1. The Son of Man and the Seven Churches (1:1-3:22)
2. The Lamb and the Seven Seals of God’s Scroll (4:1-8:1)
3. The Seven Trumpets (8:2-11:19)

4. The War with the Dragon (12:1-14:20)
5. The Seven Bowls of Wrath (15:1-16:21)
6. The Fall of Babylon the Whore (17:1-19:21)
7. The Victory of Jerusalem the Bride (20:1-22:21)

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, ““In accord with many Reformed theologians, I propose an eclectic approach that accents the idealist or iterist approach. This approach has also been called the *parallel* or *cyclical* view of Revelation.”

Now we noted in the previous section that Joel said that the “idealist or iterist approach” says that “symbolism is interpreted loosely, in a very general way, to give comfort and encouragement to persecuted Christians,” and that “its weakness is that it is difficult to affirm this view exegetically, based on the description, “things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1).” Yet, Joel proposes “an eclectic approach that accents the idealist or iterist approach”.

Now an approach is a method or a way of dealing with something. In the sense in which Joel Beeke is using the word, it is more of a description of how he has interpreted the book of Revelation.

Now Joel says that, “there are seven parallel sections in Revelation. Each section offers a different view of the church in history, as we will see as we make our way through the book. With this parallel or cyclical view of the book, we will see how each section spans the entire dispensation of the gospel, from the first coming of Christ two thousand years ago down to His coming again at the last day.”

This explains his cyclical view of the book of Revelation, that is that the “seven sections of the book of Revelation” each deal “with the entire present age or dispensation, from the first to the second coming of Christ”.

We will understand more of his meaning of a cyclical approach as we progress through his book.

Revelation 1

Page 11: “Revelation has been communicated to us in four ways that we must keep in mind to properly understand this book:”

Commentary: We will now look at the four ways, in Joel Beeke’s mind, that “Revelation has been communicated to us”. Understanding these four ways will be essential in understanding his interpretation of Revelation.

Page 11: First, it comes to us *from God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. It was delivered by an angel to the apostle John so that we all might benefit from it. It comes to us as an apostolic epistle (1:4), handed from one person to another, from church to church and from age to age. When you want to send a valuable item through the mail, you don’t just stuff it in a mail slot and hope for the best. You send it by registered mail to ensure that the item is received and signed for by the person to whom it is addressed. Revelation has come to us as a letter registered by God for believers in the church throughout history.

The last verse of the book is much like the ending of many other epistles in the New Testament: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” (Rev. 22:21). This benediction implies that, although this epistle was sent to the churches in Asia Minor in the first century, it has profound implications for all Christians and for the church everywhere and in all times—even in our present century.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke refers in context to **Revelation 1 (KJV):1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it 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. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. 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;

The book of Revelation was indeed given “to us *from God through our Lord Jesus Christ*”. And “It was delivered by an angel to the apostle John”, as Joel then says. But it was also a “prophecy”, as it says in verse 3 above, and as it also says in **Revelation 22 (KJV):18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

We can agree with Joel Beeke that the “last verse of the book is much like the ending of many other epistles in the New Testament: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”, as in verse 21 above. And we can agree with Joel that “it has profound implications for all Christians and for the church everywhere and in all times—even in our present century.” But

notice that John characterizes this book as a “prophecy”. In verse 18 we read of a solemn warning for anyone who “shall add unto these things”, and in verse 19 we read of a solemn warning to anyone who “shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy”. We must be careful how we hear.

That the book of Revelation is a prophecy will be important to remember as we read the next section of Joel Beeke’s writing.

Page 11-12: “Second, this book comes to us as an *apocalypse*. It therefore must not be read literally throughout. As a specimen of apocalyptic literature, it is filled with imagery, symbolism, and other kinds of figurative language. To read it literally is a basic error in interpretation, a failure to do justice to the literary character of the book. These verses at the opening of Revelation root this book in the prophecy of Daniel, itself full of divine revelations of things to come (Dan. 2:28-30, 45-47). Daniel contains symbolic dreams and visions, and we must interpret Revelation in a similar way.

Most of us understand this when we read a book. Fiction has different rules than non-fiction: one allows for imaginary people, places, and things, while the other is based on reality. Allegorical literature must be read allegorically; you cannot read John Bunyan’s *Pilgrims Progress* as you would read John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Thus, it is crucial to understand that the book of Revelation cannot be interpreted as mere factual data. Most books in Scripture can be accepted at face value, but Revelation was not meant to be read that way. If you read it that way, you end up with things that are simply impossible. You must view it as a book that uses imaginative symbolism to help you see more clearly the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, for example, numbers in this book are symbolic rather than mathematical. Colors are symbolic. So are animals, many of which we have never seen. So are patterns that keep repeating.

Revelation draws us into a world which is full of symbols that leave us with profound impressions. As we examine these symbols and see what they mean, we will begin to understand the message of this book. Revelation is a kind of picture book of the glory of Jesus Christ. It is, as John says, the revelation of Jesus Christ. What you and I are meant to see in this book is not a book of puzzles but a catalog of paintings depicting the glory of our Lord and Savior.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “Second, this book comes to us as an *apocalypse*. It therefore must not be read literally throughout.”

The word “apocalypse” comes from the Greek word, apokalypsis, which is translated as “Revelation” in **Revelation 1 (KJV):1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

The word “Revelation” in this verse is the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις (pronounced apokalypsis), from G601; disclosure:--appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G602.**

And this Greek word is from ἀποκαλύπτω (pronounced ap-ok-al-oo'-to), from G575

and G2572; to take off the cover, i.e. disclose:—reveal. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G601.**

So when Joel Beeke says, “this book comes to us as an *apocalypse*”, he is correct. But he is incorrect when he says, “It therefore must not be read literally throughout.” The word “*apocalypse*” means disclosure, or revelation. That is, it is referring to something that is hidden from men’s minds in the natural, but is revealed to one who is spiritual in order that they may know it. God is taking off the cover, or revealing in Revelation His plan for the future of this world. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning, as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):18** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

Joel Beeke then says, “As a specimen of apocalyptic literature, it is filled with imagery, symbolism, and other kinds of figurative language. To read it literally is a basic error in interpretation, a failure to do justice to the literary character of the book.” Joel Beeke does not say what the “other kinds of figurative language” are that he is referring to. It is true that there are many symbols to be interpreted in the book of Revelation. But that does not mean that there is no interpretation of these symbols in the Bible. Joel Beeke also refers to the “literary character of the book”. But all Scripture is inspired by God, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The book of Revelation is Scripture. Therefore, it is inspired by God. And that is its “literary character”. We must remember that the book of Revelation is still inspired by God, and as such, it is something that is revealed to us by the Spirit of God. Therefore it must be spiritually discerned, as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):12** Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God. 13 We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But the one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned by no one. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Joel Beeke then says, “These verses at the opening of Revelation root this book in the prophecy of Daniel, itself full of divine revelations of things to come (Dan. 2:28-30, 45-47). Daniel contains symbolic dreams and visions, and we must interpret Revelation in a similar way.”

He refers to **Daniel 2 (KJV):28** But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; 29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

And to **Daniel 2 (KJV):45** Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and

the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. 46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

Joel Beeke is right when he says that, “Daniel contains symbolic dreams and visions, and we must interpret Revelation in a similar way.” And the book of Revelation is rooted in the prophecy of Daniel. But the book of Daniel must be read literally because all of the symbolic dreams and visions are interpreted literally in Daniel. This is also the case with the book of Revelation, which is dependent on a rightly divided interpretation of Daniel.

Joel Beeke continues as he then says, “Most of us understand this when we read a book. Fiction has different rules than non-fiction: one allows for imaginary people, places, and things, while the other is based on reality. Allegorical literature must be read allegorically; you cannot read John Bunyan’s *Pilgrims Progress* as you would read John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Thus, it is crucial to understand that the book of Revelation cannot be interpreted as mere factual data.”

An allegory is “the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allegory>

But the book of Revelation is not full of “symbolic fictional figures”, and therefore is not “allegorical literature”, and so it is wrong to compare it with such writings. And the book of Daniel is also not “allegorical literature”, but it is the basis for understanding the book of Revelation.

Joel Beeke then says, “Most books in Scripture can be accepted at face value, but Revelation was not meant to be read that way. If you read it that way, you end up with things that are simply impossible. You must view it as a book that uses imaginative symbolism to help you see more clearly the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, for example, numbers in this book are symbolic rather than mathematical. Colors are symbolic. So are animals, many of which we have never seen. So are patterns that keep repeating.”

Joel Beeke says that we cannot take Revelation at “face value”, and if we read it that way, that is literally, “you end up with things that are simply impossible”. But being spiritually minded is to include God in our perspective or view of things. In doing so, we are reminded that nothing is impossible with God, as in **Luke 1 (KJV):37** For with God nothing shall be impossible.

And in **Matthew 19 (KJV):26** But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

All of the Bible’s symbols are to be interpreted by the Bible itself. The Lord does not leave anything to our own imagination.

The book of Revelation does not use “imaginative symbolism” because the book of Revelation is inspired by God and is Scripture. Using “imaginative symbolism” is how Joel Beeke is interpreting the symbols in the book of Revelation.

Joel Beeke continues as he says, “Revelation draws us into a world which is full of

symbols that leave us with profound impressions. As we examine these symbols and see what they mean, we will begin to understand the message of this book. Revelation is a kind of picture book of the glory of Jesus Christ. It is, as John says, the revelation of Jesus Christ. What you and I are meant to see in this book is not a book of puzzles but a catalog of paintings depicting the glory of our Lord and Savior.”

The book of Revelation has many symbols which all may be interpreted by Scripture. When John says that the book of Revelation is “the revelation of Jesus Christ”, he is not saying that the book is about the revealing of Jesus Christ, or “depicting the glory of our Lord and Savior”. He is saying that what he has written was revealed or disclosed to him by Jesus Christ. That is, Jesus Christ inspired John’s writing, and gave him the words to write.

Now, to see why the symbols in the book of Revelation are not “symbolic fictional figures”, let us look at some examples of the symbolism in Daniel, and the interpretation of those symbols.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly troubled him, but he could not remember the dream, as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):5** The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

King Nebuchadnezzar threatened to kill all the wise men of Babylon if they could not make known to him his dream, and the interpretation of the dream.

Daniel prayed, and God revealed the dream to him, as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):28** But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; 29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

It is God who reveals secrets, and who makes known “what shall come to pass hereafter”, that is, in the future. Now Daniel continues, as he tells Nebuchadnezzar the dream that he could not remember in **Daniel 2 (KJV):31** Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Then the interpretation was also revealed by God to Daniel, as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):36** This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all.

Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was symbolic of four kingdoms that were to rule over the earth, and his vision extends all the way to when "the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed", as in verse 44 above. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, so Babylon was the first kingdom. The second kingdom was Media-Persia which, lead by Cyrus, took over Babylon in B.C. 539. The third kingdom was Greece which, lead by Alexander the Great, took over Media-Persia in B.C. 336. The fourth kingdom which took over Greece was Rome in B.C. 27. The symbols in the image were all interpreted literally by Daniel.

Then Daniel concludes the interpretation, as he then tells of a final stone kingdom in **Daniel 2 (KJV):**45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. 46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

The book of Revelation is full of symbols which also must be interpreted literally, just as in the book of Daniel, as we shall see. Since most of the dream which Nebuchadnezzar had has been fulfilled, we know that the final stone kingdom is still to come. And there is more in the book of Daniel which we will look at as we progress. This will help us rightly divide the book of Revelation, as we shall see.

Page 12-13: "Third, this book is communicated as a divine vision. Ordinarily Scripture speaks of words and hearing. But Revelation uses the language of seeing and perceiving. In this revelation, Christ is not just speaking to His servants but showing them things that must soon take place. Indeed, as you read through Revelation, you will find the recurring expression, "I saw." In most of the Bible, the recurring expression is, "Hear the Word of God." But Revelation invites us to see the Word of God. John is offering us these views of the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "I saw this" and "I saw that." As he presents one image after another, the scenario builds in scope and depth until, at the very end of the book, what we see finally becomes patently clear.

Fourth, this book is communicated as prophecy. John says in verse 3, "Blessed is he

that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.” We usually understand a prophecy as something that foretells the future. But in the Bible, most prophecy does not speak about the future as much as it applies the Word of God to the present situation. There may be indications about the future, but by and large prophecy is given so that we may know how to live for God’s glory in the present.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke then speaks of the third and fourth ways he feels Revelation has been communicated, as he begins, and says, “Third, this book is communicated as a divine vision. Ordinarily Scripture speaks of words and hearing. But Revelation uses the language of seeing and perceiving. In this revelation, Christ is not just speaking to His servants but showing them things that must soon take place.”

But we also read in **Revelation 1 (KJV):3** Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, “Indeed, as you read through Revelation, you will find the recurring expression, “I saw.” In most of the Bible, the recurring expression is, “Hear the Word of God.” But Revelation invites us to see the Word of God. John is offering us these views of the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, “I saw this” and “I saw that.” As he presents one image after another, the scenario builds in scope and depth until, at the very end of the book, what we see finally becomes patently clear.”

A vision is a means of revelation that God uses. That is, God uses visions to communicate His plans and purposes to us.

Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, “Fourth, this book is communicated as prophecy. John says in verse 3, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.” We usually understand a prophecy as something that foretells the future. But in the Bible, most prophecy does not speak about the future as much as it applies the Word of God to the present situation. There may be indications about the future, but by and large prophecy is given so that we may know how to live for God’s glory in the present.”

Joel Beeke gives no evidence for his assertion here that “most prophecy does not speak about the future as much as it applies the Word of God to the present situation”. But even if this were true, we must remember that all prophecy is inspired by God, and is profitable, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that speak of the first coming of Jesus, and there are hundreds more that speak of His second coming. All of these were speaking of the future when they were prophesied.

Prophecy is inspired speaking of the Lord. A prophet is God’s mouthpiece. After all of the New Testament writings were collected, it was understood that there was an end to prophesying in that sense. That is, now we understand that any inspired speaking of the Lord is to be judged by the word of God as to its agreement with the New and the Old Testaments. So prophecy today is for exhortation, admonition, and comfort, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14**

(KJV):3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Any inspired speaking today is to be judged accordingly, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

There are no more additions to the word of God today. All prophecy today is for “edification, and exhortation, and comfort”, and is to be judged according to its agreement with the word of God.

Revelation 2

Page 67: “Losing one’s first love is serious in any marriage. You can commend any wife or husband who perform their spousal duties, but it is sad when their service becomes *mere* duty. The love has gone out of the marriage.

That is how it is at Ephesus. The church’s relationship with Christ is still intact, but what she does for Him has just become merely a matter of duty. Her heart is no longer in it. So Jesus says, “You have left your first love.” But notice here that the church has *left* its first love, not *lost* it. John Owen, a great Puritan writer, says that some leave their first love for Christ because they would think that abiding in Christ is “a plant that needs neither watering, manuring, nor pruning, but that which will thrive alone of itself.” Christians too often leave their first love today because they do not understand that love for Christ needs continual nurture and replenishment.

A potted plant may be beautiful when we first receive it. But if we put it on a table and forget to tend and water it, the leaves on that plant will fade from green to yellow, then die and drop off. Eventually, the plant itself will die. Likewise, some Christians think their relationship with Christ doesn’t need any maintenance. That is a dangerous mistake. Your love for Christ must be nurtured and protected, for it is the most precious thing you have. It is more precious than your orthodoxy, your churchgoing, your Christian activities, your evangelism, or any other aspect of your life as a Christian. Without nurturing, your relationship with Christ will wither. That is what our Lord says has happened to the church at Ephesus.”

Commentary: We can agree with Joel Beeke here. He refers to **Revelation 2 (KJV):**1 Unto the angel 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; 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 laboured, and hast not fainted. 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 Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 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.

Joel Beeke is not saying that those who have left their first love “have lost it”, that is, they have lost their salvation. He believes very strongly that once we have been born again, we have eternal life. But we can still build wood, hay, and stubble on the foundation, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Page 95-96: “Though Satan operates everywhere, I believe that in the prominent cities of this world, such as Pergamos, Satan is even more active. There he influences world governments, world affairs, world culture, and world religions. Because you and I must live in the same world where Satan works, these verses are very relevant to us. We dwell where Satan is seated in power. In order to keep satanic worldliness out of the church, we must know our dangers and submit to our Savior’s dealings.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke refers to **Revelation 2 (KJV):** 12 And to the angel 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. 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 the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 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.

Joel Beeke’s view of Satan here is important to keep in mind as we progress to Revelation, chapter 20 where Satan will be bound for one thousand years. However, Joel Beeke will then say that the thousand years are only symbolic of the “fullness of time” which we are currently in during the church age. According to Joel Beeke, Satan is bound now, but on a leash, as we shall see when we read his views on Revelation, chapter 20. But this certainly does not agree with what he says here that “Satan operates everywhere”, and that “he influences world governments, world affairs, world culture, and world religions” in “the prominent cities of this world, such as Pergamos”.

Page 100-101: “This is a reminder to us that the devil has more than one way of attacking God’s people. Sometimes he appears as “a roaring lion” who “walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8)—as he did during the persecution of believers in Pergamos. But at other times, he appears as an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14), that is, as a false prophet or false teacher with beguiling powers of communication. That is how Satan was now at work in Pergamos.

We too must be aware that the devil has many disguises. We live in an age of sensationalism, and that is also true of Christian things. The only thing that seems to awaken Christians is the spectacular and the sensational—even when it comes to the devil. When you talk to Christians about the devil’s devices, many think only in terms of occult practices and demon possession. Those are serious things, in deed, but the devil normally works in much less sensational ways.”

Commentary: Again, we need to keep Joel Beeke’s views of Satan here in mind as we

progress to Revelation, chapter 20. He refers correctly to 1 Peter 5:8, as we read in context in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

And in context to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):14** And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Page 123: “A third lesson is that the real problem in Thyatira was not that everyone was supporting Jezebel and lining up behind her, but that they were tolerating her and the godless teaching she was promoting. Christ’s complaint in Revelation 2:20 is that “thou sufferest that woman Jezebel”; in other words, “You are tolerating or putting up with this false teaching.” The interesting thing is that the risen Christ is criticizing not the teaching primarily but the toleration of the teaching. And the Thyatirans tolerated it because they were not testing it by the Word of God. That is a principle of immense importance. What is the test of all teachings? The test, of course, is apostolic teaching, as recorded in God’s Word. But the Thyatirans had never done that. They just said, “Oh well, these Jezebelians have their own views and their own ways of thinking.” Thus, they tolerated them.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke is correct here, and he agrees with Jesus in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

And in **John 15 (KJV):7** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

The world will do what it wants, but we must abide in Him, and His words must abide in us. Then we will continue in His word, and we will know the truth, and the truth shall make us free.

Joel Beeke is setting the standard here, and we must hold him to that standard. We must not tolerate or put up with false teaching.

Revelation 3

Page 154: “Second, the promise of Christ’s continual presence. Christ also promises to be present with His church in times of trial. Revelation 3:10-11 says, “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 [that is, to tempt] them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown.” Jesus promises to be with His people who continue to bear God-glorifying fruits. He will be with them in trial.”

Commentary: Christ does promise “to be present with His church in times of trial”. But to get the context, let us read the entire message to the church in Philadelphia, as in **Revelation 3 (KJV):**7 And to the angel 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. 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. 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.

In verse 10 we read of “the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”. This is not just any trial a Christian may go through. This is the time of trouble that Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):**21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

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

So Revelation 3:10 is a promise to the church in Philadelphia to be spared from going through the week of tribulation that is promised to Israel. This final week is the last one of the 70 mentioned in **Daniel 9 (KJV):**24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

And in **Daniel 9 (KJV):**27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Joel Beeke says at the end of this quote, “Jesus promises to be with His people who

continue to bear God-glorifying fruits. He will be with them in trial.” But Jesus did not promise to be “with” the church in Philadelphia in trial, but to “keep” them from the trial, as we read again in **Revelation 3 (KJV):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.

Revelation 4

Page 176: “It is helpful to remember two principles for interpreting this book. First, we must interpret Revelation cyclically rather than linearly. With the first words of chapter 4, John opens his account of the second of seven parallel cycles of visions he was given. Each cycle applies to the church of all ages. The first of the seven is the vision of Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks, with His messages to the churches of Asia (chs. 1-3). Chapters 4 through 7 record the second cycle of visions John saw on the island of Patmos.

Earlier, we said that Revelation can be viewed in terms of a video. It begins at one vantage point and then goes on to present six additional points. Collectively, they provide a panoramic view of the entire gospel age, from the first coming of Christ to His second advent. It is important to understand the book of Revelation this way rather than as a continuous, unbroken line of history.

Second, we must remember that Revelation is written symbolically. It is impressionistic—almost surrealistic in places. This material is more the genre of the artist, the poet, or the composer than that of the historian or scientist. Please don’t misunderstand me—I am not suggesting there is anything in Revelation or the Bible that is historically or scientifically inaccurate. But there are different ways of conveying truth. The scientist conveys truth through concrete reports of his experiments and discoveries, and the historian does so by means of historical research. But the poet, artist, and musician convey truth in a symbolic, impressionistic way rather than literally. Many of the prophets of Scripture were poets, singers, and musicians. We must grasp that before we plunge into this chapter if we are to understand what yet lies ahead.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “It is helpful to remember two principles for interpreting this book. First, we must interpret Revelation cyclically rather than linearly. With the first words of chapter 4, John opens his account of the second of seven parallel cycles of visions he was given. Each cycle applies to the church of all ages. The first of the seven is the vision of Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks, with His messages to the churches of Asia (chs. 1-3). Chapters 4 through 7 record the second cycle of visions John saw on the island of Patmos.”

So Joel Beeke has divided the book of Revelation into seven sections which are seven cycles that each apply “to the church of all ages”. The first cycle of the seven is “His messages to the churches of Asia (chs. 1-3)”, and the second cycle is chapters 4 through 7. According to Joel Beeke, these cycles refer to the same time period, that is, “to the church of all ages”. The cycles are just a different vision of the same time period, the church age.

On page 239, Joel Beeke will also say that, “The church is the spiritual embodiment of the nation of Israel and therefore is the heir to all the covenants and all the promises made to the Old Testament saints.” We will look at this more carefully when we get to Revelation, chapter 7.

Joel Beeke continues, as he then explains, “Earlier, we said that Revelation can be viewed in terms of a video. It begins at one vantage point and then goes on to present six additional points. Collectively, they provide a panoramic view of the entire gospel age, from the

first coming of Christ to His second advent. It is important to understand the book of Revelation this way rather than as a continuous, unbroken line of history.”

But let us read in **Revelation 4 (KJV):1** After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

The word “hereafter” is a translation of the Greek words, **μετὰ ταῦτα** (pronounced meta tauta), which are translated as “after these things” in **Revelation 4 (NASB):1** After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

These Greek words, **μετὰ ταῦτα** (pronounced meta tauta), are used twice in this verse, once at the beginning of the verse, and once at the end, and are translated both times as “After these things...after these things” in the New American Standard Bible (NASB). The point is, there is no evidence in Scripture to support Joel Beeke’s view that the book of Revelation must be interpreted cyclically and not linearly, that is, “as a continuous, unbroken line of history”, as we shall see.

Joel Beeke continues, and says, “Second, we must remember that Revelation is written symbolically. It is impressionistic—almost surrealistic in places. This material is more the genre of the artist, the poet, or the composer than that of the historian or scientist. Please don’t misunderstand me—I am not suggesting there is anything in Revelation or the Bible that is historically or scientifically inaccurate. But there are different ways of conveying truth. The scientist conveys truth through concrete reports of his experiments and discoveries, and the historian does so by means of historical research. But the poet, artist, and musician convey truth in a symbolic, impressionistic way rather than literally. Many of the prophets of Scripture were poets, singers, and musicians. We must grasp that before we plunge into this chapter if we are to understand what yet lies ahead.”

Joel Beeke is saying that the book of Revelation is “impressionistic—almost surrealistic in places”. The meaning of “surreal” is “marked by the intense irrational reality of a dream; *also* : UNBELIEVABLE, FANTASTIC”.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/surreal>

Some of the prophets were poetic, and they were singers, and musicians, but they were not irrational. The reason that they were prophets is because God spoke through them. The apostle John was not known to be a poet, a singer, or a musician. We are not to interpret Revelation as if it were just poetic verses. We must treat Revelation as Scripture, and rightly divide it. Where there are symbols in the Bible, we must look for their interpretation in the Bible itself. We must not rely on our own imagination to interpret them.

Page 177: “In Revelation 4, John sees a throne surrounded by a rainbow, a sea of glass, seven lamps of fire, and four living creatures covered with eyes. Each of these creatures has six wings. They each resemble in turn, a lion, a calf or ox, a man, and an eagle. John also sees twenty-four elders seated on thrones around this rainbow throne.

What does all this symbolism mean? In order to answer this question, we need to look carefully at the overall picture. We must search for the central truth rather than press for details.

We should not pick out a symbol here and a symbol there, then attempt to explain in detail what each symbol means in some spiritual sense. Rather, we should look for the overall central truth and interpret this vision from that vantage point. Such an approach is crucial for rightly understanding the book of Revelation.”

Commentary: This helps us understand Joel Beeke’s method in his interpretation of the book of Revelation. Joel says here that we “must search for the central truth rather than press for details”. But how we interpret symbols in the Bible is very important, and details help us find the “central truth”. This is why we must study or be diligent as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

And in **2 Timothy 2 (NASB):15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

This is the labor mentioned in **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Page 181: “Because He is sovereign, God must be worshiped by everyone in heaven and earth. Thus, ultimately, the point of Revelation 4 is that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all. The four living creatures proclaim His infinite, eternal, and unchanging holiness as the sovereign God, and the twenty-four elders worship Him as their Creator and Judge. The elders take off their victor’s crowns and cast them at the feet of the sovereign God on the throne (Rev. 4:10), declaring that He alone is worthy “to receive glory and honour and power” (v. 11). Revelation 4 declares that God is sovereign in grace and in nature, in church and in creation, and in gospel and in science.”

Commentary: Joel is seeking the central truth here, and not pressing for details to help his understanding. We can agree with Joel Beeke here. It is not that what he says here is false, but it is incomplete.

In Revelation, chapter 4, we are given a vision of heaven, as we read in **Revelation 4 (KJV):1** After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

The word “hereafter” is again a translation of the Greek words, **μετὰ ταῦτα** (pronounced meta tauta), which literally means “after these things”. And the words “After this” at the beginning of this verse are the same Greek words, **μετὰ ταῦτα** (pronounced meta tauta), which literally means “after these things”, and so we read in **Revelation 4 (NASB):1** After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

We continue in **Revelation 4 (KJV):2** And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw

four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Now let us look at some of the “details” of these verses which will help us understand more of what is being said. The word “beast”, in verses 6 through 9 above, in the Greek is ζῷον (pronounced dzo-on), neuter of a derivative of G2198; a live thing, i.e. an animal:—beast.

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2226.

And this Greek word is derived from ζῶω (pronounced dzah-o), a primary verb; to live (literally or figuratively):—life(-time), (a-)live(-ly), quick. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2198.**

John is given a vision of heaven in this chapter. These “beasts” are able to speak and say, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”, in verse 8 above. They are acknowledging the “Lord God Almighty”. So they are not beasts in the sense that we on earth know as beasts. They are actually seraphim angels, as we read of in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):1** In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Let us continue to read more of his writing before we look at more “details” of these verses.

Page 184: “Revelation 4 offers us an explanation of God’s purpose for His church. This is why it is crucial to understand how we are to interpret this book. The idea that God somehow whisks or raptures His church away after the “Laodicean Age” (Revelation 3) and that the rest of Revelation has nothing to say to the church today is nonsense. As we saw earlier, John tells us in Revelation 1 that the purpose of this book is to give comfort to the church in the midst of what will happen in the future. Revelation prepares God’s people in all ages for the tribulations and sufferings they must endure.”

Commentary: According to the premillennial interpretation, the rapture does not occur “after the “Laodicean Age” (Revelation 3)”, as Joel Beeke says above. According to the premillennial

interpretation, the church will be raptured during the Philadelphian church period, and the Laodicean church will be left behind. Now what greater comfort could be given the church today than the comfort of the teaching of the premillennial rapture, which will keep them from the “hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”, and which we will see is the correct interpretation.

Page 187: “Just before the Lord shows John the vials of wrath and tribulation that depict the terrible suffering that will come to God’s people, Christ shows him a throne encircled by a rainbow. He will not whisk us up and rapture us away from tribulation. Rather, Jesus says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). You can endure tribulation because God’s throne of justice and power is now a throne of grace for you in Christ Jesus. In Christ, divine power and fatherly love unite to help you. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Let us boldly come to this throne and to the One who sits upon it. Let us not be afraid of Him. Your Father in His throne room is committed to your highest good.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “Just before the Lord shows John the vials of wrath and tribulation that depict the terrible suffering that will come to God’s people, Christ shows him a throne encircled by a rainbow. He will not whisk us up and rapture us away from tribulation.”

He refers to **Revelation 4 (KJV):2** And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Joel does not believe in the premillennial rapture of the saints. So he sees Revelation 4 as “an explanation of God’s purpose for His church”, as he said before on page 184 above. But he doesn’t elaborate on what that purpose is that he says that Revelation 4 is an explanation of. And it is evident that he does not understand the premillennial rapture of the saints, for he says that “The idea that God somehow whisks or raptures His church away after the “Laodicean Age” (Revelation 3)” is “nonsense”, as we have read in the previous page 184 of his writing.

When the premillennial rapture of the saints is correctly taught, the rapture happens at the end of the Philadelphia church age because they will be kept from the “hour of temptation”, as we read again in **Revelation 3 (KJV):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.

No such promise is given to the Laodicean church. The premillennial rapture of the saints is the most Scriptural interpretation, as we shall see as we continue.

Now it is interesting that the vision John has is of heaven, as we read in **Revelation 4 (KJV):1** After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And around the throne were twenty-four elders sitting, as we read in **Revelation 4**

(KJV):4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

These elders were “clothed in white raiment”, and “they had on their heads crowns of gold”, which speak of rewards. They represent the saints raptured, and who will be rewarded during the tribulation period, that is, “the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”, as we read in Revelation 3:10. And they represent the redeemed of the Old and New Testaments, as we read in **Revelation 5 (KJV):**8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Now let us look at another detail about the 24 elders. In verse 9 it says that “they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”. This would identify them as a symbol of the raptured saints who will be the “dead in Christ”, and those who “are alive and remain”, which would include the Church, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):**15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

And Paul says we are to “comfort one another with these words” in verse 18.

Now, again, Joel Beeke said, “He will not whisk us up and rapture us away from tribulation.” And he continues, as he says, “Rather, Jesus says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):**33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

And Joel then continues, “You can endure tribulation because God’s throne of justice and power is now a throne of grace for you in Christ Jesus. In Christ, divine power and fatherly love unite to help you. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Let us boldly come to this throne and to the One who sits upon it. Let us not be afraid of Him. Your Father in His throne room is committed to your highest good.”

And we do find grace to help in time of need now in the Church age. But God has not appointed us to wrath as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):**9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

His wrath abides on unbelievers, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):**36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Revelation 5

Page 193: “Remember that John is speaking figuratively. God does not physically or literally sit upon a throne; nor does He literally have a right hand; nor does He literally hold a book. God is Spirit, and He does not have a body like ours. In addition, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him (1 Kings 8:27), for He inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:15). So what does this figurative language mean?”

Commentary: He is referring to **Revelation 5 (KJV):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.

And to **1 Kings 8 (KJV):27** But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

And to **Isaiah 57 (KJV):15** For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

But we are made in God’s image, as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

So spirit has form, for we are made in God’s image. And we read of the Lord appearing to Abraham in **Genesis 18 (KJV):1** And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: 4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. 8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf, which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

So the Lord ate with them for in verse 8, “they did eat”. And the Lord knew Sarah laughed in her tent, as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):13** And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

And Abraham stood in front of the Lord as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):20** And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. 22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.

And the Lord left Abraham, as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):33** And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place. This is what is called a theophany, which is a visible manifestation to humankind of God. So John is not “speaking figuratively” here in Revelation 5:1.

Page 195-96: “Many people are confused about this doctrine of divine decrees. They are prepared to admit that God foresees and foreknows everything that will happen. They accept that He knows who will and who will not believe. But then they say that because God knows all this, He gathers in all the facts, makes His estimations, and then draws up His plans. Because He foresees and foreknows everything, He can make His plans accordingly.

The Bible completely reverses that order. Ephesians 1:11 says, “In [Christ] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” This text does not say that God draws up a plan after He has gathered all the pertinent information and formed estimates of human behavior. Rather, He determines His plan according to the counsel of His will. He foresees all things because He has foreordained all things. He knows what will happen because He has decreed that it should come to pass. These sovereign, determined divine decrees are symbolized by the scroll in the right hand of the One who sits upon the throne in John’s vision.

What is more comforting than to know that God’s decrees for this world are not mere contingency plans but real determinations of all that comes to pass? Those who know this God as their Father in heaven can live in the confidence that no matter what happens, He will provide them with all things necessary for soul and body. He will make whatever He sends upon them in this valley of tears turn out for their salvation and advantage.”

Commentary: We see here that Joel Beeke believes in God’s sovereignty. We can agree with him here. And so we read in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):18** Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We were not born of our own will but of God.

Page 202-3: “Those who are closest to the throne are not the angels; they are you and me, represented by the twenty-four elders, which symbolize the entire church of the Old Testament

and the New. These are the ones who are seated around the throne of God and of the Lamb. And they have more to say than anyone else. The song of the redeemed is fuller, deeper, and more profound than the songs of the angels and the song of creation, for we who are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ can praise Him in a way that angels cannot. We can claim a more intimate interest in the Son of God than angels can.

All this is in line with the rest of the teaching of the New Testament. Angels, we are told, are spectators and subordinates in the drama of salvation. They are deeply interested in the salvation of sinners because they deeply love God. The Bible tells us that there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10). When you were saved, tens of thousands burst into song. They were happy—perhaps happier than you were, because you hadn't fully understood at that point all that had happened to you. They rejoiced.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “Those who are closest to the throne are not the angels; they are you and me, represented by the twenty-four elders, which symbolize the entire church of the Old Testament and the New. These are the ones who are seated around the throne of God and of the Lamb. And they have more to say than anyone else. The song of the redeemed is fuller, deeper, and more profound than the songs of the angels and the song of creation, for we who are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ can praise Him in a way that angels cannot.”

So he believes that the “twenty-four elders” are those “which symbolize the entire church of the Old Testament and the New”, which would correspond to all those who are in Christ. Those in the Old Testament believed in the Christ who was to come, and were saved. Those in the New who believe in the Christ who came are also saved. When Joel Beeke says that they “symbolize the entire church of the Old Testament and the New”, he is saying that the church has replaced Israel because he believes that “true Israel” was simply the church in the Old Testament as we shall see.

