

Fountaingate Christian Foundation presents...

**The
King's
Table**

Series

**Selected Studies in the Book of the
Revelation of Jesus
Christ**



***Sending the Word of God to the
Ends of the Earth***

A Personal Letter to You

Dear Friend,

There are four major interpretations of the Book of Revelation, particularly from chapter 4 onwards:

1. Preterist View - all applied to, and was fulfilled in John's time.
2. Historist View - it is an overview of history.
3. Idealist View - it is all symbolic of the struggle between good and evil.
4. Futurist View - all is fulfilled in the last days leading up to the Second Coming of Christ.

The Futurist View

Of those who hold to the Futurist View there are also different beliefs in relation to the Christian's position during the "Great Tribulation". Pre-Tribulationists believe that the Lord Jesus will rapture all believers up to be with Him during the years of tribulation when the Anti-Christ is ruling on earth. Post-Tribulationists believe that Christians will go through the tribulation which will end at the Second Coming of Christ. Others believe that some Christians will qualify to be taken out and others will be tested by going through the great tribulation. Views on the Millennium also vary, some believing it is not a literal 1000 years while others believe it is literal.

We will be looking at the Book of Revelation from the Futurist View but, rather than focusing on trying to interpret the events of the last days, our main purpose is to present the revelation of the Lord Jesus in them all: that every study may reveal the glory of Who He is.

Our Fellowship in Christ

As we look into these important prophetic visions given by the Lord Jesus to John - for him, in turn, to share with the Church - let us keep an open heart and attitude. We do not claim to have full revelation and we remain open, ready to adjust, as the Lord reveals to all of us greater understanding in the days that lie ahead. Our fellowship as believers in Christ is not based on what we understand of the Book of Revelation, but on our mutual faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross and in the Resurrection; by our rejoicing together in the fact that He is returning, and by our love for one another (1 John 1:1-3).

Every blessing,

Paul and Bunty Collins

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The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Revelation of the Lord

‘ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place... ’
Revelation 1:1

Preceding the visions he is about to receive of the awful events that are to come upon sinful mankind, the awesome and glorious realities of Heaven, and the fulfillment of God's ultimate purpose, John is given a wonderful revelation of God Himself (Rev.1:1-20). This is the essential foundation for the specific messages he is to write to the churches and for the understanding of what is about to be revealed (Eph.1:17-18).

The Eternal God

"Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come..."

Who is - Exodus 3: 14; Isaiah 40:21-31; 41:4; 46:9-11; 2 Peter 3:8.

Who was - John 12:23-28; John 10:10.

Who is to come - John 14:1-3; 2 Thess.13-18.

The 7-fold Spirit

The "seven spirits of God"...or "the seven-fold Spirit of God"...describes His nature and His involvement with mankind on earth. See Isaiah 11:2-4; 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-21.

The Faithful Witness

This is the relationship of Jesus to His Father. He came to bear witness to the heart and character of God - to reveal what the Father is like.

"No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" John 1:18 (see also John 14:9-10; 5:19,30).

Firstborn from the Dead

This is the relationship of Jesus to His Church.

"And he is the head of the body, the church;

he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" Colossians 1:18 (see also Ephesians 2:4-7; Hebrews 2:10).

Revelation 1:5-6 reveals the glorious dimensions of what this relationship means to us. He...

Loves us

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him" Psalm 103:11 (John 3:16; 15:13-14).

Freed us

Jesus came to set us free from slavery to sin, Satan and the bondage of our old Self.

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" John 8:36 (John 8:32; Romans 6:6-18; 8:2; Galatians 5:1).

Made us

"[He] has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father..." Revelation 1:6 (see also Ephesians 2:10).

Ruler of the Kings of Earth

This is the relationship of Jesus to the world.

The Alpha and the Omega

"Do not be afraid, I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" verses 17-18 (see also verse 8).

All fear is dispelled by revelation of who He is!

Look - He is Coming!

A glorious declaration of the returning victorious King!

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Glory

“...His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.
Revelation 1:16”

The One in Covenant

“...I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...” Revelation 1:10.

The voice “like a trumpet” reveals that the One who is speaking is the One in Covenant. The Children of Israel heard God’s voice like a trumpet as He made a Covenant with them (see Hebrews 12:18-21; Exodus 19:16-19). It is the sound of declaration and decree. So, as one representing God’s New Covenant people to whom he is to pass on the message about to be proclaimed, John hears His voice “like a trumpet”.

The Son of Man

“And when I turned I saw....someone ‘like a son of man,’...” Revelation 1:13.

