

"KEEPING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN" IN THE BOOK OF
REVELATION In Two Parts -- PART ONE

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Of all the books on prophecy, intended for the blessing of the Lord's people, the one that appeals to me most is the book of Revelation. There are several reasons for its fascination. In the first place it is a revelation from God, given to Jesus Christ, which was for the special blessing of the Lord's people, and for no others. It was sent by a special angel and was given to the beloved John in the form of symbols -- prophecy in the form of symbols -- this to keep it hidden from all but the Lord's faithful people. To outsiders it would appear as incomprehensible foolishness.

Its fascination is further enhanced by the fact that John the Apostle was banished to the penal island of Patmos because of his faithfulness to the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, and that it was when he was on this island that this revelation was given to him for the Lord's people. John himself, showed by the language he used that he was deeply moved by the fact that he was given this symbolic prophecy, and that he regarded the giving of the prophecy to the seven churches in Asia as a special honor and responsibility.

We note the language now of the first three verses of the book -- "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. 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." So there is a blessing to those who read the prophecy and to those who hear the prophecy, and who "KEEP THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN THEREIN." There is something important in the prophetic book that the Lord's people should "KEEP", or as Weymouth renders it -- "lay to heart." Doubtless the things that should be KEPT or "laid to heart," are lessons, exhortations and promises.

John has the message -- he had been in the spirit and had doubtless been occupied for many hours in seeing and hearing things from the revealing angel, and he wrote the things down that he saw and heard. And so he begins by saying -- "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 mentions a "throne" and this is a reference to the vision which we find recorded in the fourth chapter of Revelation -- a throne scene. John beheld a door opened in heaven,

and the first voice he heard was like a trumpet, and the voice said to him, "Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." And John said that immediately he was in the spirit, and in that state of mind he saw a throne set in heaven, and one seated upon the throne, glorious in appearance. The appearance was as a brilliant diamond and red in color as a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, emerald in appearance. The one seated upon the throne was a representation of the Emperor of the universe; and as John said, it was from this brilliant one in appearance that there was grace and peace to those for whom the message was intended. But grace and peace were also from the seven spirits which were before the throne of God, and also from Jesus Christ, who, as John says "is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." (We shall allude to these seven spirits later on.)

Then John adds, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (think of that for a moment! -- from him who washed us from our sins in his OWN BLOOD), "and who hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen." Then John adds our Lord's own words about himself -- "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

John is very humble about his position and we can glean an important lesson from his words -- "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." John didn't boast of his special faithfulness, nor of the honor conferred upon him in receiving the last inspired testimony from God for the Lord's people down through the Gospel Age. No, he merely said, "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation.

John said he was in the spirit on the Lord's day and he heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, and he was commissioned of our Lord to write what he was about to see, to record it in a book and send it to the seven churches which were in Asia. And the particular seven churches are mentioned and we can find these names if we look at the map of the territory in John's day.

And as John turned to see the voice that spoke with him, he saw a very striking vision: there were seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man. The appearance of this one like the Son of man was very peculiar and was a representation of the qualities and authority of the Son of Man as he supervised the

candlesticks, The one like unto the Son of man was clothed with a garment down to the foot and was girded about the paps with a golden girdle, and his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet as if burned in a furnace, and the voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun which shineth in his strength. The majesty of the sight was more than John could stand, and as he said, "when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." But the one having the appearance as the Son of man, laid his right hand upon John and said, "I am the first and the last: 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. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars 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."

One of the lessons we can take from this vision is that our Lord Jesus who is the first and the last, who was alive and had been dead, and is alive for evermore, and who has by right of his faithfulness, the possession of the keys of hell and of death, this one is supervising and guarding and directing the affairs of the seven stages of the churches down through the Gospel Age. NOTHING escapes his watchful eye, NOTHING transpires without his permission, NO ONE INTERFERES with the welfare of the Christian church.

His voice is as many waters -- it can be stern and it can be exceeding loving and kind; and it can use all means for the promulgation of the necessary messages down through the Gospel age. And he has absolute control and direction of the seven messengers of the seven stages of the church. Those who are faithful are used of our Lord; and those who are unfaithful are sifted out of divine service. Our Lord Jesus is in absolute control at all times, and we must "lay to heart" the message -- to look to our Head for direction at all times and in all things. We must lay to heart the meaning of the messages to the churches -- they are seven, and we do well to ponder them carefully for the lessons and exhortations and precious promises.

The promises are to provide us with inspiration and incentives to faithfulness. And as we note the experiences of the Lord's people, as suggested by the symbols used to portray the conditions of the church of Christ at various periods of the Gospel Age, we should take particular note of them, and avoid those things which received rebuke and do those things that win our Lord's word of approval.

The first church named is Ephesus, and it seems it is possible to have works and to labor

and have patience, and even to be unable to bear those who are evil, and even to ferret out those who are false apostles, and yet be lacking in something important in the Lord's estimation -- "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." There is a powerful lesson here -- apparently it is possible to keep going as Christians, yet we can lose hold on that all-important thing called "first love."

What is meant by "first love?" May it not be that deep sense of reverence we feel toward God and Christ when we realize how grandly supreme they are in every way -- grandly supreme in those qualities of character as shown in the outworking of the Divine Plan toward the human family? It is not merely gratitude for redemption, although that is, and should be a strong sentiment in our hearts toward God and Christ; but in addition it is that deep sense of appreciation of God and of Christ for what they are -- as the very personification of Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power -- combined in perfect balance. To illustrate: if we should say to a person who had benefited us greatly in various ways, and who had a grand character -- if we should say, "I am deeply grateful to you for the grand way you have treated me, and I would just love to associate with you the rest of my life, and become just like you in character "-wouldn't that be the grandest thing we could say to a person? Would not such a person feel that he had received the highest compliment possible; and would not that be "first love" toward that person? I THINK SO!

