

## End Times

### A Study of Revelation, the *Apocalypse*-week 1.

#### I. Our fears of and interests in End Times:

- A. When will they start? (Last Days versus End Times.)
- B. Can they be predicted?
- C. When will Jesus return?
- D. Will I experience God's wrath? (God's wrath versus Man's wrath)

#### II. Why study Revelation? (Revelation is literally: *a tearing away of the veil*)

- A. Vision of where the world is going
- B. Triumph of God over evil
- C. Vision of the return of Messiah

#### III. Background and style

- A. Apocalyptic and prophetic
- B. Real letter to real churches in real places. (See map)
- C. Written for us not to us
- D. Old Testament flavor
- E. Premillennial bias. (See handout on *Rapture*). To understand the timing of Revelation 4-18 one must choose a viewpoint on the Rapture.

#### IV. Defining terms and approach:

- A. prophecy: speaking forth or foretelling God's revealed word.
- B. apocalyptic: an unveiling of what is going to happen. An uncovering of the unseen.
- C. vision: supernatural glimpse of truth

- D. signs: visible events/objects that point to something else
- E. symbols: refer to something literal, must look to context for interpretation.
- F. numbers; interpreted literally unless specified otherwise
- G. interpretation: (hermeneutics) needs to be consistent; look first to ordinary explanations of meanings; recognizing some things are symbolic and a mystery. There have been multiple approaches to the interpretation of Revelation:
  - 1. *Idealist* approach: timeless principles, no specific or futuristic meaning.
  - 2. *Historicist* approach: a detailed map of history. Not popular today.
  - 3. *Preterist* approach: Must read in historical context, mostly already fulfilled. Weakness is the New Jerusalem has not yet occurred also the 2d coming.
  - 4. *Futurist* approach. It is all in the future and has nothing to do with the period since its writing.
  - 5. *Eclectic* approach. A mixture of all the other approaches.

#### V. **Revelation 1:1-3**

- A. " By Jesus, from God, for his servants, sent by an angel, to John."
- B. "To show what must soon take place." Obvious that this is a prophecy.
- C. Jewish view of time: this age and the age to come. ( see: Matthew 12:32, 24:3;29:20; Ephesians 1:21;Titus 2:12)
- D. Earth time versus heavenly time.
- E. Four ages in Revelation:
  - 1. Rev. 1-3, Church Age, ? years
  - 2. Rev. 4-19, Tribulation Age, 7 years
  - 3. Rev. 20, Kingdom Age, 1000 Years
  - 4. Rev. 21-22, Eternal Age, Endless years
- F. Blessing for the one who reads and blessing for the one who hears. The word blessing in Hebrew, ***ashar***, means: "I am on the right path with God."

#### VI. **Revelation 1:4-8:** All we have to know about the book of Revelation.

- A. Recipients are in *province* of Asia
- B. Meant to bring peace and assurance from the eternal God to those in persecution.
- C. The seven spirits before the throne. (Isaiah 11:2). Jews believed there were also 7 angels near the throne. Most likely this referred to 7 aspects of the Holy Spirit.
- D. Verses 5-8 show that removing the veil reveals it is all about the accomplishments of Jesus. Read the accomplishments and the faithfulness of God in the meaning of- *Amen!*

VII. **Revelation 1: 9-20.**

- A. In the Spirit
- B. On the Lord's Day
- C. Voice like a trumpet-clothing
- D. Verse 12: Lampstands and stars. Explained in verse 20
- E. Write on a scroll
- F. The 7 churches. Why?

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## **End Times**

### **A Study of Revelation, the *Apocalypse*-week 2**

#### **Revelation 2 and 3**

##### **I. Review from last week's outline.**

##### **II. The Church Age**

###### **A. Focus of the Risen Christ in chapter 1:**

1. Jesus walked among the lampstands, signifying his love for and involvement with His Church.
2. Jesus concerned for the pain and suffering of the Church, thus sent letters to 7 major churches. Says "I know", 9 times.
3. The Church from Pentecost until the Rapture will face difficulty, false teaching, persecution and distractions.

###### **B. Rev. 1:18, "I hold the keys of death and Hades" (see handout: *the Hadean World*).**

###### **C. The Seven Churches. (Map). Jesus specifically wanted to let them know what was going to happen. What they had in common:**

1. Established by good men.
2. Lived in the real world.
3. Excited at first about their salvation.
4. Islands in a sea of pagan idolatry.
5. Struggling economically
6. In danger.