However, we cannot claim a more intimate interest in the Son of God than angels can, because the angels in heaven have never sinned, and have no need of a savior.

And it is doubtful that we are closer to the throne than the angels, who are greater in power and might than we are, as we read in **2 Peter 2 (KJV):9** The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord

And we read also in **Psalm 8 (KJV):4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

And in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):5** For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in

subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

So man is a “little lower than the angels”. But the angels are “ministering spirits”, as we read in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):13** But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

And the Church is not Israel. God has promised that Israel will not cease to be a nation, as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):35** Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

The twenty-four elders represent all of the redeemed, the saints of the Old Testament and the New. But the Church has not and will not replace Israel as a nation.

Page 204: “First, they *trust in Christ’s blood alone for salvation*. In Revelation 5:9, the twenty-four elders sing, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;””

Commentary: There is no question that Joel R. Beeke is a believer. He trusts “in Christ’s blood alone for salvation.”

Let us continue to read in **Revelation 5 (KJV):4** And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under

the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Note here that in verse 9, the identity of the 24 elders in verse 8 is given. They were redeemed by the blood of the lamb “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”. The 24 elders represent the raptured saints of both the Church in the New Testament, and of the raptured saints of the Old Testament.

And notice that in verse 11, John “heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;”

And then in verse 12, they were all “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

The angels are rejoicing in the goodness of God who has saved us by His grace through faith. But the angels needed no salvation for they never sinned.

Page 205-06: “An old Puritan writer said, “Heaven must be in you before you can ever be in heaven.” Is Heaven in you? The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel’s land. That is how it is in heaven. Is that how it is in your life? Is the Lamb all the glory? Is He at the center? If you do not know and delight in the Lord Jesus Christ here, you would be out of place there.

If you possess something of these marks of grace, lift up your hearts and sing the praises of the Lion-Lamb. If you don’t know these marks of grace, I urge you to go with all your sins to this Lion-Lamb for your salvation. He is the One whom God has sent into the world for us and for our salvation. He can save you and wash you in His blood. Cast your sins upon Him. There is no other way to be saved. In Christ, you will be saved for all eternity; outside of Him, you will be lost forever.”

Commentary: Again, there is no question that Joel R. Beeke is a believer. And we can agree with him here, who is in agreement with Jesus in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Revelation 6

Page 208: “John’s second cycle of visions on the island of Patmos, recorded in chapters 4-7, offers a picture of the gospel age from God’s perspective. The first cycle of visions, in chapters 1-3, gives a picture of the gospel age from our earthly church perspective. It gives us a surface view of the church and its relationship to Jesus Christ. But the second cycle of visions opens with John being told to come up to God’s throne to view this age from God’s perspective.”

Commentary: In his cyclical interpretation of the book of Revelation, Joel R. Beeke sees chapters 1 to 3 as “a picture of the gospel age from our earthly church perspective”. Then he sees the second cycle in chapters 4 to 7 as a view of this age, that is, the “gospel age”, “from God’s perspective.” The problem with this view is that it fails to take into account all of the prophecy in the book of Daniel. God has a plan for Israel, as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):23** But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

In verse 23 there shall be “wrath upon this people”, and in verse 24, it says, “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”, when the wrath will end, and God will again deal with Israel. But God has not appointed us in the Church to wrath, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):9** For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Page 209: “There is no hint in Revelation of the rapture that many American preachers speak about. They think that during the tribulation in the end times, God will “rapture” the saints—that is, move them out of this world—to spare them from tribulation. But this doctrine is not scriptural. There is no hint in John 16:33 of such escape, is there? Christ simply says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Jesus does not promise to whisk His disciples away when trouble comes; on the contrary, He promises to bring us through it. Notice that He says, “But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” The implication is that if you are with Christ and in Christ, you will overcome the world. You will be made more than conquerors through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:37). That is the message of Revelation, particularly in the chapters we are now considering. In Christ, we are more than conquerors, come what may.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke does not believe in the premillennial rapture of the Church, and says that, “this doctrine is not scriptural”. And he says that, “There is no hint in John 16:33 of such escape, as we read in **John 16 (KJV):33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

If this were the only Scripture in the Bible, then he would be correct, and that we have tribulation in this world is quite evident. But let us not forget that there will be a specific time when there shall be great tribulation, as Jesus taught in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the

holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Jesus refers to a time when there shall not be just tribulation, but “great tribulation”, and it will be so great that it will be greater than any tribulation that ever was, or “ever shall be”.

Now in Matthew 24:15 above, Jesus refers to “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place”. Daniel prophesied of a “prince that shall come”, as we read in context in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

In verse 26, after Messiah shall be cut off, the “people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”. The “people” were the Romans who destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. The “prince that shall come” refers to the Antichrist.

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

This time of great tribulation is so great that it will be greater than has ever happened on the earth before, and greater than shall ever be afterwards. Then this time will be preceded by “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet”, standing “in the holy place”, that is the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, as we read again in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:).

Now the abomination of desolation that Jesus predicted would come was also prophesied by Paul in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):1** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who

opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

This Scripture speaks of a specific time, as Paul is speaking to “brethren”, and warns them when that time will be.

Now it is true that we are more than conquerors, as we read in context in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That we will go through tribulation in this world is certain. But God has a plan for the Church and for Israel. Remember that Jesus prophesied as in **Luke 21 (KJV)**:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Unlike Matthew, Luke does not mention the “abomination of desolation”. But Matthew does not mention the time when they would “see Jerusalem compassed with armies”, and when they would “know that the desolation thereof is nigh”. So Matthew cuts right to the time of the antichrist, the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Jesus and Daniel, but Luke tells us that these are “the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled”, and there has been “wrath upon this people”, and they have fallen “by the edge of the sword”, and “led away captive into all nations”. And this shall be the case “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. Then the time of vengeance in verse 22 above will be over, and God will again deal with Israel, and Israel will go through the time of “Jacob’s trouble”, and be saved out of it, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV)**:5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God,

and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

This will be the time when the Lord will melt them as silver, as we read of in **Ezekiel 22 (KJV):** 19 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. 21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.

So when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, the Church will be removed, as we shall see, and God will again deal with Israel.

Page 210-211: “The identity of the rider of the first horse is obvious from John’s description. In Revelation 6:2, John says, “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.”

Some commentators say the rider on the white horse is the antichrist. A few think he is some obscure Roman emperor or modern-day Hitler. Others think he is the devil or the devil’s henchman. Those are just a few of many interpretations, most of which make little sense when they are considered within the greater context of Scripture.

Revelation is best understood by what our forefathers called “the analogy of Scripture,” that is, by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Revelation 19:11 makes clear the identity of the rider of the white horse: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” Whatever else the devil is, he is *not* faithful and true. This description, rather, is of our Lord Jesus Christ advancing the cause of His gospel. That is in line with the rest of the book of Revelation and its overall message. Remember, Revelation is not a series of visions about what might happen in the future; it is the revelation of Jesus Christ today, who, in the power of His gospel, rides forth to conquer all the forces of evil.

This interpretation is also in harmony with the rest of Scripture. Many commentators go astray in interpreting this passage because they do not compare Scripture with Scripture. Specifically, they do not go to the Old Testament to find background for the imagery of Revelation. Take Psalm 45, for example, which is a well-known Messianic psalm. This psalm offers a parallel description of the first rider. It says: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.” (vv. 3-5). This is a picture of Christ in His reign as Messiah (cf. Heb. 1:8-9). Likewise, Revelation 6 says the rider of the white horse has a crown on his head.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “The identity of the rider of the first horse is obvious from John’s description. In Revelation 6:2, John says, “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.”

He refers in context to **Revelation 6 (KJV):** 1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 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.

Joel Beeke then continues, as he says, “Some commentators say the rider on the white horse is the antichrist. A few think he is some obscure Roman emperor or modern-day Hitler. Others think he is the devil or the devil’s henchman. Those are just a few of many interpretations, most of which make little sense when they are considered within the greater context of Scripture.”

And he is correct. Some commentators say the rider on the white horse is the antichrist, and this is the correct interpretation as we shall see.

Joel Beeke then continues, as he says, “Revelation is best understood by what our forefathers called “the analogy of Scripture,” that is, by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Revelation 19:11 makes clear the identity of the rider of the white horse: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.””

He refers in context to **Revelation 19 (KJV):** 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The only similarity between the rider in Revelation 6:2 and the rider in Revelation 19:11-21 is the white horse that they each ride. The rider in Revelation 6:2 has a crown given to him, whereas the rider in Revelation 19:12 has many crowns. Joel Beeke is correct when he says that we must compare “Scripture with Scripture”, but there is a different setting in Revelation 6:2 than in Revelation 19:11-21. That the Antichrist would ride a white horse makes perfect sense when we understand that he is the false Christ. And this also makes sense when we understand

that it is Jesus, the Lamb, who is opening the seals. As Jesus begins to open the seals, events happen on earth, and the Antichrist rides forth “conquering, and to conquer”. He is setting up his kingdom.

Joel Beeke continues, “Whatever else the devil is, he is *not* faithful and true. This description, rather, is of our Lord Jesus Christ advancing the cause of His gospel. That is in line with the rest of the book of Revelation and its overall message. Remember, Revelation is not a series of visions about what might happen in the future; it is the revelation of Jesus Christ today, who, in the power of His gospel, rides forth to conquer all the forces of evil.”

Joel Beeke is correct in that he says that the rider in Revelation 19:11-21 is “our Lord Jesus Christ”. But the vision in Revelation, chapter 6, is different than the vision in Revelation, chapter 19.

Joel Beeke continues, “This interpretation is also in harmony with the rest of Scripture. Many commentators go astray in interpreting this passage because they do not compare Scripture with Scripture. Specifically, they do not go to the Old Testament to find background for the imagery of Revelation. Take Psalm 45, for example, which is a well-known Messianic psalm. This psalm offers a parallel description of the first rider. It says: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee” (vv. 3-5). This is a picture of Christ in His reign as Messiah (cf. Heb. 1:8-9). Likewise, Revelation 6 says the rider of the white horse has a crown on his head.”

Joel Beeke refers in context here to **Psalm 45 (KJV):3** Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. 5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. 6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And to **Hebrews 1 (KJV):8** But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

There is no question that these Scriptures refer to Jesus Christ. But his interpretation of Revelation 6:2 is in line with his cyclical approach to the book of Revelation, and it is out of context with the rest of Scripture. In his cyclical approach, Revelation 6:2 is just part of the same vision in Revelation 19:11, but seen from a different angle or place. But John was commanded by the Lord to write as in **Revelation 1 (KJV):19** Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

The literal translation of the Greek in this verse is as we read in **Revelation 1 (NASB):19** Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

There is a definite linear context in these words. So the “things which shall be hereafter”, or more literally, “after these things”, are the things that occur after the “things which are”. That

is the most common sense interpretation of the verse. When we understand that Revelation is not cyclical but actually chronological, then we see that the white horse rider is riding forth as a pretender of the white horse rider in Revelation 19.

So let us now look at his interpretation of the second seal before commenting further here.

Page 213: “Revelation 6:4 says, “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.” This second horse and its rider are given power to remove peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. The rider is given a large sword with which to do this.

The red horse and his rider are symbols of persecution, as well as of the killing and bloodshed of war. In the two thousand years since Christ’s earthly ministry, there has been a major war every century except for two. Thirty million people were killed in World War I and considerably more in World War II. Pol Pot slaughtered more than 1,500,000 Cambodians in less than two years. In 1994, more than half a million Rwandans were massacred in a hundred days. The twenty-first century has by no means been immune to war, as multiple conflicts in the Middle East attest. War is an ongoing menace in this world.”

Commentary: The killings that Joel Beeke mentions here are horrendous. But Jesus spoke of a time, as in **Matthew 24 (KJV):22** And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Joel Beeke takes all the numbers in Revelation to be symbolic and not literal. But if the numbers are literal, we see that the prophecy of Jesus makes sense, as we read in **Revelation 6 (KJV):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.

The current population of the world is 7.9 billion. So one fourth of 7.9 billion is 1.975 billion. And a billion is a thousand million. If the “fourth part” of the earth’s population were killed, that would leave 5.925 billion people left alive on earth.

Then we read in **Revelation 9 (KJV):13** And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

One third of the remaining population on earth would then be 1.95525 billion. That would leave 3.96975 billion left on earth. So just in these two judgments, 3.93025 billion people, or about half the world’s current population, were killed. And this does not count others who will be killed in the other judgments. And it does not count all of the martyrs that will be killed during the great tribulation.

So when Pol Pot slaughtered more than 1,500,000 Cambodians in less than two years, that is horrendous. But when we consider the number mentioned in Revelation that will be killed, that is a time like no other.

If the numbers in Revelation are literal, then the book of Revelation is showing us how great that time of tribulation will be. The tribulation on earth now is horrendous, but Revelation is speaking of a tribulation like no other that has ever happened or will happen afterwards.

Page 222: “These seven seals are not to be regarded as seven successive phases of history, but as the complete picture of what God has in store for Christians in this world.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke does not understand the timeline that is given us in Daniel, chapter 9, where we read as in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

This prophecy extends all the way “until the consummation”, that is, until Jesus comes.

Daniel had been praying about when the 70 years captivity prophesied by Jeremiah would end. Jeremiah prophesied as in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV):11** And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

The Lord answered Daniel’s prayer, and sent the angel Gabriel to give Daniel a timeline for his people, Israel. The timeline consisted of 70 weeks in Daniel 9:24 above. In verse 25, the timeline begins with “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem”. This happened as near as we can tell with the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus in B.C. 445. Then in verse 26, after “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”, or 69 weeks, Messiah was to be cut off, that is, He would be killed, “but not for himself”. It was for us. The weeks then are weeks of years. So after 483 years, Messiah would die for us. The Bible uses the Lunar calendar of 360 days for a year. When we count the days in the month of Nissan when Artaxerxes issued his decree, and the days in the same month when Jesus was crucified, we come very close to A.D. 30 when Jesus was most likely crucified. Secular chronology is not exact, but we can be very confident that this prophecy was fulfilled to the day.

Then in verse 26 it says that, “the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”. The “people of the prince” were the Romans who destroyed the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That leaves one more week determined for Israel. This week is then mentioned in verse 27, referring to “the prince that shall come”, who “shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and

the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate”.

This final week for Israel is still to come. The “prince that shall come” is the Antichrist who will come for the final week determined for Israel in order to make a covenant with Israel. This will begin the tribulation week of 7 years. In the middle of the week he himself “shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease”, and as he sets himself up in the temple and declares himself to be God, he “shall make it desolate”, that is, he will be the “abomination of desolation”.

This was referred to by Jesus in **Matthew 24 (KJV)**:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Jesus mentions that the “abomination of desolation” will stand in “the holy place” in verse 15. That is, the Antichrist will stand in the rebuilt temple in Israel. This will be a time of “great tribulation” such as was never before in the world, nor shall ever be afterwards. So there is a timeline in the Scriptures. God has a definite plan.

And Paul writes to the Thessalonians about this time, as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV)**:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

So there is a definite time when “that man of sin” will be “revealed”. Paul continues in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV)**:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This will be the abomination of desolation in Daniel that Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:15.

Now in Daniel, chapter 7, we read of Daniel’s dream of four beasts, as in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

He then describes the beasts in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**:4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the

mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

The judgment that followed is then described, as we continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV):**9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

The timing of this judgment is then revealed in **Daniel 7 (KJV):**13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel then wanted to know the interpretation of the dream, so in his dream, he asks “one of them that stood by”, as we continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV):**15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. 19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

So in verse 16 the interpretation was made known to Daniel. In verse 17, the beasts “are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth”, but the final kingdom will be possessed by “the saints of the most High”. Nevertheless, the fourth beast would prevail against the saints for a time until judgment was given to them, and they “possessed the kingdom”.

Then the fourth beast is explained, as we continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV):23** Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. 26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

The little horn in Daniel 7:8 above is the same as the horn in verses 24 and 25, who will rise and “speak great words against the most High”. This would correspond with the one Paul speaks of **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

But there is more revealed in Daniel about this horn. We continue in **Daniel 8 (KJV):1** In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. 2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. 3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. 5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. 8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. 9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down. 12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered. 13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be

trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

So Daniel has a vision of a ram with two horns that did according to his will and became great in verse 4. Then a he goat with a “notable horn between his eyes” in verse 5 came and “smote the ram, and brake his two horns” in verse 7, and became great in verse 8. But then this “great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven”. And out of one of them came a “little horn”, and this was he “which waxed exceeding great” in verse 9, and in verse 11 he “magnified himself even to the prince of the host”, and “by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down”, referring to the temple.

Now Daniel wanted to know the meaning of the vision so the angel Gabriel was called to make him “understand the vision”, as we continue in **Daniel 8 (KJV):**15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. 18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. 19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. 20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

Now this vision has been fulfilled in history. Media-Persia was ruled by Cyrus of Persia and Darius the Mede, and they were later overcome by Alexander the Great, who ruled Greece until his death. Then four of his generals took over the kingdom and divided it among themselves.

But Gabriel explains that “at the time of the end shall be the vision” in verse 17 above. Then again in verse 19, “Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be”.

Now the angel Gabriel then explains, as we continue in **Daniel 8 (KJV):**23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. 26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. 27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

This vision helped Daniel understand the previous two visions. The first was in Daniel, chapter 2, where the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which was of a statue representing four kingdoms, was revealed to Daniel with its interpretation. And then the second was of Daniel's dream of the four beasts in Daniel chapter 7. The first kingdom was Babylon, the second Media-Persia, and the third was Greece. Daniel would live to see the take over of Babylon by Media-Persia, and he interpreted the writing of the man's hand on the wall in the presence of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, in Daniel, chapter 5, which came to pass the night after Daniel had interpreted his dream. But Daniel was not present when Greece took over Media-Persia, and Daniel was not present when Rome took over Greece. So the book of Daniel is for us to read in order to know God's plan for his people, the saints of the Most High.

Now again we read of the "prince that shall come" in **Daniel 9 (KJV):26** And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

It is this prince who will confirm the covenant with many as we continue in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

So the prince will make a covenant with Israel for one week, but in the middle of the week he will stop "the sacrifice and the oblation" in the temple, and will stand up in the temple and declare himself to be God, making himself the "abomination of desolation".

Then again we read of this king in **Daniel 11 (KJV):36** And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. 37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

So there is a time coming when one will come who will speak great words against the Most High, but this will happen at a specific time known to the Lord, as we continue to read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):5** Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Strong's Concordance says that the word "letteth" in verse 7 is a translation of the Greek word **κατέχω** (pronounced kat-ekh'-o); from **G2596** and **G2192**; to hold down (fast), in various applications (literally or figuratively):—have, hold (fast), keep (in memory), let, × make

toward, possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2722.**

Now this Greek word comes from two Greek words, G2596: κατά *katá*, kat-ah'; a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), and G2192: ἔχω *échō*, ekh'-o; a primary verb; to hold (used in very various applications, literally or figuratively, direct or remote; such as possession; ability, continuity, relation, or condition): **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2596, G2192.**

The Greek word for “withholdeth” in verse 6 above is the same as the Greek word translated “letteth”, that is, **κατέχω** (pronounced *katéchō*), in verse 7.

So “he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” could be translated “he who now holds down (restrains) will hold down (restrain), until he be taken out of the way”. Who could this be but the presence of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit were removed, that would require the Church to be removed. This is why the rapture must occur before the tribulation begins. But this is not the only reason as we shall see.

Now Joel Beeke said on page 202-203, “Those who are closest to the throne are not the angels; they are you and me, represented by the twenty-four elders, which symbolize the entire church of the Old Testament and the New.” He was referring to **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

But when we understand that these 24 elders represent the raptured saints of the Old and New Testament, we then know that the seven seals actually begin the tribulation week of 7 years, as we shall see.

Page 227: “In Revelation 6:10, we read, “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” To understand this verse, we must remember that it is part of a vision, not a literal picture of heaven. There is no literal altar in heaven, just as there is no literal throne.”

Commentary: In order to understand this verse, we must put this verse in context, so let us read beginning in **Revelation 6 (KJV):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 for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost 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 fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

It is true that this is a vision given to John. Where these saints stood in the vision we do not know. But we also see saints before the throne of God in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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.
15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

And when Moses made the tabernacle, he was told to make it according to the pattern God showed him, as in **Exodus 25 (KJV):40** And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

And in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):4** For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

So there is no reason to assume, as Joel Beeke does, that there is no “literal altar in heaven, just as there is no literal throne.”

Revelation 7

Page 236-37: “Revelation 7 is divided into two sections. Verses 1-8 describe a vision of the *church militant*, in the midst of tribulation, in the thick of the things John has seen coming upon this world. Verses 9-17 describe the *church triumphant*, the church that has come out of tribulation and is out of harm’s way. Then Revelation 8:1 describes the *church silent*, for the day of the Lord has come. Christ gives these visions to John to encourage him, to show him first the church on earth in the midst of tribulation and then the church in heaven beyond tribulation.

In the opening verses of Revelation 7, Christ assures John that He will have a sealed and militant church on earth. There are three important things to notice in these verses.

Verse 4 says, “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.” This number is not to be taken literally, for if we view this and other numbers in revelation literally, we will soon be confronted with all kinds of exegetical and historical problems. If you take 144,000 as a literal number, then you also have to take literally the six wings of the four angels, and everything else. Given the genre of Revelation, its numbers are not to be understood mathematically but spiritually.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “Revelation 7 is divided into two sections. Verses 1-8 describe a vision of the *church militant*, in the midst of tribulation, in the thick of the things John has seen coming upon this world.”

He is referring to **Revelation 7 (KJV):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, 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. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Joel Beeke believes that this refers to “the *church militant*, in the midst of tribulation, in the thick of the things John has seen coming upon this world”. But the church is not mentioned in these verses. Those who were sealed were “an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel”, as in verse 4. The Scripture is very clear here.

Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, “Verses 9-17 describe the *church triumphant*, the church that has come out of tribulation and is out of harm’s way.”

Here he is referring to **Revelation 7 (KJV):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. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 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. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The Scripture is very clear here. In verse 14, the “great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” standing before the throne in verse 9 are those who “came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”. The “great tribulation” is the period prophesied by Daniel in **Daniel 12 (KJV)**: 1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

The mention of “great tribulation” in verse 9 again points to the correct interpretation of Revelation, chapter 6, that is, that it is the beginning of the tribulation week. This “great multitude” that will be saved during the “great tribulation” will be the result of the witness of the 144,000 sealed Israelites. Israel will finally fulfill its calling to be a witness to the world.

Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, “Then Revelation 8:1 describes the *church silent*, for the day of the Lord has come. Christ gives these visions to John to encourage him, to show him first the church on earth in the midst of tribulation and then the church in heaven beyond tribulation.”

He refers in context to **Revelation 8 (KJV)**: 1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

The seventh seal launches the seven trumpet judgments. The “day of the Lord” has not come yet. The fact that the seventh seal launches the seven trumpet judgments shows again the chronological progression in the book of Revelation. It is not cyclical as Joel Beeke asserts.

Joel Beeke continues, “In the opening verse of Revelation 7, Christ assures John that He will have a sealed and militant church on earth. There are three important things to notice in these verses.

Verse 4 says, “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.” This number is not to be taken literally, for if we view this and other numbers in revelation literally, we will

soon be confronted with all kinds of exegetical and historical problems. If you take 144,000 as a literal number, then you also have to take literally the six wings of the four angels, and everything else. Given the genre of Revelation, its numbers are not to be understood mathematically but spiritually.”

Joel Beeke says that the number, “hundred and forty and four thousand”, is not to be taken literally because we will then “soon be confronted with all kinds of exegetical and historical problems”, which he does not name. But he does see the six wings of the angels as a problem, as he refers to **Revelation 4 (KJV):8** And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

But these six wings are also mentioned in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):2** Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

Is Isaiah not to be understood literally? Of course it is to be understood literally, as are the numbers in Revelation. We don’t spiritualize things because we don’t understand them. These are seraphim angels whom Joel Beeke will also see when he gets to heaven.

Nevertheless, he concludes, “Given the genre of Revelation, its numbers are not to be understood mathematically but spiritually.”

Now “genre” is a kind of literature in this context. Joel Beeke calls it “apocalyptic literature”, as he said on page 11, “Second, this book comes to us as an *apocalypse*. It therefore must not be read literally throughout. As a specimen of apocalyptic literature, it is filled with imagery, symbolism, and other kinds of figurative language. To read it literally is a basic error in interpretation, a failure to do justice to the literary character of the book.”

But the book of Revelation is inspired by God, and is Scripture. We are to interpret all of Scripture literally. The word “Revelation” in Revelation 1:1 in the Greek is the word **Ἀποκάλυψις** (pronounced apokalypsis), from **G601**; disclosure:--appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G602.**

And this Greek word is from **ἀποκαλύπτω** (pronounced ap-ok-al-oo’-to), from **G575** and **G2572**; to take off the cover, i.e. disclose:—reveal. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G601.**

So the book of Revelation is literally a revelation, or disclosure, of things to come. It is not just some “specimen of apocalyptic literature”. Therefore the Scripture does not refer to “the church militant”, but to literal Israel. To make the numbers in Revelation out as just symbolic does not do justice to the numbers in Daniel, which are definitely literal.

Jeremiah prophesied of 70 years of captivity when Israel was taken captive to Babylon in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV):11** And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. 13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

When the 70 years were almost accomplished, Daniel sought the Lord, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):1** In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes,

which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

And the Lord answered his prayer, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):**21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. 24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The 70 years captivity began in B.C. 606 when Babylon invaded Israel, and ended in B.C. 536 when Cyrus, King of Persia who, with Darius the Mede, had conquered Babylon, and issued a decree to allow the Jews to return to Israel. So the number 70 in Jeremiah's prophecy was a literal number. Then we read of 70 weeks determined upon Israel in Daniel 9:24 above. And in Daniel 9:25, "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." If we take the 70 weeks to be of years, then the "seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks" would be 69 weeks of 483 years. The commandment to restore Jerusalem came in B.C. 445. Using 360 days for a year, which is the Biblical year, this would make the 483 years to be 476 actual years $((483 * 360) / 365.25)$. When we subtract 476 years from B.C. 445, we get A.D. 31. But when we count the days in the month of Nissan when Artaxerxes issued his decree in B.C. 445, and the days in the same month when Jesus was crucified, we come very close to A.D. 30 when Jesus was most likely crucified. Given the dating methods of the time, this is only approximate. But it tells us that the numbers in Daniel are literal.

Therefore, there is one more week, or 7 more years, determined upon Israel, which is still to be accomplished. All symbols in the book of Revelation are to be interpreted from Scripture alone. There is no reason in Scripture to believe that, "Verses 1-8 describe a vision of the *church militant*, in the midst of tribulation, in the thick of the things John has seen coming upon this world", as Joel Beeke says.

Page 237-8: “Revelation 7:5-8 lists twelve groups of twelve thousand. Each group bears the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Some dispensationalists say that means the church has been raptured at this point and is no longer on earth. All that is left on earth is the nation of Israel. God does a great work among these people and 144,000 are saved. But that does not harmonize with the rest of Scripture. It doesn’t even fit in with Revelation 7. These verses are not a description of the nation of Israel. For one thing, two tribes are missing. Then, too, the order of the tribes here is very different from the customary order in which the tribes are listed in the Old Testament. Judah is listed first here, but he wasn’t the oldest of Jacob’s sons, so he is not first in any list of the tribes in the Old Testament. He is listed first here because the Lord Jesus Christ came from the tribe of Judah. The order of the tribes has been changed in the light of the gospel and the way in which the promises of the Old Testament have been fulfilled in Christ. So what we have here is not a picture of literal Israel, but a picture of the true Israel of God. One of the most repeated symbols in the Bible is the symbol of Israel as the people of God, and that symbol reappears here.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “Revelation 7:5-8 lists twelve groups of twelve thousand. Each group bears the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Some dispensationalists say that means the church has been raptured at this point and is no longer on earth. All that is left on earth is the nation of Israel. God does a great work among these people and 144,000 are saved. But that does not harmonize with the rest of Scripture. It doesn’t even fit in with Revelation 7.”

What Joel Beeke means is that the dispensational interpretation does not harmonize with his interpretation of Scripture. The dispensational interpretation actually fits in with Revelation 7 just fine. After the rapture, it will not be just the nation of Israel which is left on earth, but all unbelievers. The reason that Israel will go through the tribulation is because they are a nation of unbelievers. But they will look on Him whom they pierced, and will be saved in a day.

Joel Beeke continues, as he says, “These verses are not a description of the nation of Israel. For one thing, two tribes are missing. Then, too, the order of the tribes here is very different from the customary order in which the tribes are listed in the Old Testament. Judah is listed first here, but he wasn’t the oldest of Jacob’s sons, so he is not first in any list of the tribes in the Old Testament. He is listed first here because the Lord Jesus Christ came from the tribe of Judah. The order of the tribes has been changed in the light of the gospel and the way in which the promises of the Old Testament have been fulfilled in Christ.”

He refers again in context to **Revelation 7 (KJV):** 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, 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. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the

tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Clarence Larkin explains why the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are omitted from this list in Revelation 7, when he says, “There is a remarkable difference in the names of the Tribes as here recorded and the names of the original Twelve Tribes. Here the names of Dan and Ephraim are omitted, and the names of Joseph and Levi are substituted. Why is this? The reason is plain. In Deut. 29:18-21, we read that the man, or woman, or family, or TRIBE, that should introduce idolatry into Israel, should have their or its name “blotted out” from under heaven, and be separated out of the Tribes of Israel. This is just what the Tribes of Dan and Ephraim were guilty of when they permitted Jeroboam to set up “Golden Calves” to be worshipped, one at Dan in the “Tribe of Dan,” and the other at Bethel in the “Tribe of Ephraim.” 1 Kings 12:25-30. This is the reason why the Tribes of Dan and Ephraim are omitted from the list in this chapter, and the names of Joseph and Levi substituted. But as the Tribes of Dan and Ephraim are in the list of the Twelve Tribes that shall occupy the Holy Land during the Millennium (Ez. 48:1-7, 23-29), it is evident that the SEALING of the Tribes in this chapter is more for HEAVENLY PRESERVATION, than to keep them for an earthly inheritance, and this view is confirmed by the fact that they are later seen with the Lamb on the Heavenly Mount Zion. Rev. 14:1-5. The omission of their names in this list of these “SEALED ONES” is to show that the Tribes of Dan and Ephraim must pass through the Great Tribulation unprotected by sealing.

The Book of Revelation, page 66, by Clarence Larkin.

Joel Beeke concludes, as he says, “So what we have here is not a picture of literal Israel, but a picture of the true Israel of God. One of the most repeated symbols in the Bible is the symbol of Israel as the people of God, and that symbol reappears here.”

So Joel Beeke is saying that the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 7 does not refer to literal Israel but to Gentile Christians. Joel doesn't understand that God will again deal with Israel after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Then all Israel will be saved. But to understand his thinking more clearly we must read further.

Page 239: “The church is the spiritual embodiment of the nation of Israel and therefore is the heir to all the covenants and all the promises made to the Old Testament saints. That means that all the promises in the Old Testament relating to the land and everything else belong to the true spiritual Israel, that is to true believers. When the prophet Isaiah promises that the wilderness will blossom like a rose, that is true for spiritual Israel. As a general rule, the great promises that are made to Israel in the Old Testament belong, dear child of God, to you. That is a great comfort in this world of tribulation. So what we have here is a symbolic description of the church militant, the true spiritual Israel of God, God's servant people. They are numbered as 12 x 12 x 10 x 10 x 10, symbolizing the fullness of God's covenant people. Revelation 7:3 describes these 144,000 as “the servants of our God.” They are not citizens of national Israel but of spiritual Israel. They are born-again Christians.

Commentary: When Joel Beeke begins, as he says that, “The church is the spiritual embodiment of the nation of Israel and therefore is the heir to all the covenants and all the promises made to the Old Testament saints,” and that, “That means that all the promises in the Old Testament relating to the land and everything else belong to the true spiritual Israel, that is to true believers,” he is saying in effect that the Church has replaced Israel.

But that is not what the Scripture teaches. The Scripture says that Israel is the olive tree with the natural branches, as we begin reading in **Romans 11 (KJV):**15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Israel is the “root and fatness of the olive tree”, the “lump” that is “holy”. And we Gentiles were “grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree”.

We continue in **Romans 11 (KJV):**22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

In verse 25 we read that “Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” So when the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in”, then “all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob”, in verse 26. These are God’s promises to Israel which are “without repentance” in verse 29. And if Israel is to remain a nation, and they are to be saved, then they will retain their land.

Now Paul mentions the “Israel of God”, as we read in **Galatians 6 (KJV):**15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the

Israel of God.

The Israel of God are those who believe in Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the true Israel believed in Him who was to come. We in the New Testament believe in Him who has come. God has a plan for Israel, and He has a plan for the Church. But the Church is not the nation of Israel. And we read also of God's promise to Israel in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV)**:²⁴ For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. ²⁶ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. ²⁸ And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Israel is now like a valley of dry bones, as we read in **Ezekiel 37 (KJV)**:¹ The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, ² And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. ³ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. ⁴ Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵ Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. ⁸ And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. ¹¹ Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. ¹² Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, ¹⁴ And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.

Israel shall be born again, and dwell in their "own land". This is a promise of God to Israel.

Now Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, "When the prophet Isaiah promises that the wilderness will blossom like a rose, that is true for spiritual Israel. As a general rule, the great promises that are made to Israel in the Old Testament belong, dear child of God, to you. That is a great comfort in this world of tribulation. So what we have here is a symbolic description of the church militant, the true spiritual Israel of God, God's servant people. They are numbered as

12 x 12 x 10 x 10 x 10, symbolizing the fullness of God's covenant people. Revelation 7:3 describes these 144,000 as "the servants of our God." They are not citizens of national Israel but of spiritual Israel. They are born-again Christians."

It is true that the 144,000 are "born-again", for they have been sealed. But they are "of all the tribes of the children of Israel" in Revelation 7:4. The Scripture is very clear. Now let us look at some of God's promises to Israel.

The first time the Lord set his hand to recover the remnant of his people was after the 70 years captivity in Babylon, but there will be a second time, as in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):10** And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. 13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. 14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. 15 And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. 16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 30 (KJV):1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. 4 And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. 10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Jeremiah 31 (KJV):31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the

covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah 33 (KJV):19 And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, 20 Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; 21 Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. 23 Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. 25 Thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; 26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

Jeremiah 46 (KJV):27 But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. 28 Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

Daniel 12 (KJV):1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Ezekiel 22 (KJV):19 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become

dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. 21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.

Zechariah 13 (KJV):7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. 8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.