And so with "first love" in the spiritual realm -- we feel not only deeply grateful to God and to Christ for their lovingkindness to us in redemption and in the high calling extended to us, but we feel that we are the most honored and happiest when we have the privilege of being the special friends of God and of Christ, and try to become like them in character. This reminds us of the words of Jesus found in John 15:8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Another lesson we learn is found in the words of commendation addressed to this church at Ephesus -- "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Nicolaitanism is the theory or doctrine of human headship or lordship in the Christian church. This we must hate as the Lord also hates it -- we must never submit to any headship that takes the place of the headship of our Lord. We must never allow ourselves to look to any human leader as taking the place of Christ -- giving directions in the place of Christ. We are to appreciate faithful teachers, and pastors and elders, but we are to be like the noble Bereans, by making sure that such teachers and pastors and elders are speaking in harmony with the directions of our TRUE Head, the Lord Jesus Himself.

And now to receive inspiration from the promise to the church at Ephesus-"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of

God." This particular tree which was in the MIDST of the paradise of God, was, in the first Paradise, a forbidden tree -- the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The promise to the overcomer is that he will have the privilege and joy of partaking of the tree of all knowledge under conditions that will have God's sanction and not bring a curse. What a delight it is to look forward to the time when we can have access to all knowledge, and that there will be no curse to result from such eating. This is an incentive worth remembering.

The second church addressed is Smyrna, and the message to this church is not very long. From a prophetic standpoint, this message applies to the church in the time when there was a severe persecution of the church by the Pagans. This is particularly referred to in the words "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." The ten days refer to the ten years of persecution from the decree of Diocletian in A.D. 303 to the Edict of Milan by Constantine, in A.D. 313. The Lord's people at that time had a rough time of it; but our Lord was with them as he is the one in the midst of the seven candlesticks -- "Lo I am WITH you, even unto the end of the age." Our Lord knew what it was like to go through persecution, for he was hounded unto death, even unto the death of the cruel Roman cross.

To this church our Lord said, "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive." Yes, he was dead, but "is alive." And what a comfort are such words to the Lord's suffering people when they know that their Lord had experienced opposition unto death! He would be in a position to know how to comfort his suffering followers -- and his followers would KNOW that he KNEW! There would be this "fellowship feeling" toward one another -- both knowing that they were experiencing the same things in the same cause. Here is something we can "LAY TO HEART."

How cheering are his words to this church -- "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. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Ah yes, if we are faithful unto death we will receive a crown, a reward of life -- the HIGHEST FORM OF LIFE -- the CROWNING feature of life -- immortality, life within ourselves. How inspiring is the promise to us that if we are faithful unto death "we shall not be hurt of the second death." The second death is for willful wrongdoers, and if faithful unto the end, we are the Lord's own, and free from all possibility of being destroyed in the second death. Here is something else we can "LAY TO HEART."

During the time of the severe Smyrna persecution, the Lord was aware of everything that was going on -- he saw their works and their tribulation and also their poverty. BUT he saw something else too -- "BUT THOU ART RICH." Yes, they were rich in character qualities, and they were also rich in having the Lord's favor. The persecutors of the Lord's people may feel that they are in power and can carry on with impunity, but the Lord is the judge and he knows how rich are his people in having the Lord's favor and how, in time, the persecutors will suffer just retribution for having persecuted the Lord's people, sometimes unto death. This reminds us of the vision which John saw when the fifth seal was opened (chapter 7, Vs. 9 to 11), "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and 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? 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." There is a mingling of sentiment here on the part of the Lord's people -- an absolute trust in God that he is "holy and true"; but the time is long and the persecution dreadful, and so they ask, "How long O Lord before thou wilt avenge our blood?" -- How long will it be before all persecution will be brought to an end and evil doers restrained and punished? The Lord assures His suffering people that it takes time to work out all his purposes, and that all of his people must pass through difficult experiences, and it takes many centuries for all these things to be accomplished. What a comfort it is to know that the One who is in the midst of the candlesticks is supervising the experiences of the Lord's people and that evil will be permitted to hold sway only for a good purpose and for the right period of time.

Now let us see what we can "TAKE TO HEART" from the message to the church at Pergamos. This was the time when God's true people had to be "Antipas" -- they had to resist popery. The seat of Satan was being established at this time. This was the time when false teachers were acting like Balaam -- teaching error for profit. This was the time when human headship was becoming firmly established in the church -- Nicolaitanism. It was a dreadful time indeed and dangerous for the Lord's true people. But the Lord's true people held fast to the name of Christ and did not deny the faith, but were martyrs in their opposition to selfish ambition in the professed church of Christ. We can benefit from their examples of courage and faith, and remain true to what we have and not allow ourselves to be influenced by false teachers. Our Lord said to this falling church -- "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." This sword of the mouth is the Truth, and that is the weapon we are exhorted to use in resisting false teachers and teachings.

How inspiring to the Lord's true people is the promise to the church at Pergamos -- "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The end of the unfaithful is to be shame and defeat, while the reward for faithfulness is to eat of the hidden manna -- even immortality. Then too, the faithful have the promise of a white stone -- a stone is divided in half, and the name of our Lord is on one-half and our name is on the other half and there is an exchange of half stones. This symbolically indicates a precious token of the love between the Lord and ourselves. This is the reward to the overcomers, but even in this life we have a personal acquaintance with our blessed Lord. We have the seal of the Holy Spirit, and the natural man knows nothing of this precious, individual, secret relationship between the Lord and ourselves. How inspiring to love and faithfulness is this promise that we shall fully experience in the first resurrection. We are blessed indeed as we read these things and "LAY THEM TO HEART.'