##### **III. Letters to the seven churches<sup>1</sup>**

A. Ephesus: Lost Love, 2:1-7. Important trade city with largest harbor.

1. Center of pagan worship of Artemis. One of 7 wonders of ancient world. 45,000 seat amphitheater.
2. Temple of Domitian, the Roman Emperor.
3. Hard working.
4. Confronted false teaching. May have fought false teachers, but killed fellowship. ( the common life)
5. "You have left your first love." Lack of love for each other?
6. Hated Nicolaitions. Immorality of Balaam.
7. Tree of life in the paradise of God.
8. If the shoe fits....

B. Smyrna: Suffering Saints, 2:8-11

1. Modern Izmir.
2. Home of Imperial cult-emperor worship.
3. Jews persecuted Christians. May be responsible for label: synagogue of Satan

C. Pergamum: Fornicating Faction, 2:12-17

D. Thyatira: Compromising Christians, 2:18-27

E. Sardis: Sinful Slumber, 3:1-6

F. Philadelphia: Persevering Pillars, 3:7-13

G. Laodicea: Prosperous Paupers, 3:14-22

<sup>1</sup> Section II outline borrowed from Craig S. Keener, Application Commentary , Revelation, p44

## **End Times**

### **A Study of Revelation –Week 3**

#### **I. Chapter 4**

- A. Door open in heaven
- B. Throne in heaven
- C. Twenty Four elders.
- D. Seven lamps were the seven spirits.
- E. Four living creatures with four faces. (see Ezekiel 1:5; Isaiah 6:3)
- F. -Lion=fiercest wild animal.
  - ox=strongest domestic animal
  - man-strongest human.
  - eagle-most powerful bird
- G. The song of heaven.

#### **II. Chapter 5, a scene in Heaven**

- A. Scroll with 7 seals
- B. The Lamb
- C. Worship in Heaven

#### **III. Chapter 6, beginning of the Tribulation**

- A. Lamb opens seals 1 through 6
- B. Four horsemen (see Zechariah 6:1-5)

1. White horse-a spirit of war
2. Red horse-a spirit of unrest
3. Black horse-a spirit of hunger
4. Pale horse-a spirit of death

C. Souls under the altar

D. Earthquake

**IV. Chapter 7, sealing the servants of God**

A. The 144,000

B. The multitude in white robes

**V. Chapter 8, opening the 7<sup>th</sup> seal**

A. Silence in Heaven

B. The angel and the censer

C. The angels sound the trumpets 1 through 4:

1. hail and fire mixed with blood
2. mountain thrown into the sea
3. star falls from the sky
4. sun and moon turn dark

D. Eagle cries "Woe! Woe!,Woe!"

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**End Times**  
**A Study of Revelation –Week 4**

**I. Chapter 9.**

A. The **fifth** trumpet.

1. Locusts attack anyone without the seal of God
2. King of the locusts: Apollyon(Greek); Abaddon (Hebrew)

B. The **sixth** trumpet

1. Four Angels bound at the Euphrates
2. 200,000,000 horsemen

**II. Chapter 10.**

A.Things we are not know.

B.The angel says it is almost over.

C. The little scroll.

**III. Chapter 11.**

A. Two witnesses prophesy for 1260 days

B. The Beast attacks and kill the two witnesses

C. The two witnesses come back to life and go to heaven.

D. Severe earthquake.

#### **IV. Chapter 12.**

A. The pregnant woman

B. The red dragon (Satan)

C. The male child

D. Michael fights the dragon (Satan) and his angels

E. The woman escapes.

#### **V. Chapter 13.**

A. The Beast

B. Forty-two months the Beast is worshipped. (1260 days.)

C. The second Beast.

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## **End Times**

### **A Study of Revelation –Week 5**

#### **The final “undoing of the world order.”**

#### **I. Chapter 14**

##### **A. The Lamb and the 144,000**

1. Their mark
2. Their song
3. Their purity

##### **B. Three angels**

1. First angel: “The hour of judgment has come.”
2. Second angel: “Babylon has fallen.” Theories:
  - a. Babylon is a synonym for Rome.
  - b. Jerusalem
  - c. The United States, especially NYC
  - d. Literally the real Babylon.
  - e. The world order of evil.
3. Third angel: “tormented with burning Sulphur...