God has an unchangeable plan for the nation of Israel. And there is a fire that they must go through that is still to come, but they shall be saved out of it. Israel is to one day be the head of the nations, for the law shall go forth from Jerusalem, as we read in **Micah 4 (KJV):**2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The time of Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah 30:7 is the time of the last week of the 70 that is determined on Israel in Daniel 9:24-27. This will be the seven year tribulation period when Israel will be born again in one day, as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV):**5 Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. 6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies. 7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

God's plan for Israel is as sure as the heavens in their place. The nation of Israel will be born again in one day, and will then enter once more into God's favor. But they will have to go through great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, first, and be melted as silver. Then they will be saved.

Page 244-45: "In the first part of Revelation 7, John sees a group of 144,000 people. In verse 9 he looks again and sees a great crowd that no man can number. It is the same group he is seeing, only from a different viewpoint. In the first half of the chapter, he sees the true Israel of God passing through the wilderness of this world through great tribulation. The 144,000 represent the true church of God in any place at any given time in this world. But in verse 9, John sees a numberless throng that represents the sum of all believers of every generation, place, and time gathered together in glory. It represents the total ingathering of God's elect, the church triumphant."

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “In the first part of Revelation 7, John sees a group of 144,000 people. In verse 9 he looks again and sees a great crowd that no man can number. It is the same group he is seeing, only from a different viewpoint.”

So he is saying that the 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation 7, verse 1 to 8, are the same group he is seeing in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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;

The words “After this” in verse 9 above in the Greek are **Μετὰ ταῦτα** (pronounced meta tauta), and literally mean “after these things”, because the word tauta is a pronoun in the Accusative Neuter Plural case.

So after John saw the sealing of the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel, he then sees “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”. The great multitude is not the same group as the 144,000 for it is from “all nations”.

Joel Beeke then says, “In the first half of the chapter, he sees the true Israel of God passing through the wilderness of this world through great tribulation. The 144,000 represent the true church of God in any place at any given time in this world. But in verse 9, John sees a numberless throng that represents the sum of all believers of every generation, place, and time gathered together in glory. It represents the total ingathering of God’s elect, the church triumphant.”

The 144,000 were sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel, but the great multitude is “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”. Why was the distinction between Israel and the nations made in this Scripture? The most common sense reading of this Scripture is that the “great multitude” of Gentiles is the result of the witness of the sealing of the 144,000 Jews who were sealed from the tribes of Israel. Israel in the tribulation week of 7 years, the final week of the 70 determined for Israel in Daniel 9:24, will finally fulfill its calling to witness to the world, and a great multitude will be saved as a result. This “great multitude” came out of the “great tribulation” as we read in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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.

The “great tribulation” mentioned in verse 14 above is the “time of trouble” mentioned in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And this time is also the time Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Page 245-46: “These people are the spiritual seed of Abraham. They are the sum total of

believers.”

Commentary: He refers again to Revelation 7, and the “great multitude” in verse 9. And he is correct. The “great multitude” are the spiritual seed of Abraham, but the 144,000 are Jews who were sealed are from the tribes of Israel. The spiritual seed of Abraham are all true believers, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):16** Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Those who have faith in Jesus Christ who are of Israel are the seed of Abraham. Likewise all in the Church who have faith are of the seed of Abraham. This is the most common sense interpretation of the Scripture. When the literal sense makes sense, seek no other sense, for any other sense is nonsense.

Page 246-47: “This great tribulation is not three and a half years of intense persecution to come. It refers to the entire journey of God’s people between the Red Sea and the Jordan. In other words, the great tribulation represents our “wilderness wanderings.” It is life from that moment when God intervenes to rescue you from the slavery of sin and Satan and set you on the path of life until the day your earthly life ends. It is life in this world as a Christian. We are told in Revelation that the numberless throng, having passed through tribulation, is now out of harm’s way, beyond pain and suffering.”

Commentary: The “numberless throng, having passed through tribulation” that he is referring to is as we read in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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;

And in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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.

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

It is “at that time thy people shall be delivered”, that is, Daniel’s people, the Jews. The time that the Scripture is speaking of here in verse 1 is the time in Daniel, chapter 11, when the antichrist is in full swing, as we read in **Daniel 11 (KJV):36** And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. 37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

This is the one Paul prophesied of in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing

himself that he is God.

To be a true Israelite one has to be a believer in Jesus Christ. During the tribulation period 144,000 Jews will believe in Jesus Christ, and they will win, through their witness, a great multitude, which no man could number. The “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” in Daniel 12:1 is the time of “great tribulation” mentioned in Matthew 24:21 by Jesus, and in Revelation 7:14. This points to a specific time, and not just a general time of tribulation during the church age.

Revelation 8

Page 256 “In verses 3 and 4, John says “the prayers of all saints” are brought to God. So who is a saint? Look through the New Testament Epistles and see how Christians in places such as Rome, Corinth, Philippi, and Ephesus are addressed. All believers in those places are called saints. The Bible applies the word *saint* to any person who genuinely trusts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The word *saint* is synonymous with the word *Christian*.

Saint literally means “set-apart one” or “sanctified one.” When we turn from sin to Christ, God sets us apart from the world around us, seals us with His Holy Spirit, and calls us to pursue holiness of life. We now belong to Christ as members of His body, and we belong to God as His children and heirs. And God listens to the prayers of all His saints. This passage tells us that.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “In verses 3 and 4, John says “the prayers of all saints” are brought to God. So who is a saint? Look through the New Testament Epistles and see how Christians in places such as Rome, Corinth, Philippi, and Ephesus are addressed. All believers in those places are called saints. The Bible applies the word *saint* to any person who genuinely trusts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The word *saint* is synonymous with the word *Christian*.”

He is referring in context to **Revelation 8 (KJV):1** And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. **2** And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. **3** And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. **4** And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

And he is correct in that he says that all believers in Jesus Christ are called saints. But the word “saint” is also found in the Old Testament, as we read in **Deuteronomy 33 (KJV):2** And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

And in **1 Samuel 2 (KJV):9** He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

The word “saint” in the Hebrew is **שִׁקְדָּה** (pronounced ko'-desh), from H6942; a sacred place or thing; rarely abstract, sanctity:—consecrated (thing), dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing), holiness, (× most) holy (× day, portion, thing), saint, sanctuary. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H6942**

This Hebrew word comes from **שִׁקְדָּה** (pronounced kaw-dash'), a primitive root; to be (causatively, make, pronounce or observe as) clean (ceremonially or morally):—appoint, bid, consecrate, dedicate, defile, hallow, (be, keep) holy(-er, place), keep, prepare, proclaim, purify, sanctify(-ied one, self), × wholly. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H6942**

The word “saint” is found in the New Testament as well, as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus,

called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:

The word “saint” in the Greek is ἅγιος (pronounced hag'-ee-os), from ἅγιος hágos (an awful thing) (compare G53, G2282); sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated):—(most) holy (one, thing), saint. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G40**

And this Greek word is from ἄγνός (pronounced hag-nos'), from the same as G40; properly, clean, i.e. (figuratively) innocent, modest, perfect:—chaste, clean, pure. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G53**

And from θάλπω (pronounced thal'-po), probably akin to θάλλω thállō (to warm); to brood, i.e. (figuratively) to foster:—cherish. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2282**

Joel Beeke then says, “Saint literally means “set-apart one” or “sanctified one.” When we turn from sin to Christ, God sets us apart from the world around us, seals us with His Holy Spirit, and calls us to pursue holiness of life. We now belong to Christ as members of His body, and we belong to God as His children and heirs. And God listens to the prayers of all His saints. This passage tells us that.”

All who are the Lord’s are saints, and “Saint literally means “set-apart one” or “sanctified one””, as Joel says. When we are sanctified, we are separated from sin, and set apart for God. And all saints are believers in Jesus Christ. But Israel will not cease to be a nation, as the Lord has promised.

Page 267: “Storm images can symbolize historical judgments against nations (Ps. 18:11-14; Isa. 28:1-3; 30:30-31). The fall of a mountain into the sea is a symbol of national calamity (Ps. 46:2). Blowing trumpets, casting down mountains, and throwing a rock into the sea are images of the overthrow of Babylon ([Rev.] 18:21; Jer. 51:25-29, 63-64). Forcing people to drink bitterness (wormwood) signifies bitter experiences like invasion, defeat, and exile (Jer. 8:14-16; 9:15-16; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19). Sun and moon struck (smitten) with darkness can be a sign of conquest by a foreign power (Ezek. 32:2, 7-8, 11). Therefore, these trumpets symbolize natural and political disasters throughout this age that display God’s sovereignty over creation, supremacy over man’s idols, and wrath against sin.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke quotes the above from Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible, 1877. He begins the quote, and says, “Storm images can symbolize historical judgments against nations (Ps. 18:11-14; Isa. 28:1-3; 30:30-31).”

His quote refers to a Psalm of David in **Psalm 18 (KJV):** 11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. 12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. 14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

And to **Isaiah 28 (KJV):** 1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest

of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. 3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

And to **Isaiah 30 (KJV):30** And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. 31 For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.

But the raining of hailstones is not a symbolic one but a real judgment, as we read in **Joshua 10 (KJV):9** Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. 10 And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. 11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. 12 Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel.

Joel Beeke continues his quote, and says, “Blowing trumpets, casting down mountains, and throwing a rock into the sea are images of the overthrow of Babylon ([Rev.] 18:21; Jer. 51:25-29, 63-64).”

He refers to **Revelation 18 (KJV):21** And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

And to **Jeremiah 51 (KJV):25** Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. 26 And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord. 27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. 28 Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. 29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.

And to **Jeremiah 51 (KJV):63** And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: 64 And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

But the first four trumpet judgments are as we read in **Revelation 8 (KJV):6** And the

seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

At first glance, this sounds like natural disasters, but on a scale as never before has happened on the earth. When have we seen “the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up”, as in verse 7? And when have we seen “the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed”, as in verse 9? And when have we seen “the third part of the waters” become “wormwood”, as in verse 11? We can only imagine what it would be like if “the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise”, as in verse 12. This will be during the time of trouble “such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”, as in Daniel 12:1.

To Joel Beeke, “the third part” is only symbolic of some devastation that will happen during the Church age because to him, numbers are symbolic and not literal in Revelation.

But the trumpet judgments are not general random happenings such as we see today. There is no reason in the Scripture to think of these judgments as just symbolic of anything. These are judgments that will be during the time of tribulation that Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Jesus did say that we in the church would have tribulation, as we read in **John 16 (KJV):33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

But Jesus mentions a time of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” in Matthew 24:21. This will be the time of Jacob’s trouble mentioned in Jeremiah 30:1-7.

As the trumpets sound, judgments happen on earth. These are not symbolic of “natural and political disasters throughout this age”, but these are judgments that God will bring upon the earth because of man’s sin in order to get man to repent.

Revelation 9

Page 273-74: “The locusts are given power to harm all people except those who have the seal of God on their foreheads (v. 4). The sealed ones have been freed from their sins by Christ’s blood through faith in Him (Rev. 7:1-3, 14). They now serve as priests and kings in God’s kingdom. Blessed are those who are forever sealed by the Holy Spirit as citizens of God’s kingdom! Are you one of them? Have you been freed from your sins by the blood of Christ?”

This trumpet warns that those who are not sealed or owned by Christ do not belong to Him. If that is the case for you, you are wide open to demonic forces and influences. The teaching of the Bible is clear: if you do not belong to Christ today, then you must belong to Satan and his demons.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “The locusts are given power to harm all people except those who have the seal of God on their foreheads (v. 4).”

He refers in context to **Revelation 9 (KJV):** 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. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

Joel Beeke continues, “The sealed ones have been freed from their sins by Christ’s blood through faith in Him (Rev. 7:1-3, 14).”

He refers to **Revelation 7 (KJV):** 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, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

And to **Revelation 7 (KJV):** 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.

Those who were sealed in Revelation 7:4-8 were 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel. Those who “came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” were the “great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”, as in Revelation 7:9.

To Joel Beek, those who are sealed from the 12 tribes of Israel are the same as the great multitude that came out of great tribulation. But there is no basis for this in the Scriptures.

Joel Beeke continues, “They now serve as priests and kings in God’s kingdom. Blessed

are those who are forever sealed by the Holy Spirit as citizens of God's kingdom! Are you one of them? Have you been freed from your sins by the blood of Christ?

This trumpet warns that those who are not sealed or owned by Christ do not belong to Him. If that is the case for you, you are wide open to demonic forces and influences. The teaching of the Bible is clear: if you do not belong to Christ today, then you must belong to Satan and his demons."

And he is correct when he says, "if you do not belong to Christ today, then you must belong to Satan and his demons." And so we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But let us keep this in mind, for when we get to Revelation, chapter 20, he will say that Satan is bound during the Church age, but he is on a leash.

And the fifth angel which sounds the trumpet releases a demon horde of locusts from the bottomless pit to whom it is "given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man", as in Revelation 9:5 above. This is definitely a judgment and not a natural disaster, and a definite time of "five months" is mentioned.

Page 279-80: "So if you are in Christ, you have nothing to fear. But if you do not belong to Christ and are still clinging to sin and the world, then you are under the power of the devil and his angels. The only way to stand against the hordes of locusts from hell is to be sealed by Christ. When the judgments of God fall upon the world, you must have Christ's seal on your forehead. Confess your sins now to God and ask for grace to believe in Christ alone for your salvation. Put on the whole armor of God and be sealed by His spirit. If you are Christ's, you are safe. If you are not, you are prey for the awful demonic influences that fill this world. You are prey to every lust of the flesh and every vain deceit that fills this world. You are prey to all the destructive powers that come from the pit. Ultimately, you are prey to the everlasting abyss of damnation."

Commentary: Joel Beeke is preaching the Gospel here. But while his encouragement to Christians and non Christians is good, he will say that Satan has been bound during the Church age when he refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):**1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Joel Beeke does not believe that the "thousand years" are literal, but that they are symbolic of the Church age. So Joel believes that Satan has been already bound, but he will allow a little freedom to Satan and will say he is on a leash as it were. And yet here he says that

if you are not Christ's, "you are prey for the awful demonic influences that fill this world". We need to keep this in mind when we get to his comments in Revelation 20.

Page 280: "Revelation 9:14 seems to imply the universality of war. It says, "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." In Revelation, the number four often refers to the four points of the compass, which sum up the entire world. So the description of war in verses 14 and following does not refer to Armageddon or a nuclear holocaust, but to military conflicts that will rage all over the world. The number four symbolizes that no part of the globe or point of the compass will escape the ravages of war."

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, "Revelation 9:14 seems to imply the universality of war. It says, "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."

He refers in context to **Revelation 9 (KJV):** 13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Joel continues, as he then says, "In Revelation, the number four often refers to the four points of the compass, which sum up the entire world. So the description of war in verses 14 and following does not refer to Armageddon or a nuclear holocaust, but to military conflicts that will rage all over the world. The number four symbolizes that no part of the globe or point of the compass will escape the ravages of war."

Armageddon is not mentioned here in this Scripture. The army mentioned in this Scripture is a demon army. So this Scripture is referring to a trumpet judgment which will take one third of the population of the earth that are left from the other judgments. Remember that in Revelation 6:8, with the opening of the fourth seal, a fourth of men were killed "with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth". The sixth trumpet will reduce the population on earth even more by one third.

Revelation 10

Page 304: “This action of taking and eating this little book offers us two important lessons—one for ourselves and the other for the evangelization of others. The first lesson is that it is not sufficient to have the Word of God in hand. We must digest it, meaning we must take it into our innermost being. We must say, like the prophet Jeremiah, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jer. 15:16). In other words, we must take the gospel to heart. We must take it into our inmost being so that it can give strength to our lives and transform us, just as food nourishes and strengthens our bodies.

The result of feeding on the Word of God is not only a schooled theological intellect, but also a Christ-like character. The purpose of such feeding is to change our being so that Jesus Christ in all His beauty and glory begins to shine forth in our character and lives.”

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 10 (KJV):8** 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: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. 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. 11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

And Joel Beeke refers to **Jeremiah 15 (KJV):16** Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

We can agree with Joel Beeke here. And we could add that “feeding on the Word of God” will give us a spiritual mind, as in **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

And as we feed on the word of God, our minds are renewed which transforms us, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your

mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

But there is a deeper significance of the eating of the little book here. The angel says in verses 5 to 6 that there should be “time no longer”, that is, no delay, as we read in **Revelation 10 (NASB):**5 Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven, 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there will no longer be a delay, 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He announced to His servants the prophets.

And in verse 7, when the seventh angel sounds, he says that “the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

After John ate the little book, it was sweet as honey in his mouth, but it made his belly bitter. Then the angel tells him he must prophesy again, indicating there was more to his message. And indeed there are twelve more chapters in Revelation, including the vial judgments still to come in chapter 16. That the little book made John’s belly bitter indicates that the worst is yet to come.

Revelation 11

Page 315: “The vision of Revelation 11:1-2 centers on the temple. Throughout the New Testament, the temple is used to describe the Christian Church. All through their writings, the apostles stress that believers are the temple. In the New Testament, the true temple of God is the church. As Peter says in 1 Peter 2:5, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” In the New Testament context, the word temple refers not to a building like the one that was replaced by Christ in His church, but, as Beale says, “The focus is now on the whole covenant community forming a spiritual temple in which God’s presence dwells.”

According to this symbolic understanding, then, we see that John is told in Revelation 11:1-2 to measure the temple, just as a surveyor is sent out to determine the precise boundaries of a parcel of land that is being purchased. John is determining the boundaries of the true church that God is committed to preserve through all the tribulations of every age. This vision is thus analogous to the vision of the sealing of the saints in Revelation 7, which says that in the midst of God’s judgments, the angel puts a mark on true believers so they will be saved throughout the great tribulation and make it safely into heaven. As Paul says, “the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19).

At the same time, John is told in verse 2 that he is not to measure the court outside the temple. That court is a symbol of nominal Christians—people who are associated with the church but are not true members of the body of Christ. They have not genuinely been saved through living faith in the Lord Jesus. In times of persecution, many of these nominal Christians fall away. As John says in 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.””

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “The vision of Revelation 11:1-2 centers on the temple. Throughout the New Testament, the temple is used to describe the Christian Church. All through their writings, the apostles stress that believers are the temple. In the New Testament, the true temple of God is the church.”

He refers to **Revelation 11 (KJV):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.”

But the word “temple” in the New Testament is also used of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, as we read in **Matthew 24 (KJV):2** And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 3 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

That temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 by Titus, the Roman general. But the temple will be rebuilt, for we know that when the antichrist shall come, he will set himself up in the temple and declare himself to be God, as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that

man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Jesus spoke of this time in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

The “holy place” refers to the Jewish temple.

Then in Ezekiel, chapters 40 through 47, the new temple is described. This temple has never been built before, for waters will issue out from this temple, as we read in **Ezekiel 47 (KJV):1** Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

Then the waters in the Dead Sea will be healed by these waters, as we read in **Ezekiel 47 (KJV):8** Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. 9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Now let us read again in **Revelation 11 (KJV):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.”

In verse 2 we read that the “holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months”. The context of this verse places the temple in verse 1 in Jerusalem. Then we read of the two witnesses dying in the city where our Lord was crucified in **Revelation 11 (KJV):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.

Joel Beeke makes everything in the book of Revelation symbolic in order to fit his cyclical interpretation. But his cyclical interpretation does not fit the context.

He then continues, “As Peter says in 1 Peter 2:5, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” In the New Testament context, the word temple refers not to a building like the one that was replaced by Christ in His church, but, as Beale says, “The focus is now on the whole covenant community forming a spiritual temple in which God’s presence dwells.””

Joel Beeke refers in context to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which

the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

And Paul taught as in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

And Jesus taught His disciples that He would build His church, as we read in **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Greek word translated “Peter” is petros, a stone, and the Greek word translated “rock” is petra, a bedrock. The bedrock upon which the church is being built is Christ, the “head of the corner”, or chief cornerstone, as Peter taught in 1 Peter 2:7 above.

Joel Beeke is correct in that he says the church is a temple, a spiritual house where we in the church offer up spiritual sacrifices. But God has given promise to Israel that they will do the same when all Israel will be saved. In order for Israel to be melted, and go through the time of Jacob’s trouble, the Church will have to be removed. Then God will again deal with Israel and bring them through the fire to salvation.

Joel continues, as he says, “According to this symbolic understanding, then, we see that John is told in Revelation 11:1-2 to measure the temple, just as a surveyor is sent out to determine the precise boundaries of a parcel of land that is being purchased. John is determining the boundaries of the true church that God is committed to preserve through all the tribulations of every age. This vision is thus analogous to the vision of the sealing of the saints in Revelation 7, which says that in the midst of God’s judgments, the angel puts a mark on true believers so they will be saved throughout the great tribulation and make it safely into heaven. As Paul says, “the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19).”

He refers to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

But the Scripture is very detailed, as we read again in **Revelation 11 (KJV):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.

This describes the Old Testament temple which had an altar, and a court of the Gentiles outside of the temple. There is no evidence in the Scripture that this is symbolic of the Church. Joel is again making the Scripture fit in his cyclical interpretation of the book of Revelation.

Joel continues, and says, “At the same time, John is told in verse 2 that he is not to measure the court outside the temple. That court is a symbol of nominal Christians—people who are associated with the church but are not true members of the body of Christ. They have not genuinely been saved through living faith in the Lord Jesus. In times of persecution, many

of these nominal Christians fall away. As John says in 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.””

And Joel makes a good analogy of the court here, but there is still no evidence in the Scriptures that the temple and the court is symbolic of the Church.

According to Joel Beeke’s interpretation, all of Revelation 11 would just be symbolic of the Church. But since we know that there is one more week in God’s plan for Israel that is still to come, and in the midst of that week the Antichrist will set himself up in “the temple” and declare “himself that he is God”, we know that Joel Beeke’s interpretation here is not a valid one.

Page 318: “Revelation 11:2 describes the church as besieged by the world. The church is like a city set upon a hill that is surrounded and under attack. Those who are true believers are safe, but nominal Christians are vulnerable to the world’s power and persecution. That is also a picture of the church. The world comes into the church through nominal confessions of faith and takes over the outer circle of the church. The church is a city besieged by the world throughout the New Testament age.

By contrast, verse 3 describes the church as going out into the world as a powerful witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the reason for numbering the time in days in this verse is to remind us that witnessing is an everyday requirement. Every day that we are in this world we are to testify about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Commentary: He is referring here in context to **Revelation 11 (KJV):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. **3** And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. **4** These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. **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.

So Joel Beeke is saying that the “temple” in verse 2 is the Church that is “like a city set upon a hill”. And the “two witnesses” in verse 3, he says, “describes the church as going out into the world as a powerful witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

But when have we seen fire proceeding out of the mouths in the Church, devouring their enemies. However, we have such a vision in **2 Kings 1 (KJV):9** Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. **10** And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. **11** Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. **12** And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and

consumed him and his fifty. 13 And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. 14 Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. 15 And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

And Elijah also shut up the heaven that there was no rain, as we read in **1 Kings 17 (KJV):**1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And in **1 Kings 18 (KJV):**1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

And in **1 Kings 18 (KJV):**41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

And in **1 Kings 18 (KJV):**45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. 46 And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Revelation 11:3 is speaking about two who will witness in the city of Jerusalem, as we shall see in the next segment.

We also know that the “forty and two months” in verse 2 are the same as the “thousand two hundred and threescore days” in verse 3. That is, they refer to 3½ lunar years, which is the Biblical year of 360 days. This would be one half of the tribulation week of 7 years that is still to come for Israel in order to fulfill the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27. These two witnesses have nothing to do with the Church, as we shall see. There is no reason to interpret the number “two” as anything but 2 in verse 3 where it speaks of the “two witnesses”.

And Joel Beeke does not sound so sure of his own interpretation, as he says, “Perhaps the reason for numbering the time in days in this verse is to remind us that witnessing is an everyday requirement.”

Page 322: “This passage certainly applies to the future because it describes what will happen when the last trumpet sounds and Jesus returns to earth. But verse 12 does not mention a secret rapture; rather, it vindicates an open one, for when Jesus Christ comes back to earth, the Church will be caught up to heaven in full sight of the enemy. The last trumpet will announce God’s final vindication of the gospel. God will have the final word. That is what John is saying to persecuted Christians.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke is referring here in context to **Revelation 11 (KJV):**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. 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. 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. 14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

So the two witnesses will finish their testimony and be killed by the “beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit”, that is, the Antichrist. There is no evidence that these two witnesses represent the Church. And they will be witnessing in “the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified”, which refers to Jerusalem. Therefore, it is very likely they will be Jews.

Also, if the two witnesses represent the church, then all of the Church must be dead when Christ comes. This cannot be, for “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”, as in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Joel Beeke’s interpretation is not valid here.

Page 326: “When Jesus returns, everyone will know it (Matt. 24:30). If the trumpet sounds after you’ve been in the grave for two thousand years, you will stand on your feet and rise to meet Christ. As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” No one will miss out on the second coming. When the trumpet sounds, we will all hear it.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke refers in context to **Matthew 24 (KJV):29** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

So the timing here is when Jesus returns “Immediately after the tribulation of those days” in verse 29. And in verse 30, “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven”. This does not seem to fit in Joel Beeke’s chronology. He believes the timing of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 is the same as the rapture of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:12, and since everyone saw the two witnesses rise from the dead, that means that everyone on earth will see the church raptured, and that all the Church must be dead. But it is evident that, since it is

“the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit”, which is the antichrist, who kills them, that would mean that judgment is still to fall on the beast.

And the trumpet that sounds in Revelation 11 is mentioned in **Revelation 11 (KJV):14** The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

This seventh trumpet is the third woe which will encompass the seven vial judgments which begin in **Revelation 15 (KJV):5** And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

And the first vial was poured out, as we read in **Revelation 16 (KJV):1** And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

According to Joel Beeke’s interpretation of the two witnesses being the Church caught up, this would also leave time before the final judgment when the Church is not present. And this does not fit in Joel Beeke’s timing of the final judgment, for in his thinking, “every eye will see Him”, and it all happens at once, and then the final judgment.

Page 328: “Verse 19 tells us that when the last trumpet sounds and Jesus Christ returns to earth on the clouds, God will hold an open house for the universe. He will display to the entire cosmos what He has been doing in this world since the dawn of time. He will open up His temple for inspection. He has been building this temple, not with bricks and stones, but with living stones, that is, living people (1 Peter 2:5). That is already happening now. Whenever someone is converted and becomes a Christian, he becomes a living stone in God’s temple. One day, the very last person for whom Christ died upon the cross will be saved. The last stone will be placed, and the temple will be complete. On that day, God will open the temple and show forth His works on earth.

The tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament were just architectural models, built on a human scale. Their rituals and ceremonies were mere scaffolding. In the New Testament days, the scale models were laid aside, and the scaffolding discarded as God built His church. When the trumpet sounds, the church will be complete.

Verse 19 refers to the ark of the covenant of the Old Testament. It was the preeminent sign of God’s presence among His people and of the covenant of grace. Inside the ark were the two tablets of the law. The lid of the ark was the mercy seat, on which the priest would sprinkle blood to atone for sin, thereby obtaining pardon for God’s people. The ark of the covenant was a wonderful symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. It was made of gold and wood, representative of Christ, who is the gold of deity and the wood of humanity.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke here refers in context to **Revelation 11 (KJV):**15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Joel Beeke does not mince words here. He believes that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plans and purposes. But Israel's time will come, as we read again in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):**27 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.

God wants us to know that all His promises to Israel are certain, as we read again in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):**35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly", as we read in Revelation 11:14 above. The third woe will be the finality of God's judgments during the great tribulation, of which the angel warned about in **Revelation 8 (KJV):**13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

The worst is coming! Israel has been set aside while the Lord builds His Church. But the Lord will again deal with Israel in the tribulation week, as He has promised. But we can agree with Joel Beeke as he says, "Verse 19 refers to the ark of the covenant of the Old Testament. It was the preeminent sign of God's presence among His people and of the covenant of grace. Inside the ark were the two tablets of the law. The lid of the ark was the mercy seat, on which the priest would sprinkle blood to atone for sin, thereby obtaining pardon for God's people. The ark of the covenant was a wonderful symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. It was made of gold and wood, representative of Christ, who is the gold of deity and the wood of humanity."

Revelation 12

Page 341: “So the woman of Revelation, who is “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” represents, first of all, the people of God under the old covenant, the twelve tribes of Israel. As such, she is the church in confinement, the church under the law, waiting for the birth of the Messiah from her body.”

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

The woman does represent “the people of God under the old covenant, the twelve tribes of Israel”, for the sun is symbolic of Jacob, the moon is symbolic of his wife, and the twelve stars are symbolic of Jacob’s sons, as we read in **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

But Israel is not “the church in confinement”, or “the church under the law”. Now is the “times of the Gentiles”, as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):20** And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

In verse 22 we read that “these be the days of vengeance”, and in verse 23, there shall be “wrath upon this people”, and in verse 24 “they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations”, and “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. And this prophecy has certainly been fulfilled, for we know that about 6 million Jews died in the holocaust of World War II.

Israel is now in blindness in part, as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

In the Church age, God is reaching out to the Gentiles. Israel is out of favor with the Lord until the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in” because they crucified their Savior. But when the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in”, the Lord will then “turn away ungodliness from Jacob”, and “all Israel shall be saved”.

Page 342: “Soon after the woman brings forth her child, Revelation 12:5 says that, “her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” He is snatched away from the jaws of the enormous red dragon and taken up to heaven. The woman flees into the wilderness, where God nourishes her, feeds her, and looks after her for three and a half years (v.6), which is symbolic of the gospel age.

The woman represents not only the church of the Old Testament, but also the New Testament church. The number twelve represents not only the twelve tribes of Israel, but also the twelve apostles of the Lord (cf. Rev 21:12,14). She is not only the church of the Old Testament waiting to give birth to the Messiah, for after the child is born, the woman flees into the wilderness in an effort to escape the devil. But Satan, having been frustrated in his efforts to devour the child, persecutes her; in other words, he refocuses on the destruction of the New Testament church (vv.13,17). John is speaking here to first-century Christians who are suffering in “the wilderness,” enduring one conflict after another. John assures them that though the dragon is pursuing them, God will provide for them and care for them (v.14).

Thus the woman represents the people of God in all ages. She is the embodiment of God’s covenant promise to Abraham and his seed, that out of his line would come a Messiah who would bring saving blessing to all nations.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “Soon after the woman brings forth her child, Revelation 12:5 says that, “her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” He is snatched away from the jaws of the enormous red dragon and taken up to heaven. The woman flees into the wilderness, where God nourishes her, feeds her, and looks after her for three and a half years (v.6), which is symbolic of the gospel age.”

Let us read Revelation, chapter 12, in context, as we begin in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

Joel Beeke interpreted these symbols correctly on page 341, when he said, “So the woman of Revelation, who is “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” represents, first of all, the people of God under the old covenant, the twelve tribes of Israel.” And this we know to be true, as we read in **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Joseph’s father, Jacob, interprets the dream for us. The sun is symbolic of Jacob or Israel as he was renamed. The moon is symbolic of Joseph’s mother. The eleven stars, plus Joseph, are symbolic of the twelve stars in Revelation 12:1. This identifies the woman as Israel.

But Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, “The woman represents not only the church of the Old Testament, but also the New Testament church. The number twelve represents not only the twelve tribes of Israel, but also the twelve apostles of the Lord (cf. Rev 21:12,14). She is not only the church of the Old Testament waiting to give birth to the Messiah, for after the child is born, the woman flees into the wilderness in an effort to escape the devil. But Satan, having

been frustrated in his efforts to devour the child, persecutes her; in other words, he refocuses on the destruction of the New Testament church (vv.13,17).”

He refers in context to **Revelation 21 (KJV):**10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The context of these verses is given in **Revelation 21 (KJV):**1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

So the number twelve is equal to the number of the tribes of Israel, and to the number of the apostles appointed by Jesus when He was on earth. But the context of Revelation 12 does not include the apostles.

We continue to read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

When the “dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered” in verse 4, he used Herod to kill all of the children 2 years old and under in Israel, as we read in **Matthew 2 (KJV):**16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

That the woman “brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron”, further identifies her as Israel for the child is Jesus Christ who was “caught up unto God, and to his throne” after He was crucified for our sins.

We continue to read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Now the woman flees “into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God”, for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days”, or 3½ Biblical years.

In order to see the timing of these verse, we continue in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the

kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

So the devil is cast out of heaven and restricted to this earth, for “neither was their place found any more in heaven” for him in verse 8. And in verse 12, this causes “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down” to them, “having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time”.

Then in verse 13, “And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child”. So the dragon is cast out of heaven, and then restricted to this earth, and then he knows that his time is short. He then goes after the woman “which brought forth the man child”, Israel, but in verse 14, Israel is “given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent”. The Church is never mentioned in the context of these verses.

Let us continue to read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):** 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Now the woman has a place prepared by God for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days”, or 3½ years, as in Revelation 12:6 above. And she is also “nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent” in Revelation 12:14 above. This would agree with the 3½ years time in verse 6. This would also correspond to the timing in **Daniel 9 (KJV):** 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The abomination of desolation is the time when the Antichrist will stand in the temple and declare himself to be God. This will be in the middle of the tribulation week, as he says in verse 27, “in the midst of the week”. This will also be the time when the devil is restricted to this earth. So Israel will be running from the antichrist who will be empowered by Satan for the last 3½ years of the 7 years, or last week of the 70 weeks determined for Israel in Daniel 9:24.

This is the time Jesus spoke of in His warning in **Matthew 24 (KJV):** 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his

house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Those in Judaea at this time are told to “flee into the mountains”. Jesus is telling anyone who may read these verses in Israel, “in those days” in verse 19, to flee. So the woman represents faithful Israel, and not the Church. God has a plan for the Church, and He will fulfill it. But He also has a plan for Israel, and He will fulfill it also.

Page 347: “The war of the ages has been fought and won, for Christ has decisively defeated the devil by His atoning death. The cross was not an unforeseen tragedy; it was the battlefield God prepared, before the foundation of the world, where His Son, Jesus Christ, would decisively defeat the dragon. Hebrews 2:14 says that in His death, Jesus destroyed Satan, who had the power of death. And Colossian 2:15 says that upon the cross, Christ openly triumphed over all principalities and powers of darkness. He came to this earth to destroy the power of the devil, and He has done that. He did it at Calvary. He also did it at the empty tomb. He does so now as he sits in heavenly places “to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” And He will do it finally and forever in His final Judgment.

Revelation 12:7-12a should not be seen as describing events that will happen in the future. Neither should this passage be seen as a chronological addendum to the verses that precede it. Rather, it should be viewed as a kind of replay of Christ’s victory over Satan.”

Commentary: He refers here to **Hebrews 2 (KJV):14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

And in context to **Colossians 2 (KJV):14** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

And Christ is already victorious over Satan, as Jesus taught in **Luke 10 (KJV):17** And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

And in **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

But in Revelation 12:7-9, Satan will be cast out of heaven and restricted to this earth

in the middle of the tribulation week. We must interpret the Scriptures in their proper context. Revelation 12:7-12a should be seen as describing events that will happen in the future. This is not a replay of Christ's victory over Satan. Revelation 12:7-12a is describing events that will occur at the time of Jacob's trouble, but he will be saved out of it, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):6** Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Notice in verse 7 above that, "that day is great, so that none is like it". This will be a day like no other, and not a panoramic view of other days.