If we are faithful overcomers we will meet our Pergamos brethren beyond the veil in the first resurrection. No doubt there will be reminiscing of the Lord's people as they relate to one another their experiences in the different periods of the Christian church during the Gospel Age. They will reread the previews of prophecy contained in the book of Revelation, and they will point out to one another their own experiences, and they will say to one another -- "See the Lord knew all about it beforehand and he was standing in our midst the whole time, supervising our experiences and giving us strength from his own example and from the promises to the churches contained in these very messages to the seven churches in Asia.

Now let us see what we can learn and "LAY TO HEART" from the message to the church in Thyatira. The Lord severely condemns those false Christians who brought about a fornication -- a union of the Christian church with the civil power. This is expressed in the 2nd chapter, Vs. 20-23. "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." This was a time of extreme stress upon the Lord's true people -- to resist all this spiritual fornication. The Lord said to his faithful people at that time -- "But unto you I say and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden -- but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come."

And then the sustaining promise -- and how much this promise means to the Lord's people -- NOW we are subject to the powers that be and we are subject to all forms of

tyranny. But in the next age, it is going to be different -- listen to the promise -- "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 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 I will give him the morning star." Yes, it will be altogether different then -- now we must endure the rule of imperfect and selfish men; but in the next age, we will be given absolute power to rule the nations with a "rod of iron, -- there will be no resistance possible to the new rule -- but the power will be exercised in a righteous manner, to establish righteousness in the earth. How inspiring is this promise to us who are witnessing the great power struggles of the various governments of the earth, even in the United Nations which is supposed to be founded upon the highest of ideals. We know that man cannot bring order out of this horrible chaos which is in the earth; and we know too that no human power can bring back the dead to life.

Sardis is the next church addressed and we find the message in the first Vs. of chapter 3. This is the darkest period of the Christian church -- the time when the false church had almost obliterated all the faithful from the face of the earth. But the one standing amongst the candlesticks with the eyes as a flame of fire was able to see that there were a few left -- "Thou has a few names EVEN IN SARDIS which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white." What a dreadful time this was for the Lord's true people! It was at this time that the false church triumphantly proclaimed, "There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule, and religious opposers resist no more." This was just before the Reformation burst forth. This was the time when the false church made the public declaration -- "The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its head, i. e., to thee" O Leo the 10th.

This was the time when the spiritual vitality of the true church was at its lowest ebb -- "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God." The false church felt confident and triumphant, but little did it know of the commotion that would arise to plague it in the next period of the church, when the Reformation got started in full force.

The promise to the faithful overcomers is a delight to read -- "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Yes, those who were hounded to death in the Sardis period will have their names secure in the book of life. Their names were cast out as vile while they lived on earth, but Jesus promised that he would confess their names before his Father and before his angels. So it is heartening

indeed, as we take this promise to heart -- if our names are cast out as vile and despicable in this life, because we follow the Master and his precious truth, it will be different in the First Resurrection -- our Lord will gladly and enthusiastically confess our names before the Father and before all the angels. So what matters it now, if we are rejected and despised (just as our Lord was), if, in the next life we are confessed before the Father and his angels?

Philadelphia is the next church addressed. We gain much from the message addressed to this church -- it is called the church of brother love. This was the Reformation period -- when the Reformation burst forth in the midst of the false church. We take particular note of the words that are used in the message to this church -- "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." The false church was claiming to be the holy and the true and to have the key of David; but our Lord would now use some of his faithful witnesses to dispute the claims of the false church; and it would be proclaimed by the Reformers that Christ was the one who was holy and true and who had the key of David.

Then the message continues -- "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." Our Lord saw that there was some strength left after the terrible times of the Sardis church, and through his providences he set before his faithful ones an open door and the faithful reformers went through that open door, and because it was the right time for the truth to be triumphant against the false church, our Lord said of this open door, that no one would be able to shut it. And so it was -- behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews (which say they are the true people of God), 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." This applies no doubt to the time when the true church will be in power and will subdue all the enemies of the Lord, and all opponents of the truth will have to come and worship the true church in glory.

We can gain courage from the example of the Reformers -- even though they had only a LITTLE strength, yet they were not remiss in using what strength they had in the face of terrible odds. So with us, if we see opportunities to serve the interests of the Truth or the interests of the Lord's people, we should use our energies and not think that because there is so much opposition that we should back down and do nothing. The Lord's people were faithful in the Reformation time and the Lord promised them that because they "had kept the word of his patience, he would keep them from the hour of temptation, which would come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. And now we are the Lord's people in that time -- the Laodicean period and we are in the very midst of the

hour of temptation which has come upon the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. The Lord expects us to be faithful under the circumstances of our day, and he provides special assistance adapted to the condition of our particular time.

The promise to the overcomers of the Philadelphia brethren is very inspiring – “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.” How full of precious meaning is contained in this promise! What an inspiring hope this is to think of being a pillar in the glorified temple beyond the veil, and to have the name New Jerusalem written upon us, and that we shall never have to look forward to anything that would make us unhappy or lonely. We shall have the name of the Bridegroom written upon us and we shall be the temple of the Lord, and come down to bless the inhabitants of the earth!

From this New Jerusalem will issue forth a river of water of life for the refreshment of the whole human creation; and the leaves of the trees beside this river will be for the healing of the nations. How delightful it is to think of this pure, sparkling, fresh water of truth which is to refresh the nations who have had nothing but stale brackish water to drink for so many centuries!