Read Daniel 7:9-14. Like John, Daniel sees the glory of God and the “Son of Man” coming before the Throne. It is the Lord Jesus himself. As the “Son of Man” Jesus is the representative Man. The believers are “in Him”(Ephesians 1:3-14).

“He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again” Mark 8:31 (see also Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49).

Our great High Priest

“...dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest” Revelation 1:13 (see Exodus 28:4-5; 29:5; Hebrews 2:17; 4:14-16; 9:11-15).

Our righteous judge

“His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow...” Revelation 1:14.

White head and hair speaks of wisdom, dignity, authority and righteousness. See Leviticus 19:32;

Proverbs 16:31; Isaiah 1:18.

“As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool...The court was seated and the books were opened” Daniel 7:9-10.

His penetrating insight

“...his eyes were like blazing fire” Rev.1:14 (see also Daniel 7:9; 10:6).

His righteous life

“His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace” Revelation 1:15 (see also Ezekiel 1:7; 43:2; Daniel 10:6).

His feet speak of His life and ministry as he walked this earth representing mankind. In the midst of the trials and sufferings he faced, still remaining holy, righteous.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin” Hebrews 4:15 (see also Heb.2:17-18).

His powerful, purifying voice

“...and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters” Revelation 1: 15 (Ezekiel 43:2).

Like a waterfall or a rushing river, the sound of His voice brings cleansing and life to all around.

The sword of His Word

“...out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword” Revelation 1:16.

His Word cuts through to the truth of a man or woman’s heart and life (Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 49:2). He is the Truth (John 14:6). He is the Word - the full communication of God to Man (John 1:1,14).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Churches

‘...I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone ‘like a son of man’...’
Revelation 1:12-13

Seven Golden Lampstands **His Ascended Glory**

“...the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” Revelation 1:20.

John sees the Lord walking amongst seven golden lampstands which picture the seven churches in Asia-Minor (modern Turkey) at that time. Jesus had declared of His followers...

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden...let your light shine before men...” Matthew 5:14-16 (see also 1 Thess.5:5; Ephesians 5:8-9; 1 John 1:7).

Seven Stars in His Hand

The seven stars held in His hand picture the seven “messengers” of the churches, speaking of the leadership ministries of the Church (read Ephesians 4:11-6; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5-9).

Walking in Their Midst

The three-fold declaration of Who He is as He walks in their midst (Revelation 1:17-18), is the greatest revelation needed by the churches as they live and minister on earth and is the revelation that takes away all fear. He is...

The First and the Last

He is the central priority of all human history - of individuals lives, the corporate church and the whole of mankind.

The Living One

He has conquered what had been the Enemy’s greatest victory - death (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-7).

Holder of the Keys

All victory, power and authority are in His hands (Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 19:11-16).

John, the “beloved”, had already seen the glory of the Lord. He had walked with the Lord during His ministry on earth, seen Him transfigured in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, and had seen Him after His resurrection.

“The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” John 1:14 (see also 1 John 1:1-3; Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8).

But John is totally overwhelmed by the glory of the Lord now revealed to him as he sees Jesus in His ascended glory (Revelation 1:17).

Desired by Moses

It was this glory that Moses had desired to see but God, in His mercy, had refused him.

“...‘you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live’” Exodus 33:12-23; 34:4-7

Returned to Jesus

It was this full glory that Jesus prayed to His Father to return to Him once His work on earth was completed.

“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began” John 17:4-5.

The purpose of God for us

The Lord Jesus came into the world to bring salvation to sinful mankind and to restore God’s original purpose in creating them (see Genesis 1:26-27; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:18; Jude 24).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Love

“...you have left (abandoned) the love that you had at first [you have deserted Me, your first love] Revelation 2:4 (Amp.V) ”

The Revelation to Ephesus

The message the Lord brings to the church at Ephesus has to do with their relationship with Him. He reveals Himself specifically to them as the one who walks among them and holds the ministries in His hand (Revelation 2:1).

The Lord's Commendation

Before dealing with their need the Lord commends them for three things:

Their work for the Lord

"I know your industry and activities, laborious toil and trouble..." Rev.2:2 (Amp.V)

Their strength in the Lord

"...your patient endurance...I know you are enduring patiently and are bearing up for My name's sake, and you have not fainted or become exhausted or grown weary" Revelation 2:2-3 (Amp.V)

Their discernment of the Lord

"...I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false...You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" Rev.2:2,6.

The Nicolaitans were a sect within the church who were propagating two heresies...