C.”Voice from heaven: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

##### **D. Harvesting the earth**

## **II. Chapter 15**

### **A. 7 angels with 7 plagues**

#### **1. Victors from the first harvest. (14:14-16)**

- a. Pre-tribulation believers: all the righteous who have been saved during the Tribulation.
- b. Other views: all the righteous from all times, including the church.

### **B. 7 Angels with plagues emerge from the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony.**

### **C. Living creature (KJV: beast, 4:6) gives bowls (KJV: vials) of wrath to the 7 angels.**

### **D. Smoke filled the temple: no one could enter even for intercession.**

## **III. Chapter 16.**

### **A. First bowl of wrath: sores**

### **B. Second bowl of wrath: sea turns to blood**

### **C. Third bowl of wrath: rivers turn to blood**

### **D. Fourth bowl of wrath: sun intensifies and scorches; still no repentance.**

### **E. Fifth bowl of wrath: Beasts throne in darkness; still no repentance**

### **F. Sixth bowl of wrath: Euphrates dries up; preparation for Armageddon**

### **G. Seventh bowl of wrath: hail, earthquake, and wrath for Babylon.**

**IV. Chapter 17**

- A. Punishment of the woman who sits on the beast.
- B. 10 kings; 10 horns
- C. Victory of the Lamb and the chosen

**V. Chapter 18**

- A. Total destruction of Babylon
- B. Complete destruction of the evil world order

## **End Times**

### **A Study of Revelation –Week 6**

#### **Chapters 19 and 20—Return of the King**

- I. **Praise in heaven. (19:1-10)**
  - A. Destruction of the great prostitute (Ch. 18) has taken place.
  - B. Hallelujah: *halal*= praise; *jah*=God. Only appears in this chapter in the entire Bible. (19:1, 3, 4, 6)
  - C. Call for all to praise God both great and small.
  - D. Wedding of the Lamb.
    - 1. Identity of the Bride
    - 2. Preparation of the Bride
    - 3. Attire of the Bride
    - 4. Wedding supper. Great messianic banquet. (Isaiah 25:6; Matthew 8:11; 26:29)
  - E. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Possible meanings:
    - 1. A consistent life of witness is prophetic.
    - 2. Spreading a message received from Christ is prophetic.
- II. **The rider on the white horse**
  - A. Arrival of the conquering King!
    - 1. His appearance
    - 2. His army (Isaiah 63)

B. Dimensions of his name:

1. 19:11- Faithful and True
2. 19:12- a secret name, “no one knows but himself.”
3. 19:13- Word of God
4. 19:16- King of Kings and Lord of Lords

C. The other great supper. (19:17,18)

D. The capture and destruction of the Beast.

III. **The Thousand Years. Chapter 20:** very controversial

A. Binding of Satan

B. Multiple thrones of judgment. (1 Corinthians 6:2)

C. Martyrs resurrected and reign.

D. 1000 year reign of Christ

E. Satan released

F. Battle of Gog and Magog

G. White Throne

1. Judging the dead
2. Books opened and the “Book of Life”
3. Destruction of Death and Hades
4. Eternal punishment for the condemned