Now in regards to Joel Beeke's statement, "He does so now as he sits in heavenly places "to rule all nations with a rod of iron"", the verse he is referring to, Revelation 12:5, refers to Christ's rule in the millennium. Joel Beeke does not believe that there will be a literal millennium. But the phrase, "rod of iron" is found four times in the Bible. The first is in **Psalms 2 (KJV):6** Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 9 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

It is also found in **Revelation 2 (KJV):26** And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule 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.

This is speaking of the reward of the righteous during the millennium. It is also found in **Revelation 12 (KJV):5** And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV):11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.

Notice that in verse 15 it says, "he shall rule them with a rod of iron". The verb is in the future tense. This refers to God's plan in the future. This was also revealed by Isaiah in his prophecy in **Isaiah 2 (KJV):1** The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from

Jerusalem. 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

So in the “last days” in verse 2, “he shall judge among the nations” in verse 4, and “nation shall not lift up sword against nation”. We are not there yet. This refers to a future time.

Then we read in **Isaiah 65 (KJV)**:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

This cannot be the time of the new heaven and the new earth for then there will be no more death, as there is in verse 20 above, for we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV)**:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

We continue to read in **Isaiah 65 (KJV)**:21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

This is a description of life in the millennium. People will live several hundred years as they did before the flood. And there will be changes in the animal life. Israel shall again be the head of the nations. The Lord Jesus will rule on earth with a rod of iron for a thousand years, and. “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”, as in Isaiah 2:4 above.

Then there will be one final rebellion because sin will still remain in the human race, and because death will continue until the new heaven and the new earth which the Lord will create. This is revealed in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Page 348: “But Jesus sees Calvary as the high point of His work on earth. He says that He is glorified in death. Being lifted up on the cross, He defeated the prince of this world, Satan, who was then hurled down.”

Commentary: Jesus taught as in **John 12 (KJV):**31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

And we read in **John 17 (KJV):**5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Jesus did defeat Satan for us at the cross. But the time of Satan’s restriction to this earth will be in the middle of the tribulation. The second half of the tribulation will be the great tribulation because the devil will then be restricted to this earth.

Satan has not yet been restricted to this earth. Satan still has access to heaven, as we read in **Job 1 (KJV):**6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. 7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? 9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. 12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

Satan was also able to smite Job with boils as we read in **Job 2 (KJV):**3 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. 4 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. 9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

This did not change when Jesus died on the cross for us. But believers do have authority in Jesus’ name over all the power of the enemy, as we read again in **Luke 10 (KJV):**17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and

nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Satan will be restricted to this earth at the middle of the tribulation week. Then it will be hell on earth. This is why it is called the great tribulation. And this is why we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):12** Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Page 349: “Although Satan has been defeated and is on the run, he is still a force to be reckoned with. That is the main thrust of Revelation 12. It is the message John wants to share with Christians who are being persecuted by the Roman Empire. The apostle wants these believers to see the enemy and to understand what is going on. Satan is frustrated and angry because he has been defeated at Calvary, so he has turned his attention to the church and is trying to trap her with a stream of lies and delusions. When that is unsuccessful, Satan turns his attention to individual believers. Verse 17 says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [Christians], which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” As individual believers, we all belong to the same family. We are that remnant.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “Although Satan has been defeated and is on the run, he is still a force to be reckoned with. That is the main thrust of Revelation 12. It is the message John wants to share with Christians who are being persecuted by the Roman Empire. The apostle wants these believers to see the enemy and to understand what is going on.”

But John is seeing a vision here, as the chapter begins in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

This is not John’s “message” which he “wants to share with Christians who are being persecuted by the Roman Empire”, as if it were some kind of sermon. This is a vision John is seeing that is given to him by the Lord.

Now Joel Beeke then continues, and says, “Satan is frustrated and angry because he has been defeated at Calvary, so he has turned his attention to the church and is trying to trap her with a stream of lies and delusions. When that is unsuccessful, Satan turns his attention to individual believers. Verse 17 says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [Christians], which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” As individual believers, we all belong to the same family. We are that remnant.”

He is referring in context to **Revelation 12 (KJV):13** And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Joel Beeke sees this as happening during the Church age, the age in which we now live. But this refers to the middle of the tribulation week, because the woman is Israel and not the Church. Satan will be cast down to the earth in the middle of the tribulation week. Then the Antichrist will break the covenant he has made with Israel, as we read again in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Then Israel will be given a place of refuge by God for “a time, and times, and half a time” or three and one half years, the last half of the tribulation week. This will be the great tribulation, literally hell on earth when Satan is confined to the earth’s atmosphere, and the vial judgments will be poured out in Revelation 16.

Now we need to keep in mind that Joel Beeke said that, although Satan is “on the run, he is still a force to be reckoned with”. This will be important when we read his comments on Revelation 20 about the binding of Satan in the bottomless pit.

And the Church is not the remnant that is referred to, but Israel, as we read in **Jeremiah 23 (KJV):3** And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

And in **Ezekiel 6 (KJV):8** Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.

And in **Joel 2 (KJV):32** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Revelation 13

Page 362-63: “Many have tried to identify who these beasts represent. Some interpretations are sincere and some are sensational; some are serious and some are silly; some are intelligent and some are inane. But the Christians of John’s day would have had no trouble identifying the two beasts. These first readers of Revelation were being persecuted by officials of the imperial government. Whether the persecution was instigated by Nero, Domitian, or some local ruler, it came upon believers with brutal savagery. In such wicked rulers, early Christians saw the first beast: the deified military and political power of man.

As to the second beast, the Roman imperial powers did not oppose the worship of various gods, so long as those worshipers honored the Emperor. In fact, in Asia Minor there were priests and temples devoted specifically to the worship of the genius of the Emperor. One such temple in Ephesus housed a large statue of Domitian. Christians in Asia Minor felt increasing pressure to publicly offer worship to the Emperor, and refusal to participate could result in economic exclusion from commerce, and worse yet, capital punishment from the civil authorities.

Therefore, although John wrote in cloaked language, it would have been clear to the first recipients of this book that he referred to the idolatrous political and religious systems by which Satan attacked the church through the civic and cultural institutions of the world.”

Commentary: It is possible that the Christians of John’s day did identify the beasts as Joel Beeke describes, but that doesn’t help us rightly divide the word of God. If we encounter a symbol in the Bible, we must study to find the interpretation of that symbol in the Bible itself. The Bible interprets all of its symbols. We will understand more about the Scripture’s interpretation of the beasts as we progress.

Page 363-64: “John is referring to Rome in chapter 13, but he speaks in symbolic language. He writes this way to protect himself, his readers, and the book of Revelation itself. If he were to specifically name Caesar or the priest in Asia, Revelation would not be distributed. Any person found reading the book would be sentenced to death. So John writes in code about a dreadful reality in history. He writes about Rome as a secular and religious power that is raining destruction upon the followers of Christ.”

Commentary: John uses symbols in Revelation. But it is not John who made up the symbols but the Lord. All of the symbols in Revelation then must be interpreted by the Bible itself. The understanding of these symbols will not be understood by carnal minds. And this may be why the Lord inspired John to write as he did. But Caesar was not the beast in Revelation, chapter 13. The Roman emperors were brutal, but Jesus spoke of a time of trouble that has never been before, nor shall be afterwards. That is the time that Revelation, chapters 6 to 19, is speaking of.

Page 364: “Revelation 13 teaches us that these two beasts have labored to destroy the church throughout history. They represent what the Bible describes as the “spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3). John comforts the early Christians by noting that these antichrists are a sign we are living

in the last times (1 John 2:18). The last times stretch from the first coming of Christ to His second coming, during which time there have already been many antichrists. But Scripture also tells us that at the end of time the antichrist will come, who is the epitome of rebellion against God. This may be a person or an institution, but John's point is that the spirit of antichrist is evident throughout history."

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, "Revelation 13 teaches us that these two beasts have labored to destroy the church throughout history. They represent what the Bible describes as the "spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3)."

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

The beast in Revelation 13 is the antichrist, and the spirit of antichrist has been with us from the beginning. But Revelation 13 gives us a vision of what the antichrist and the false prophet will be like. When Joel Beeke says that, "Revelation 13 teaches us that these two beasts have labored to destroy the church throughout history", he misses the point. Revelation 13 is not talking about the Church, but the saints who will be present during the time of the great tribulation. It will be "given unto him", the antichrist, "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations", as in Revelation 13:7.

It is true that the spirit of antichrist has been with us from the beginning as John has said in 1 John 4:3, but Revelation 13 is speaking of the great tribulation, the last 3½ years of the week of tribulation.

Joel Beeke then says, "John comforts the early Christians by noting that these antichrists are a sign we are living in the last times (1 John 2:18). The last times stretch from the first coming of Christ to His second coming, during which time there have already been many antichrists."

And to **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

And John does comfort Christians in his epistle. But we are talking about Revelation 13 here.

Joel Beeke then continues, and says, "But Scripture also tells us that at the end of time the antichrist will come, who is the epitome of rebellion against God. This may be a person or an institution, but John's point is that the spirit of antichrist is evident throughout history."

If "at the end of time the antichrist will come", as we have just quoted Joel Beeke as saying, this seems to be contrary to his belief that Revelation is cyclical. And he is not sure whether the beast is a "person or an institution".

Let us see what the Scripture teaches. The first beast mentioned in Revelation 13 has a dual identity, as we shall see. Let us begin reading in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. **2** And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth

of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

When the beast rises up out of the sea in verse 1, he has “seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy”. This reminds us of **Revelation 12 (KJV):3** And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

The identity of the dragon is given in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Now another characteristic of this beast is as in verse 2 where it says that “the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion”. These are the first 3 beasts mentioned by Daniel in **Daniel 7 (KJV):2** Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

The first beast was like a lion. This was the national symbol for Babylon. The second beast was like a bear, which was the national symbol for Media-Persia. The third beast was like a leopard, which was the national symbol for Greece. These beasts are in order chronologically as history will verify.

Then the fourth beast mentioned by Daniel is as we read in **Daniel 7 (KJV):7** After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Now the interpretation of Daniel's dream is then given in **Daniel 7 (KJV):17** These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

So the four beasts are four kings. Then we continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV):19** Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which

shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

In Daniel 7:17 the great beasts, which are four, are four kings. And in verse 23, the fourth beast is also the fourth kingdom, which means that the first three beasts were also kingdoms as well as kings. We continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV):24** And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. 26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

The fourth beast shall have ten horns, which are ten kings in verse 24, “and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings”. The one who subdues the three kings is the antichrist. Now the beast looks like the one in Revelation 13, which had seven heads and ten horns. The interesting thing about this beast is that it has no national symbol mentioned in Daniel for it. It is not like any one beast, but it “was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass”, as in Daniel 7:19 above.

Now let us read again in **Daniel 7 (KJV):23** Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

The fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision was Rome. This would correspond to the fourth beast in Daniel 7, which “shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth”.

So in Revelation 13, we have the fulfillment of Daniel’s visions in Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, with a little more information, as we read again in **Revelation 13 (KJV):5** And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

The end has been determined for this beast in the chronology of the kingdoms. When the beast appears in this form with seven heads and ten horns, it will have 42 months before its judgment.

Now Rome was the fourth kingdom in Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision in **Daniel 2 (KJV):40** And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all

these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Now the interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, and Daniel's vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7 all extend to the victory of the God of heaven and the kingdom He shall establish. So Rome, as the fourth kingdom, must be revived, and this corresponds to the feet and ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue. And so we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):26** And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

So "the people of the prince that shall come" are those who destroyed "the city and the sanctuary", and these people were from Rome for it was Titus, the Roman general, who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The prince that shall come refers to antichrist who will rise as head of the revived Roman empire, and this will be the fourth kingdom on earth which "the stone" that "was cut out of the mountain without hands", will "brake in pieces", as in Daniel 2:45 above.

Now let us read again in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

So the beast will be the revived Roman empire, which will be a combination of the empires of Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece, as well as Rome. This is the first identity of the beast.

But the beast is also symbolic of a person, as we continue in **Revelation 13 (KJV):3** And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

This "beast" has a "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" in verse 5, and "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle" in verse 6. This will be the fulfillment of the words of Jesus in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

This is the antichrist. And “power was given unto him to continue forty and two months”, which corresponds to the time that the woman, Israel, is protected as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):6** And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

And in **Revelation 12 (KJV):14** And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

So the word “beast” in Revelation 13:1 is symbolic of both an empire and a person. This is the first beast in Revelation 13.

Then there is a second “beast”, as we continue in **Revelation 13 (KJV):11** And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

This second “beast” is called the false prophet in **Revelation 19 (KJV):20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And in **Revelation 16 (KJV):13** And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

And in **Revelation 20 (KJV):10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

An institution will not be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Only a person will be cast in there. Therefore the first beast in Revelation 13 will be the antichrist, and the second beast will be the false prophet, and in the last 3½ years, or “forty and two months” shall be great tribulation.

Page 366-67: “The world is in the grip of institutions and ideologies that transcend the individual and condition his lifestyle. We live in a consumer society that is rife with hidden persuaders, multinational companies, ideologies, and *-isms* that wage war against Christ and

His church. We should look behind these things to see the beasts of Revelation, the mystery of iniquity, the power of antichrist, and the devil's schemes against the church."

Commentary: The beasts, the antichrist and the false prophet, will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. They are not institutions. But we do "live in a consumer society that is rife with hidden persuaders".

Page 367-68: "Verses 16 and 17 tell us how to identify the beasts. They say, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

The mark of the beast, like so many things in Revelation, should not be taken literally but symbolically. We are not to look for a barcode, a brand mark, or a credit card number that is to be embedded on the forehead or the right hand. Myriad suggestions have been made by those who view the entire book of Revelation as literal. Their interpretations and predictions may be entertaining and sell books, but they mishandle Revelation and its symbols.

The mark of the beast is not a literal mark any more than is the mark of God's elect, which seals them as His own (Rev. 7:3-4). The mark of the beast is simply a sign of ownership. In the days of Roman rule, slaves were marked with their owner's seal, which meant they had to serve that person. Receiving the mark of the beast, then, means that you belong to Satan, serve him, and worship him. The mark is pressed upon the forehead, which symbolizes the mind or philosophy of a person; or on the right hand, symbolizing a person's actions, deeds, trade, and industry. In other words, when people's thinking and actions are controlled by someone who hates Christ, they bear the mark of the beast."

Commentary: Joel Beeke quotes Revelation 13:16-17, which is as we read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):**16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

He says that, "The mark of the beast, like so many things in Revelation, should not be taken literally but symbolically." And he concludes that, "In other words, when people's thinking and actions are controlled by someone who hates Christ, they bear the mark of the beast."

And he compares the seal of the elect to the mark of the beast, as he says, "The mark of of the beast is not a literal mark any more than is the mark of God's elect, which seals them as His own (Rev. 7:3-4)."

He refers in context to **Revelation 7 (KJV):**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, 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.

But the sealing done by the angel was with the "seal of the living God". It is a spiritual

seal that is not discernible by fleshly minds. The mark of the beast will be a symbol that the world will be able to discern, for you must have the mark of the beast to buy or sell, as we read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):** 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

The word “mark” in verse 16 in the Greek is **χάραγμα** (pronounced khar'-ag-mah); from the same as G5482; a scratch or etching, i.e. stamp (as a badge of servitude), or sculptured figure (statue):—graven, mark. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G5480.**

And this Greek word is from **χάραξ** (pronounced khar'-ax); from **χαράσσω** charássō (to sharpen to a point; akin to G1125 through the idea of scratching); a stake, i.e. (by implication) a palisade or rampart (military mound for circumvallation in a siege):—trench. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G5482.**

This word does not refer to actions, but to a visible mark which should then be taken literally and not symbolically.

Revelation 14

Page 376: “Nowhere does Satan appear to have as much power as in the book of Revelation. Yet in that book, the devil is overcome by a lamb. That is the mystery of God—that by weakness, by yielding, by God becoming man, by the helplessness of infancy, and by suffering and death, the awful powers of evil personified in the beasts of Revelation are overcome forever. That is God’s way of salvation.

Do you believe that? Does all your trust, hope, and confidence rest in the God of all creation, who took on frail human flesh and subjected himself to death at the hands of His creatures? Are you convinced that you are saved by a crucified Savior, who is a lamb? Stand in awe at the weakness of Calvary, for it is a sign of the power and wisdom of God. It is the only way sinners are saved.”

Commentary: We can agree with Joel Beeke here. Jesus Christ is the lamb of God as John the Baptist taught in **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

He is the only way sinners are saved, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Page 377: “Likewise, Revelation 13 speaks of the antichrist, who seeks dominion over the whole earth. Through a confederacy of evil, he conspires against the Lord and His Anointed.”

Commentary: We can agree with Joel Beeke here.

Page 378: “The Lord wants us to understand that human institutions, ideologies, and rulers are in the grip of antichrist today. Yet the Lamb stands with His people on Mount Zion in the position of triumph. God has set His King upon the holy mountain and has given Him the heathen for His inheritance.

So do not think of Mount Zion as a real place in the world, a mountain in Jerusalem where a lamb will appear with 144,000 troops.”

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 14 (KJV):1** And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: **3** And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. **4** These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. **5** And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The word Sion in verse 1 is a translation of the Greek word, Σιών, pronounced siōn. So it is referring to Mount Zion. This reference is to the heavenly Mount Zion, of which we also read

of in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Whatever touched the mountain shall be put to death, as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):**12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

The “mount that might be touched” in Hebrews 12:18 to 19 above refers to **Exodus 19 (KJV):**18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.

And Hebrews 12:19 and 20 refer to **Exodus 20 (KJV):**18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

In Hebrews, chapter 12, Mount Sinai is just used as an example of a mountain that could be touched. But there is an actual Mount Zion in Scripture, as we read in **2 Samuel 5 (KJV):**7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.

And in **1 Kings 8 (KJV):**1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.

And in **2 Kings 19 (KJV):**31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

And in **1 Chronicles 11 (KJV):**5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David.

And in **2 Chronicles 5 (KJV):**1 Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the

house of God. 2 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.

So Mount Zion is a real place in the world, a mountain in Jerusalem, but Revelation 14 is speaking of the heavenly mount Zion, as we read again in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):22** But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Page 379: “In the book, Lindsey argues that the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 14:1 are 144,000 “Billy Grahams,” or evangelists. Through the preaching of these men, a great multitude, which no one can number, will be saved. To Lindsey, then, the 144,000 are a select group of premillennial preachers. They are Christ’s bodyguard, a special elite force who will stand on the earth at the last day.

However, such an interpretation does not arise from Revelation 14. The text says nothing about this group of people having a special, evangelistic mission. Rather, we are told at the end of Revelation 14:3 that the 144,000 are they “which were redeemed from the earth.” They are followers of the Lamb. In other words, they are Christians. But will 144,000 people be saved? Of course not. This number, like all others in the book of Revelation, is symbolic.”

Commentary: He refers to The Late Great Planet Earth by Hal Lindsey, and in context to **Revelation 14 (KJV):1** And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

The “hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth” are the saved Jews from the twelve tribes, which we read of in Revelation, chapter 7. They are saved because they are believers in Jesus Christ, and they will win a great multitude during the tribulation week, the last week of the 70 weeks of Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27.

The numbers are not symbolic in Revelation, just like they are not symbolic in the rest of the Daniel, and the rest of the Bible. When they are understood literally, they make perfect sense with the rest of Scripture.

And if the numbers are not literal in the book of Revelation, why is the “great multitude” pictured in heaven, as we read in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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;

And in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

And then the 144,000 are pictured in heaven seven chapters later in **Revelation 14 (KJV)**:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

If the number 144,000 is just a symbolic number, why is it mentioned again in Revelation 14? And in verse 3, “sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth”. And in verse 4, “they are virgins”.

Joel Beeke would say that this is because Revelation is cyclical and must be read with this in mind. But this makes no sense. What makes sense is that, after their witness, the 144,000 were then martyred, and are then seen in heaven with the Lord.

Page 379-80: “Likewise, the numbers in Revelation are to be understood spiritually. Twelve is the number of the church. There are the twelve patriarchs of Israel in the Old Testament. The twelve apostles in the New Testament are the foundation of the church. And 144,000, or 12 times 12 times 1,000, represents the complete church. It is the symbolic number of the elect, for whom Christ has died. The 144,000 represent the great multitude of the redeemed, which no one can number.

Revelation 14:1 says they have the “Father’s name written in their foreheads”. This reminds us of the 144,000 of chapter 7, who have God’s seal on their foreheads and are a multitude that no man can number.”

Commentary: The number, 144,000, is equal to 12 times 12,000 as we read in Revelation, chapter 7. It represents 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, as we read again in **Revelation 7 (KJV)**: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. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of

the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

After the 144,000 are sealed, there was a great multitude which stood before the throne, as we read again in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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;

The 144,000 were sealed for a specific purpose, in order to be a witness to the Gentiles during the tribulation. Israel will finally fulfill its calling to be a witness to the Gentiles. This great multitude will be a result of the witness of the 144,000 Israelites during the tribulation. And this great multitude were not Jews, for they were “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”. That this great multitude “stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” shows that they were saved by the witness of the 144,000, as we read again in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

As this great multitude “which came out of great tribulation” stands before the throne in heaven, it is evident that they were martyred. And so, in Revelation 14, we now see the 144,000 in heaven for they now stand before the throne of God. This means that they were also martyred after their witness.

There is no justification for interpreting the numbers in Revelation “spiritually”. All of the symbols in the Bible are interpreted by the Bible itself, as we saw in Revelation 12 with the woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. These represent Jacob, and Joseph’s mother, and their 12 sons, as we read again in **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

God has promised to keep Israel as a nation, as we read again in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):35** Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

Page 388: “In any church, there is an invisible dividing line; some people are followers of the Lamb, and others are followers of Satan and the beasts. Revelation 14 clearly contrasts those who are on either side of this line. On one side are the followers of the Lamb, the 144,000, representing the church made up of the total sum of the elect. On the other side are those who

worship the beast. The gospel is the dividing line between these two groups. Revelation 14 also says that this division will continue until the final harvest of the earth and the final judgment.”

Commentary: Revelation 14 is clearly not about the Church. It is about the witness of true Israel who will be saved during the tribulation week, and be a witness to the nations. We do see a unity of Israel and the Church in that all who are believers in Israel and the Church are believers in Jesus Christ. But God has a plan for Israel, and He has a plan for the Church.

Page 390: “The gospel, while sharply focused on Calvary, is as big as the Bible. It is woven into everything that God has revealed to us. You won’t understand the Bible unless you realize that the focal point of Scripture is Christ crucified. Everything the Bible has to say leads us to Christ, and from there directs us into the way we are to live as His followers. So we are to understand this message of the first angel as the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is good news.

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 14 (KJV):6** And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, **7** Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And we can say, Amen, to Joel Beeke’s comment here. But notice that there is a time element in verse 7, which says, “the hour of his judgment is come”. This points to a specific time, and that time is running out for those on earth who do not believe.

Page 396: “Babylon is man setting himself against the decrees and counsels of God. Babylon is the world, the kingdom of antichrist, which is opposed to God and His people.”

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 14 (KJV):8** And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

There is much truth in Joel Beeke’s comment here, but we will understand more of the context of this Scripture when we get to Revelation, chapter 17 and 18.

Page 399: “Third, hell is everlasting. The sins of the world are sins against the infinite and eternal majesty of God, so they deserve infinite, eternal punishment. Revelation 14:11 says of the ungodly, “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night.” The wicked will have no relief or intermission from God’s fury. They will be ever dying, yet never dead. The wrath of God will never be exhausted, because He is infinitely angry against sin that is committed against Him. James Hamilton writes, “Hell lasts forever because God is infinitely important. Hell is about the worth and majesty of God. If you understand what it means for God to be God, you will understand why hell lasts forever.” Moreover, those in hell will keep on sinning, adding to the eternal day of wrath forever and ever. Thomas Watson says, “Oh eternity! Eternity! Who can fathom it”.

The only way to escape such damnation is through the Lamb who endured the agonies

of hell for those who worship Him in Spirit and truth.”

Commentary: We can agree with Joel Beeke’s comment here. Hell is eternal. The only way to escape it is “through the Lamb”. John Piper offers this definition of God’s righteousness when he says, ”God’s righteousness is His unwavering allegiance to do what is right, that is, most ultimately, to uphold the infinite worth of His glory.” **The Future of Justification, A Response to N. T. Wright, by John Piper, page 78.**

It is because of His righteousness that God will not allow evil to triumph.

Page 402: “The sweet pronouncement of the Spirit does not say that the deeds of Christians will precede them. As they enter into the presence of the heavenly King, the redeemed will not say, “I am coming here on the basis of my deeds.” There is no entry for those who come on that basis, for weighted in the balance of God, their deeds will be found wanting, broken into a thousand useless pieces. Rather, they will come on the basis of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in His glorious sacrifice on the cross and in His marvelous resurrection. But when they look behind them, to their astonishment, they will see that their deeds are following them, one by one. All that they did out of faith in God, for His glory, and according to His commandments will follow them, and they will bow their heads and be amazed that He should have done so much through their short lives.”

Commentary: We can agree again with Joel Beeke’s comment here. We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This judgment is for believers. The judgment will proceed as in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; **13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. **14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. **15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If we build “gold, silver, precious stones”, we will receive a reward. If we build wood, hay, or stubble, we will receive no reward, but we will still be saved, yet so as by the fire of our bad choices in this life. If we make bad choices in this life, we will suffer for it in this life, and we will have no reward in the next life. But we will still be saved if we have truly believed that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we have confessed Him as Lord, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

And the judgment in 2 Corinthians 5:10, and 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 is only for believers, for those who build wood, hay, or stubble in this judgment will still be saved, “yet so as by fire”.

And we won’t come on the basis of our own works, just as Joel says, “Rather, they

will come on the basis of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in His glorious sacrifice on the cross and in His marvelous resurrection. But when they look behind them, to their astonishment, they will see that their deeds are following them, one by one. All that they did out of faith in God, for His glory, and according to His commandments will follow them, and they will bow their heads and be amazed that He should have done so much through their short lives.”

And so we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As we walk in fellowship with the Lord, we will do the works He has ordained for us to do, and He will reward us accordingly.

Page 406: “Revelation is a symbolic book, and we are looking at it in terms of seven parallel cycles rather than one linear narrative. Each visionary cycle takes in the entire gospel age. First, chapters 1-3 present John’s vision of Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, addressing the seven churches. Second, chapters 4-7 describe the opening of the book or scroll with the seven seals. Third, chapters 8-11 record the sounding of the seven trumpets of judgment. Chapters 12-14 are about war between the dragon and his helpers against the angels and saints of God. Chapters 15-16 present the outpourings of the seven vials of wrath. Chapters 17-19 tell about the fall of the great harlot and the beasts. The book concludes with chapters 20-22, a vision of the new Jerusalem.

Revelation 14:14-20 is the final scene in the fourth cycle of visions. It is a close-up description of what will happen at the end of time, when Christ comes again from heaven to judge the living and the dead. This final judgment, which will be the culmination of world history and the consummation of God’s kingdom, has been announced repeatedly in earlier visions. But here it is actually described for us in increasingly graphic detail.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke summarizes his cyclical interpretation of Revelation here. He says that, “Each visionary cycle takes in the entire gospel age”. And he says that, “Revelation 14:14-20 is the final scene in the fourth cycle of visions.” He refers to **Revelation 14 (KJV):**14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Joel Beeke says that, “Revelation 14:14-20 is the final scene in the fourth cycle of visions. It is a close-up description of what will happen at the end of time, when Christ comes again from heaven to judge the living and the dead. This final judgment, which will be the culmination of world history and the consummation of God’s kingdom, has been announced repeatedly in earlier visions. But here it is actually described for us in increasingly graphic detail.”

Let us read more of his comments to understand more of how he interprets these verses.

Page 415-16: “There is a sense in which harvesting is always going on in the earth. But what is before us in Revelation 14 is the culmination of all this—the final judgment, here called *the final harvest*. It is called “the winepress of the wrath of God,” drawing upon the imagery of Isaiah 63:1-6, where the Lord appears with red-stained clothing because, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come” (vv.3-4).

Not only does the language throughout Revelation 14 imply this, but the arithmetic in verse 20 also requires it. This verse says, “And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Again, numbers in Revelation are to be understood spiritually, not literally. We are to understand this distance spiritually. We are told, in essence, that the area that is affected by the judgment of God is 1,600 furlongs—184 miles and deep enough for a horse to swim in. In other words, verse 20 presents a picture of the vast extent of the judgment.

The number 1,600 is the square of 40. No matter how you arrive at this number—whether four times four multiplied by ten times ten, or another way—the numbers that are involved are *four* and *ten*. Now *four* is the number of the earth in Scripture. We even acknowledge this in our own day when we speak of the four points of the compass or the four corners of the earth. The number *four* in Scripture invariably applies to the created sphere. *Ten* is the number of completion. So what we have here is a picture not of a bloody battle in Palestine or Armageddon as many premillennialists understand it; rather, this is a symbolic representation of a judgment encircling the whole earth—a full, final, and complete judgment of the world. These 1,600 furlongs contain the lifeblood of the whole world. That is the picture.”

Commentary: Now here, we get a clear picture of Joel Beeke’s thinking. He refers to **Revelation 14 (KJV):20** And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

And he is saying that this is a “symbolic representation of a judgment encircling the whole earth—a full, final, and complete judgment of the world.” And that, “These 1,600 furlongs contain the lifeblood of the whole world. That is the picture.”

But this same judgment is mentioned in **Revelation 16 (KJV):12** And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the

way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

In verse 16, the word translated Armageddon in the Greek is Ἀρμαγεδών (pronounced harmagedōn), of Hebrew origin ([H2022](#) and [H4023](#)); Armageddon (or Har-Meggiddon), a symbolic name: Armageddon. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G717.**

This Greek word comes from two Hebrew words, **הַר** har, har; a shortened form of [H2042](#); a mountain or range of hills (sometimes used figuratively):—hill (country), mount(-ain), × promotion. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H2022.**

And **מִגְדוֹן** (pronounced meg-id-done'); (Zechariah [H12](#)) or **מִגְדוֹ** (pronounced M^egiddôw); from [H1413](#); rendezvous; Megiddon or Megiddo, a place in Palestine:—Megiddo, Megiddon. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, H4023.**

So Armageddon in Hebrew means “hill of Megiddo”, a place in Palestine. And in Revelation 16:14 above, “the spirits of devils, working miracles” are going “forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”. And they are being gathered in Palestine to the hill of Megiddo, or Armageddon, as in verse 16.

So Armageddon is not some imaginary place. Then this same battle is described in **Revelation 19 (KJV):** 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

In Ezekiel, chapter 39, we read of a day that Israel shall know the Lord, as we read in

Ezekiel 39 (KJV):17 And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. 18 Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. 19 And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. 20 Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God. 21 And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. 22 So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. 23 And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. 24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them. 25 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; 26 After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. 27 When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; 28 Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. 29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.

Then in Zechariah, chapter 12, we read of a day when the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):**1 The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. 2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. 4 In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. 6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. 7 The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. 8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I

will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

In verse 9 the Lord will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And in verse 10, “they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son”. This will be the time of Israel’s repentance, the time when all Israel will be saved.

So the battle of Armageddon is not a symbolic battle. It will be a time when the armies of the earth come against Jerusalem, but the Lord will defend Jerusalem, and Israel will be saved.

This will be the time of Jacob’s trouble, as we read again in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):5** For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

Joel Beeke then concludes, as he says, “So what we have here is a picture not of a bloody battle in Palestine or Armageddon as many premillennialists understand it; rather, this is a symbolic representation of a judgment encircling the whole earth—a full, final, and complete judgment of the world. These 1,600 furlongs contain the lifeblood of the whole world. That is the picture.”

But “a bloody battle in Palestine or Armageddon as many premillennialists understand it” is exactly what the Scripture is saying. This is not a “symbolic representation of a judgment encircling the whole earth—a full, final, and complete judgment of the world.”

These 1,600 furlongs do not “contain the lifeblood of the whole world” as Joel Beeke concludes. That is not “the picture”. But it will contain the lifeblood of “the kings of the earth and of the whole world”, who will come against Jerusalem, in the time of Jacob’s trouble. These will come, as we will read in **Revelation 16 (KJV):13** And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

What Joel Beeke does not understand about the symbols in the Bible is that they are not of any private interpretation, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

When we encounter a symbol in the Bible, we must look for the interpretation in the Scriptures. We are not free to make up our own interpretation of a symbol to fit our own approach in interpreting the Scriptures.

Page 417: “First, *there is great comfort for believers in the final judgment.* It is a very comforting truth for true Christians to know that before God tramples the lifeblood out of this world, He will first gather in all of His wheat. Paul speaks about the second coming and says, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16-17). If there is any doctrine of the rapture in Scripture, that’s it, but it is not what the premillennialists mean by the rapture. Paul is clear that it all happens at once, instantaneously. There is no period of a thousand years between the rapture of the church and the judgment of God. The Lord descends from heaven with a shout. And even as He is coming upon the clouds of glory, those who are His are caught up to meet Him. That is the picture here. It is not the angels but the One who sits upon the cloud (v. 16) who stoops down and, with a sweep of His powerful arm, gathers up His wheat. That is what Jesus’ return will mean for you if you are a Christian. You will be caught up to meet Him in the air.”

Commentary: Since Joel Beeke is an amillennialist in his thinking, he sees all references to judgment as a reference to the one final judgment. What he doesn’t understand is that, just as Jesus’ first coming spanned 33½ years, so His second coming will span 7 years. Joel sees a “rapture” happening right before the final judgment. But He doesn’t understand that the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we which are alive and remain will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and return with Him to heaven while the judgments are happening on earth during the seven years of tribulation.

Now when Joel mentions wheat, he is referring to the parable in **Matthew 13 (KJV):24** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

He then refers to Paul, as we read in context in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

He agrees that this is the “doctrine of the rapture in Scripture”, but he also says, “it is not what the premillennialists mean by the rapture”. And he adds, “There is no period of a thousand years between the rapture of the church and the judgment of God.”

What he means is that “there is no period of a thousand years between the rapture of the church” and the final “judgment of God”. He sees the rapture happening at the harvest. The wheat will be gathered at the rapture. Then “God tramples the life blood out of this world”.