- * They compromised with the pagan society, teaching that spiritual liberty gave liberty to practice immorality and idolatry.
- * Their name came from two Greek words - "nikao", which means "to conquer or consume" and "laos", which means "the people". It seems they began the concept of dividing "ministry" and "laity".

The Ephesians had also discerned the false

apostles which Paul wrote of in 2 Cor.11:13-15.

The Lord's Correction

Despite all their good work, the Ephesians had forsaken the most important thing of all - their love of the Lord and, therefore, their relationship with Him (Revelation 2:4). Their total focus was now on what they, and others, were doing. They had left their "first love" - their priority - the Lord Himself.

The Lord's Promise

In response to their repentance, and therefore the overcoming of their failure, the Lord gives a wonderful promise...

"To him who overcomes (is victorious), I will grant to eat [of the fruit] of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" Revelation 2:7 (Amp.V).

The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life represents everything that God is (see Genesis 2:9; 3:22; Proverbs 3:18; 11:30; Ezekiel 47:7,12; Revelation 22:2,19). Eating its fruit pictures the impartation of God to our spirit and our growth into His glorious image (2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:11-13).

The Paradise of God

The Paradise of God is the place where God dwells in all His glory. It is also called "the third Heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) where Paul says he heard "inexpressible things". Its earthly expression (the Garden of Eden) was where God walked "in the cool of the day" (literally "in the winds of the Spirit of the day") to fellowship with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8).

Both speak of glorious, loving relationship with the Lord.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Life

“...you will suffer persecution...Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
Revelation 2:9

The Church in Smyrna

The message John is instructed to write to the church in Smyrna (modern day Izmir, the second largest city in Asiatic Turkey) is to a church undergoing great trials and facing horrific persecution (Revelation 2:8-11). They were experiencing opposition from two quarters. Smyrna was a faithful ally of Rome and the Gentiles were eager to meet the demand of Emperor worship. There was also a large Jewish community in the city actively hostile against Christianity.

Four-fold trials

“I know your afflictions and your poverty - yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan....I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days...”
Rev.2:9-10 (also 1 Cor.4:11-13; 2 Cor.4:7-12).

Afflictions

The Amplified Version enlarges the meaning here - “distress and pressing trouble”. Read 1 Peter 1:5-7; Matt.25:21; Rom.8:35-39; James 1:2-4.

Poverty

Smyrna, a natural port for the ancient trade route, was one of the most prosperous cities in Asia Minor. It was famous for its beauty and magnificent public buildings. However, the Christian believers were suffering poverty as a result of persecution. The Lord, on the other hand, declares they are rich! Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

Slander

The reputation of the Smyrna Christians was being destroyed by slander. Read 1 Corinthians 4:13 and 1 Peter 3:16.

Persecution

Read Matt.5:10; 1 Pet.4:12-16. The outright attack of the Enemy (through people) against the believers in the Lord Jesus was to be expected and would result in blessing by the Lord. “10 days” speaks of short but intense persecution, and in the Scripture depicts testing (Daniel 1:12).

Revelation of the Lord

See Revelation 2:8; 1:17-18. The revelation of the Lord to those who are going through trials and persecution is wonderfully specific. He is the Lord of Life. He is the Living One who sovereignly rules over all human history. He is the One in charge! He is victor over all! He is the firstborn from the dead (see Revelation 1:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20-49).

Sharing His Sufferings

- * His glory revealed (1 Peter 4:12-19).
- * His Life revealed (2 Corinthians 4:8-12).
- * His power outflowing (Philippians 3:10-14).

Promise of the Lord

With the Lord’s encouragement “*Do not be afraid*” and “*Be faithful even to the point of death*” (2:10) comes His wonderful promise...

I will give you the Crown of Life

Smyrna was famous for its athletic games. The “crown” pictures the wreath placed on the head of a victorious athlete or military leader (2 Timothy 4:7-8; 2:3-5; 1 Corinthians 9:24-25).

Not hurt by the second death

Physical death has no fear because the believer has been rescued from “the second death”. Read Revelation 20:6,14; 21:8. See also 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Living Word

“ These are the words of him who has the sharp, doubled-edged sword....To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna... Revelation 2:12,17 ”

The City of Pergamum

Read Revelation 2:12-17. Pergamum (modern Bergama) was a sophisticated city of Asia-Minor and was a centre of Greek culture and education. It had a 200,000 volume library. It was also the centre of four pagan cults - Zeus, Athena, Dionysus and Asclepius - the chief god being Asclepius Soter whose symbol was a serpent. He was seen as the god of healing and people came from all over the world seeking the idol's power to heal. On top of this, the city boasted a religious "first" in the province. In 29BC it built the first temple of emperor worship in honour of Rome and the Emperor Augustus. Thus, the Lord Jesus refers to Pergamum as the place "where Satan has his throne", "where Satan lives" (v.13).