## **End Times**

### **A Study of Revelation –Week 7**

#### **Chapters 21 and 22—the Eternal Age**

#### **I. Another look at the Great White Throne Judgment. 20: 1-15**

#### **II. The new heaven and earth. 21:1**

##### **A. The current heaven and earth.**

1. Isaiah 34:4; 51:6
2. Matthew 24:35
3. 2 Peter 3:10, 12

##### **B. Destroyed and recreated versus renewed and transformed? (*kainos*-new in time and quality-superior)**

1. Isaiah 65:17; 66:22
2. 2 Peter 3:13

##### **C. List of all the things that won't be there. Ch. 21 and 22**

##### **D. Full circle from creation.**

#### **III. The New Jerusalem**

##### **A. The glory of God**

##### **B. Wall of Jasper**

##### **C. 12 gates**

##### **D. 12 foundation stones**

##### **E. The gold street**

##### **F. The river, 22:1**

G. The Tree of Life, 22:2

H. Light from the Lord God. 22:5

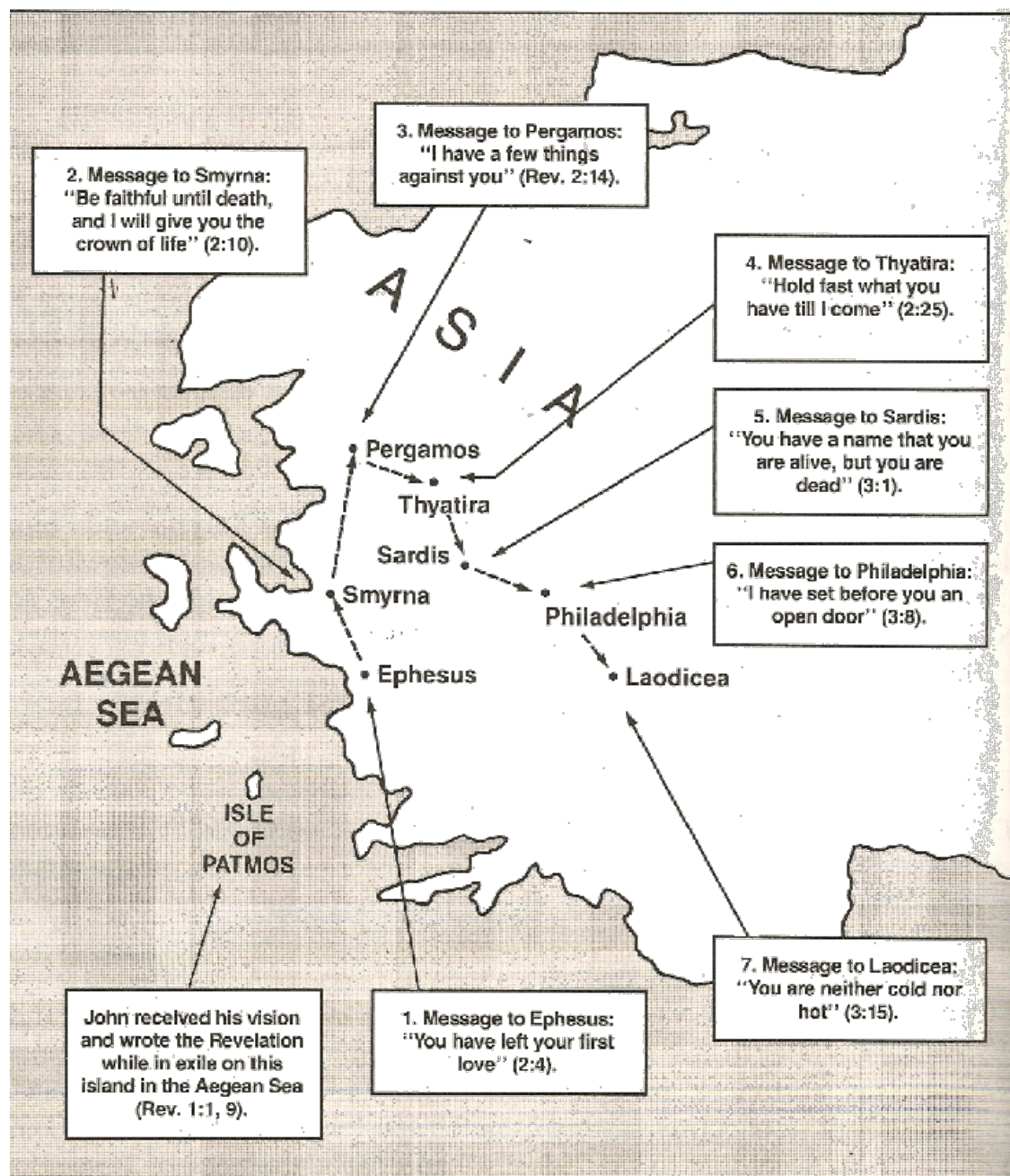
**IV. Those who will be in the presence of God and Jesus. Hebrews 12:22-24**

- A. “countless thousands of angels.”
- B. “assembly of God’s first born children”—Church Age believers
- C. “righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.”—Old Testament saints

**V. Those who won’t be in the presence of God and Jesus. 20:8; 27**

**VI. “I am coming soon.”**

- A. Blessed to keep the words of this prophecy.
- B. “Do not seal up the words of this prophecy.”
- C. The words of Jesus. 22:12-16; to the churches.
- D. John’s words of warning. 22:17-20
- E. **Amen! Come Lord Jesus.**





## Babylon

**The Scripture mentions the city of Babylon over 280 times.** Jerusalem is the only other city mentioned more times. (300). The prophetic identity of Babylon has been controversial, especially as it is named in the Book of Revelation. Some see Babylon as ancient Rome in a literal sense, while others take a broader view that it is actually the entire world order of evil and no specific city or government. As far back as the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah, the fall of Babylon was predicted. Modern commentators believe the Revelation references could be to the rebuilt literal Babylon about 50 miles southwest of Bagdad in Iraq. It is sited on the Euphrates River.