Now if Matthew 13:24-30 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 were the only Scriptures in the Bible, Joel Beeke would be justified in his thinking that there will be just one final judgment. However, his interpretation is an oversimplification of the word of God. We must include all of Scripture in order to find a Biblical truth, a “doctrine”, for “all Scripture is inspired by God”, as we read again in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Now he refers to Revelation 14:16, but let us read it again in context, beginning in **Revelation 14 (KJV):13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. 14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

The word “henceforth” in verse 13 above in the Greek is **ἀπᾶρτί** (pronounced aparti), from **G575** and **G737**; from now, i.e. henceforth (already):—from henceforth. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G534.**

It is from two Greek words, **ἀπό** (pronounced apo), a primary particle; "off," i.e. away (from something near), in various senses (of place, time, or relation; literal or figurative):—(X here-) after, ago, at, because of, before, by (the space of), for(-th), from, in, (out) of, off, (up-)on(-ce), since, with. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G575.**

And from **ἄρτι** (pronounced arti), adverb from a derivative of **G142** (compare **G740**) through the idea of suspension; just now:—this day (hour), hence(-forth), here(-after), hither(-to), (even) now, (this) present.

So we could translate verse 13 as in **Revelation 14 (NASB):13** And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

So there are still those who will die in the Lord in verse 13 “from henceforth” as in the King James Version, or “from now on” as in the New American Standard Bible.

Now in verses 14 to 16 above, we see the Son of Man on a cloud with a sharp sickle in his hand, and he is told to reap for the time is come. These verses see the Lord Jesus reaping the harvest of the wheat in the earth.

Now let us continue in **Revelation 14 (KJV):17** And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was

trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

So in verses 17 to 20 we read of another angel with a sharp sickle who is told to gather the clusters of the “vine of the earth”. He does so and casts them “into the great winepress of the wrath of God”. In verse 20, the “winepress was trodden without the city”. In the New American Standard Bible we read as in **Revelation 14 (NASB):20** And the wine press was trampled outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

The Son of Man will be gathering the wheat, that is, those “who die in the Lord from henceforth”, or “from now on” in Revelation 14:13. This will happen while the other angel will be gathering the wicked and hurling them into the winepress of God’s judgment. However, this will not be “*the final judgment*” as Joel Beeke says. We shall see why when we get to Revelation, chapter 20.

Revelation 15-16

Page 422: “In Revelation 15-16, John sees a new vision. This time, the vision is about seven vials of God’s wrath that will be poured out on the earth. It is the fifth cycle of visions in the book of Revelation, each of which sweeps through church history from Christ’s first advent to His second coming.”

Commentary: But let us begin reading in **Revelation 15 (KJV):1** And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

The word “last” in the Greek is **ἔσχατος** (pronounced *eschatos*), a superlative probably from **G2192** (in the sense of contiguity); farthest, final (of place or time):—ends of, last, latter end, lowest, uttermost. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2078**

And we read the same in **Revelation 15 (NASB):1** Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

So these plagues are the last or “final (of place or time)”. This would mean that we are not in a cyclical pattern as Beeke suggests. Rather, these plagues are different than those which had gone before.

It is important to see how the seals and trumpets and vials progress in the Scriptures. The seals begin in **Revelation 6 (KJV):1** And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 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.

Now we notice that before this we read in **Revelation 4 (KJV):5** And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Now we will find the same “lightnings and thunderings and voices” when the seventh seal is broken, which is when the seven trumpet judgments will begin, as we read first in **Revelation 8 (KJV):1** And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

So there “proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices” in Revelation 4:5 before the seals started, and then there were “voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” in Revelation 8:5 just before “the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” in Revelation 4:6.

Then when the seventh trumpet sounds, we read in context in **Revelation 11 (KJV):14**

The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

In verse 14 we see that the seventh trumpet is going to trigger the vial judgments, which will be the third woe. And in verse 19 “there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”. And this will precede the vial judgments, as we then read in **Revelation 16 (KJV):**1 And I heard a voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

So we see that the seventh seal will include the seven trumpet judgments and the seven vial judgments, while the seventh trumpet judgment will include the seven vial judgments.

Before the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, there will proceed lightnings and thunderings and voices, beginning in **Revelation 4 (KJV):**5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

But before the trumpet judgments there will also be an earthquake, that is, “voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake”, in Revelation 8:5.

And in Revelation 11:19 before the vial judgments there will also be an earthquake and great hail, that is, “there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”.

Now here is how all of the seals, trumpets, and vials proceed:

The Throne: “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices”, Revelation 4:5; “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”, Revelation 5:1

First Seal: the Lamb opens the first seal and a white horse “went forth conquering, and to conquer”, Revelation 6:1-2

Second Seal: a red horse took peace from the earth, Revelation 6:3-4

Third Seal: a black horse brought famine, Revelation 6:5-6

Fourth Seal: a pale horse had power to kill over “the fourth part of the earth”, Revelation 6:7-8

Fifth Seal: a vision of martyrs “under the altar”, who “were slain for the word of God,

and for the testimony which they held”, Revelation 6:9-11

Sixth Seal: a great earthquake, “the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, 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”, and “the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places”, Revelation 6:12-17

Seventh Seal: the Seven trumpets prepared to sound, “and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake”, Revelation 8:1-6

First Trumpet: fire cast upon the earth, and one third of trees burnt up, and all green grass burnt up, Revelation 8:7

Second Trumpet: burning mountain cast into the sea, and one third of the sea became blood, one third of creatures in the sea died, and one third of ships destroyed, Revelation 8:8-9

Third Trumpet: a great star called Wormwood fell on rivers and fountains of waters, and many men died from the bitter waters, Revelation 8:10-11

Fourth Trumpet: the third part of the sun, moon, and stars darkened, and three woes announced by angel, Revelation 8:12-13

Fifth Trumpet: the first woe is locusts with the power of scorpions released from bottomless pit, and torment men without the seal of God in their foreheads five months, Revelation 9:1-12

Sixth Trumpet: demon horsemen kill one third of men by fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths, Revelation 9:13-21; and after the two witnesses finish their testimony, they are killed by the beast, and after 3 days and ½ they will be raised from the dead, and the same hour there will be a great earthquake, and 1/10 of the city falls, and 7,000 men will be slain, but the remnant will give God the glory; this completes the second woe, as we read in **Revelation 11 (KJV):14** The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

Seventh Trumpet: The seventh trumpet sounds and there were “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”, Revelation 11 (KJV):15-19

First Vial: “And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image, Revelation 16:1-2

Second Vial: “And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; the sea became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea”, Revelation 16:3

Third Vial: “And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood”, Revelation 16:4-7

Fourth Vial: “And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire”, Revelation 16:8-9

- Fifth Vial:** “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores...”, Revelation 16:10-11
- Sixth Vial:** “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared, and three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, working miracles, in order to go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”, Revelation 16:12-16
- Seventh Vial:** “...there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great”, Revelation 16:17-21

Now notice that before the seals were opened, “out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices” in Revelation 4:5. And when the seventh seal was opened, “there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” in Revelation 8:5, but there was no judgment. The seventh seal just began the seven trumpets. And then when the seventh trumpet was sounded, there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail in Revelation 11:19, and this was before the vials were poured out in Revelation 16. And then when the seventh vial was poured out, there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great in Revelation 16:18.

So we are seeing a progression in time here. Before the seals began there proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices. Before the trumpets began, there were lightnings and thunderings and voices, and an earthquake. Before the vials began, there were lightnings and thunderings and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail. And when the seventh vial was poured out, there were lightnings and thunderings and voices, and a very great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

What we are seeing in the seals, and the trumpets, and the vials is a progression in time, and not the same cycle repeated over and over again but in a different vision. This is contrary to what Joel Beeke is saying is happening in his cyclical interpretation.

Page 438-39: “The seven vials parallel the order of the seven trumpets that sound in chapters 8-11. The first trumpet announces something that will happen to the earth; likewise, the first vial is poured upon the earth. The second trumpet and the second vial both affect the sea; the third, the rivers; the fourth, the sun; the fifth, the abode of the beast or the realm of the wicked; and the sixth, the River Euphrates. The seventh trumpet and seventh vial both have to do with the final judgment.

Although the trumpets and the vials follow the same pattern, the vials of judgment are more intense than the former patterns of seven. For example, as the seven seals are opened, 25 percent of things is destroyed. When the trumpets sound, the destruction increases to 33 percent. By Revelation 16, everything is under the judgment and wrath of God.

This parallel structure stresses the Christian view of history over against the secular view that history simply goes round and round without purpose. The biblical view of history is that God marches on through the centuries, moving forward to a glorious final end. What a comfort that truth must have been to John and the persecuted church of his day, and what a comfort it still is to believers today. It reminds us that the day will come when God’s sovereign justice will be gloriously manifested to a world that is rapidly moving toward destruction.”

Commentary: First of all we notice what he says, as he begins, “The seven vials parallel the order of the seven trumpets that sound in chapters 8-11. The first trumpet announces something that will happen to the earth; likewise, the first vial is poured upon the earth.”

But let us read of the first trumpet in **Revelation 8 (KJV):7** The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Then we read of the first vial **Revelation 16 (KJV):1** And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

These judgments are cast or poured out “upon the earth”, but they are completely different. The trumpet judgment is upon the trees and green grass, while the vial judgment is a “noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image”.

Then we read of the second trumpet in **Revelation 8 (KJV):8** And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

And then we read of the second vial in **Revelation 16 (KJV):3** And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

These judgments are similar but with the trumpet in Revelation 8:9, only “the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died”, whereas with the vial in Revelation 16:3, “every living soul died in the sea”. How are these then parallel judgments? Instead, the

difference in intensity shows that there is a progression of time in these judgments, and they are not just different views of the same time period.

Then we read of the third trumpet in **Revelation 8 (KJV):**10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

And we read of the third vial in **Revelation 16 (KJV):**4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

These judgments are also similar but not the same. With the third trumpet in Revelation 8:10-11, the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters became wormwood, whereas with the third vial in Revelation 16:4-7, the rivers and fountains of waters became blood, leaving us to believe that all the rivers and fountains of waters were affected.

And then we read of the fourth trumpet in **Revelation 8 (KJV):**12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

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

With the fourth trumpet judgment in Revelation 8:12, only the third part of the sun, moon, and stars were smitten, and darkened the third part of the day and night. But with the fourth vial judgment, men were scorched with fire, and blasphemed the name of God. These judgments are not the same. In one there is darkness, but in the other there is a scorching heat. This shows that they are not parallel, or showing the same time period but from a different view.

Then we read of the fifth trumpet in **Revelation 9 (KJV):**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. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their

faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

And we read of the fifth vial in **Revelation 16 (KJV)**:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

With the fifth trumpet judgment in Revelation 9:1-12, “the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit”, but the judgment relates more to the torment for five months of a demon horde from the bottomless pit. With the fifth vial judgment, his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but no time limit was set upon this judgment.

Then we read of the sixth trumpet in **Revelation 9 (KJV)**:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

And we read of the sixth vial in **Revelation 16 (KJV)**:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

With the sixth trumpet judgment in Revelation 9:13-21, the Euphrates is only mentioned as the place where the four angels were bound. Then when they were loosed, the third part of

men were slain by another demon horde. With the sixth vial judgment in Revelation 16:12-16, the Euphrates river was dried up in order that the kings of the east might be prepared. And three unclean spirits are working miracles in order to draw the kings of the earth and of the whole world to “the battle of that great day of God Almighty” which will be in “a place called Armageddon”. These again are therefore not parallel views of the same time or judgment.

Then we read of the seventh trumpet in **Revelation 11 (KJV):**15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

And we read of the seventh vial in **Revelation 16 (KJV):**17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

With the seventh trumpet judgment in Revelation 11:15-19, “there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”, but no real judgment like with the other trumpets. With the seventh vial judgment in Revelation 16:17-21, “there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great” in verse 18, and in verse 19, “the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell”. Then in verse 20, “every island fled away, and the mountains were not found”. And then in verse 21, “there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great”.

The reason there is no real judgment mentioned when the seventh trumpet sounds is because the seventh trumpet is the prelude to the seven vial judgments. The differences in these judgments show that they occur in different times, that is, they are chronological.

And even Joel Beeke notices a difference as he says above, “Although the trumpets and the vials follow the same pattern, the vials of judgment are more intense than the former patterns of seven.” If the vial judgments are more intense than the former patterns of seven, which is speaking of the seven seals and seven trumpets, then Joel Beeke has spoken against his

own theory that these are repeating cyclical patterns. They must be consecutive, that is, in chronological order.

Page 443: “Hendricksen writes, “Armageddon then is a symbol of every battle in which when a need is greatest and believers are oppressed, the Lord suddenly reveals His power in the interest of the distressed people and strikingly defeats His enemies.” That is what Armageddon seems to be about. It is not a literal place, but a battle against spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. There will be an Armageddon in the end, but it will be fought not literally in Megiddo, but under circumstances in which God gives His saints victory against all the raging hordes of evil.”

Commentary: Megiddo is a real place as we have shown. Joel Beeke says here that, “There will be an Armageddon in the end”. And he said on page 365, “But Scripture also tells us that at the end of time the antichrist will come, who is the epitome of rebellion against God. This may be a person or an institution, but John’s point is that the spirit of antichrist is evident throughout history.”

But if this is true, then Armageddon will be fought “literally in Megiddo” in a real battle in which the kings of the earth and the whole world will be drawn into, led by the antichrist and the false prophet, who will be the leaders of this rebellion as we will read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):** 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

There is no evidence to believe otherwise.

Page 444: “We’ve already noted that this vision of the seven vials covers the same ground as the vision of the seven trumpets. They are parallel, and yet there is progress. The trumpets warn of what is to come, while the vials depict wrath actually poured out.”

Commentary: Apparently Joel Beeke does not think that wrath was actually poured out when the trumpets sounded, but that the trumpets were just warnings “of what is to come”. But when the first angel sounded his trumpet in Revelation 8:7, there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

And when the second angel sounded his trumpet in Revelation 8:8, a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood, and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

And when the sixth angel sounded in Revelation 9:13-21, one third of men were killed by a demon horde.

But there is certainly progress. Things get bad during the trumpet judgments, and things get worse during the vial judgments. So they are not parallel, and they do not cover the same

ground. The trumpet judgments happen, and then the vials are poured out. There may be some similarities, but it is clear that the trumpet judgments are not the same as the vial judgments.

Page 446: “The trumpets are sounded and the vials of God’s wrath are poured out at the same time.”

Page 447: “The dividing line between the trumpets and vials is often difficult to discern. No one knows when a sounding trumpet will give way to the outpouring of a vial of wrath.”

Commentary: It is really not difficult if we see that the trumpet judgments follow the seals, and the vials follow the trumpets. The trumpets are not sounded at the same time as the vials are being poured out. The seventh seal includes the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet includes the seven vials. So when the seventh seal is broken, the seven trumpets begin. And when the seventh trumpet sounds, the seven vials begin.

It’s really not as hard as Joel Beeke makes it out to be. Once we put all of the seals and trumpets and vials in chronological order, everything fits. There is therefore no reason to believe that everything is cyclical and symbolic in Revelation. All of the symbols in the Bible are to be interpreted by the Bible itself. It is not left up to us to come up with our own interpretation.

Revelation 17

Page 456: “Babylon almost ruined Nebuchadnezzar by enticing and seducing him. She is the mother of harlots. She is the world.

In his first epistle, John describes the world: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). Babylon symbolizes the world—not the creation, but the world as a spiritual, moral entity created by men in opposition to God. Babylon is first mentioned in Genesis 10 and 11. “Babel” was the beginning of Nimrod’s kingdom (Gen. 10:10). At Babel, Nimrod and his people tried to build a tower to reach up to heaven, until God confused their language and thwarted their plans; the name Babel means “confusion” (Gen. 11:9). Throughout Scripture, Babylon represents the world of sinners opposed to God. This means Babylon is always with us. It is not confined to a particular place, time, or culture. Babylon is a continuing presence and power in human history.

Much in Revelation 17 is difficult to understand. But one truth that emerges is that Babylon is viewed as past, present, and future. Babylon was, is, and is to come. Her essence is the same despite any changes in her outward appearance. John would have recognized the essence of Babylon in Rome, the imperial city, set in the midst of seven hills (v. 9). But in his vision, the mountains give way to ten horns and then to ten kings (v. 12), meaning that Babylon is constantly changing. Babylon’s particular form may change, but her essence is always the same in this world.

Babylon, then, is the world as the center of industry, commerce, culture, and power. This woman stands for everything that tempts, seduces, and draws people away from God, all that stirs the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. This mystery woman is the harlot city.

Commentary: Joel Beeke refers in context to **Genesis 10 (KJV):8** And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. **9** He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. **10** And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

And to **Genesis 11 (KJV):9** Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

And in context to Babylon, as we begin reading in **Revelation 17 (KJV):1** And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: **2** With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. **3** So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. **4** And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: **5** And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The

Earth. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

So, in verse 1, John sees a woman who is “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters”. The “kings of the earth have committed fornication” with this woman, and “the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication”. The “wine of her fornication” would relate to the false doctrine of the woman. Her name is “Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth”, in verse 5.

This woman was “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” in verse 6. The angel tells John that he will explain the “mystery” of the woman, and the “beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns”. Now a “mystery” is something hidden.

Then we continue to read in **Revelation 17 (KJV):8** The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Since it was founded the city of Rome has been known as the city on seven hills.

We continue in **Revelation 17 (KJV):10** And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Rome was in power in the time of John’s prophecy. So the king that “is” was of Rome.

We continue in **Revelation 17 (KJV):11** And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

The “beast” in this chapter has a dual identity. First, he is a king for he is of the seven. Then we will see that the “beast” also refers to a kingdom.

We continue in **Revelation 17 (KJV):12** And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

So this beast with the ten kings shall “make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.”

We continue in **Revelation 17 (KJV):15** And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

So the whore sits on “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”. In other words, her influence is worldwide. At some point the ten horns on the beast “shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire”. Then in verse

18 we are given the identity of the woman, for she “is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth”, that is, she is Rome for that is who reigned over the “kings of the earth” in the time of John’s prophecy.

But if the woman is Rome, who is the beast? The beast with seven heads and ten horns is also mentioned in **Revelation 13 (KJV)**: 1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

The beast in verse 2 was “like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion”. This corresponds to three of the four beasts of Daniel’s vision in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**: 1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Now we notice that the fourth beast had ten horns in verse 7, and “another little horn” arose “before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots”. This would make seven kings and ten kingdoms, as we shall see.

Then we continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**: 9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. 13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all

people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The angel then explains to Daniel, as we continue in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**:15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. 19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. 26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. 28 Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

In verse 17 we understand that, “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” Then we read again in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**:21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

This horn prevailed until the Ancient of days came, that is, until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Then in verse 23 we understand that the fourth beast “shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces”. So the beasts have a dual symbolism. Each beast stands for a king and for a kingdom. And the fourth beast will be the fourth kingdom on earth, and will be in a revived form of ten toes until the Ancient of days comes, as we know from Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2.

Now in verse 24, we understand that there will be a king who will arise and subdue three of the ten kings, and in verse 25, “he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall

wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

This reminds us of the one Paul taught about in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Then we read again of the phrase, “a time and times and the dividing of time” in **Daniel 7 (KJV):25** And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

So power was given unto him “until a time and times and the dividing of time” which reminds of John’s prophecy of the beast who would “continue forty and two months”, as we read again in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

And this “time and times and the dividing of time” also reminds us of **Revelation 12 (KJV):14** And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

So this king will reign in the last half of the week of tribulation, for “forty and two months”, or for 3½ years.

Now the fourth beast, or king and kingdom, will be judged, and the kingdom shall be “given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom”, as we read in Daniel 7:27 above. So Daniel’s vision reaches all the way to the second coming of Christ, that is, “Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” in Daniel 7:22 above.

Now these four beasts which symbolized 4 kings and 4 kingdoms, must have reminded Daniel of his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a great a statue, of which we read of, beginning in **Daniel 2 (KJV):1** And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

Now Nebuchadnezzar could not remember his dream, but it troubled him, so he called for the magicians to interpret it but they could not so he wanted to kill them all. But Daniel sought the Lord who revealed the secret in a night vision.

Then Daniel told the king his dream, as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):31** Thou, O king,

sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Now the “lion” in Daniel’s dream in Daniel, chapter 7, was the emblem of Babylon, and this would correspond to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of the great statue, as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):**37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

The second kingdom was Media-Persia, which corresponded to the breast and arms of silver, which was symbolic of Darius the Mede, who ruled over Media, and Cyrus who ruled over Persia. The third kingdom was Greece, which corresponded to the belly and thighs of brass. The fourth kingdom was Rome, which corresponded to the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay.

Daniel then explains more, as we continue in **Daniel 2 (KJV):**41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

So the ten toes of the feet of the image will be the final form of the fourth kingdom, which the stone that was “cut out of the mountain without hands” shall “brake in pieces”. And in verse 44 above, “in the days of these kings”, that is, the ten toes, “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

So the woman in Revelation, chapter 17, is the great whore, the city of Rome, who will be carried by the beast in the first half of the tribulation week, as we read again in **Revelation 17 (KJV):**3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

The beast will have seven heads and ten horns, which will be the final form of the revived Roman empire. The woman has “a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication”, which is symbolic of all of the world’s false religions. That this woman is symbolic of Rome indicates that the head of all of the world’s false religions will ultimately be the Roman Catholic Church.

Now let us read again what Joel Beeke said above at the end of our quote, as he says, “John would have recognized the essence of Babylon in Rome, the imperial city, set in the midst of seven hills (v. 9). But in his vision, the mountains give way to ten horns and then to ten kings (v. 12), meaning that Babylon is constantly changing. Babylon’s particular form may change, but her essence is always the same in this world.”

Joel makes it sound as if the mountains change into the ten horns, and the ten horns change into the ten kings. But the Scripture is very clear, as we read in **Revelation 17 (KJV):9** And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

The seven heads are symbolic of seven mountains. Since it was founded the city of Rome has been known as the city on seven hills. The mountains identify where the woman sits, that is, the city of Rome. The seven heads are also symbolic of seven kings, as we continue in **Revelation 17 (KJV):10** And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

And again, Rome was in power in the time of John’s prophecy. So the king that “is” was of Rome. Then we read of ten horns in **Revelation 17 (KJV):12** And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

The ten horns are symbolic of ten kings who will give their power and strength unto the beast. The ten horns did not become the seven mountains, but Joel makes it sound as if the mountains change into the ten horns, and the ten horns change into the ten kings. The Scripture interprets the symbols here.

Joel Beeke then concludes, “Babylon, then, is the world as the center of industry, commerce, culture, and power. This woman stands for everything that tempts, seduces, and draws people away from God, all that stirs the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. This mystery woman is the harlot city.”

Now let us read again of the woman in **Revelation 17 (KJV):1** And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

This woman is the whore that “sitteth upon many waters” in verse 1. And in verse 3, she also sits upon “a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns”.

Then let us read again the verses that he refers to in **Revelation 17 (KJV):9** And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

So the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. And the seven heads “are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come”. In verse 11, the beast is also a king. The woman is not the beast with seven heads and ten horns. The woman sits upon the beast, or is carried by the beast, as we read in **Revelation 17 (KJV):7** And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

Again, Joel Beeke even says that, “This mystery woman is the harlot city.” And so we read in **Revelation 17 (KJV):18** And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

And in John’s time, that city would be Rome. Now this woman holds a cup “full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication”, in verse 4. That is, she holds a cup full of idolatrous practices. And her influence is worldwide for she sits “upon many waters” in verse 1, which are “are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” in verse 15. But in the next verse, the ten horns will hate the whore and burn her with fire as we read in **Revelation 17 (KJV):16** And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

So the beast will carry the woman, or use the woman, in his rise to power in the first half of the tribulation. Then in the middle of the tribulation week the ten horns will hate the woman and burn her with fire, and the beast will switch his operation of power to Jerusalem where he will set himself up in the temple and declare himself to be God. This is what is being described in **Revelation 13 (KJV):5** And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

In verse 5, “power was given unto him to continue forty and two months”, or three and one half years. This describes the last half of the tribulation week.

The false prophet will then set up an image of the beast and command all people everywhere to worship the image or be killed, as we read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):11** And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

This is why this will be called the “great tribulation”. Now let us continue to Revelation 18.

Revelation 18

Page 463: “Revelation 18 presents us with solemn truths about the end of the world, the collapse of civilization, and the fall of Babylon. In doing so, it presents us with a great certainty, a powerful warning, a final retribution, and a solemn disillusionment.”

Commentary: Now remember that on page 396, Joel Beeke said, “Babylon is man setting himself against the decrees and counsels of God. Babylon is the world, the kingdom of antichrist, which is opposed to God and His people.”

He was referring to **Revelation 14 (KJV):8** And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

There is some truth in Joel Beeke’s comment. But Babylon was not just “the world, the kingdom of antichrist, which is opposed to God and His people.” Babylon existed in a mystery or hidden form in Rome. The woman in Revelation, chapter 17, verse 5, had a name written on her forehead, “Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth”. That is, she was a great false religious system hidden in Rome. Now when Rome is burned by the ten horns in Revelation 17:16, Mystery Babylon falls.

With this understanding let us now begin reading in **Revelation 18 (KJV):1** And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. **2** And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. **3** For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. **4** And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. **5** For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. **6** Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. **7** How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. **8** Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

In verse 4, God is calling His people out of this false religious system, which is based in the harlot city of Rome. This false religious system is one of the wealthiest systems in the world. This is why, when the center of it’s base is burned with fire, “the merchants of the earth” who were “waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” will mourn for her, as we continue in **Revelation 18 (KJV):9** And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, **10** Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. **11** And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: **12** The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen,

and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

We might wonder why the kings of the earth were bewailing her in verse 9 above. But when we understand that the kings of the earth used her in order to unite and control their kingdoms, then it all makes sense. This false religious system was supported by the woman, the city of Rome, who sat on “many waters”.

Page 465: “What God requires of us is *spiritual separation from this world*. The warning is, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

It is possible to distance ourselves a bit from the world by refraining from some of her more notorious sins. We can resort to legalism, making up rules and regulations that go beyond Scripture, and deceive ourselves with our apparent virtue and sanctity (Col 2:18-23). But the only way we can truly and spiritually come out of the world and still live in it is through the cross of Christ.

Paul reminds us in Galatians 1:4 that Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” Paul is saying that you need a Savior in order to be spiritually separate from the world and to escape the destruction that is coming upon it. You need someone stronger than yourself to lead you out of this wilderness. Jesus has given Himself to us for this very purpose. He has gone to Calvary for us and borne the wrath of God against sin. He has done this so that you and I might be delivered from this present evil world and its ultimate destruction.”

Commentary: Now he refers here to **Revelation 18 (KJV):4** And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

And to **Colossians 2 (KJV):18** Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though

living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

And in context to **Galatians 1 (KJV):3** Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

But in Revelation 18:4, the Lord is calling His people to come out of the false religious system that is based in Rome, which is Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.

Otherwise, Joel Beeke's exhortations in Colossians 2:18-23 and Galatians 1:3-4 are right on. We are in the world as believers, but not of the world. We are a city set on a hill, and we must let our light shine so that others may become believers.

Page 466: "Yet for the present, the world does not concede. She boasts in verse 7, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow (cf. Isaiah 47:5-11). She is like the rich fool, who lived for worldly pleasures, such as expanding his business and gathering his riches into barns, eating and drinking all the while to toast his good fortune (Luke 12:13-21). The world says, "I am a queen; I am no widow; I shall know nothing of sorrow."

Commentary: He refers in context to **Revelation 18 (KJV):4** And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

And in context to **Isaiah 47 (KJV):1** Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. 2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. 3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man. 4 As for our redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. 5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. 6 I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. 7 And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. 8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: 9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. 10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am,

and none else beside me. 11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. 12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. 13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. 14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. 15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

To Joel Beeke, “Babylon is the world”. And Babylon is in the world, and Babylon is of the world. Babylon is the city referred to in Isaiah 47:1-15, to which the Lord had given His people into her hand because of their idolatry. But in Revelation, chapter 18, the woman is Rome, who had on her forehead, “Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” because Rome had become like Babylon. And so Rome was really Babylon hidden inside of it because of all of the idolatry and false religious practices.

Page 468: “Things are not always as they appear in this world. We see people living it up, apparently happy as can be; but if you look deeper, you soon discover they are as miserable as sin. Revelation 18:9 and following (almost to the end of the chapter) show us what’s really going on in people who cohabit with the world. In a word, they soon become disillusioned. Kings, merchants, travelers, importers, exporters, businesspeople, and politicians are also powerless as Babylon collapses. They weep and mourn over her, but they are terrified.”

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 18 (KJV):**8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and

as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Joel Beeke sees Revelation, chapter 18 as referring to the world, of which Babylon is only a symbol. But Revelation, chapter 18 is actually showing the lament of the kings of the earth, and the merchants, who were made rich by her trade. They were mourning the burning of the city of Rome which had become Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, as we read in Revelation, chapter 17. And this burning was so that the beast, the antichrist, could set himself up in the temple in Jerusalem and declare himself to be God. Satan will then be cast down to the earth and restricted to this earth's atmosphere, and Israel will be given wings of a great eagle in Revelation 12:14 for "a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent", the last 3½ years of the tribulation week. And Jesus spoke of this fleeing of Israel in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Israel is told to flee into the mountains during this time of "great tribulation". And those who take heed to this warning shall be kept in a place "prepared of God", as in **Revelation 12 (KJV):6** And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Revelation 19

Page 472: “Notice that this passage includes two things: a funeral and a wedding. If you can imagine the setting of Revelation 19, you can almost see the smoke of Babylon on the horizon—not the smoke of industry and life, but the smoke of destruction and ruin. “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen” (18:2). The great world city is no more. All that remains is a smoldering ruin. But in the foreground of this setting, a wedding is going on. Festivity, rejoicing, and singing accompany this event, for it is the marriage of the Lamb. That is what all the singing and shouting is about. The hallelujah choruses of the heavenly host celebrate the funeral of this world and the wedding of the Lamb.”

Page 473: “Revelation 19:1-5 speaks briefly about the joy of the holy angels and the redeemed over the destruction of Babylon, which represents all worldliness that opposes God.”

Commentary: He refers in context to **Revelation 19 (KJV):** 1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: 2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Joel Beeke sees the references to Babylon in the book of Revelation as a reference to this world where sin abounds. Babylon is “the great world city” on page 427, and it “represents all worldliness that opposes God” on page 473. And according to Joel Beeke, it is all leading up to one final judgment.

Page 505: “Revelation 19:19 describes the final battle—the final conflict of all time. The battle lines are drawn up as opposing armies face one another at the place called Armageddon. We saw when considering Revelation 16:16 that the word Armageddon may be derived either from bar-mageddon, which means “mount (bar) of Megiddo,” or b’ar-mageddon, which means “the city (ar) of Megiddo.” The city was on a plateau that overlooked the plain of Esdraelon, where many ancient battles were fought. Here Israel’s armies defeated Sisera and his armies in the days of Deborah (Judg. 5:19).

That was an unexpected victory. King Jabin and his general, Sisera, had chariots of iron. Israel could not possibly win against such a foe. When the Israelites asked, “Who is going to fight for us?” Deborah responded, “The Lord will fight for us.” That day on the plain of Esdraelon, Sisera’s chariots bogged down in mud and his army was totally defeated. Armageddon is symbolic of every battle in which believers are oppressed and powerless, and the Lord uses His power to defeat the enemy.

Yet the battle at the end of Revelation 19 looks beyond all these conflicts to the final, climactic confrontation between the powers of Satan and God. God takes Satan and his minions down and throws them into the lake of fire. There will be an Armageddon in the end, but not at the literal place of Megiddo. It will take place when God extraordinarily intervenes for His people and gives them victory over all their enemies. Armageddon is symbolic of the triumph of the Lamb. Armageddon can be traced throughout the history of the gospel, but its ultimate manifestation will be at the very end, when Christ comes again.”

Commentary: He refers to **Revelation 19 (KJV):19** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

And to **Revelation 16 (KJV):16** And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

And in context to **Judges 5 (KJV):19** The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. 20 They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. 21 The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

So Joel Beeke acknowledges that Megiddo is a real place, yet he says, “There will be an Armageddon in the end, but not at the literal place of Megiddo.” And he says that Armageddon is merely “symbolic of the triumph of the Lamb”.

Page 506: “The final battle is over very quickly. We are told that “with the spirit [breath] of his mouth,” Christ defeats all His enemies upon His glorious return (2 Thess. 2:3-12). The sword going out of His mouth and His breath are symbols for His Word and Spirit; He will conquer with such spiritual weapons. His very presence vanquishes His enemies (2 Thess. 2:8). The results of the battle are final and forever. Revelation 19:19-20 says that the beast from the sea and the false prophet (antichristian persecution and religion) are thrown into the lake of fire, and their followers are slain and thrown in after them. John tells us later that the devil and all of Christ’s opponents will remain eternally in that lake of fire (20:10, 14-15; 21:8). Kistemaker writes: “This lake is a vast area of fire that burns ceaselessly with the nauseating smell of sulfur. The impossibility of ever leaving this burning pool is self-evident, and everlasting pain and horror are the lot of those consigned to hell.””

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “The final battle is over very quickly. We are told that “with the spirit [breath] of his mouth,” Christ defeats all His enemies upon His glorious return (2 Thess. 2:3-12). The sword going out of His mouth and His breath are symbols for His Word and Spirit; He will conquer with such spiritual weapons. His very presence vanquishes

His enemies (2 Thess. 2:8).”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The “man of sin” in verse 3 is the antichrist, who in verse 4, “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”.

In verse 6, the word “withholdeth” in the Greek is **κατέχω** (pronounced *katechō*), “from **G2596** and **G2192**; to hold down (fast), in various applications (literally or figuratively):—have, hold (fast), keep (in memory), let, × make toward, possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2722.**

This Greek word is from two Greek words, **κατά** (pronounced *kat-ah*'), a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), in varied relations (according to the case (genitive, dative or accusative) with which it is joined): **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2596**, and **ἔχω** (pronounced *ekh'-o*), a primary verb; to hold (used in very various applications, literally or figuratively, direct or remote; **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2192.**

In verse 7, the word “letteth” is from the same Greek word as “withholdeth” in verse 6 above. And so it is more correctly translated as “restrains” in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):6** And you know what restrains him now, so that he will be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is removed.

The one who restrains lawlessness is the Holy Spirit. When He is removed, “then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”, as in verses 8-10 above.

The “Wicked” in verse 8 in the Greek is **ἄνομος** (pronounced *an'-om-os*), from **G1** (as a negative particle) and **G3551**; lawless, i.e. (negatively) not subject to (the Jewish) law; (by implication, a Gentile), or (positively) wicked:—without law, lawless, transgressor, unlawful, wicked. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G459.**

This word is in the singular in this verse. So it is correctly translated as in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):8** Then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will eliminate with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and false

signs and wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved.

So again, the Wicked or lawless one is the same one mentioned in verses 3 and 4, that is, the antichrist.

Now in verse 8, this Wicked or lawless one is he whom “the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming”.