The last message is to the Laodicean church, or the church of the Laodiceans. The nominal church is luke-warm, and this is very displeasing to the one who is in the midst of the candlesticks -- this nominal church is spewed out of the Lord's mouth. The professed church says it is "rich and increased with goods, and has need of nothing;" but in the Lord's estimation it is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

This church is counseled of the Lord to buy of him "gold tried in the fire, that it may become rich; and white raiment, that it may be clothed and to have its eyes anointed with eye salve that it may see." This is the period when the Lord "stands at the door and knocks: and 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." Yes, he is our present Lord and we have heard his knock and have responded to his voice and opened the door, and he has come in to us and he has supped with us, and we have supped with him. And what a feast has been spread before our wondering eyes -- things new and old. Our table is spread with the most wonderful delicacies -- refreshing to our souls and nourishing the fruits of the spirit. No table spread for the Lord's people has ever equaled the table spread here in the end of the age. Both our minds and hearts are satisfied and our lives are marked with continual rejoicing and thankfulness. This feast is a foretaste of the feast that will be spread before

us when we will be with the Lord in glory -- when he will confess our names before the Father and before his holy angels.

The promise to the Laodicean church is a constant inspiration to us, especially as we know that there is going to be a literal kingdom set up for the blessing of the nations -- "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." This promise is in our minds constantly because it figures so prominently in the Harvest Message we have.

After the messages to the seven churches, we find the throne scene -- this is recorded in the 4th and 5th chapters of Revelation. Upon the throne is seated God himself, or we should say this is a vision that is intended to convey the thought that God is meant, although actually it was not God, but only a vision representing various qualities which we know are identified with God. The throne scene is a striking vision, but it is not our purpose at this time to dwell upon all the details of each vision, but only those details which will teach us some lesson that we should "TAKE TO HEART."

The outstanding feature of the vision that teaches a salutary lesson is the answer to the question -- "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" John saw in the right hand of the one seated upon the throne a book written within and on the backside sealed with seven seals." And the question was asked, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" No one responded, and John wept much because no one was found worthy. Then one of the 24 elders speaks to John -- "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." And John "Beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having 7 horns and 7 eyes, which are the 7 spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." -- This is the one that is worthy to open the book and loose the 7 seals. The slain Lamb -- the one who had been so faithful as to give his life to redeem Adam and his race, is the one who deserves the honor of opening the book and loosing the 7 seals.

There is a double lesson here that we can "TAKE TO HEART." First, that we are to honor the slain Lamb and look to him as the one worthy to receive our homage and to direct our lives. The second lesson is that special faithfulness to God brings special honors from God -- honors of dignity and usefulness -- in other words no one should expect rewards of any kind unless he first prove himself as fully devoted to the purposes of God and the ideals of God's character as the Master himself.

In the beginning of our talk, we noted that grace and peace were to be to us from the one

seated upon the throne -- meaning our Heavenly Father, and also from Jesus Christ. In addition, it was said that grace and peace would be from the "seven spirits" which were before the throne of God. In the throne vision it was said that the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and the slain Lamb had 7 horns and 7 eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." All this together would seem to suggest that as "eyes" would represent deep wisdom and spirits would represent powers, and that there were 7 in each case -- that God's wisdom and power in their completeness would be exercised in behalf of the Lord's people, and give them favor and peace. And we believe this has been the case, that the Lord's people have been cared for in every possible way, and there has been no lack of any kind. We know from experience that we have been abundantly provided for in our day, and we feel confident that all grace and peace will be ours in the remainder of our pilgrim journey. Let us "TAKE THIS TO HEART."

We specially note the 12th verse of chapter 5 -- "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive" (now note 7 things which the Lamb was worthy to receive) -- "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing."

After the Lamb takes the book he proceeds to open the seals, one by one, and John sees a new vision in each case, and he records what he saw and what he heard. Incidentally, the throne scene remains in view all the time -- John is before the throne and he watches as the Lamb opens the seals; and off to one side, so to speak, he beholds new visions and he records all he sees and hears. The opening of the seven seals reveals the visions of the entire book of Revelation, and we have them in book form -- the last book of the Bible -- the book of Revelation, or the Apokalupsis, or revelation. We are in awe (and we "TAKE THIS TO HEART") as we contemplate God's foreknowledge of all that was to transpire down through the Gospel Age, and on down to the end of the Millennial Age. This is a blessing to us to realize that all that has happened and what will happen was completely known to our Heavenly Father, from the foundation of the world -- this gives us confidence and peace in our Christian life.

We pass over the opening of the first five seals without comment. The opening of the sixth seal reveals a vision of a great earthquake and this is interpreted to mean the French Revolution. Other symbols have to do with conditions that we see around us -- there is great fear on the part of the mighty, and efforts are made to shore up their positions, and they say to the mountains and rocks (kingdoms and strong organizations in society), "hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?" This has been going on for a long time now (in our day), and possibly the great cry for protection is directed to the United Nations -- COVER US, PROTECT US -- "For the great day of the Lord's

wrath has come." How strengthening it is to our faith to understand the significance of these world conditions. We can see that men are in desperation and are spending millions of dollars all over the world, and are doing everything they can think of to preserve the status quo -- but it is too late!

END OF PART ONE

"KEEPING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN" IN THE BOOK OF
REVELATION In Two Parts -- PART TWO

Br. Ted Smith

In the 7th chapter we read of "the great multitude, which no man could number. . . and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." And one of the elders informs John that these "are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in the temple." We have studied about this class for many years, and we take to heart all that has been said about this and we want to live in such a way that we will not have to come up through great tribulation and wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb. We "TAKE TO HEART" that we must take great care to keep our robes unspotted from the world, and cleanse our robes daily from all the spots so that we will not have to go through this special tribulation for the cleansing of our robes. So we gain a wholesome lesson from the 7th chapter which is about the Great Multitude.