**Babylon was originally the location of the Tower of Babel** which was the first recorded rebellion against God by all of mankind. The rebellion occurred under King Nimrod who controlled much of the area not long after the flood. Nimrod was a warrior king who descended from Noah, through Ham, through Cush. Nimrod controlled the plain of Shinar where Babel was built and then went to Assyria where he built Nineveh. (Genesis 10:8-12)

By preventing the building of the Tower of Babel, God decreed that man should speak different languages and he scattered them throughout the earth. He said that if they could build a tower to heaven there was nothing they couldn't do. From this point man lived in separate nation-states and tribes and that complexity may have been God's way to combat Satan's leading

mankind astray. It would have been easier for Satan if everyone lived under one government and language. The prophesy that the Antichrist will lead the world into a united one-world government is one of the themes of Revelation. He is also believed, based on the locations of the Beast's headquarters in Revelation, to base himself in literal Babylon.

Babylon was built by King Nebuchadnezzar in 600BC. From its construction Babylon was a hotbed of Idolatry and sinfulness. When the Jews sinned by worshipping false Gods, God allowed them to be captured and led in to captivity in Babylon. Daniel was one of these captives and had his visions in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar may have been the most powerful king in all of world history. In 539 BC King Cyrus of Persia, (Iran) captured Babylon and the city became a pile of ruins. This defeat had been prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 21:9. He also mentions it in Isaiah chapter 13-14. Jeremiah prophesied the defeat of Babylon in Jeremiah 50-51. Complicating the understanding of the prophesy of Babylon's destruction, Zechariah prophesied 20 years after its fall that it would rise again. (Zechariah 5:5-11). This was in 519BC and potentially argued for a rebuilding of Babylon at some time in the future.

### **So will Babylon be rebuilt?**

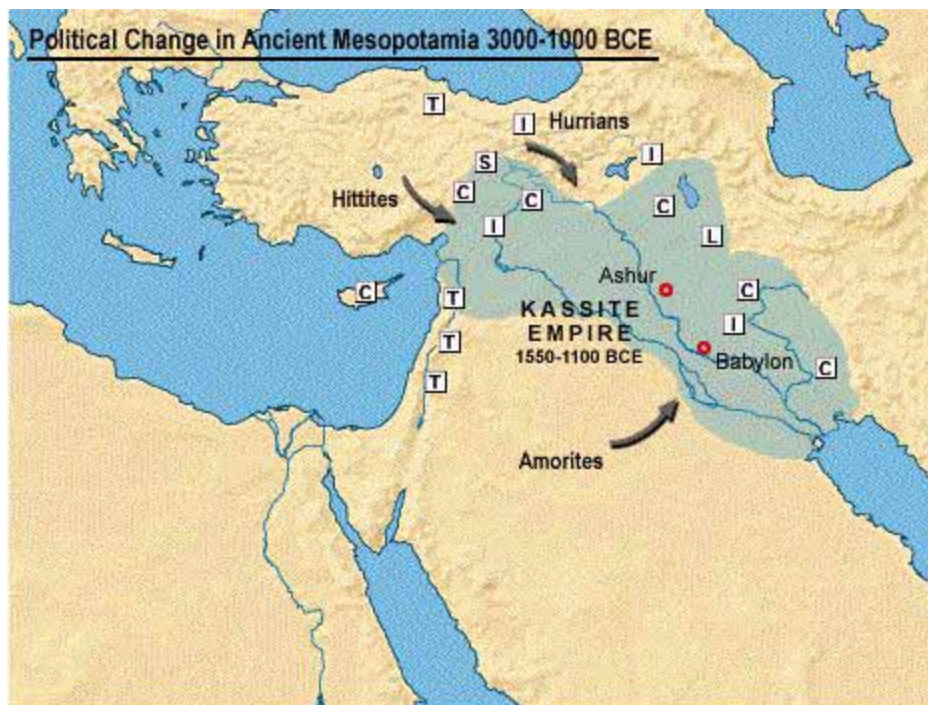
Sadam Hussein saw himself as a modern Nebuchadnezzar. In 1987 he began rebuilding Babylon. He had his likeness and story engraved on monuments as the walls went up. The UN approved the rebuilding of Babylon as a world Heritage center and even the United States Department of State donated \$500,000 to help rebuild its monuments. Construction has continued, however has been interrupted by ISIS in recent times. Revelation 18:9-11 implies a current destruction that John sees as part of his vision. When American and Allied forces invaded Iraq in 2003 they intentionally didn't fire on the walls of ancient Babylon. There are several viewpoints as to the meaning of Babylon in Revelation:

- It refers to Rome and has already been accomplished.
- It refers to Jerusalem and already been accomplished.
- It refers to the United States and especially New York City and will be accomplished
- It is literally Babylon and it has been rebuilt and will be destroyed
- It is the destruction of the entire world order of evil both spiritually and commercially.

**My view is a composite of the last 2 views.** I believe the city may be restored only to be destroyed by the outpouring of the Bowls of Wrath in Revelation 16. At the same time the phrase, ""and the cities of the nations collapsed" (16:19), refers to all of the sinful cities in the world. I think, then that the entire world order falls apart at the same time and that no one city is large enough or sinfully important enough to be the only one destroyed. Chapters 17-and 18

celebrate the destruction of Babylon in particular, because it is symbolic of everything wrong with the world order.

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# The Rapture

**I. The Doctrine of Imminency:** "Keep watch because you do not know on what day the Lord will come-so you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." Matthew 24:42

- A. No one knows when the Lord Jesus will come for his believers.
- B. The Christian world falls into different camps of belief such as: pre-tribulation rapture; mid- tribulation rapture; pre-wrath rapture; and post-tribulation rapture.

**II. The Doctrine of the Rapture.** In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Paul says we will be caught up to meet Him in the air and will be with Him forever. The Greek word for caught-up is *harpazo*. The literal meaning of *harpazo* is to *snatch or seize, or take suddenly*. While the word-*rapture* is not used in our English Bibles, *harpazo* was translated from Greek to Latin by Jerome (405AD) by using the Latin word *rapio* which means to *seize away*. That word eventually became the English word *rapture*.

**III. The Doctrine of the Rapture** is based on the use of *harpazo* in Matthew 11:12, 13:19; John 6:15, 10:12,28,29; Acts 8:39, 23:10; 2 Corinthians 12:2,4; 1Thessalonians 4:17; Jude 1:23; Revelation 12:5. While these verses do not all relate to the *rapture*, they illustrate the definition of *harpazo*. The actual scriptures that say or infer a *rapture* are: John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; and 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4: 13-18.

**IV. When will the Rapture occur?** A very brief overview of divergent viewpoints.<sup>1</sup>

- A. Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Teaches the church will be raptured before the 7 years of tribulation begins. The tribulation begins at some point after the Rapture. This view is based on the Scriptures that say the Lord will rescue his people before the coming wrath of God. i.e. 1 Thessalonians 1:10. This view assumes that Jesus returns in 2 phases: one to snatch away his believers and then to return for final judgment bringing with him his believers.
- B. Mid-Tribulation Rapture. This view teaches the Lord will rescue his church mid-way through the 7 year tribulation. Believers will endure 3 ½ years of suffering from God's wrath. This conflicts with the Doctrine of Imminency that says no prophetic events need to occur before the Lord gathers his people. Other difficulties exist with this interpretation.
- C. Post-Tribulation Rapture. Post Tribulationists believe the Rapture and the Second Coming are separated by just a few moments. They also believe the outpouring of God's wrath will be confined to the very end of the Tribulation when it will be unleashed only on unbelievers. This view conflicts with the timetable laid out in Revelation which shows God's wrath being poured out well before the Second Coming of Christ.
- D. Pre-wrath Rapture. This view is a ¾ Tribulation viewpoint. The Rapture will occur 5 ½ years into the Tribulation and immediately following the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> seal in Revelation 6. This view holds that up until this point the wrath described in Revelation is mostly the wrath of man. This conflicts with the obvious meaning of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 that the Day of the Lord comes unexpectedly.