Joel Beeke then continues, and says, “The results of the battle are final and forever. Revelation 19:19-20 says that the beast from the sea and the false prophet (antichristian persecution and religion) are thrown into the lake of fire, and their followers are slain and thrown in after them.”

He refers in context to **Revelation 19 (KJV):**19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

But this Scripture does not say that, “the beast from the sea and the false prophet (antichristian persecution and religion) are thrown into the lake of fire, and their followers are slain and thrown in after them”. The Scripture just says that “the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh”. That is, the “remnant” of those who came against the Lord in their armies will be slain. This doesn’t refer to all who were on earth at this time. And there is still to come the White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 where “the dead, small and great”, will “stand before God”, and all who were “not found written in the book of life” were “cast into the lake of fire.”

The reason this is important is because Joel Beeke is an “antinomian”. That is, he does not believe there will be a millennium. We will discuss this more later when we get to Revelation 20.

Now Joel Beeke also makes the false prophet out to be symbolic of “antichristian persecution and religion”. But the false prophet “wrought miracles before” the beast, “with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image” in verse 20 above. And in Revelation 19:20, the beast and the false prophet “both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone”. It is persons who are thrown into the lake of fire, and not ideologies.

Joel Beeke then says, “John tells us later that the devil and all of Christ’s opponents will remain eternally in that lake of fire (20:10, 14-15; 21:8).”

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):**10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

And to **Revelation 20 (KJV):**14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

And to **Revelation 21 (KJV):8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

However, after the battle of Armageddon, the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, and the devil is thrown into the lake of fire a thousand years later.

Joel Beeke quotes Kistemaker correctly, as he “writes: “This lake is a vast area of fire that burns ceaselessly with the nauseating smell of sulfur. The impossibility of ever leaving this burning pool is self-evident, and everlasting pain and horror are the lot of those consigned to hell.””

Being cast into the Lake of Fire is an eternal punishment as Beeke points out. But the “final battle” will occur a thousand years after the battle of Armageddon, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

In verse 10, after “the thousand years are expired”, the devil is now “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever”. This again leaves the White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 still to come for the rest of the dead.

Joel Beeke is very nebulous about what Armageddon actually is, as he said on page 505 that, “Armageddon is symbolic of the triumph of the Lamb. Armageddon can be traced throughout the history of the gospel, but its ultimate manifestation will be at the very end, when Christ comes again.”

But there is no reason in the Scriptures to conclude that Armageddon is symbolic of anything. The battle of Armageddon is described with the same references to “winepress” and red apparel in **Isaiah 63 (KJV):1** Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. 6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

When the armies of the kings of this world come against Jerusalem, the Lord will fight for them, and all Israel will be saved as the Lord has promised.

Revelation 20

Page 511-513: “*Amillennialism or Inaugurated Millennialism* This view is held by most Reformed Christians. It teaches that the millennium is not a future earthly kingdom. Rather, the millennium is a symbolic description of the spiritual kingdom of God that is now present ever since Pentecost in the church’s missionary advance and heavenly reign, even as the church suffers persecution and waits for Christ’s return and judgment day. The term *amillennialism* is not an accurate description of this view, because the prefix a- means “no”, as in “no millennium.” Amillennialists *do* believe in a millennium. This position might better be called *inaugurated millennialism*, because we believe that the millennium has already been inaugurated. Thus, inaugurated millennialism believes that the millennium is not an exact period of a thousand years, but is really a symbolic description of the entire gospel age until Christ returns on the clouds.

With due respect to Christians who hold differing views, we believe that the book of Revelation, including the most highly debated section of chapter 20, favors an *amillennial* interpretation. Here are some reasons why:

First, the New Testament teaches that God’s promises to Israel have already found partial fulfillment in the church as a spiritual, international kingdom; and yet, they will be fulfilled in ultimate glory rather than in a nationalistic, earthly reign of Christ. (Matt. 12:28, Luke 17:20-21, John 18:36-37; Act 15:13-18; Rom. 2:28-29; 4:16, 14:17; Gal. 3:28-29, 4:26; Heb. 12:22-24,28).

Second, Scripture indicates that Christ’s coming in glory, the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, judgment day, and the end of this age will all take place together in rapid succession, as opposed to being dispersed over a thousand-year period (Dan. 12:2, Matt. 13:39-43; 16:27; 24:29-31; 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11).

Third, Revelation is a book of symbolic visions. Therefore, one must interpret the numbers (such as *one thousand*) and images (such as *binding with a chain* and *sealing in a pit*) in chapter 20 as symbols. This is not inconsistent with a literal interpretation of God’s Word, but only the recognition that parts of Scripture communicate via metaphors and symbols.

Fourth, Revelation follows a cyclical structure, repeatedly bringing the reader to the return of Christ at the end of each cycle. Chapter 19 ends the cycle of the conquest of Babylon and culminates in the destruction of the wicked. Chapter 20, like chapter 12, steps back to consider the era between Christ’s first and second comings before moving ahead to judgment day and eternity.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke summarizes what amillennialists believe, as he begins and says, “*Amillennialism or Inaugurated Millennialism* This view is held by most Reformed Christians. It teaches that the millennium is not a future earthly kingdom. Rather, the millennium is a symbolic description of the spiritual kingdom of God that is now present ever since Pentecost in the church’s missionary advance and heavenly reign, even as the church suffers persecution and waits for Christ’s return and judgment day.”

He then says, “The term *amillennialism* is not an accurate description of this view,

because the prefix a- means “no”, as in “no millennium.” Amillennialists *do* believe in a millennium. This position might better be called *inaugurated millennialism*, because we believe that the millennium has already been inaugurated.”

And he concludes, “Thus, inaugurated millennialism believes that the millennium is not an exact period of a thousand years, but is really a symbolic description of the entire gospel age until Christ returns on the clouds.”

But the word “millennium” means a period of a thousand years. There is no indication in the Scriptures that this is symbolic of anything.

Joel Beeke continues, “With due respect to Christians who hold differing views, we believe that the book of Revelation, including the most highly debated section of chapter 20, favors an *amillennial* interpretation. Here are some reasons why:”

And he then states the reasons for his belief in an “*amillennial* interpretation”, as he says, “First, the New Testament teaches that God’s promises to Israel have already found partial fulfillment in the church as a spiritual, international kingdom; and yet, they will be fulfilled in ultimate glory rather than in a nationalistic, earthly reign of Christ. (Matt. 12:28, Luke 17:20-21, John 18:36-37; Act 15:13-18; Rom. 2:28-29; 4:16, 14:17; Gal. 3:28-29, 4:26; Heb. 12:22-24,28).”

And he refers to **Matthew 12 (KJV):28** But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

And to **Luke 17 (KJV):20** And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

And to **John 18 (KJV):36** Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

But these verses point out that the kingdom is not manifest yet, but is in a mystery form, that is, a hidden form, as Jesus taught in **Matthew 13 (KJV):10** And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to

hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Pilate, whom Jesus was speaking to in John 18:36-37, did not “see” or “hear” these things, and so he crucified the Lord of Glory. The kingdom of God is hidden from the world now. The world does not “see” the kingdom now, but they will see it when it is manifest, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Joel Beeke refers also to **Acts 15 (KJV):**13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

In verse 14, God is taking out of the Gentiles “a people for his name”. And in Acts 15 James is quoting from **Amos 9 (KJV):**11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. 13 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

There is nothing symbolic about this Scripture. It simply says that God “will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them”, that is, the “waste cities” in Israel, and He “will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them”. Israel will get their land back.

And Joel Beeke also refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):**28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

And in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):**16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

And so the promises are to a spiritual seed, that is, to those who are born again. And so we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):**26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

But God has not forgotten his promises to Israel, nor will He, as we read in Jeremiah 31

(KJV):33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

The nation of Israel will be born again in a day, as we read again in **Isaiah 66 (KJV):8** Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

This will be at the time of Jacob's trouble in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):5** For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

And Joel Beeke refers also to **Romans 14 (KJV):17** For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And to **Galatians 3 (KJV):28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

And to **Galatians 4 (KJV):26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

And to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):22** But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

And to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

So to repeat, Joel says, "First, the New Testament teaches that God's promises to Israel have already found partial fulfillment in the church as a spiritual, international kingdom; and yet, they will be fulfilled in ultimate glory rather than in a nationalistic, earthly reign of Christ."

And all the Scriptures he refers to are true. And we are all one in Christ our Savior. But God will not forget his promises to the nation of Israel, as the Scriptures teach, for now is the times of the Gentiles, and when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, God will again deal with Israel, as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be

ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Joel Beeke then gives a second reason for why he favors an *amillennial* interpretation, as he says, “Second, Scripture indicates that Christ’s coming in glory, the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, judgment day, and the end of this age will all take place together in rapid succession, as opposed to being dispersed over a thousand-year period (Dan. 12:2, Matt. 13:39-43; 16:27; 24:29-31; 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11).

And he refers in context to **Daniel 12 (KJV):**1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

This Scripture mentions the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous, but it does not specify a time of the resurrections. It also refers to the “time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”, and it is “at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people”. The children of the people of Daniel were of Israel.

And Joel Beeke refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):**39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And to **Matthew 16 (KJV):**27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

The “end of this world” in Matthew 13:40 above is a very general term. We must place this Scripture in context with all the Scriptures that speak of that time.

And he refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):**29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Jesus describes when the end will come, as we read the verses preceding this one in **Matthew 24 (KJV):**14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a

witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Jesus says that the “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come”, in verse 14 above. Then in verse 15 He mentions a sign that we on the earth will see, that is, the “abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)”. What he is saying is, let the reader, who may be reading when this happens, read in Daniel the mention of this. Then Jesus gives instructions to those in Judaea what to do when they will see this sign. And in verse 22, He says that this time will be so bad that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” And He says that He will come “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” in verse 27. That is, it will be no secret. All will see Him.

But there are events such as the “abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” which will precede His coming, and Israel will flee and be provided for by the Lord for 3½ years, the last half of the tribulation week.

Joel Beeke then also refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV)**: 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then

shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This Scripture in verse 31 speaks of a time “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:”, and in verse 32, “And before him shall be gathered all nations...” This is a judgment pictured on earth, and not in heaven, so it is a different judgment than the Great White Throne Judgment which is described in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 will be to decide which nations will enter the kingdom. And as we progress, we will see that this will be the millennial kingdom.

Joel Beeke then refers to **John 5 (KJV):28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

And to **Acts 24 (KJV):15** And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

If these were the only Scriptures that speak of the resurrections of the dead, we would think that there was to be just one big resurrection day. But even these Scriptures hint at two resurrections, one of the just, and one of the unjust. And because Joel Beeke believes that all the numbers in Revelation are symbolic because of the many symbols in Revelation, he does not see that the Bible interprets all of its symbols. There is no need for us to make up something to explain a symbol that we find in the Bible. We must look for the interpretation in the Bible itself.

And Joel Beeke also refers to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):13** But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

And to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):1** But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have

no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

As we read in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, we see that in verse 16, “the dead in Christ shall rise first”, and then in verse 17, “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord”. These Scriptures only speak of those “in Christ”, that is, believers. Then in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, we read in verse 4, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” And the more we know of the Scriptures rightly divided, the more comfort we will find in these words.

So again, Joel said, “Second, Scripture indicates that Christ’s coming in glory, the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, judgment day, and the end of this age will all take place together in rapid succession, as opposed to being dispersed over a thousand-year period.”

But there is evidence in Scripture of two resurrections. Dr. Albert Grimes says, “Jesus is here speaking concerning the resurrection and He said in Luke 20:35-36, “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36 Neither can they die anymore for they are equal unto the angels; and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.” Here Jesus speaks of a resurrection out from amongst the dead, pointing out the fact as we have already stated that there is a first resurrection. Then in Luke 14:13-14, “But when thou makest a feast, call the poor and maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And thou shalt be blessed for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Jesus then speaks of a resurrection of the just. Paul also brings out the same fact of a first resurrection in Philippians 3:11, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Note: The words of Paul became more striking translated as they should, “If by any means I might attain unto the out resurrection from the dead.” This translation clearly brings out the fact of a first or foremost resurrection out from amongst the dead. Hebrews 11:35, “Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Note: a more nobler resurrection. So this first or out from amongst the dead resurrection is the resurrection of the just. It is a better resurrection.”

<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/grimes/book10.pdf>

Now Dr. Grimes refers to “the out resurrection from the dead”, and in Philippians 3:11, the word in the Greek translated “resurrection” is **ἐξανάστασις** (pronounced *exanastasis*), from G1817; a rising from death:—resurrection. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G1815**

And this Greek word is from **ἐξάνιστημι** (pronounced ex-an-is'-tay-mee), from G1537 and G450; objectively, to produce, i.e. (figuratively) beget; subjectively, to arise, i.e. (figuratively) object:—raise (rise) up. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G1817**

And this Greek word is from **ἐκ** (pronounced ek), a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause; literal or figurative; direct or remote): **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G1537**

And from **ἀνίστημι** (pronounced an-is'-tay-mee), from G303 and G2476; to stand up (literal or figurative, transitive or intransitive):—arise, lift up, raise up (again), rise (again), stand up(-right). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G450**

So a more literal translation of Philippians 3:11 is as state above, “If by any means I might attain unto the out resurrection of the dead,” that is, a resurrection out from among the dead.

But Joel Beeke then gives a third reason for why he favors an *amillennial* interpretation, as he says, “Third, Revelation is a book of symbolic visions. Therefore, one must interpret the numbers (such as *one thousand*) and images (*such as binding with a chain and sealing in a pit*) in chapter 20 as symbols. This is not inconsistent with a literal interpretation of God’s Word, but only the recognition that parts of Scripture communicate via metaphors and symbols.”

The Scripture does “communicate via metaphors and symbols”, but the Scripture also interprets all such metaphors and symbols. The Scripture does not leave it up to us to interpret these things, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

In Daniel 2:31-35, Daniel reveals what King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed. Then Daniel says in **Daniel 2 (KJV):36** This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

Then Daniel interprets the symbolism of the dream in Daniel 2:37-45. In Daniel, chapter 7, Daniel then interprets the dream of King Belshazzar, and then in Daniel, chapter 8, Daniel receives a vision, and in Daniel 8:16 God calls on the angel Gabriel to interpret the dream for Daniel. Then in Daniel, chapter 9, Daniel is told the entire history of his people that is to come. And all of this helps us understand the symbols used in the book of Revelation. When the book of Daniel and its symbols are properly understood, we have no excuse for using our own understanding to interpret the symbols in the book of Revelation.

Page 514: “Yet we are told in Revelation 20:1-3 that Satan is bound and thrown into the pit, where he is locked away for a thousand years. How are we to understand this? Allow me to illustrate. Whenever you go to a zoo, you are very glad the animals are in cages or enclosures. It is very comforting to see the bars. That is the picture we are given in verses 1-3.

In this gospel age Satan is bound. He is behind bars. He is on a chain and confined to a pit. Still, a lion in a cage is dangerous, even though he is caged. Similarly, in these gospel days, God has seized Satan and thrown him into the abyss, where he remains under lock and key to

this very day. Yet, he remains dangerous.

But you might say: “When we read the newspapers and walk the streets, Satan doesn’t appear to be bound. He seems to be very active.” The question we must ask is this: In what sense is Satan bound? It is possible to tie up a dog in the backyard and yet still allow him a certain amount of activity—a certain scope in which he can be active. He can’t go beyond the lead. He can wreak havoc only *within* the radius of the lead.

That is how we are to understand the binding of Satan. His binding is a result of Christ’s death and resurrection. His power over the nations is now broken and his influence curtailed. He cannot deceive the nations anymore. This is what we are told in verses 2-3. God has bound Satan and cast him into a bottomless pit, where he is to remain until the thousand years are fulfilled. But he is still active. He is bound, but not in every way. There is still much that he can do. We must thus regard him as dangerous still. He is to be feared, even though he is bound as far as the nations are concerned.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “Yet we are told in Revelation 20:1-3 that Satan is bound and thrown into the pit, where he is locked away for a thousand years. How are we to understand this? Allow me to illustrate. Whenever you go to a zoo, you are very glad the animals are in cages or enclosures. It is very comforting to see the bars. That is the picture we are given in verses 1-3.

In this gospel age Satan is bound. He is behind bars. He is on a chain and confined to a pit. Still, a lion in a cage is dangerous, even though he is caged. Similarly, in these gospel days, God has seized Satan and thrown him into the abyss, where he remains under lock and key to this very day. Yet, he remains dangerous.”

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):** 1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

The Scripture says that during the thousand years, Satan is cast into “the bottomless pit”, and that the angel “shut him up”, and “set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled”, and afterwards, “he must be loosed a little season”. The Scripture is very clear here.

Joel Beeke then says, “But you might say: “When we read the newspapers and walk the streets, Satan doesn’t appear to be bound. He seems to be very active.” The question we must ask is this: In what sense is Satan bound? It is possible to tie up a dog in the backyard and yet still allow him a certain amount of activity—a certain scope in which he can be active. He can’t go beyond the lead. He can wreak havoc only *within* the radius of the lead.

That is how we are to understand the binding of Satan. His binding is a result of Christ’s death and resurrection. His power over the nations is now broken and his influence curtailed. He cannot deceive the nations anymore. This is what we are told in verses 2-3. God has bound Satan and cast him into a bottomless pit, where he is to remain until the thousand years are fulfilled. But he is still active. He is bound, but not in every way. There is still much that he can

do. We must thus regard him as dangerous still. He is to be feared, even though he is bound as far as the nations are concerned.”

But the Scripture does not say that, “He is bound, but not in every way”, as Joel Beeke says. The reason Satan is still dangerous is because the millennium has not begun yet, and Satan has not been bound yet, as we shall see.

Now if Satan was already bound and cast into the bottomless pit, why are believers told to put on the whole armor of God, as in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):11** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

And why does the Scripture say he is “now working in the sons of disobedience” in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.

Satan has been defeated, but he is still working in the unsaved who are walking “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air”. Satan has not been bound and thrown into the bottomless pit yet.

Page 515: “Before our Lord’s coming, the devil held sway over the nations. Before Jesus came, the Gentiles were in utter darkness. But now that Christ has died and risen again, and poured out His Spirit, Satan’s power over the world is curtailed and defeated.

Some say John’s account of the binding of Satan cannot refer to the present time because the devil remains active in the world today. However, other Scripture passages affirm that the devil was conquered by Christ’s death on the cross. Speaking of the approaching hour of that death, Christ declared, “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31). The devil is “judged” (John 16:11); Christ came to “bind” him (Matt. 12:29) and has “spoiled” him (Col. 2:15); and Christ partook of our flesh and blood “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Such absolute language does not mean that Satan no longer has any influence in the world, but the devil cannot stop the Lord Jesus from saving lost sinners among the nations.

To summarize the first three verses of Revelation 20, the seventh and final cycle of Revelation begins with a symbolic overview of God’s kingdom in this present age. “A thousand years” symbolizes fullness (ten times ten times ten; cf. Rev. 5:11; 7:4; 14:1; 21:16), and the phrase, “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,” links John’s vision to the

defeat of Satan at Christ's exaltation to heaven (Rev. 12:9). The Lord Jesus bound Satan at His first coming (Matt. 12:28-29; cf. Isa. 24:21-23). Now, as the resurrected Christ, He has authority ("the keys") over the forces of death and hell (Rev. 1:18). He now has control over Satan's forces (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) according to God's holy purposes (Rev. 9:1-11). His victory over Satan is as decisive and complete as if the devil were already dead and buried."

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, "Before our Lord's coming, the devil held sway over the nations. Before Jesus came, the Gentiles were in utter darkness. But now that Christ has died and risen again, and poured out His Spirit, Satan's power over the world is curtailed and defeated."

So let us look at the passages he refers to.

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):31** Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

We have to understand this Scripture in the context of the whole of Scripture.

And he refers to **John 16 (KJV):11** Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

And Joel refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):28** But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

In this Scripture, Jesus is explaining how He is working by using an analogy. The world is Satan's house, as it were. He is the god of this world. Satan is not only the "prince of this world", but he is the god of this world, as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):4** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So Jesus is casting devils out of one person at a time. So when we read in John 12:31 above that, "now shall the prince of this world be cast out", we understand that he is cast out as individuals are set free when they have faith in Jesus Christ.

This was the mission of Jesus, that is, to set the captives free, as we read in **Luke 4 (KJV):16** And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

And Joel also refers to **Colossians 2 (KJV):15** And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

And to **Hebrews 2 (KJV):14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and

blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

The word “destroy” in the Greek is **καταργέω** (pronounced *katargeō*), from G2596 and G691; to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively:—abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G2673**

And this Greek word is from **κατά** (pronounced *kat-ah'*), a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time)

And from **ἀργέω** (pronounced *arg-eh'-o*), from G692; to be idle, i.e. (figuratively) to delay:—linger. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G691**

So we could read this verse as “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might “render useless” him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”

And Jesus taught as in **Luke 10 (KJV):17** And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

And again, Paul taught as in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):3** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

And as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.

So the way we are to understand Satan’s power in this world is that Satan is still in the world, and that he is the “god of this world” who has “blinded the minds of them which believe not”. The unsaved, the unbelievers, walk “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”. But Christians have absolute authority over him in Jesus’ name. And Christians have been given the mission of Jesus, so that unbelievers may become believers, and be set free. So Satan has not been bound in the bottomless pit yet.

Joel Beeke then says, “To summarize the first three verses of Revelation 20, the seventh and final cycle of Revelation begins with a symbolic overview of God’s kingdom in this present age. “A thousand years” symbolizes fullness (ten times ten time ten;...”

And on page 511-513, Joel Beeke said, “Third, Revelation is a book of symbolic visions. Therefore, one must interpret the numbers (such as *one thousand*) and images (such as *binding with a chain* and *sealing in a pit*) in chapter 20 as symbols. This is not inconsistent with a literal interpretation of God’s Word, but only the recognition that parts of Scripture communicate via

metaphors and symbols.”

But we must interpret the “metaphors and symbols” according to the Scripture. The Scripture explains all of the symbols, as we have read in Genesis 37:5-10 which we used to interpret Revelation 12 and the sun clothed woman. We are not to interpret them ourselves, as Joel Beeke seems to say on page 11 where he says, “Second, this book comes to us as an *apocalypse*. It therefore must not be read literally throughout. As a specimen of apocalyptic literature, it is filled with imagery, symbolism, and other kinds of figurative language. To read it literally is a basic error in interpretation, a failure to do justice to the literary character of the book.”

But we are to interpret all of Scripture literally. The word “Revelation” in Revelation 1:1 in the Greek is the word **Ἀποκάλυψις** (pronounced apokalypsis), from G601; disclosure:-- appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G602.**

And this Greek word is from **ἀποκαλύπτω** (pronounced ap-ok-al-oo-p'-to), from G575 and G2572; to take off the cover, i.e. disclose:—reveal. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G601.**

So the book of Revelation is literally a revelation, a disclosure of things to come. It is not just some “specimen of apocalyptic literature”. The Scriptures are not just any literature. All Scripture is inspired by God, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

We are to rightly divide the word of truth, as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The words “rightly dividing” are a translation of the Greek word **ὀρθοτομέω** (pronounced or-thot-om-eh'-o); from a compound of G3717 and the base of of G5114, to make a straight cut, i.e. (figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message):—rightly divide. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G3718.**

In ancient times, this spoke of the stonemason’s art of cutting rocks with a straight cut so that they would fit in a firm foundation.

We are not to take things out of context in the Scriptures. All of the symbols in the Bible are defined by the Bible itself. There is nothing in the book of Revelation that says that we should interpret all numbers as symbols. The whole Bible is to be interpreted literally, and all of the symbols are interpreted by the Bible itself.

Again, in his summary, Joel Beeke then says, “A thousand years” symbolizes fullness (ten times ten time ten; cf. Rev. 5:11; 7:4; 14:1; 21:16), and the phrase, “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,” links John’s vision to the defeat of Satan at Christ’s exaltation to heaven (Rev. 12:9).”

He refers to **Revelation 5 (KJV):11** And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

But “Thousands of thousands” is an undefined number, so it is like the number of the

sands on the seashore, as in **Hosea 1 (KJV):10** Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

But “a thousand years” is a known number. And there is no Scripture that defines it as a symbol of fullness, or anything else for that matter.

And he refers to **Revelation 7 (KJV):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.

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

Again, 144,000 is a definite number. It is not symbolic of anything. Even the number of stars is known to God, as we read in **Psalms 147 (KJV):4** He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

And in **Isaiah 40 (KJV):26** Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

And Joel Beeke refers to **Revelation 21 (KJV):16** And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

So the New Jerusalem will be a cube that is 1,500 miles on a side. Again, this is a definite number. And the New Jerusalem will be brought down from heaven to the new earth.

Now, again, Joel Beeke said that “the phrase, “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,” links John’s vision to the defeat of Satan at Christ’s exaltation to heaven (Rev. 12:9).”

And he refers to **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

However, we must put this Scripture in context with the rest of Revelation, chapter 12. We begin reading in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

We know that the sun, the moon, and the crown of twelve stars refers to Israel, as Jacob interpreted them for us in **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

Then we continue in **Revelation 12 (KJV):2** And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And

his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

So Israel, the woman in verse 2, is pictured as “being with child”, and “travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered”. Then in verse 3, “there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads”. The “seven heads and ten horns” are also referred to in context in **Revelation 13 (KJV)**:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

In Revelation 12:4, we see that it is the dragon that “gave power unto the beast”, the antichrist. But we also see that the beast was in verse 2, “like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion”, which shows us that this beast was also symbolic of an empire or kingdom composed of the beasts in Daniel, chapter 7, where the lion was Babylon, the bear was Media-Persia, and the leopard was Greece. The antichrist will unite these kingdoms into the kingdom of the beast in the tribulation week, which will be the 70th week determined for Israel in Daniel 9:24-27.

Now as we continue in Revelation, chapter 12, again in verse 4 we read that the dragon is Satan whose sin “drew the third part of the stars of heaven”, that is, a third of the angels, and “did cast them to the earth”. Satan was the first to sin in the universe, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV)**:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Continuing in Revelation 12:4, we read that, “the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born”,

The dragon is Satan whose sin “drew the third part of the stars of heaven”, that is, a third of the angels, and “did cast them to the earth”. This dragon “stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born”, but in verse 5, “she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne”.

This child was Jesus Christ who will “rule all nations with a rod of iron” in the millennium. He was “caught up unto God, and to his throne” after He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, but He will return and reign on the earth during the millennium.

We continue to read in **Revelation 12 (KJV)**:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

According to Biblical chronology, a year is 360 days, as we know from **Genesis 7 (KJV):11** In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

And from **Genesis 8 (KJV):3** And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. 4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

If it rained from “the second month, the seventeenth day of the month” in Genesis 7:11 until “the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month” in Genesis 8:4, then 150 days would equal 5 months times 30 days per month. So “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” in Biblical chronology would be 3½ years.

We continue reading in **Revelation 12 (KJV):7** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

This corresponds to the last half of the tribulation week. The devil, that is, Satan, will then be restricted to the earth's atmosphere. He will not have access to heaven as he did in Job, as in **Job 2 (KJV):1** Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

The sons of God in this verse are the angels, as we also read of in **Job 38 (KJV):4** Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

When Satan is cast out into the earth, this will be a time of literally hell on earth, for the devil will be restricted to this earth, “having great wrath” in Revelation 12:12.

We continue reading in **Revelation 12 (KJV):15** And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman,

and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The woman refers to Israel who will be given safe passage for the last half of the week of tribulation.

Joel Beeke then said, “The Lord Jesus bound Satan at His first coming (Matt. 12:28-29; cf. Isa. 24:21-23).

He refers to **Matthew 12 (KJV):28** But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

The binding here refers to the authority the saints have during the church age, as we read again in **Luke 10 (KJV):19** Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

This is another indication that Satan has not been bound in the bottomless pit yet. The devils are subject to us in the name of Jesus, but he still roams the world like a roaring lion, as Peter taught in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Joel Beeke then also refers to **Isaiah 24 (KJV):21** And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

And this refers to the time “when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously”, that is, during the millennium, or thousand year reign of Christ. Satan will be shut up in the bottomless pit during the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. But now we have authority in the name of Jesus, and so we read in **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And in **Mark 16 (KJV):17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

In the name of Jesus, we have authority over all of Satan's hordes. And Jesus said as in **Acts 1 (KJV):6** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And the promise of the Holy Spirit is for all that are afar off, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

And Jesus taught as in **John 14 (KJV):12** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Joel Beeke concludes, “Now, as the resurrected Christ, He has authority (“the keys”) over the forces of death and hell (Rev. 1:18). He now has control over Satan’s forces (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) according to God’s holy purposes (Rev. 9:1-11). His victory over Satan is as decisive and complete as if the devil were already dead and buried.”

He refers to **Revelation 1 (KJV):18** I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Yes, and Jesus has triumphed over Satan, and this is not in doubt. But Satan still roars about like a roaring lion as we read above in 1 Peter 5:8.

And he refers to **2 Peter 2 (KJV):4** For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

These were the angels responsible for the flood in Noah’s time, but Joel Beeke refers to the next Scripture, Jude 1:6, as if it occurred at the time of Jesus’ triumph on the cross. We read in **Jude 1 (KJV):6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

These angels comingled with the daughters of men in **Genesis 6 (KJV):4** There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

The reason Noah and his family were spared is because Noah was not defiled in this way but “perfect in his generations”, as in verse 9 above.

Joel Beeke then refers to “God’s holy purposes” in **Revelation 9 (KJV):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. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as

the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

So according to Joel Beeke, this happened when Jesus triumphed on the cross, as we read again what he says, “Now, as the resurrected Christ, He has authority (“the keys”) over the forces of death and hell (Rev. 1:18). He now has control over Satan’s forces (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) according to God’s holy purposes (Rev. 9:1-11). His victory over Satan is as decisive and complete as if the devil were already dead and buried.”

Jesus’ victory on the cross was “decisive and complete as if the devil were already dead and buried.” But if we are living in the time of Revelation 9:1-11, as Joel Beeke says, then Satan is loose in the world today, because the angel “opened the bottomless pit” in Revelation 9:2 above.

We read again what Joel Beeke said, “Before our Lord’s coming, the devil held sway over the nations. Before Jesus came, the Gentiles were in utter darkness. But now that Christ has died and risen again, and poured out His Spirit, Satan’s power over the world is curtailed and defeated.”

But Satan still prowls the earth as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He is still the god of this world. We as Christians have authority over him in Jesus’ name. But the world is still in darkness and under his control.

And after the death of Jesus, Paul cast out devils, as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):11** And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

But unbelievers are still under his influence, as we continue in **Acts 19 (KJV):13** Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

The world is still in darkness, as we read in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

But the Lord has delivered us who are believers, as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):13**

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Page 517-522: “During the time in which Satan is bound, the saints reign. Revelation 20:4-6 says: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

This vision parallels the previous one; thus, the binding of Satan and the reigning of the saints happen at the same time. But in what sense can we speak about the saints reigning in this gospel age? This is a difficult passage to understand properly. The key to interpreting it is verse 5, which refers to the “first resurrection.”

The reign of the saints seems to be synonymous with the first resurrection. This first resurrection is not the resurrection of the body, because John says that he sees only the “souls” of the martyrs (v. 4). So this first resurrection is a resurrection of the soul, not of the body. It is a *spiritual* and *heavenly* resurrection.

There are two ways of understanding what the reign of the saints means, both of which have merit:

First, this could be a reference to the *intermediate state* between death and the return of Christ. What happens to our loved ones, our Christian relatives and friends, who die? Their bodies are in the grave, but their souls are with Christ. John could be describing this intermediate state of the faithful departed.

John might speak to his readers about the intermediate state because he is a pastor, and he is writing to people who need pastoral comfort. Believers are being persecuted. Many have lost loved ones under Rome’s cruel regime. Some of them will have to face martyrdom. Some will be beheaded for the sake of Christ because they refuse to bow and worship Caesar. These suffering saints might be asking, “Is following Christ worth it?”

John is saying, in effect: “Let me show you the state of the faithful departed, those brothers and sisters of yours who have been beheaded because they refused to compromise. They are seated on thrones in glory with Christ. They have never been as alive as they are now, reigning with Christ in glory and waiting for His coming and the resurrection of the body.”

If this is John’s purpose, it would certainly tie in with what Paul tells us in two of his epistles. He says of persecution and suffering in 2 Corinthians 4:16-17: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Paul wants suffering Christians to keep things in proper perspective. He is saying to them: “What you will suffer under imperial Rome is only a moment of affliction. But what awaits you is to reign eternally with Christ in glory.”

He also says in Romans 8:16-18: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that

we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Like Paul in these passages, John in our passage may be comforting hurting Christians by reminding them that their deceased brothers and sisters are in an intermediate state between suffering and the glory that awaits them.

Second, the reign of the saints could refer to a present reality. It is possible to understand the first resurrection not in terms of death, but in terms of Jesus’ resurrection and our resurrection to new spiritual life through regeneration. Paul says in Ephesians 2:4-7, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

Paul is saying to ordinary Christians that we were once dead in sin, but God has quickened us. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, God has raised us from the dead and made us alive in Christ. Likewise, just as God raised Christ up to heaven to be seated at His right hand, so we also are raised up with Christ and seated in heavenly places with Him.

So it is possible to understand the first resurrection in terms of the new birth, or regeneration. John says, in effect, “Those who have known the second birth will never know the second death.” If you are born again, then nothing in this world can harm you in an ultimate sense. “Fear not them which kill the body...but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). The saints were not to be afraid or intimidated by Nero or Rome, but to fear God. Like them, you must remember that you have been resurrected from the dead. You have been born again by the Holy Spirit. You are thus more than conquerors through Christ who loved you.

The reign of the saints is not just about the intermediate state. I believe that Christian loved ones who have gone on ahead of us are reigning with Christ now, and that gives me great comfort. But I also believe that the reign of the saints is a present biblical reality. God has made us kings and priests through Jesus Christ here on this earth.

The context of 1 Corinthians 6 is interesting. It seems that some Christians were suing each other in court. Paul tells them that Christians shouldn’t be dealing with one another like that. He uses a powerful argument in verses 2-3: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?” What a message for beleaguered saints today!

The Reformers understood the significance of our death, resurrection, ascension and heavenly session with Christ. The Heidelberg Catechism poses a most important question: “Why are thou called a Christian?” The answer is stated in terms of Christ’s threefold office as Prophet, Priest, and King, and how believers share in it now and in the life to come: “Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of His anointing; so that I may confess His name [as a prophet], and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him [as a priest]; and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this

life, and afterwards reign with Him eternally over all creatures [as a king]” (“The Heidelberg Catechism”, The Three Forms of Unity, 78). The Christian’s combat against sin and Satan is invested with royal strength and dignity; he fights as a king should fight for the honor and glory of his kingdom. He is as truly a king now as he will be in the life to come.