Skipping on over to the 11th chapter, Vs. 15 to 19 we read of the opening of the 7th seal. This is of special interest to us because in chapter 10, V. 7, we are informed that "in the days of the voice of the 7th angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." So if we have convincing evidence that we are in the time of the events of the 7th seal, then we will know that the mystery of God, the church of Christ, will soon be finished, and will be completed beyond the veil.

When the 7th angel sounded, John heard 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." And John hears the 24 elders saying that our Lord has taken to himself his great power and reigned. And at the same time the nations are angry, and the day of wrath is come, and the time for the judging of the dead -- to reward all that have God's approval and destroy those who are destroyers of the earth. We see these conditions in the earth today -- great distress of nations -- they are indeed "angry," and the day of God's wrath is here. Our Lord is reigning and he is a conquering warrior, and Satan's kingdom is gradually disintegrating. This is heart-cheering to us as we see the evidences of the old order passing away in great disorder, and we look forward to the new order on the other side of the Battle of Armageddon.

In connection with all this, John saw something else that is of special interest to us here in the end of the age, when the 7th angel is sounding. In the 19th V. it is said that "the

temple of God was opened in heaven and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." If the temple of God represents the church and the ark of his testament is "The Christ, Head and Body," this would fit so well our possession of special knowledge in our day concerning the church. I am safe in saying that we are blessed above all other periods of the church with an accurate and complete knowledge concerning the church of Christ -- the purpose of its selection, who are to make up the church, the present work of the church, the conditions by which we can make progress in character development, and finally the hope of the church -- to live and reign as the Seed of Abraham for the blessing of all the families of the earth. All this is a delight to us, as we "TAKE IT TO HEART."

There were more things that John saw and heard -- "lightnings, voices, thunderings, and earthquakes and great hail." This is a thumbnail sketch of the things we see around us -- things that are revealed in later visions in greater detail. All around us are flashes of truth, great voices of proclamations and much thunder of controversy, and we are in the very midst of the greatest revolutionary earthquake the world has ever known, and we can hear the mighty smashing of great hail stones upon the earth -- hard, distressing expressions of truth. I think this present war in Vietnam is bringing about many crushing expressions of truth that are causing people to think as never before, and this is leading on to the terrible state of anarchy. Yes, the hailstones are becoming more numerous and weightier.

Turning now to the 14th chapter we find a whole cluster of visions that fairly sparkle with interest to us. These visions pertain to our day, beginning with 1874. The details are fairly easy to grasp because we can recognize events that have taken place in our own day. First there is the vision of a Lamb standing on Mount Zion and with him are 144,000, and these are singing as it were a new song and harping with their harps. Then there is an angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth. Added to this is another vision of an angel expressing a warning in a LOUD voice -- "worship not the beast or his image, for if you do you will drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Next John heard a voice from heaven saying, "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." Then John saw a reaper seated upon a white cloud, and this personage is the same as the one that walks among the 7 candlesticks -- one like unto the son of man. And this reaper thrusts in his sickle and the earth is reaped. Finally another angel comes out of the temple, and he too has a sharp sickle, but he does not reap wheat, but gathers the clusters of the vine of the earth, and casts them into the great winepress of the wrath of God, and the winepress is trodden and blood flows from the winepress to a tremendous depth, indicating great slaughter. How thrilling are these visions, and how much they mean to us who are living in the end of the age actually witnessing their fulfillment, and even having a part in their fulfillment! We

"TAKE THESE THINGS TO HEART," for they enable us to lift up our heads with joyful anticipation -- these events indicate that it will not be long until we shall experience our change.

The Lamb standing on Mount Zion is a representation of our Lord finally standing up and assuming control of earth's affairs. This vision begins in 1874. The first work of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion is the resurrection of the sleeping saints; and then as each one of the saints who is still alive on earth, finishes his course, he is changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye -- "they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." These saints have a wonderful song to sing -- "as it were a NEW SONG." The song of the gospel had become so mixed with sour notes in the nominal system that it needed to be rewritten and restated to conform to the truth. What a song we have and how we delight to play this new song on our harps -- the Scriptures are like a new song sheet now and how delightful is the melody that can be harped now -- the lovingkindness of our God through Christ Jesus -- no sour notes now, no jarring discords. We sing this song with great joy until such time as we finish our course and join our brethren in glorification on Mount Zion.

How easy it is to recognize the fulfillment of the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach; for have not the Lord's people been proclaiming to the whole world 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 water?" Also is it not easy to recognize the fulfillment of the next vision -- the 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?" Yes, this has been an important part of the Harvest message -- we know what Babylon is, we know she is fallen, and we know too that it has been proclaimed world wide that Babylon is fallen. Volume IV is an outstanding example of the fulfillment of this proclamation.

And too, we have heard the warning of the third angel, saying with a LOUD voice -- do not worship the beast or his image, or receive his mark in the forehead, or in the hand -- we steer clear of all the errors of Babylon so we will not have the mark of Babylon in our forehead (so we will not believe any of Babylon's erroneous doctrines), and we do not cooperate with Babylon, -- so we will not have the mark of the beast in our hands. And as V. 12 of the 14th chapter says, "Here is the patience of the saints; that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Yes, we keep separated from the nominal system -- separated from her mixture of truth and error, and separated from all cooperation with the daughters -- the daughters of the Great Harlot.

Then the special promise of an instantaneous resurrection of the saints -- applicable to our day only -- "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 words do follow them." How we "TAKE THIS TO HEART", when one of our number finishes his course; and also what stimulus it is to our faith and hope -- that we are assured that when we finish our course in death, we will not need to sleep, as did the saints in the past, but we shall be immediately changed to be with the saints in glory. It is with great anticipation, therefore, that we look forward with joy to meeting our Lord and all the rest of the Lord's people that have been resurrected, either at the time when our Lord first returned, or afterward.