**V. There are several reasons** why the Pre-Tribulation viewpoint seems most valid.

- A. The church is only mentioned in Revelation 1-3 (19 times) and one time in chapters 20- 22 referring to the same events that are in 1-3. In chapters 4-18 the church is not mentioned as the wrath of God is being poured out.
- B. It doesn't make sense for God's people to endure God's wrath. This is especially true in light of Scripture to the contrary.
- C. Jesus is described as coming **for** his people then he is said to come **with** his people. This argues for the 2d coming to be one event in 2 phases. First, the rapture of believers and the 2d phase his ultimate return.
- D. The Pre-Tribulation viewpoint is the only one that fully aligns with the Doctrine of Imminency.

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<sup>1</sup> Explanations paraphrased from End Times, Dr. Mark Hitchcock.p135 ff.

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## The Antichrist

The name Antichrist refers to the final evil world ruler. John also mentions antichrists (more than one) who have gone out into the world. (1 John 2:18). These antichrists go into the world before the final Antichrist, but are of the same false and deceptive spirit that he is.

Throughout the Bible there are references to the Antichrist. Sometime they refer to one who is “anti”, or opposed to Christ, as well as one who is “anti” by taking the place of Christ. The prefix: “anti” can have both meanings.

Jesus said to the Jewish leaders that he had come in “my Father’s name, but you did not receive me: if another comes in his own name you will receive him.” (John 5:43) By this he meant that the one who would try to replace him would come in his own name, but he would be a fake.

Dr. Mark Hitchcock as well as Dr. David Jeremiah both list several names from both the Old and New Testaments that are pseudonyms for the Antichrist.

- The little horn (Daniel 7:8)
- A king, insolent and skilled in intrigue. (Daniel 8:23)
- The prince who is to come. (Daniel 9:26)
- The one who makes desolate. (Daniel 9:27) *This is the one who must sign a treaty with Israel before the Tribulation begins.*
- The King who does as he pleases. Daniel 11:36-45)
- A foolish shepherd. (Zechariah 11:15-17)
- A Man of destruction. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- The lawless one. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- The rider on the white horse (Revelation 6:2)
- The beast out of the Sea. (Revelation 13:1-2)

No one can know now of the actual identity of the Antichrist. Some believe he may be European and he will have an actual name. We can know more about his character or lack of character from the Bible references above. Most scholars believe the Tribulation starts when:

***“He (The Antichrist) will confirm a covenant (treaty) with many for one “seven”(understood as 7 years), In the middle of the “seven” ( Three and one half years into the 7 years of the Tribulation) he will put an end to the sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of the Temple, he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.(Daniel 9:27)***

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## End Times

### A Study of Revelation

#### *The Hadean World*

To the Jews the intermediate destination of someone who died was **Sheol**. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, the word **Sheol** was translated **Hades**, thus the intermediate place referred to by the Jews became the **Hadean World**. Jewish thought was that people were held in either the bad side of **Sheol**, (Hades) which they called, **Tartarus**, or they were in the good side which was called **Paradise**. Both the Old and New Testament use these words in describing where a person goes when one dies. Jesus told the thief on the cross, “today you will be with me in **Paradise**.” (Luke 23:43.)

Several places in the New Testament the word **Hades** appears. The KJV usually translates it “**Hell**”. That word, however is more correctly the translation of the word **Gehenna** which means the place of everlasting fire. (The word Hades comes from Greek Mythology. Hades was the son of Cronus and was given control of the abode of the dead after his father died. He is called the God of the Dead. His brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, were given control of the sky and sea, respectively.) Why translators chose **Hades** as the word to use for **Sheol** is unknown.

Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. He says the rich man lifted up his eyes in **Hades** where he was suffering. Lazarus was pictured in the arms of Abraham and quite comfortable. A great gulf was between them.

In Jude 6, the angels who were disobedient in the days of Noah are pictured as being held in gloomy darkness in chains. This is a very clear picture of the Jewish idea of **Tartarus** in the Hadean world. **Tartarus** was the deepest part of **Hades**.

For the 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian, this is all confusing. Is there an intermediate place the dead go to await judgment? Is there a place of intermediate punishment that is something less than the everlasting fire of **Gehenna**? Is **Paradise** the same as heaven?