Many of us were taught in geography class that it is impossible for a river to rise higher than its source. But Christians can rise higher than their source. Our achievements can rise above our organizational skills, our strength, our personality, or our weakness. Our achievements in this life can rise to the level of its real source, which is hid with Christ in God. We can reign with Him. We can sit on a throne. John says that he saw thrones, and those who refused to bow the knee to the beast were sitting on them. That is you, dear believer, as a follower of the Lamb.

To summarize, verses 4-6, God’s mediatorial kingdom has already come in its spiritual power and reality to His people (John 18:36-37; Rom. 14:17; Eph. 1:19-21; Col. 1:12-13), and those who possess the kingdom are already blessed by God (Matt. 5:3; cf. Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 22:7; 14). Even now, God’s people, symbolized in an earlier vision by the twenty-four elders, are crowned and enthroned in God’s heavenly presence (Rev. 4:4, cf. Eph. 2:6). In this world, they suffer and die at the hands of wicked rulers for their refusal to participate in its idolatry. Yet those who are faithful unto death still live (Rev. 2:10) as priests (Isa. 61:6) and kings because of Christ’s death for them (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) and the Spirit’s work in them (cf. the spiritual resurrection in Ezek. 37:1-14). In Revelation 20, just as the second death is the ultimate punishment of hellfire (v. 14) after the first death of the body, so the first resurrection is a gift of spiritual life before the second resurrection of the body (vv. 12-13). A spiritual resurrection precedes the physical resurrection, as Christ taught (John 5:24-29), for believers are united to Him who is the resurrection and the life—even after they die (John 11:25-26; Col. 3:1-4; cf. Matt. 22:21-32).

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “During the time in which Satan is bound, the saints reign. Revelation 20:4-6 says: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

This vision parallels the previous one; thus, the binding of Satan and the reigning of the saints happen at the same time. But in what sense can we speak about the saints reigning in this gospel age? This is a difficult passage to understand properly. The key to interpreting it is verse 5, which refers to the “first resurrection.””

And he is correct when he says that “the binding of Satan and the reigning of the saints happen at the same time”, which is at the beginning of the 1000 years reign of Christ. But Joel Beeke believes that this period will be the gospel age because he feels that the thousand years is symbolic and not literal. But is this Scriptural? Before answering that, we must first

find out what he means by “first resurrection”.

But Joel Beeke continues, as he then says, “The reign of the saints seems to be synonymous with the first resurrection. This first resurrection is not the resurrection of the body, because John says that he sees only the “souls” of the martyrs (v. 4). So this first resurrection is a resurrection of the soul, not of the body. It is a *spiritual* and *heavenly* resurrection.”

But let us read verse 4 in context as in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

What John sees is “the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus”, and it was these who “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”, in verse 4. Then in verse 5, “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished”. If these souls were beheaded, which relates to a physical death, and they then “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”, the thousand years could not be the Church age because these saints would have been beheaded during the Church age, which according to Joel Beeke is the age we are living in.

But Joel continues, as he then says, “There are two ways of understanding what the reign of the saints means, both of which have merit:

First, this could be a reference to the *intermediate state* between death and the return of Christ. What happens to our loved ones, our Christian relatives and friends, who die? Their bodies are in the grave, but their souls are with Christ. John could be describing this intermediate state of the faithful departed.”

And Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

When believers in Jesus Christ die, they go to be present with the Lord. But in Revelation 20:4, these saints were beheaded for their witness of Jesus, and then lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, but in verse 5, we read that the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, and that this living with Christ after being beheaded is the “first resurrection”.

But Joel Beeke continues, and says, “John might speak to his readers about the intermediate state because he is a pastor, and he is writing to people who need pastoral comfort. Believers are being persecuted. Many have lost loved ones under Rome’s cruel regime. Some of them will have to face martyrdom. Some will be beheaded for the sake of Christ because they refuse to bow and worship Caesar. These suffering saints might be asking, “Is following Christ worth it?”

John is saying, in effect: “Let me show you the state of the faithful departed, those brothers and sisters of yours who have been beheaded because they refused to compromise. They are seated on thrones in glory with Christ. They have never been as alive as they are now, reigning with Christ in glory and waiting for His coming and the resurrection of the body.”

If this is John’s purpose, it would certainly tie in with what Paul tells us in two of his

epistles. He says of persecution and suffering in 2 Corinthians 4:16-17: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Paul wants suffering Christians to keep things in proper perspective. He is saying to them: “What you will suffer under imperial Rome is only a moment of affliction. But what awaits you is to reign eternally with Christ in glory.”

He also says in Romans 8:16-18: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Like Paul in these passages, John in our passage may be comforting hurting Christians by reminding them that their deceased brothers and sisters are in an intermediate state between suffering and the glory that awaits them.”

But John is not a pastor, but an apostle who walked with the Lord and saw Him crucified and rise from the dead. So God’s purpose in giving John this vision is not about an encouraging sermon, but about His plans and purposes for His Church and for Israel.

Now we need to read carefully here. Joel Beeke said, “So this first resurrection is a resurrection of the soul, not of the body. It is a *spiritual* and *heavenly* resurrection”. And he says that this “first resurrection” can be understood in two ways. The first way is that John is speaking of a vision he had of the souls in heaven “in an intermediate state between suffering and the glory that awaits them”. Now he will explain his second way of understanding this passage.

Joel Beeke continues, and says, “Second, the reign of the saints could refer to a present reality. It is possible to understand the first resurrection not in terms of death, but in terms of Jesus’ resurrection and our resurrection to new spiritual life through regeneration. Paul says in Ephesians 2:4-7, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

Paul is saying to ordinary Christians that we were once dead in sin, but God has quickened us. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, God has raised us from the dead and made us alive in Christ. Likewise, just as God raised Christ up to heaven to be seated at His right hand, so we also are raised up with Christ and seated in heavenly places with Him.

So it is possible to understand the first resurrection in terms of the new birth, or regeneration. John says, in effect, “Those who have known the second birth will never know the second death.” If you are born again, then nothing in this world can harm you in an ultimate sense. “Fear not them which kill the body...but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). The saints were not to be afraid or intimidated by Nero or Rome, but to fear God. Like them, you must remember that you have been resurrected from the dead. You have been born again by the Holy Spirit. You are thus more than conquerors through Christ who loved you.

The reign of the saints is not just about the intermediate state. I believe that Christian

loved ones who have gone on ahead of us are reigning with Christ now, and that gives me great comfort. But I also believe that the reign of the saints is a present biblical reality. God has made us kings and priests through Jesus Christ here on this earth.”

So Joel Beeke believes that both ways are valid ways of understanding the “first resurrection”. That is, that in Revelation 20, verse 4, where it says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”, it not only refers to those saints who have been martyred, or died in the Lord, and gone to heaven, but the “souls” in Revelation 20, verse 4, also refers to the saints who are currently living in the gospel age and have been born again in a spiritual resurrection. And in order to explain how John could be seeing saints in heaven in this current gospel age, he says that, “just as God raised Christ up to heaven to be seated at His right hand, so we also are raised up with Christ and seated in heavenly places with Him”.

But let us continue reading for more understanding of his writing before commenting more.

Joel Beeke continues, “The context of 1 Corinthians 6 is interesting. It seems that some Christians were suing each other in court. Paul tells them that Christians shouldn’t be dealing with one another like that. He uses a powerful argument in verses 2-3: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?” What a message for beleaguered saints today!

The Reformers understood the significance of our death, resurrection, ascension and heavenly session with Christ. The Heidelberg Catechism poses a most important question: “Why are thou called a Christian?” The answer is stated in terms of Christ’s threefold office as Prophet, Priest, and King, and how believers share in it now and in the life to come: “Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of His anointing; so that I may confess His name [as a prophet], and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him [as a priest]; and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life, and afterwards reign with Him eternally over all creatures [as a king]” (“The Heidelberg Catechism”, The Three Forms of Unity, 78). The Christian’s combat against sin and Satan is invested with royal strength and dignity; he fights as a king should fight for the honor and glory of his kingdom. He is as truly a king now as he will be in the life to come.

Many of us were taught in geography class that it is impossible for a river to rise higher than its source. But Christians can rise higher than their source. Our achievements can rise above our organizational skills, our strength, our personality, or our weakness. Our achievements in this life can rise to the level of its real source, which is hid with Christ in God. We can reign with Him. We can sit on a throne. John says that he saw thrones, and those who refused to bow the knee to the beast were sitting on them. That is you, dear believer, as a follower of the Lamb.”

It is true that we have been raised to sit in heavenly places, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved

us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And this refers to a spiritual resurrection as we read also in **Colossians 3 (KJV)**:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

But the souls that John sees in Revelation 20:4 were beheaded for their witness of Jesus. We have to be born again before we die a physical death or else it is too late.

Joel will now summarize, as he then says, “To summarize, verses 4-6, God’s mediatorial kingdom has already come in its spiritual power and reality to His people (John 18:36-37; Rom. 14:17; Eph. 1:19-21; Col. 1:12-13), and those who possess the kingdom are already blessed by God (Matt. 5:3; cf. Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 22:7; 14).”

He refers to **John 18 (KJV)**:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

And to **Romans 14 (KJV)**:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And to **Ephesians 1 (KJV)**:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV)**:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

While this is all true, the kingdom of God is not manifest yet. This is why we pray, as in **Matthew 6 (KJV)**:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

We hope for what we don’t see, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption,

to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

And again, Joel then says “and those who possess the kingdom are already blessed by God”, and he refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And to **Revelation 1 (KJV):3** Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

And to **Revelation 14 (KJV):13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

And the dead which die in the Lord are certainly blessed to be with their Lord.

And Joel refers to **Revelation 16 (KJV):15** Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

And in context to **Revelation 19 (KJV):7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

The marriage supper of the Lamb is in heaven.

And Joel refers to **Revelation 22 (KJV):7** Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

And to **Revelation 22 (KJV):14** Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

So it is true that “those who possess the kingdom are already blessed by God”, as Joel has said. But they are not as blessed as they will be when we are made like Him at the resurrection of our bodies.

Joel Beeke continues, “Even now, God’s people, symbolized in an earlier vision by the twenty-four elders, are crowned and enthroned in God’s heavenly presence (Rev. 4:4, cf. Eph. 2:6).”

And he refers to **Revelation 4 (KJV):4** And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

And to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

In Revelation 4:4, the crowns will be our rewards, which we will receive at the judgment seat of Christ. The “four and twenty elders” are sitting in heaven, “clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold”. This is a vision of the future, after the rapture of the saints.

In Ephesians 2:6, this is a present reality for all believers in Jesus Christ. This is speaking of the oneness in spirit we have with Jesus.

Joel then continues, “In this world, they suffer and die at the hands of wicked rulers for their refusal to participate in its idolatry. Yet those who are faithful unto death still live (Rev.

2:10) as priests (Isa. 61:6) and kings because of Christ's death for them (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) and the Spirit's work in them (cf. the spiritual resurrection in Ezek. 37:1-14)."

And he refers to **Revelation 2 (KJV):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.

And in context to **Isaiah 61 (KJV):1** The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. 4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

Verses 1 and 2 have begun as Jesus said in **Luke 4 (KJV):17** And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

But Isaiah 61:3-6 are still to be fulfilled for Israel because there is nothing symbolic in these verses in Isaiah.

And Joel refers to **Revelation 1 (KJV):6** And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

And in context to **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 1:6 speaks of a present reality, but the kingdom is not manifest yet. And Revelation 5:8-10 speaks of a vision of the raptured saints in heaven, who "shall reign on the earth" in verse 10. This will be when the kingdom of God is manifest on earth during the thousand year reign of Christ.

And Joel then refers to the "spiritual resurrection" in **Ezekiel 37 (KJV):1** The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, 2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. 3 And he said

unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. 9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12 Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.

In verse 11 we read that “these bones are the whole house of Israel”, and in verse 14 that the Lord will put His Spirit in them and they “shall live”, and the Lord shall place them in their “own land”. This is another promise to Israel in the Old Testament that God will bring to pass in the future when all Israel shall be saved. It is not symbolic of anything but it is for literal Israel. While all who are saved will be born again spiritually, this prophecy is for Israel when they shall again be saved as a nation.

Joel Beeke then continues, and then says, “In Revelation 20, just as the second death is the ultimate punishment of hellfire (v. 14) after the first death of the body, so the first resurrection is a gift of spiritual life before the second resurrection of the body (vv. 12-13).”

He refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):** 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

And he is correct when he says that “the second death is the ultimate punishment of hellfire (v. 14)”, but he is not correct in that he only adds it is “after the first death of the body”. The “second death” is actually after the death of the body, and the resurrection of that same body. We read in **Matthew 10 (KJV):** 28 And 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 soul and body in hell.

And in **John 5 (KJV):28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

They “that are in the graves” are the dead, that is, those who have passed out of this life. Some “that have done good” will then be resurrected to “the resurrection of life”, and “they that have done evil” will be resurrected “unto the resurrection of damnation”. So there are two physical resurrections, one of the righteous, and one of the unrighteous.

Joel Beeke then continues, “A spiritual resurrection precedes the physical resurrection, as Christ taught (John 5:24-29), for believers are united to Him who is the resurrection and the life—even after they die (John 11:25-26; Col. 3:1-4; cf. Matt. 22:21-32).”

And he refers to **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

In verse 24, Jesus explains what happens when we are born again. He that believes on Him that sent Jesus “is passed from death unto life”. This is the new birth that Jesus explained to Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

When we believe in Jesus, we are born of the Spirit, and we pass from spiritual death to spiritual life, for “whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit”, as in verse 6. That is, our spirit is born of the Spirit and we now have eternal life, as John also explains in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And again, Joel adds, “for believers are united to Him who is the resurrection and the life—even after they die, referring to **John 11 (KJV):25** Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

And to **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not

on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

And when we are born again, our eternal life in our spirit is “hid with Christ in God”, and not manifest yet to the world as it will be in the thousand year reign of Christ on earth.

And Joel refers to **Matthew 22 (KJV):**21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way. 23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Joel Beeke believes in the resurrection, and in eternal life for those who believe in Jesus, and that is good. And we believers receive eternal life in our spirits when we believe, and this is what is hidden with Christ in God from the world. But we do not receive this spiritual life when we die a physical death, but when we believe in Jesus here on earth. While Joel acknowledges this, he misunderstands what is meant by the first resurrection in Revelation 20:5.

Again he said, “In Revelation 20, just as the second death is the ultimate punishment of hellfire (v. 14) after the first death of the body, so the first resurrection is a gift of spiritual life before the second resurrection of the body (vv. 12-13).”

But in the context of Revelation 20, the first resurrection is not of the spirit or soul, but of the body. Now let us read again in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

John sees the “souls” of the martyrs who were beheaded during the tribulation. But these “souls” were among the dead who lived with Christ, while the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. If this were referring to a spiritual resurrection, it could not happen after they were beheaded and were dead, for we must accept Christ and be born again before we die a physical death, or else it will be too late, as Jesus taught in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.

And in Revelation 20:5 above we read, “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” If the thousand years are symbolic of the Church age, then no

one else can be born again, or resurrected, during this time, because “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished”.

Therefore, these “souls” are a reference to those who were part of the “first resurrection”, which was of their bodies, for they were raised after they had been beheaded. So “the rest of the dead did not live again”, or were resurrected, until after the “thousand years were finished”. This is referring to the unrighteous dead. This invalidates Joel Beeke’s theory that the “thousand years” is only symbolic of the church age.

And Revelation 20:4-6 cannot refer to the “intermediate state” because when we die, our spirit and soul go to heaven to be with the Lord. This is not a resurrection but simply a release of our spirit and soul from our body, which is mortal, to be with the Lord until the resurrection of our bodies.

Now we read of the first fruits of resurrected saints in **Matthew 27 (KJV):50** Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

The word “ghost” in verse 50 in the Greek is **πνεῦμα** (pronounced pnyoo'-mah); from G4154; a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively, a spirit, i.e. (human) the rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc., or (superhuman) an angel, demon, or (divine) God, Christ's spirit, the Holy Spirit:—ghost, life, spirit(-ual, -ually), mind. Compare G5590. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, G4151.**

The word “ghost” is an old English translation of the Greek word, **πνεῦμα** (pronounced pnyoo'-mah). A current translation is spirit. So our spirit and soul are the unseen parts of us. It is in our spirit that we connect with God, and the spiritual. Our soul is composed of our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience. Before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.

When we believed in Jesus Christ, we were made alive, as we continue in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

As a result of being born again by the Spirit of God in our spirit, we have a new divine nature in our spirit, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):4** Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.

Our soul still holds all of the baggage of our past when we are born again. This is cleansed in a progressive sanctification as we walk in the light of the word of God. Then when we see Him, we will be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love

the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

When we understand our makeup, we then know that Joel Beeke's interpretation of the first resurrection is untenable. Our first resurrection in a spiritual sense is a spiritual resurrection which occurs here on earth in our spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ and we are born again. But this is not the first resurrection that is referred to in Revelation, chapter 20. The first resurrection in Revelation, chapter 20, speaks of those who were physically dead, some being beheaded, and who then were resurrected in their bodies, and lived again with Christ during His thousand year reign on earth.

Page 528: "John says in verse 11, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." The portion of Scripture before us is unspeakably solemn. Though cloaked in symbolic language, it speaks of the final day, when we all must appear before God's great white throne. The bodies of all who have died will be raised from death and reunited with their souls for this great event. As the Westminster Confession (33.1) says, "All persons who have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." (Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, 4:271)

The judge on the throne is Christ Jesus (Acts 17:31). Jesus Himself confirms that in many other places. For example, in Matthew 25:31-32, He says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." There can be no doubt that Jesus is speaking about Himself here.

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, "John says in verse 11", and he refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

In this judgment, in verse 1, the "earth and the heaven fled away" from the face of him that sat on "a great white throne".

He then refers in context to **Acts 17 (KJV):30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath

ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

This definitely points to Jesus, but it does not specify which judgment. But Jesus will be present for all of the judgments.

And he then refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

In this judgment, in verse 31, “the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory”. And in verse 32, “before him shall be gathered all nations”. And He will separate the “sheep from the goats”. So this judgment is on earth.

The sheep on the right hand will be blessed, and “inherit the kingdom prepared” for them “from the foundation of the world”. But the goats will depart “into everlasting punishment”. This judgment will be based on how the nations treated Christ’s brethren, as he says in verse 40, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”.

So the nations will be allowed entrance into the kingdom based on their treatment of the Jews during the tribulation week. The sheep nations shall go into the kingdom age where Christ will rule with a rod of iron for one thousand years.

This rule with a rod of iron is also mentioned in **Psalm 2 (KJV):**9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

And in **Revelation 2 (KJV):**7 And he shall rule 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.

And in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And this time is mentioned in **Isaiah 2 (KJV)**:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

And in **Micah 4 (KJV)**:1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. 2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

The curse will be lifted from the earth in the millennium. Dr. Albert Grimes says, "Then also in Isaiah 35:1, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." These statements have to do mostly with the land of Palestine. However, it will affect all the world.

Crop failures will only come to those who will not come up to worship in Jerusalem. They will be judged in the sense that no rain will come upon their crops as stated in Zechariah 14:17-19, "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. 18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." So the earth will be restored back to conditions that existed before Adam fell. It will be delivered from the bondage of corruption as in Romans 8:21, "Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."” **BOOK TWELVE, PART 3, FUTURE EVENTS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, by Dr. Albert Grimes**
<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/grimes/book12.pdf>

Page 532: In Revelation 20:11, John says he sees a great throne. The throne is great not only because of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Judge who sits upon it, but also because of the greatness of the scope of His authority to judge. Everyone will appear before this throne on the day of judgment.

We are told in verses 12-13: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and

the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”

When the Son of man comes again, everyone will hear His voice. Those who are in the grave will be raised, some to life and others to condemnation. Everyone will be present before the great white throne. Verse 12 says we shall “stand before God” and see Him with our own eyes. Each person will be raised, not with someone else’s body, but with the body he or she had or has now. It will be transformed for eternity, but it will be the same body. In your flesh, you will see the Judge on that last day. We will all be there in our bodies before the judgment throne of Christ, to give an account of what we have done with our lives.

Christians will not escape the scrutiny of God. The Bible says that we will all be called to account at the great white throne. If the sins of believers will be recalled in that day, however, it will only be done in the context of God’s amazing grace to His own glory. We will not be condemned, because Christ is our Savior; nevertheless, we will be there. That ought to wake us up as Christians. We can’t sit back comfortably and say, “Well, I’m a Christian; this coming day of judgment has nothing to do with me.” That’s not true; we will all be there.

Understanding this great throne of judgment should motivate us also to bring the gospel to the lost. Knowing that our friends and relatives, as well as our neighbors and the people we work with, will have to appear before the great tribunal of Christ should make us eager to invite them to come to Christ now. The certainty of judgment and the terror of the Lord ought to make us urgently persuasive.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, “In Revelation 20:11, John says he sees a great throne. The throne is great not only because of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Judge who sits upon it, but also because of the greatness of the scope of His authority to judge. Everyone will appear before this throne on the day of judgment.”

He then refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):** 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Joel Beeke then says, “When the Son of man comes again, everyone will hear His voice. Those who are in the grave will be raised, some to life and others to condemnation. Everyone will be present before the great white throne. Verse 12 says we shall “stand before God” and see Him with our own eyes. Each person will be raised, not with someone else’s body, but with the body he or she had or has now. It will be transformed for eternity, but it will be the same body. In your flesh, you will see the Judge on that last day. We will all be there in our bodies before the judgment throne of Christ, to give an account of what we have done with our lives.”

Here he makes all of the judgments in Revelation fall into one judgment, that is, the White Throne Judgment. The White Throne Judgment is a judgment based on works.

But he ignores the fact that the first resurrection already occurred of the righteous dead in Revelation 20:4-5. In the first resurrection, which is for believers, we will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

This judgment is only for rewards, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Paul was writing to the Corinthians who were believers in Jesus Christ. So when he says in verse 15, “If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire”, he is speaking of a believer who, if all they may have built on the foundation of Jesus Christ was “wood, hay, stubble”, would have to endure the fire of their bad choices in this life, but would still be saved because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

The judgment for believers at the “judgment seat of Christ” will be after the rapture and during the tribulation week, and before the millennium, which Joel Beeke does not believe in.

So not everyone will have to appear before the White Throne Judgment. The White Throne Judgment is for unbelievers, who are the “rest of the dead” in **Revelation 20 (KJV):5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The first resurrection is for believers who will be judged for rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. The White Throne Judgment is for the unbelieving dead who will be judged solely on their works.

Revelation 21

Page 554: “Revelation 21:9-10 says, “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” Let us take a walk with the apostle John and explore the New Jerusalem under six headings: the church’s origin (vv. 9-10); the church’s beauty (vv.11, 18-21); the church’s invulnerability (vv. 12a, 17, 25); the church’s universality (vv. 12b-13); the church’s foundations (v. 14); and the church’s glory (vv. 22-24).

Since this passage is symbolic, we should rid ourselves of any idea of a literal city. Some interpret Revelation literally, but it is wrong to think that this city literally falls from the skies. For one thing, it is too big. If you look at the measurements of the city in verse 16, you see it is twelve thousand furlongs wide, long, and high, which means that it extends fourteen hundred miles in every direction. This city would be half the size of the United States. The city is a symbol, for the angel says to John: “I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he... shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (vv. 9-10).

This isn’t a picture of a millennial city on earth. This is not even a picture of heaven. This city is the bride, the wife of the Lamb. She is the church triumphant, the perfected, glorified church of Jesus Christ. In this passage, we are not so much looking through a window into the world to come but into a kind of mirror. As members of Christ’s body, the church, we see ourselves as we are now in principle and as we shall be hereafter in perfection. We are not only spectators of this vision, but we are also the spectacle itself. We are not merely going to the Celestial City, we *are* the Celestial City. We who believe, together with all the redeemed of the Lord, are represented here. Let us examine this city now, beginning with its origin.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke sees the new Jerusalem as symbolic of the Church, and not a “literal city”. He says it “is too big” to fall “from the skies”. He refers in context to **Revelation 21 (KJV):**9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear

glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Joel Beeke sees this vision of Jerusalem as a symbol, as he says, “The city is a symbol, for the angel says to John: “I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he... shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (vv. 9-10).”

And he says, “This isn't a picture of a millennial city on earth. This is not even a picture of heaven. This city is the bride, the wife of the Lamb. She is the church triumphant, the perfected, glorified church of Jesus Christ.”

But in Revelation 21:27 above we read, “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

The Lamb's wife is all believers, that is, “they who are written in the Lamb's book of life”, and they are the ones who will enter into it.

Let us read more of his thinking in the next segment.

Page 555: “Verses 2 and 10 tell us that New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, that is, from God. The Christian church is not a man-made institution. It is not the consequence of the interplay of sociological, economic or other human factors. We can't explain the church in those terms. The church comes from God; it comes down out of heaven.

Every Christian is from heaven in the sense of the supernatural origin of our salvation. Early in His ministry, Christ had a nighttime encounter with Nicodemus, a Pharisee (John 3). Nicodemus had religion, but he did not have Christ. So Jesus said to him, in essence, “Nicodemus, you must be born again. Your religion is all very well and good, but it won't save you. You need something other than religion. You need to be born from above.” As the sons of God, Christians are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). As “lively stones” (1 Peter 2:5) we are “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22). Revelation 21 shows us that “habitation of God” coming down from heaven.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke is correct when he says that the “Christian church is not a man-made institution”. And all who are members of the Church are “born from above”, as we read in **John**

3 (KJV):3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

The word “again” is a translation of the Greek word *ἄνωθεν* (pronounced an'-o-then); from G507; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew:--from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top.

So unless we are born from above, we cannot see the kingdom of God. But the Church is not described as coming “down out of heaven”. The new birth comes like the wind as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

But Joel says, “Every Christian is from heaven in the sense of the supernatural origin of our salvation.” And this is true in this sense. But to get the context, let us read the preceding verses in Revelation, chapter 21, as in **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. **2** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. **4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. **5** And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. **6** And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. **7** He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. **8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

In verse 1, “the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea”. John saw “a new heaven and a new earth”. And we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. **11** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, **12** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

God, who made the heavens and the earth, will make all things new. Is there anything too hard for Him? A new city of Jerusalem would make sense when we understand that the “earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”, as in verse 10 above. If God is able to melt the heavens and the earth with “fervent heat”, He is able to make a new city of Jerusalem as big as a cube, over 1400 miles on each side, to come down from heaven.

Page 559: “Adam was on probation. There was always the possibility that he would fall. If

you and I are in Christ, there is no possibility whatsoever that we will ever be separated from Him.”

Commentary: We can agree with Joel Beeke here. And we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Page 559-560: “Revelation 21:12b-13 says New Jerusalem is a cosmopolitan city: “And [the city] had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels [messengers], and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.”

Written on each gate are the names of three of the twelve tribes of Israel, and these gates are on every side of the city—on the north side, the south side, the east side, and the west side. Messengers stand at the mouth of each gate. This is perfectly in line with the covenant of grace God made with Abraham: “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18). Until Jesus came, the Jewish nation was the guardian and trustee of the gospel. That is why Israel was kept under the Mosaic law, as Paul argues in Galatians 3. And that is why the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on the doors of this city. To Israel belong “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises,” Paul notes in Romans 9:4. The gospel is a Jewish gospel. Its roots are in the Old Testament, in God’s covenant with Abraham and his seed, and yet the blessing of Abraham included reaching out to believers of all nations, to the north, south, east, and west. The gates of the city face every direction and are open to all types of people.

Revelation 21 presents us with the church as God sees it. It has gates on every side. We need to ask ourselves: Does our local church have an open door on the north, south, east, and west? Do we truly welcome people in these doors, no matter what their language, their race, their socioeconomic status, their background, or their history of sin? Are we open to all, seeking to win all sinners to the Savior?”

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins as he says, “Revelation 21:12b-13 says New Jerusalem is a cosmopolitan city:”

He then refers in context to **Revelation 21 (KJV):**9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me,

saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

And he then says, “Written on each gate are the names of three of the twelve tribes of Israel, and these gates are on every side of the city—on the north side, the south side, the east side, and the west side.”

So he is saying that on each of the three gates on the north side are written “the names of three of the twelve tribes of Israel”. And on the south, and the east, and the west, are also written on each of their gates “the names of three of the twelve tribes of Israel”. But the Scripture does not say that. The Scripture simply implies that on each gate is the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Joel Beeke wants to make his interpretation fit his belief that the new Jerusalem is the Church. But there is no reason to believe that the Church has replaced Israel. In Revelation, chapter 21, the city of Jerusalem is minutely described as a beautiful city with “a wall great and high”, a city with “twelve gates” with the “names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel”, and an angel at each gate. And “the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb”. So in this new earth and heaven, the new city of Jerusalem will include the Church and Israel. But Israel will still be a nation, and it will then be a nation of believers in Jesus Christ.

The city is called the “bride, the Lamb’s wife”, because of the marriage of the Lamb which shows the intimacy that all believers have with our God.

Revelation 22

Page 567-68: “In the previous chapter on Revelation 21, we toured the heavenly Jerusalem. We walked around the city, looking at its walls, gates, and foundations. We admired its beauty, its transcendence, and its shape as a perfect cube, like the Holy of Holies—the city that is one great temple. We saw that this city is designed for perfect and uninterrupted communion with God.

Let us now visit the city center of New Jerusalem. Often, we try to avoid the centers of large congested cities. We are grateful for highways that bypass them. But this city center is not to be avoided, for God’s throne is at the heart of this city (Rev. 22:3). Down the high streets of New Jerusalem flows the pure river of the water of life. And on either side of that river is a beautiful boulevard of trees. The lights and sights of the cities of earth cannot compare with the lights and sights of New Jerusalem, for we are told that there will be no night in heaven (v. 5). There is no need for candles or sunlight, for God Himself is all the light that is needed.

Let us examine New Jerusalem’s city center under these headings: a garden city; a cosmopolitan city, a capital city, and an illuminated city.”

Commentary: Joel Beeke sees the vision of the city as symbolic of the Church. On page 555, referring to Revelation 21:2 and Revelation 21:10, he says, “The church comes from God; it comes down out of heaven.” On page 554, referring to Revelation 21:9-10, he says, “This isn’t a picture of a millennial city on earth. This is not even a picture of heaven. This city is the bride, the wife of the Lamb. She is the church triumphant, the perfected, glorified church of Jesus Christ.”

Now Joel Beeke begins here as he says, “In the previous chapter on Revelation 21, we toured the heavenly Jerusalem.” Then in the next paragraph he says, “Let us now visit the city center of New Jerusalem. We are grateful for highways that bypass them. But this city center is not to be avoided, for God’s throne is at the heart of this city (Rev. 22:3).”

And he says, “The lights and sights of the cities of earth cannot compare with the lights and sights of New Jerusalem, for we are told that there will be no night in heaven (v. 5). There is no need for candles or sunlight, for God Himself is all the light that is needed.”

Here he says that “there will be no night in heaven (v. 5)”.

Now he refers is context to **Revelation 22 (KJV):**1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

But remember that he said on page 554, referring to Revelation 21:9-10, “This isn’t a picture of a millennial city on earth. This is not even a picture of heaven. This city is the bride, the wife of the Lamb. She is the church triumphant, the perfected, glorified church of Jesus Christ.”

But what we are actually seeing is a picture of heaven come down to earth. Revelation 21 and 22 are showing us what the new earth will look like, and what it will be like in the new Jerusalem.

Page 568-71: “When you step inside New Jerusalem, you will see a beautiful garden, a forest of trees, and a pure flowing river (vv. 1-2). You won’t see office buildings, skyscrapers, and housing developments. New Jerusalem is a garden city.

Revelation tells us in no uncertain terms that this city is *the church of Christ*: “One of the seven angels...talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he...shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (21:9-10).

If we are true believers, you and I belong to this city. We are not just going to the city, we *are* this city. Everything about the city—its foundations, walls, gates, the pure flowing river, and the tree of life—applies to us. John sees the Christian church as it shall be in perfection, but also as it is now in principle.

Bearing this in mind, let’s try to interpret the symbolism here. Much of the imagery suggests the Garden of Eden. That garden, too, had a river, a tree of life, and, most importantly, the presence of God (Gen. 2). God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and spoke with Adam. But there is more than just an allusion to Eden here.

It is interesting that the Bible ends where it began. The opening chapters of Genesis give the account of the first creation. The closing chapters of Revelation describe God’s creation of the new heaven and the new earth. Genesis tells about Paradise lost. Revelation tells about Paradise regained. But the most encouraging part of Revelation 22 is not simply a return to Genesis 2, but an advance on Genesis 2. New Jerusalem is the “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” and the “better country, that is, an heavenly,” that was the object of Abraham’s spiritual quest (Heb. 11:10, 16). In Christ we gain more than Adam lost.

This is what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 when he says: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” That means that you and I are not simply going back to the Garden of Eden. Eden was an *earthly* paradise. We are going beyond that earthly Eden to its *heavenly* counterpart.

Eden was only a shadow of the heavenly garden, much as the earthly tabernacle and temple were shadows of the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells. The kingdom of glory is far greater than the kingdoms of this world. Where sin did abound, says, Paul, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5:20).

Genesis 2 tells about the creation of the first man and his wife, and they were beautiful. But Revelation 22 tells about the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His bride, the church. There is only a faint comparison between that first couple and the last, for there is a definite advance here from what we see in Genesis. Sin, death, and the curse entered the Garden of Eden, but here we are told there will be no more curse (v. 3). In Eden, the trees yielded their

fruit in season, but in the New Jerusalem, the one tree will be fruitful all year round (v. 2). The leaves of this tree will be used to heal the nations (v. 2). There will be no sin, no illness, no decay, and no death in this city. The leaves of the tree will prevent that.

But the main point of this passage is that the city is coming down from heaven, from God. It has not yet arrived in its fullness, but it is coming even now. This is the tension we find in the New Testament between the now and the not yet. Now is the kingdom come among you, says Jesus (Luke 11:20), and yet, the kingdom is still to come. This tension is true also regarding the heavenly Jerusalem. By the power of God's Spirit and through the preaching of His Word, the church is coming down out of heaven. The true church is not a mere human institution or organization. It comes from God. Likewise, a Christian is one who has been born from above by the Spirit of God. The salvation that we enjoy as Christians is not just a return to our original state before the fall, but an advance on it.

Do you believe that you are better off now under the gospel than our father Adam was? Are you rejoicing in that today? You should be. You have the righteousness of Christ, which is much more than innocence. By God's regenerating work in your heart, you have been made a partaker of the divine nature in a sense that Adam was not.

Adam lived in an earthly paradise. He was lord of Eden. However, we are joint heirs with Christ. We sit in heavenly places in Him. Adam was on probation. He was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That tree is not mentioned in Revelation 22, for you and I are eternally secure in our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no probation in glory. We can say with Paul, "Nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (see Rom. 8:38-39). This is an advance on the Garden of Eden.