We "TAKE DEEPLY TO HEART" the vision concerning the one like unto the Son of Man, seated on a white cloud, with a sickle in his hand. We are confident that we are in the Harvest of the Gospel Age, and that we are all being harvested. We take the Harvest Message very seriously and also our work of cooperating with our Lord in harvesting the wheat. We realize that we have been harvested ourselves with this message, and that the Harvest Message is one of the most convincing and heart-cheering proofs that our Beloved Redeemer and Head is present, finishing up the work of the Gospel Age, and that we have the joy and honor of working with him in this final work before restitution blessings begin to flow to Redeemed mankind.

The final vision in this cluster of visions, is the picturing of the work of gathering the vine of the earth, and we can see unmistakable evidences of this work in the earth today. The trouble is becoming more intense and the hail is becoming heavier and more frequent. Speaking of the hail reminds me of a large ad which appeared recently in the Sunday New York Times. This was a two-page ad in the N. Y. Times magazine section, dated April 23, 1967. It was put in by Alcan Aluminum Limited and was entitled WHAT COULD WE BUILD IF WE WORKED TOGETHER? -- and the message itself was from the pen of U. Thant, Sec. Gen. of the United Nations. The ad read in part as follows: "This simple but tantalizing question is a sharp reminder of the irony of the present state of mankind. It dramatizes the persistent struggle between our wisdom and our foolishness, our strength and our weakness, our creativeness and our self-destructiveness, our idealism and our baseness. It serves to remind us that the predominant rivalries of our era, political, military, or ideological, are also the most wasteful consumers of our time, spirit, talent, resources and even of life. It reminds us of the strange fact that even now, with an unprecedented range of knowledge at our disposal, men in all parts of the world passively continue to accept policies and programs of all kinds which not only fritter away their substance and the bountiful legacy of nature, but at times endanger their very existence. The simplest citizen can grasp the fact that a fraction of the money that will be spent throughout the world on armaments, in 1967 could finance economic and social

programs, both national and global, on a scale hitherto undreamed of. It is obvious that a small part of the ingenuity, effort, expertise and resources deployed in building an intercontinental missile system, for example, would almost certainly, if applied to the more immediate problems of human misery or of future human development, produce a series of breakthroughs which might well illuminate and inspire man's whole concept of his own future. It is a commonplace that, if nations could only lay down the sword and live in harmony, the world might, with judicious leadership and management, well become a place which could rival all the utopias of the philosophers -- and certainly be far more interesting." (End of quote) The irony of all this is that the ad was composed or written NOT by one professing to be a Christian, but by a man who is from one of the so-called heathen nations AND addressed in large measure to those who do profess to recognize and respect Christian ideals. We can predict the future to some extent, for does not the Revelator tell us in chapter 16, V. 21, that "men would blaspheme God because of the plague of hail?" -- yes they will refuse to repent and go right on trying to uphold their selfish ways and institutions.

Now we will go forward to chapter 17, where we find a description of BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

This was the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. What is there about this vision that is a blessing to those who read or who hear the prophecy read? Oh, it is because we are made aware of the identity of the greatest enemy of the true church down through the Gospel Age. We are given so much information about her that we cannot help recognizing her on the bloody pages of history. Consequently we have knowledge and we are not looking for some man antichrist, but are able to see the fulfillment in the past of the long history of this false church, and we are also made acquainted with her final destruction in anarchy.

And in the 18th chapter, we find a vision of another angel from heaven having great power and the earth was lightened with his glory. And this angel cries mightily with a strong voice, saying "Babylon the great is fallen and is become the habitation of devils." And following this is 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. We have seen how the earth has indeed been lightened with the glory of the angel who proclaims that "Babylon the great is fallen." And we know the angel that was used to proclaim this message. And too, we have also heard the message to the Lord's true people to come out of Babylon. It gives us great joy to know of these things and this is part of the evidence that we are indeed in the very end of the age. And we anticipate the fulfillment of the vision of Babylon's destruction in the action of a mighty angel who "took up a stone like a great mill stone, 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!" The Lord does not keep anything hidden from his people that they need to know to enable them to see the signs of the times and lift up their heads for their deliverance draweth nigh!

In the 19th chapter we hear something about the marriage of the Lamb -- this is of special interest to us, as we are the prospective bride and look forward to being joined to the one who loved us so much that he died for us, and has been preparing the bride for himself all through the Gospel Age. In the 6th V. John heard a mighty voice saying, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 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." And this makes us think about our wedding robe that we wear in this life, and we are greatly concerned that we keep it unspotted that we might be joined to our Heavenly Bridegroom and have fine linen of righteousness of our own.

Following this are the words John heard, "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." IT GIVES US GREAT JOY to think of this marriage supper and that the Great Company will have the privilege of being present and share in the blessings of the occasion. What a happy time that will be, and we truly take these things to heart for they give us so much pleasure of soul while we are still here on earth, waiting until we shall be joined with the other saints beyond the veil. Then the Bride will have bridesmaids and we shall know for sure just who make up the Great Company class.

In the 10th V. of chapter 19 we find another lesson in dignity and humility -- "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." John was inclined to worship the revealing angel, but the angel declined to accept the worship and reminded John that a fellow servant should not be worshipped -- worship belongs to God. We can "TAKE THIS TO HEART" -- we should give credit to those used in a special way to minister to God's people, and esteem them highly for their service to us in spiritual things, but we should not give such ministers the worship that belongs to God.