The Apostle Paul saw **Paradise** as the third heaven. (2 Corinthians 12:3) He also made it clear that he would be with Jesus when he died. We probably will not be able to completely understand the true configuration of these places this side of heaven. If they do exist:

1. They are not the final place of eternity for either the righteous or the wicked.
2. There is no way to move back and forth between **Tartarus** and **Paradise**.
3. Jesus said the gates of **Hades** will not prevail against his Church.
4. Jesus holds the keys to death and **Hades**. Revelation 1: 18

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## The Controversy of the 1000 Year Reign.

(To write this paper, I have drawn from numerous, often opposing sources: such as the works of

Dr. Mark Hitchcock, Dr. David Jeremiah, William Barclay, Dr. Craig S. Keener, and Matthew Henry.)

There is a great deal of hope and comfort in believing there will be a nearly perfect society on earth headed by Jesus Christ along with his followers. To think that it will last for 1000 years makes it an even more joyful thought. From the earliest days of Jewish writings the Jews have looked forward to a time when the Messiah would return and set up such a kingdom. They even imagined that King David might be resurrected and reappear as their king once again.

Revelation 20 is the only place in the New Testament where the idea of a literal, earthly kingdom, would exist under Christ's rule. The specific length of the kingdom is said to be 1000 years. That number (1000) is used six times by John in Revelation 20:1-10. Four times it refers to Christ's reign or that of his followers, and 2 times it specifically refers to the length of time Satan will be bound and released.

The controversy that swelled around this concept began almost immediately after the first century. During the first century the writers and believers generally accepted and looked forward to it. Gradually Christian leaders began to doubt if it was really going to be a literal Kingdom and if it is literal when would it occur. Additionally the question of how would Jesus reign? Would it be literally or spiritually?

The viewpoints of difference may be summarized with 3 labels:

1. **a millennial**, meaning no millennium, but the reign of Christ is existing at the present time.;
2. **premillennial**, meaning a literal earthly kingdom headed by Jesus Christ lasting for 1000 years.
3. **postmillennial**, meaning Christ will return after the millennium since the millennium represents all the years between the first and second coming of Christ.

The **amillennial** belief is that there is no literal 7 year Tribulation

Age and that Christ will return someday to judge all people. This position is the view of the Catholic Church, the Greek Church and many Protestant denominations. Augustine, writing in the 5<sup>th</sup> century espoused this view as a result of the earlier writings of Tyconius who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. John Calvin and Martin Luther also supported this view. They hold that Satan was bound at Christ's first coming and that both good and evil are developing during the current Church Age. At Christ's second coming everyone will be resurrected and judgment will occur.

The **premillennial** view says that Jesus will return before (pre) the millennial kingdom and inaugurate his kingdom after the 7 year Tribulation Age. Premillennialists believe there will be a literal reign by Jesus for 1000 years on the existing earth. The earth will be a place of peace for those years and Satan will be bound until the 1000 years have ended. Premillennialists agree with the other viewpoints that Christ is currently reigning in the hearts of his people on earth, but his millennial reign will be different. During the 1000 years Jesus Christ will bring the entire world to a knowledge of God. There are differences within the premillennial viewpoint, but this summary basically catches the major points. Premillennialism was the earliest view as stated before. Writers who supported this view include early church fathers such as: Papias, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr and Tertullian. Modern supporters include; John Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, J. Vernon McGee, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, John MacArthur, Adrian Rogers, David Jeremiah, Chuck Smith, Chuck Swindoll and Mark Hitchcock.

The **postmillennial** view does not see a 1000 year reign, but rather the gradual change of the world by the preaching of the gospel. The world will gradually be Christianized and Jesus will return when that has occurred. They look forward to a golden age of spiritual prosperity. There will be a time when Christian principles are in control and evil has been greatly reduced. Postmillennialism grew in the 18th and 19th centuries and spread as a result of the teaching of Daniel Whitby, a Unitarian minister in England. The tragedies of world war and serious economic setbacks made this view much less popular.

#### **Six reasons why I choose the Premillennialist's viewpoint:**

1. Promises of God made in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants to ultimately restore and bless Israel.
2. It was the earliest view.
3. Revelation 20:4-6, "*they came to life and reigned with Christ for 1000 years.*"
4. It is the most natural way to read Revelation 20:1-6
5. Binding and imprisonment of Satan while the 1000 year reign is ongoing is more logical than that he was bound by the resurrection of Christ at the beginning of the Church Age..
6. Literal use of numbers throughout Revelation argue for belief in the literal 1000 years since it is mentioned 6 times.