The symbolism in this chapter attests to the superabundant character of our salvation, but there is more to it than that. Notice that the garden will be in the *city*. The tragedy of the fall and of subsequent human history is that the garden and the city became separate (Gen. 4:16-17). Man, because of his sin, was driven out of the garden. And since he had to live outside of Eden, the human race has lived in estrangement from both the garden of God and the city of God. Yet the city has been crying out for the garden, and the garden for the city.

Now, in Christ's church, the garden is the city. People are no longer cut off from the presence of God and denied access to the tree of life, with its abundant fruit and healing leaves. As Christians, you and I are no longer cut off from the source of supply for our deepest needs. That is the picture. Although this is ideally and perfectly true of the future state for us, it is powerfully true now for genuine Christians. John says: "You are now come to Mount Zion. You have come now to this heavenly city, this New Jerusalem. You have come through the Mediator and through the blood of the covenant. But you have now come to his city" (see Heb. 12:22)."

Commentary: Joel Beeke begins, as he says, "When you step inside New Jerusalem, you will see a beautiful garden, a forest of trees, and a pure flowing river (vv. 1-2). You won't see office buildings, skyscrapers, and housing developments. New Jerusalem is a garden city."

He refers again to **Revelation 22 (KJV):** 1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner

of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

He then says, “Revelation tells us in no uncertain terms that this city is *the church of Christ*: “One of the seven angels...talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he...shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (21:9-10).”

He refers to **Revelation 21 (KJV):9** And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...

As proof, he then says, “If we are true believers, you and I belong to this city. We are not just going to the city, we *are* this city. Everything about the city—its foundations, walls, gates, the pure flowing river, and the tree of life—applies to us. John sees the Christian church as it shall be in perfection, but also as it is now in principle.”

And he is correct. If we are true believers, we belong to this city. And the city is “the Lamb’s wife”. But it is not just the Christian church that this city represents. The gates of the city have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The vision of the new Jerusalem is a vision which includes all believers. National identity will be preserved, as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):24** And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Joel then continues, “Bearing this in mind, let’s try to interpret the symbolism here. Much of the imagery suggests the Garden of Eden. That garden, too, had a river, a tree of life, and, most importantly, the presence of God (Gen. 2). God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and spoke with Adam. But there is more than just an allusion to Eden here.

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He refers to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):10** For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

And to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):16** But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Joel continues, as he then says, “This is what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 when he says: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” That means that you and I are not simply going back to

the Garden of Eden. Eden was an *earthly* paradise. We are going beyond that earthly Eden to its *heavenly* counterpart.

Eden was only a shadow of the heavenly garden, much as the earthly tabernacle and temple were shadows of the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells. The kingdom of glory is far greater than the kingdoms of this world. Where sin did abound, says, Paul, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5:20).”

Joel refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

And Joel continues, “Genesis 2 tells about the creation of the first man and his wife, and they were beautiful. But Revelation 22 tells about the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His bride, the church. There is only a faint comparison between that first couple and the last, for there is a definite advance here from what we see in Genesis. Sin, death, and the curse entered the Garden of Eden, but here we are told there will be no more curse (v. 3). In Eden, the trees yielded their fruit in season, but in the New Jerusalem, the one tree will be fruitful all year round (v. 2). The leaves of this tree will be used to heal the nations (v. 2). There will be no sin, no illness, no decay, and no death in this city. The leaves of the tree will prevent that.

But the main point of this passage is that the city is coming down from heaven, from God. It has not yet arrived in its fullness, but it is coming even now. This is the tension we find in the New Testament between the now and the not yet. Now is the kingdom come among you, says Jesus (Luke 11:20), and yet, the kingdom is still to come. This tension is true also regarding the heavenly Jerusalem. By the power of God’s Spirit and through the preaching of His Word, the church is coming down out of heaven. The true church is not a mere human institution or organization. It comes from God. Likewise, a Christian is one who has been born from above by the Spirit of God. The salvation that we enjoy as Christians is not just a return to our original state before the fall, but an advance on it.”

Joel refers to **Luke 11 (KJV):20** But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

The kingdom has come where believers are present, as we read in **Matthew 18 (KJV):20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

But the kingdom is not manifest yet. This is why we pray as in **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Joel Beeke continues, “Do you believe that you are better off now under the gospel than our father Adam was? Are you rejoicing in that today? You should be. You have the righteousness of Christ, which is much more than innocence. By God’s regenerating work in your heart, you have been made a partaker of the divine nature in a sense that Adam was not.”

And so we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

But it is when we see Him that we will be like Him, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Joel continues, “Adam lived in an earthly paradise. He was lord of Eden. However, we

are joint heirs with Christ. We sit in heavenly places in Him. Adam was on probation. He was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That tree is not mentioned in Revelation 22, for you and I are eternally secure in our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no probation in glory. We can say with Paul, “Nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus” (see Rom. 8:38-39). This is an advance on the Garden of Eden.”

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Joel continues, “The symbolism in this chapter attests to the superabundant character of our salvation, but there is more to it than that. Notice that the garden will be in the *city*. The tragedy of the fall and of subsequent human history is that the garden and the city became separate (Gen. 4:16-17). Man, because of his sin, was driven out of the garden. And since he had to live outside of Eden, the human race has lived in estrangement from both the garden of God and the city of God. Yet the city has been crying out for the garden, and the garden for the city.

In his saying that “the garden will be in the city”, Joel refers in context to **Revelation 22 (KJV):**1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Joel continues, “Now, in Christ’s church, the garden is the city. People are no longer cut off from the presence of God and denied access to the tree of life, with its abundant fruit and healing leaves. As Christians, you and I are no longer cut off from the source of supply for our deepest needs. That is the picture. Although this is ideally and perfectly true of the future state for us, it is powerfully true now for genuine Christians. John says: “You are now come to Mount Zion. You have come now to this heavenly city, this New Jerusalem. You have come through the Mediator and through the blood of the covenant. But you have now come to his city” (see Heb. 12:22).”

Joel refers in context to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

But Revelation 21 and 22 are speaking of the time when on the new earth and heaven, the new Jerusalem will come down from heaven and be on earth.

Page 573-74: “The inhabitants of this city will retain their national identity, but not in a political or nationalistic sense, or even a patriotic sense. There will be no flag-waving in New Jerusalem. There will be no cultural superiority, no national rivalry, no one-upmanship, and no

triumphalism. All separations and divides between or among people will be done away with, because the nations will be healed, or made whole. Everything that separates us one from another will be removed. Evil will be walled out and good will be kept within.

Everyone will not look alike in heaven. God loves diversity; that is why He created the world with so many textures, varieties, and colors. Surely the new heaven and new earth will not be less glorious than that. Whatever is best, glorious, and God-honoring from all the cultures and nations of this earth will be purified, enhanced, and glorified in the heavenly Jerusalem.”

Commentary: We can agree with Joel Beeke here. God created our individuality. We are unique and God created us this way. But Joel Beeke misunderstands that the vision is about the fulfillment of God’s promise that His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. The New Jerusalem is about a literal city that will be on earth where the will of God will finally be done on earth as it is in heaven in fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer in **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Conclusion

Page 598: “Revelation 22:17 is one of the most compelling gospel invitations: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

All the commands in this verse for people to come are related, because the welcome the church offers to the returning Christ and the invitation of the gospel to lost sinners go together. They haven't always gone together in the history of the church. Many Christians have become so taken up with prophecy and its interpretation that they have forgotten about evangelizing the lost. On the other hand, some have become so obsessed with evangelism that they have never bothered to come to grips with what the Bible actually teaches about Christ's return. Both of these positions are flawed: “The Spirit and the bride say, Come...Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (vv. 17,20).

Commentary: He refers in context to **Revelation 22 (KJV):17** And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

And we can agree with Joel Beeke here that evangelism is important, but the study of prophecy is also important. We must rightly divide the word of God, as Paul encouraged Timothy in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Rightly dividing the word of truth is all important in our evangelizing and in our teaching. Joel Beeke is a great evangelist. He ends every chapter in his book with a message of God's love for the lost, and the Lord's offer of salvation to all who would receive it.

However, he assumes that the whole book of Revelation is symbolic, and it must not be interpreted literally. And so he concludes that there will be just one final judgment when all will be judged, and either condemned to the Lake of Fire or given entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. But he does not understand that the Bible interprets all of its symbols. The Bible does not leave anything to one's own interpretation. And so his teaching on Revelation cannot stand the test of the Scriptures.

The Scripture says that he that believes on Jesus is not condemned, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Joel Beeke acknowledges that the one who has truly believed is born again, and that

this is what Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

When we believe, we are born again, and we pass from death to life. And when we are born again, God justifies us. This is proven by the past tense of the verb justified, as it is correctly translated in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we also have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we celebrate in hope of the glory of God.

Therefore there is no need for us to be judged at the great white throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. This is why there will be a separate judgment for believers, as Paul taught in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This judgment will be for rewards, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

The Lord by Paul issues a solemn warning to believers to be careful not to defile God's temple, which we become when we believe. If all we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ is wood, hay, or stubble, we can look forward to a trial by fire in this life, and we will lose rewards we would have received for building gold, silver, and precious stones. But we would still be saved because we have passed from death to eternal life when we believe. Joel Beeke acknowledges this, but he needs to let go of his tradition about the final judgment.

Symbols in Revelation

In Revelation 1, we read of seven stars and candlesticks in **Revelation 1 (KJV):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. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And these seven stars and candlesticks are interpreted in **Revelation 1 (KJV):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.

These seven candlesticks were symbolic of seven churches that were literal churches in John's time, as mentioned in **Revelation 1 (KJV):11** Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The seven stars were the angels of these seven churches. The word "angels" in the Greek is ἄγγελος (pronounced ang'-el-os); from ἀγγέλλω (pronounced angéllō) (probably derived from G71; compare G34) (to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an "angel"; by implication, a pastor:—angel, messenger. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G32.**

In Revelation 1:13, we read that "in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man", and this refers to Jesus who appeared in a glorified form.

Then in Revelation 2 we read of those who held the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes", as in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

The word "Nicolaitanes" in the Greek is Νικολαΐτης nik-ol-ah-ee'-tace; from G3532; a Nicolaite, i.e. adherent of Nicolaus:—Nicolaitane. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G3531.**

And this Greek word is derived from Νικόλαος nik-ol'-ah-os; from G3534 and G2994; victorious over the people; Nicolaus, a heretic:—Nicolaus. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G32.**

And this Greek word is derived from two Greek words, first νίκος nee'-kos; from G3529; a conquest (concretely), i.e. (by implication) triumph:—victory. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G3534.**

And second from Λαοδικεύς lah-od-ik-yooce'; from G2993; a Laodicean, i.e. inhabitant of Laodicia:—Laodicean. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2994.**

And this Greek word is derived from Λαοδίκεια lah-od-ik'-i-ah; from a compound of G2992 and G1349; Laodicia, a place in Asia Minor:—Laodicea. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2993.**

And this Greek word is derived from two Greek words, first λαός lah-os'; apparently a primary word; a people (in general; thus differing from G1218, which denotes one's own populace):—people. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G2992.**

And second from δίκη dee'-kay; probably from G1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):—judgment, punish, vengeance. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, G1349.**

All of this is provided to show that the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" had to do with "victory over the people". What were only "deeds of the Nicolaitanes" of some in the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:6, had become a "doctrine" in the church in Smyrna. This refers to the priesthood that began to manifest itself in the churches very early on, and which soon took over the ministry in the churches. This would soon develop into a hierarchy of cardinals, bishops,

and pope.

Then we read of the “morning star” in **Revelation 2 (KJV):18** And I will give him the morning star.

And this is interpreted for us in **Revelation 22 (KJV):16** I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

So the “morning star” is Jesus.

Then we read of “the hour of temptation” in **Revelation 3 (KJV):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.

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

And in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And in **Mark 13 (KJV):19** For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

And in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):7** Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

And the time of Jacob's trouble is symbolic of the final week of the seventy determined for Israel, as in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Then in Revelation 4, we see twenty-four elders sitting in heaven with crowns of gold on their heads, as in **Revelation 4 (KJV):4** And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

The twenty-four elders represent believers. The fact that there are twenty-four of them is symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles. That they have crowns on their heads is symbolic of the rewards that believers will receive. The fact that they are pictured in heaven before the seven seals are opened proves that the rapture of the saints happens before the tribulation week of seven years begins. Again, the fact that there are twenty-four of them is

symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles which shows that the rapture will include all who are in Christ, both dead and alive. It is necessary that the Church be removed at the rapture so that God can then again deal with Israel and bring them to salvation. And God will then also use Israel to save a great multitude of Gentiles.

Then we read of four beasts around the throne in **Revelation 4 (KJV):6** And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

These beasts are not imaginary beings but seraphim, that is, a type of angels, as we read of in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):2** Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

Then in Revelation 5, the seven sealed book is mentioned in **Revelation 5 (KJV):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.

As this book is opened by the Lamb, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David”, things begin to happen on earth. This book is a type of the title deed to the whole earth, which God owns since He is the creator of the heavens and the earth.

In Revelation 9 we read of the “bottomless pit”, as in **Revelation 9 (KJV):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. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

The “bottomless pit” is a prison house for demons. Another prison house is hades, or hell, where the wicked dead go before the White Throne judgment.

Then in Revelation 10, we read of the “mystery of God”, as in **Revelation 10 (KJV):7** But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

The “mystery of God” is His hidden will that was communicated “to his servants the prophets”, which we have recorded in the Scriptures. It is hidden to the unsaved, who have not the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But His hidden will is revealed to us who have the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

This hidden will of God is what is contained in the “little book” in **Revelation 10 (KJV):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. 11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

In Revelation 12 we have the sun clothed woman, as in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And we have seen that Genesis 37:5-10 identify this woman as Israel.

Then we have the “great red dragon”, as in **Revelation 12 (KJV):3** And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

The identity of the dragon and the “third part of the stars of heaven” in verse 4 are then revealed in **Revelation 12 (KJV):7** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The dragon is Satan, and the “third part of the stars of heaven” are his angels. The “seven heads and ten horns” are also revealed in **Daniel 7 (KJV):24** And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

The ten horns belong to the fourth beast in **Daniel 7 (KJV):7** After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

The fourth beast will be the fourth kingdom on earth, as in **Daniel 7 (KJV):23** Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

And these “seven heads and ten horns” on the dragon in Revelation 12:3 are also mentioned in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

And this same “beast” is also mentioned in **Revelation 17 (KJV):3** So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

The woman who will “sit upon a scarlet coloured beast” is the city of Rome. This beast is the antichrist who will reign over the fourth kingdom on earth, and who will carry the woman, which is the city of Rome, as we read in **Revelation 17 (KJV):18** And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

This city will be the center of all of the false religious systems in the world, and her

name is as in **Revelation 17 (KJV):4** And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth.

She has this name because she will carry forward all of the abominations of Babylon in her time.

So these are the symbols in the book of Revelation, which are all interpreted by the Scriptures. Now let us look at the numbers in Revelation which Joel Beeke believes to be all symbolic.

Numbers in Revelation

Joel Beeke said on page 11-12, “So, for example, numbers in this book are symbolic rather than mathematical.” Let us see if this holds true in the book of Revelation.

We first read of the number seven in **Revelation 1 (KJV):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;

John is writing to the seven churches in Asia, which are named in **Revelation 1 (KJV):10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

So the number seven here is not symbolic but a literal number, for these churches were real churches. Then we read of the seven candlesticks and the seven stars in **Revelation 1 (KJV):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.

The candlesticks and the stars are symbolic, and their interpretation is given in verse 20, where it says, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches”.

Then we read of the number ten in the message to the Church at Smyrna in **Revelation 2 (KJV):8** And unto the angel 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. 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.

In verse 10 we read that this church would “have tribulation ten days”. We know that there were 10 great persecutions in the early church, as follows:

- 1st Under Nero A.D. 54-68
- 2nd Under Domitian A.D. 81- 96
- 3rd Under Trajan A.D. 98-117
- 4th Under Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus A.D. 138-180
- 5th Under Severus A.D. 193 – 211
- 6th Under Maximus A.D. 235-238
- 7th Under Decius A.D. 249-251
- 8th Under Valerian A.D. 253-260
- 9th Under Aurelian A.D. 274-287
- 10th Under Diocletian A.D. 292-304

This seems to indicate that, though these were literal churches in the day of John's prophecy, these churches were also symbolic of seven periods of church history. Since the book of Revelation is a prophecy, it is not unreasonable to think that God would include something about the future of the Church in it.

As we study the different messages to the churches, we find that the church at Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):6** But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

But the church in Pergamos had those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

So the "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes had become a doctrine to some in the church at Pergamos. This shows a progression. The early church father, Irenaeus, spoke of a "priesthood of the Lord" in his writings from about 170 to 202 A.D. This began a hierarchy of holiness in the church which progressed to bishops, cardinals, and a pope.

Then the church in Thyatira seems to represent the church in the middle ages, as we read of their rebuke in **Revelation 2 (KJV):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. 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.

The teaching that the celebration of the Lord's Supper turned the bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Christ began very early in the church, and was believed by Irenaeus, who said in **Adversus Heresies, Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, "For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity."

And he said in **Book 5 Chapter II.**, "3. When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal,

which [flesh] is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?— even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” 4463 Eph. v. 30”

And in the same paragraph 3, he also says, “And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ; so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption, 4465 1 Cor. xv. 53. because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness, in order that we may never become puffed up, as if we had life from ourselves, and exalted against God, our minds becoming ungrateful;”

But Jesus said to do this “in remembrance of me”, as in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

And Jesus explained what He meant in **John 6 (KJV):53** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

And in **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

It is by His word that we are born of the Spirit, as we read in **James 1 (KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

And the one who believes in Him has passed from death to life, as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The churches began to develop rituals because of the priesthood that took over the ministry in the churches. This is why the Church needed to go through a reformation.

Then in the church in Philadelphia, the Lord promises to keep them from the hour of temptation, as we read in **Revelation 3 (KJV):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.

The church in Philadelphia is given a vision that spans all the way to the “hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”. This is speaking of the tribulation week that will be the final week of the 70 promised to Israel. The

Church in the Philadelphia period of the Church age will be spared from the tribulation week that is still to come for Israel. But the church in Laodicea has need of gold tried in the fire, as we read in **Revelation 3 (KJV):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. 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.

Christ is pictured as outside of this church. Those in this church will go through the tribulation, but if anyone hears His voice, and “open the door” to Him, they will be saved.

Then in Revelation 4 we read of four and twenty elders, as in **Revelation 4 (KJV):4** And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

These elders represent the raptured saints of the Old and New Testament, as we read in **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

In verse 10 we see that they “shall reign on the earth”, and that they did not yet reign.

And then again in Revelation 4, we read of the beasts with six wings. The word “beasts” is better translated as “living creatures”, as we read in **Revelation 4 (NASB):5** Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God; 6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.”

These “living creatures” are seraphim, which we read of in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):2** Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

Then in Revelation 5 we read of “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands”, in **Revelation 5 (KJV):11** And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

This is speaking of the number of angels and saints around the throne in heaven, that is, millions.

Then in Revelation 6, we read of “the fourth part of the earth”, as in **Revelation 6**

(KJV):7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth 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.

The current population of the world is 7.9 billion. So one fourth of 7.9 billion is 1.975 billion. And a billion is a thousand million. If the “fourth part” of the earth’s population were killed, that would leave 5.925 billion people left alive on earth. This is the time of great tribulation.

Then in Revelation 7 we read of 144,000 in **Revelation 7 (KJV):**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. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand...

So there were sealed 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. There is no symbolism even hinted at in the Scriptures relating to this number. And after the sealing, we see a great multitude of saved Gentiles in **Revelation 7 (KJV):**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.

No symbolism is not even hinted at here also. The logical conclusion is that the sealing of the 144,000 was for a special calling in a period of great tribulation in order to witness to Gentiles before the end comes. And this was met with great success in that a great multitude, which no man could number, were saved by their witness.

In Revelation 8 we read of the third part of the sun being smitten, as in **Revelation 8 (KJV):**12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

We could just imagine the Lord saying, “Hey earth people, do you see what I just did to the sun? Listen to the angel!”

Then in Revelation 9, we read of an army of “two hundred thousand thousand” in **Revelation 9 (KJV):**13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the

brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

This was an army of demons. The judgment on the earth during this time will be very great. There is no hint of any symbolism here. The army is literally 200 million strong, and is an army of demons who will slay the “third part of men”. Remember that in the fourth seal, “the fourth part of the earth” was killed, which would leave 5.925 billion people left alive on earth according to our current population of 7.9 billion. One third of the remaining population on earth would then be 1.95525 billion that were slain when the sixth trumpet sounds. That would leave 3.96975 billion left on earth, since one fourth of men have been killed already in the fourth seal. So just in these two judgments, 3.93025 billion people, or about half the world’s current population, were killed. And this does not count others who will be killed in the other judgments. And it does not count all of the martyrs that will be killed during the great tribulation, of which we read in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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;

And in **Revelation 7 (KJV):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.

If the Lord didn’t intervene, no flesh would be saved.

Then in Revelation 11, it mentions “forty and two months” and “a thousand two hundred and threescore days”, as we read in **Revelation 11 (KJV):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. 3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

In the Scriptures, “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” is equal to 3½ years because the Bible uses the lunar year of 360 days, and not the solar year of 365¼ days. Those in ancient times did not know about the leap year which adds a ¼ day every year, and thus a full day every 4 years. And “forty and two months” equals 3½ years. There is no intimation that this is symbolic of anything.

Then in Revelation 12, “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” is mentioned again in **Revelation 12 (KJV):6** And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

And this would equal one half of the week of 7 years still to be accomplished for Israel in order to fulfill Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27. And this would correspond to the last half of the 7 years, since Israel will flee from the antichrist during this time, because in the middle of the week the antichrist will break the covenant he will make with Israel, and persecute Israel. This will also correspond to the “time, and times, and half a time” mentioned in the **Revelation 12 (KJV):14** And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Then in Revelation 13, “forty and two months” is mentioned again in Revelation 13

(KJV):5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

The one in the Scriptures who has “a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies” is the antichrist. He will continue for forty and two months, the last 3½ years of the tribulation week, empowered by the dragon, Satan, who will be cast out of heaven at that time.

Then in Revelation 14, the “hundred forty and four thousand” are seen in heaven with the Lamb, and these are the same 144,000 in Revelation 7, only now they have been martyred.

Then we have the “great winepress of the wrath of God” extending “by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs”, or about 200 miles, as we read in **Revelation 15 (KJV):19** And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

To Joel Beeke this is too great a distance, and too deep, and it must be symbolic. But when we consider that the armies of the whole world will be in this battle, and that they are fighting against the Lord of Hosts, it seems very likely to be the case, as we read in **Revelation 16 (KJV):12** And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Then in Revelation 17 we read of a beast with “seven heads and ten horns” in **Revelation 17 (KJV):3** So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

And again in **Revelation 17 (KJV):7** And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

And this is the same beast we saw rise up out of the sea in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

And we read of a dragon with the same “seven heads and ten horns” in **Revelation 12 (KJV):3** And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

And the dragon’s identity is revealed in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The dragon gave the beast his power as we read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):2** And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

So the dragon and the beast are united.

The Dependency on Daniel

So the dragon had seven heads and ten horns in Revelation 12:3, and the beast had “seven heads and ten horns” in Revelation 13:1, and “the dragon gave him his power, and great authority”.

But we know that the beast was also “like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion” in Revelation 13:2. How are we to interpret these symbols.

These same symbols are also found in Daniel 7, as we read in **Daniel 7 (KJV):**3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

And these symbols are then interpreted for us in **Daniel 7 (KJV):**16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. 17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. 19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; 20 And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

In Daniel 7:17, These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. The interpretation of these beasts was already given in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a colossal statue with a head of gold, which was Babylon, and arms of silver, which was Media-Persia, and the belly and the thighs of brass, which was Greece, and the legs of iron with feet part of iron and part of clay, which was Rome.

Now in Daniel 7:20, the fourth beast had ten horns, and another “came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things”, that is, he had a “mouth as the mouth of a lion” as in Revelation 13:2 above. Then in Daniel 7:21,

this beast prevails until, in verse 22, the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom”.

So this vision that Daniel had extends all the way to the end when Christ would come. This means that the beast in Revelation is the same as the fourth beast in Daniel. So the book of Revelation is giving us a vision of the future just like Daniel did. It is the same vision as Daniel’s. And these beasts are even named. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon were the head of gold, as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):38** And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

Then in Daniel 8 we have Daniel’s vision of the ram and the he goat. And the interpretation is given in **Daniel 8 (KJV):20** The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

The kings of Media and Persia took over the kingdom after Babylon, and after Daniel had interpreted the writing of the hand on the wall before king Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, as we read in **Daniel 5 (KJV):26** This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27 Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28 Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. 29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. 30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Then Cyrus is also mentioned in **Daniel 6 (KJV):28** So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus, as we read in **Daniel 1 (KJV):21** And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

Actually, Daniel lived a little longer than this, as we read in **Daniel 10 (KJV):1** In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

So Daniel saw the fulfillment in part of his vision in Daniel 8. He then knew with certainty that the ram in Daniel 8 was Media-Persia because he was there when it happened. And he then knew that Greece was to follow. And history proves this to be true.

Now this Cyrus in Daniel 10:1 is the Cyrus that Isaiah had prophesied of in **Isaiah 44 (KJV):28** That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Jeremiah’s Prophecy

Jeremiah had prophesied, as in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV):11** And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the

Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. 13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

Now the word of the Lord according to Jeremiah was fulfilled by the Cyrus in Isaiah's prophecy in B.C. 536, as we read in **2 Chronicles 36 (KJV):22** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.

And as we read in **Ezra 1 (KJV):1** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Israel was taken captive by Babylon in B.C. 606. The 70 years captivity was fulfilled in B.C. 536. Then the rebuilding of the temple began in Jerusalem under Zerubbabel. But the building of the temple was delayed, as we read in **Ezra 4 (KJV):4** Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, 5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Darius king of Persia, also known as Darius Hystaspes, was king of Persia from B.C. 521 to B.C. 485. The temple was finally finished, as we read in **Ezra 6 (KJV):15** And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

This would have been B.C. 515 approximately.

The Prophecy of 70 Weeks

Now before the proclamation by Cyrus in B.C. 536, Daniel had sought the Lord about the prophecy of Jeremiah, and when it would be accomplished, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):1** In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, was ruler under Cyrus, and they came and conquered Babylon in B.C. 538. Now while Daniel was praying the angel Gabriel was sent to him, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):20** And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer,

even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Seventy weeks have been determined for Israel, as we continue in **Daniel 9 (KJV)**:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

So after “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”, or 69 weeks, and then Messiah was to be cut off. Then in verse 26, in A.D. 70, the Romans, “the people of the prince that shall come”, destroyed “the city and the sanctuary” under Titus, the Roman General. This leaves one more week that has been determined for Israel.

Now Ezra the priest made his way to Jerusalem under Artaxerxes, who came into power about B.C. 465. He made a decree in **Ezra 7 (KJV)**:11 Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel. 2 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. 13 I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

Zerubbabel began the building of the temple in Jerusalem under Cyrus in B.C. 536, but in B.C. 515 when the temple was finished, the wall and the city still needed rebuilding.

Now we read in **Nehemiah 1 (KJV)**:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

Now Nehemiah prays, and God answers his prayer, as we read in **Nehemiah 2 (KJV)**:1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are

consumed with fire?

And then in **Nehemiah 2 (KJV):7** Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

Now let us read again in **Daniel 9 (KJV):25** Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

So “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” did not start until the time of Nehemiah, and this commandment would have been the one issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus who ruled over Media-Persia from B.C. 465 to B.C. 424. And this commandment was issued in the 20th year of his reign so about B.C. 445.

So this commandment would be the beginning of the 70 weeks determined for Israel. And since we know that the 69 weeks would equal 483 years, and the Biblical year was the lunar year of 360 days, then we must multiply the 483 by 360, and we get 173,880 days. Then we must divide 173,880 by 365¼ to get the actual years meant by the Bible. This would give us 476 years and 20 days. When we calculate B.C. 445 – 476 years, we get A.D. 31. We then come very close to A.D. 30 when Jesus was most likely crucified. The difference can be explained by the fact that our historical dating is not exact.

This means that 69 weeks were fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross, and there is still one more week of years determined for Israel to be fulfilled. This week is mentioned, as we continue in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

This will be a covenant that Israel will make with the antichrist. In the middle of the week, the antichrist will stand in the temple and declare himself to be God, and Israel will have to flee. God will then protect the faithful remnant of Israel for the last 42 months of the reign of the antichrist, which will be the great tribulation because Satan will be restricted to this earth.

Then in the final battle of Armageddon, which will bring an end to the week of tribulation, the beast and the false prophet and the armies of the kings of the earth are gathered against the army of the Lord, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):19** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

The Throne of His Glory

After the battle of Armageddon, Jesus will come down to earth and sit on the throne of His glory, and before Him will be gathered all nations, as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Jesus will judge the nations based on their treatment of Israel during the tribulation week, as we continue in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Christ's brethren are the faithful Jews during the tribulation week. We continue in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

So those nations who treated Israel accordingly will be allowed entrance into the kingdom of the thousand years reign of Christ. We must understand that sin will still be in the world because death will still be present during this kingdom age. And so we read in **Isaiah 65 (KJV):17** For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

In Isaiah 65:17 the Lord sees far into the future of the new heavens and a new earth that He will create. He then looks to the age of the thousand year reign of Christ, in which in verse 19, “the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her”, that is in Jerusalem, and in verse 20 people will live into the hundreds of years as they did before the flood, for “the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed”. Then there will be changes in the animal life, as in verse 25, where, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.”

Revelation 20

Now because of the exactness of the numbers in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Daniel, we can have confidence in the exactness of the numbers in the book of Revelation.

We have shown that all of the numbers in Revelation up to chapter 19 are literal numbers. So in Revelation 20, there is no reason to assume that the thousand years is symbolic of anything.

There is never a doubt about how the battle of Armageddon will end in Revelation 19. Then in Revelation 20, an angel binds Satan for a thousand years, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

There is no doubt that, when the armies of the kings of the earth were gathered together against the army of the Lord in the battle of Armageddon, that Satan had deceived them. After this battle, he will be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, “that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled”, as in verse 3 above.

Then we read of the first resurrection in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

So those who were beheaded in the tribulation “for the witness of Jesus” will be resurrected bodily, for they “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”. This is the clear teaching of these verses.

Then after the thousand years “are expired”, Satan will be loosed, as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

There is never a doubt about how this final battle will end. Satan and those he deceived will be lost forever, as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The White Throne judgment will be the judgment of the wicked dead who will be judged “according to their works” in verse 13 above. The righteous are not mentioned in this judgment.

The New Jerusalem

To Joel Beeke, this city is symbolic of all believers. But John says that he saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

In verse 2 it says that the “holy city, new Jerusalem” was “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”. That is, the city was like a bride adorned for a husband.

We continue in **Revelation 21 (KJV):3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And in verse 3 it says that, “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them”, speaking of a habitation.

We continue in **Revelation 21 (KJV):5** And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

In verse 5 He says, “Behold, I make all things new”. In verse 1 John saw “a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away”. In Genesis we read of the Lord appearing to Abraham and promising him a son at the age of 100, as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):14** Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

And in **Genesis 21 (KJV):5** And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

And we read of Jeremiah’s testimony in **Jeremiah 32 (KJV):17** Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

And the Lord spoke as in **Jeremiah 32 (KJV):27** Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

It was not too hard for the Lord to make a new heaven and a new earth. We continue to read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):9** And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a

jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

A furlong is 220 yards. So when we multiply 12,000 x 220 we get 2,640,000. There are 1760 yards in a mile, so 2,640,000 / 1760 equals 1500. So twelve thousand furlongs would be equal to 1500 miles. The city was a cube of 1500 miles on a side. This will be the new Jerusalem on the new earth.

We continue in **Revelation 21 (KJV)**:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

A cubit in the Bible is the distance between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger. So let us estimate it to be 18 inches. Then we would multiply 18 x 144 and we get 2592 inches. Then we divide 2592 / 12 equals 216 feet. So the wall around the city is 216 feet high.

We continue in **Revelation 21 (KJV)**:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysopterus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

There is no indication in the Scriptures that this is symbolic of anything. Instead, we see that there will be a new Jerusalem on the new earth under a new heaven. As God was faithful to send Jesus to fulfill all of the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning His first coming, so He will be faithful to fulfill all of the prophecies in the Old and the New Testament concerning the future. Rightly dividing the word of God gives us great comfort. When we understand God's plan for the Church and for Israel, it gives us great comfort.

Revelation 22

We read as in **Revelation 22 (KJV)**:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the

street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. 6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

In Revelation 21:3 we read that “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them”, and here we read that the throne of God and of the Lamb will be on earth. So heaven will be on earth.

We continue in **Revelation 22 (KJV)**:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

So let us rightly divide the word of God so that we may “keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book”, and worship in Spirit and in truth.

We continue in **Revelation 22 (KJV)**:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

We must be careful how we hear, as we read in **Luke 8 (KJV)**:18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

If we have a willingness to receive truth, we will receive more truth.

God's Promises to Israel to Be Fulfilled

The Lord God who created the heavens and the earth has made a promise to Israel that we read of in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):**9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

To say that this passage is somehow symbolic of the Church is to make all prophecy symbolic of something. We will never know the true meaning of the Scripture if we do this. This Scripture is a promise of the Lord to literal Israel, and to the literal city of Jerusalem when Israel as a nation will finally repent and be saved. Israel will look on Him “whom they pierced” and mourn for Him, and be sorry for their sin.

Israel will be saved in one day, as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV):**5 Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. 6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies. 7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. 14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. 15 For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. 17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord. 18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. 19 And I will set a sign

among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. 20 And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. 21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. 22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. 24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

This prophecy is not symbolic of the Church but is a promise to the nation of Israel that “as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children”, and the nation of Israel shall be born again in one day, as in verse 8.

The book of Revelation is in total agreement with all of God’s prophecies in the Old Testament. To say that the book of Revelation is all symbolic, and it is up to us to come up with the interpretation of its symbols, is to ignore all of the symbols in the book of Daniel which are interpreted in the same book of Daniel, and which the entire book of Revelation is dependent on.

There are many more prophecies to be fulfilled for Israel. This makes it impossible to interpret Revelation cyclically, as if the book of Revelation was all about the Church age. God is not done with the Church, and He is not done with the nation of Israel. He has a plan for both.

We must be willing to let go of our tradition in order to rightly divide the word of truth. Then we will not add to or take away “from the words of the book of this prophecy”, the book of Revelation.

Whom do you fear, God or man?

Proverbs 29 (KJV):25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

Job 28 (KJV):28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

And we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):**29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

And in **John 12 (KJV):**42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.