The following Vs. of the chapter, Vs. 11 to 21, portray in symbolic form the final riding forth of our Lord to smite the nations with the sword of his mouth and to tread the "winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This is of more than ordinary interest to us for two reasons -- first, we rejoice that it is God's purpose to make an end to the permission of evil and destroy everything that would stand in the way of the rule of

righteousness and the Kingdom of God; second, it is delight to us because we know we shall have the privilege and joy of being with our Lord in the wiping from the face of the earth all evil influences and this will pave the way for the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Our lives are wrapped up in our future hopes of being with our Lord to enjoy his love and fellowship and to be working with him in the purposes of our Heavenly Father.

It is interesting and very important to notice the weapon that our Lord uses -- "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." This is found in V. 15, and the last V. of this thrilling symbolic picture expresses the same thought -- "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." We can look then for truth to be the chief weapon in the great battle between the present evil social order and the coming Kingdom of righteousness. This is what we should be watching for in world events -- truth that makes manifest everything that is not right -- it is the weapon now, and the weapon that will be used by our Lord and by ourselves when we are with him in glory. Enlightenment of the mind is the most powerful weapon of all to destroy tyranny of all kinds.

In chapter 20 we have another symbol which rejoices our hearts -- "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." The 3rd V. of this chapter tells us the purpose or result of the binding -- that Satan will no longer be able to deceive the nations." The "deceiving of the nations" now -- isn't that one of the things that we mourn about in the present time?! Deceit, misunderstanding, light for darkness, and darkness for light, misrepresentations -- how grievous are all these situations. We praise God daily for the precious hope that in due time there will be nothing in the world but light, truth, and that errors and lies will flee away forever. Satan, as we know, is the father of lies, and we rejoice as we see the sword of the spirit, the truth bringing the hidden things to light and gradually Satan is being bound and finally will be completely bound. He is to be bound for 1,000 years and then loosed out of his prison to test the loyalty of mankind at the end of the Millennium.

The succeeding vision reveals another blessed feature of God's plan. 4th V. -- "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 (or came to life, as Rotherham translates it) and reigned with Christ a thousand years. All this has to do with the First Resurrection, according to the 5th V. This is a judgment scene -- those who were faithful

to all the tests brought to bear upon them have a part in the First Resurrection and they sit upon thrones and do a judgment work. How many thrones would there be? A possible clue to the proper number may be found in Matt. 19:28 where Jesus said, "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Paul, in 1 Cor. 6:2 said, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" What an important work that will be and what an honor to be judges upon a throne during the 1,000 years. This is the reward to the more than overcomers during the Gospel Age. This will be the work of those who have part in the First or Chief Resurrection.

When the instructing work and judging work is completed, Satan will be loosed out of his prison and mankind will be tested to see who has been sincere and who has been merely feigning obedience for the sake of personal gain. Satan will be allowed to go out in the four quarters of the earth, to deceive as many as he can, and then will be revealed who are sheep and who are goats. The disloyal are spoken of as rebelling against the camp of the saints about (this would mean the earthly rulership of the Kingdom) and the beloved City - - the beloved city would be New Jerusalem, the heavenly phase of the Kingdom. The end of the rebellious is in devouring fire from heaven, or in plain language, destruction. And Satan the great deceiver is destroyed in the lake of fire and brimstone, which we all know is the Second Death.

Because we are in the end of the age, in the Harvest time, our Pastor was able to give us some consistent and harmonious explanations of the various symbols in the rest of the book of Revelation. These visions were used to picture the new conditions to be set up in the earth in connection with the Kingdom of God. However, without an understanding of the Divine Plan, it is impossible to grasp the meaning of these thrilling pictures. One picture is the "great white throne." Another one is a new heaven and a new earth." Still another is about the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ. And the final one is a pure river of water of life. As we consider these divinely inspired pictures we can feast upon the grand hopes for the future -- hopes having to do with new conditions in which we shall share. While we will be in an exalted position with our Lord as Head, yet it will not be with a feeling of triumph over our enemies and gloating in the possession of power. No, we will be filled with holy joy that we are privileged to overcome all the enemies of mankind, and usher them into new conditions of relief from sin and death, and bring them liberty as children of God and liberty to do what is righteous and enable them to reap the fruits of obedience to God's laws.

In Vs. 11 to 15, chapter 20 we find the future conditions pictured as a great white throne. The one seated upon the throne would be our Lord Jesus himself -- and as stated in V . 11

-- "From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." The present social order and religious arrangements will have no place in the new order. It is not possible to reform the present earth and the present heavens -- they are in the hands of the corrupt and unrighteous, and they must be entirely displaced by a complete new arrangement. The great white throne pictures a time of perfect and righteous judgment to be meted out to all mankind -- it is white -- meaning that it is absolutely pure and trustworthy. The perfect Redeemer will be on the throne and his judgments will be in full accord with justice, and wisdom, tempered with love. All the dead, small and great will stand before this judgment throne and the books of truth will be opened, and all mankind will be brought to a knowledge of the truth as Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:3, 4), "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." None will need say then, "Know the Lord, for all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest." (Jer. 31:34) It will be possible then to judge men according to their works, for nothing will interfere with good works and there will be no persecution then for righteousness, and all can express their true heart's desire.

There will be another book opened at that time and it will be the book of life. As each one proves worthy, his name will be recorded in this book of life. To have ones name written in the book of life, it is necessary that he be obedient to the things written in the books of truth that will be made crystal clear at that time. All mankind will have an opportunity to be judged because Jesus died for all, and not for just a few. All who are in the "sea " -- the restless masses will have their opportunity. All who are in the death condition -- alive but under sentence of death will be blessed if they so desire to be blessed. And all those who have gone down into the death condition -- hades, oblivion will be awakened to have their part in the blessed judging of that day. Then death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. And all those whose names are not written in the book of life will likewise be cast into the lake of fire from which there will be no awakening.

It seems reasonable to me to think that all those who are cast into the second death will prefer this to living under the new order. The new order will not be to their liking and they would prefer to die than to give up selfishness and live a life of service to their fellow men. I don't think there will be any mourning over the destruction of the willfully wicked, for their actions and attitude will be such that they will prefer death to living in the company of the righteous.

We proceed now into the 21st chapter. It begins by giving us a symbolic picture of the new order -- "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. This chapter is joyful reading,

knowing as we do that a new heaven would mean a new religious arrangement, even Christ on his throne with his faithful body members, the Bride. And knowing as we do, that a new earth would be a new social order with the Ancient Worthies as princes in the earth, and that the nation of Israel will be the very center of the Kingdom on earth. And knowing, as we do that the expression "no more sea" would represent the fact that there would be no more lawless restless masses, but only a settled peaceful society. Now men are learning war as fast as they can and playing the dangerous game of "brinkmanship," and now every man's hand is against his neighbor.

Comprehending the meaning of these symbols then, let us read the chapter and in our mind's eye, let us think of the glorious new social order with Christ and the church reigning for the blessing of all the nations, and mankind coming to a knowledge of the truth and going up the grand highway of holiness to human perfection, not only in mind and body but also in character. As we read the message of John, let the holy influence raise our hearts and minds so that we can, in the spirit, be in that glorious day. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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. 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 he that sat upon the throne said (we remember now this is referring us back to the throne scene back in the 4th chapter) Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 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. He that overcometh (and this overcoming refers to the Millennial Age - - mankind then must overcome their selfish ways and become just and loving) -- he that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Yes, all the obedient of mankind will become sons of God, on the human plane of being -- "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.

"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." From these words one would think and expect John to give a glowing description of a woman being married to her Heavenly Bridegroom. But no, there is an entirely different vision. John said he was carried away in the spirit to a "great and high mountain, and was shown that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven

from God." The great and high mountain is none other than the spiritual phase of the Kingdom of God; and that great city is made up of the true footstep followers of Christ, the overcomers who have written upon them the name of the city of God -- "New Jerusalem." And what a city of glory and blessing that will be! There will be a uniting then of all the members of the Bride class with their heavenly Lord and supreme will be their joy and happiness in company with their Lord and with one another!

Let us read on and note the splendor of the symbols used as indicating the high exaltation of the New Jerusalem and the dignity of the work that will be performed in behalf of mankind at that time -- this city "having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Clear crystal light will be diffused in every direction for the uplift and directing of the human family brought back from the grave. We note the details given concerning this heavenly city and when we consider the measurements and the materials and other details, we are forced to conclude that the purpose of such a magnificent picture is to convey the idea of supreme splendor and grandeur connected with the future position of the Bride of Christ and the exalted position and lofty work in the administration of the affairs of the earth. For instance, note the measurement -- the city is not only in the form of a square, but is in the form of a cube, and 1,500 miles is the measurement given! Think of that -- 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide and 1,500 miles high! Incidentally our 7th Day Adventist friends take all this literally! The walls are great and high and there are three gates in each of the four sides, twelve gates in all, with an angel standing at each gate, and these gates are named after the 12 tribes of Israel. And the wall of the city has 12 foundations, and in them are the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. The wall measures 144 cubits which would be 216 feet, and this must mean 216 feet thick because the city is in the form of a cube, each side measuring 1,500 miles. The wall is made of jasper and the city itself is of pure gold, like unto clear glass. The foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, amethyst. And more wonder still -- each gate is made of a pearl, and the street of the city is of pure gold and has the appearance of transparent glass. The city has no temple for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. The light of the city is so intense and brilliant that there is no need of the sun, nor of the moon, for the glory of God lightens it and the Lamb is the light thereof. If the picture is so magnificent to our imagination, what must the reality be?! "WE TAKE THESE THINGS TO HEART!"

Now we note what the Revelator has to say of this future city of God -- "And the nations shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall

bring the glory of the nations into it. 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." Let us be inspired by the thought there (let us "TAKE IT TO HEART") -- that only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life will have the privilege of entering into this glorious heavenly city. It is with holy awe that we contemplate such a hope. It makes us think of the top stone of the pyramid as shown on the chart of the ages -- it is not only in top position, but there is great brilliance connected with this top position -- "glory, honor and immortality" and the heart-cheering work of restoring the nations to all that was lost in the Garden of Eden.

In the last chapter of this Heavenly message is another picture of the Kingdom, and this in the form of a "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And there is a tree of life on either side of the river and this tree of life bears 12 manner of fruits, and the fruits are produced every month, and the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations." What a river of water of life that will be! for we read in the 47th chapter of Ezekiel that this river of water of life will be so abundant and deep that men will be able to swim in it! Yes, the water of truth and blessing will cover the earth ocean deep! All manner of instruction will proceed from this river and from the fruits and leaves of the tree of life for the blessing of mankind. Men will then be made free of deceitfulness of sin and will be privileged to revel in truth and righteousness. The curse pronounced in the Garden of Eden will be entirely removed, for as says the Revelator, "There shall be no more curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and mankind will become the serving sons of God, and shall see the face of God in the sense of having his favor, and God's name shall be in their foreheads. Never again will there be a dreadful night time on the earth for the "Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever and ever as kings on the earth."

And the revealing angel said unto John, "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.'

"Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." And finally in the last chapter, 17th V, is the climactic statement of all, as far as mankind is concerned -- "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."

Hymn #58 "Zion's Glorious Hope"