The Lord's Commendation

Not only was it a city of great idolatry, Pergamum also produced the first martyr of Asia. In the face of such idolatry and persecution, the Lord commends the church of Pergamum for their faithfulness to Him (v.13).

The Lord's Correction

Despite remaining true to His Name, the Lord rebukes the church for two major errors. Some in the church were embracing...

The teaching of Balaam

Read Numbers 22-25:2; 31:16. Balaam's error was two-fold:

*** Peddling God's Word for profit**

"They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness" 2 Peter 2:15 (see also Jude 11).

Paul speaks strongly against this love of money in his counsel to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:3-19) and declares in 2 Corinthians 2:17...

"Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit."

*** Teaching worldly compromise**

"Eating food offered to idols" indicated a giving of oneself to the idol and, thereby, the way of life it involved (Numbers 25:1-3).

The teaching of the Nicolaitans

Unlike the church at Ephesus, who had discerned the error of the teaching of the Nicolaitans (see Lesson 7), some in the church at Pergamum had believed and embraced it.

Revelation to Pergamum

The specific aspect of the Lord's glory revealed to the church at Pergamum is that He is the living Word of God (see Revelation 1:16; John 1:1-2; 14), expressed in two dimensions...

The sword of judgment (v.12-16)

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" Hebrews 4: 12-13.

The manna of life (v.17)

"Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4 (see Deuteronomy 8:3; Exodus 16:4-5;33-34; John 6:32-58; Colossians 2:2-4).

Promise to the Overcomer

* White stone (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 26)

* New Name (Isa.62:2;Gen.17:1-5;32:24-30).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Burning Insight

“ ...Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds... Revelation 2:23 ”

Read Revelation 2:18-29. In the midst of all that was worthy of commendation, the church at Thyatira had one major and very dangerous error. They were tolerating “Jezebel”.

The Evil of “Jezebel”

Rather than an individual woman, it is more than likely “Jezebel” was the belief of Gnosticism that was infiltrating the church through heretical teachers. The Lord uses the Jezebel of the Old Testament, who turned Israel to Baal worship and killed the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:4,13; 19:1-2; 21:17-24; 2 Kings 9:30-37), to describe the danger of this heretic teaching.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism was in its infancy but already it was having dire impact on the churches. Amongst its heretic teaching it claimed that the flesh was nothing, only the spirit was of consequence, thereby permitting sexual immorality and the eating of food offered to idols (Revelation 2:20). It also claimed a “secret” knowledge of how to break through the seven realms of the powers of darkness in order to reach the heavenlies. This teaching totally divested the finished work of Christ on the Cross and Paul counteracts this in his letter to the Ephesians, declaring that just as Christ was raised from the dead and seated at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms...

“far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come...And God place all things under his feet...” Ephesians 1:;20-22.

...so, too, the believer in Christ has been seated together with Christ. We, too, have been placed in the same position with Christ *far above* all the realms of the powers of darkness (Ephesians 2:6). In opposition to the finished work of Christ,

“Jezebel” was offering two spiritually exciting enticements...

*** Supernatural knowledge**

v.20 - calls herself a prophetess

v.24 - knowledge of the so-called deep secrets of Satan

*** Authority over Satan**

As a result of this “secret” knowledge, the gnostic teaching offered supernatural authority over Satan.

The Revelation of the Lord

Eyes like blazing fire

Revelation 1:14...speaking of His insight burning into the very heart and minds of the ones He is looking at (2:23).

Feet like burnished bronze

Revelation 1:15...The feet are that part of the body which touches the earth...a picture of the Lord’s holy walk amongst us, and identification with us, while he was on the earth (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; 1 Peter 1:6-7).

Promise to the Overcomer

Authority

All authority is already His (v.26-27). It is revelation of the Lord, not revelation of Satan, which gives us *authority* and *knowledge* of what is ahead.

The Morning Star

Read verse 28, Isaiah 14:12, Revelation 22:16. Like all the angelic beings, Lucifer had been an expression of the glory of God as “the morning star”. The Lord Jesus *is*, however, “the Morning Star”. He is the new beginning, the new day, for all believers in Him. See 1 John 3:2-3.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Awakenings

“...you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Revelation 3:1-2”

Read Revelation 3:1-6. Whereas the churches in Pergamum and Thyatira had a few who had been led astray, in the church in Sardis only a few had not been (verse 4).

The Lord's Rebuke

Reputation has to do with how people *see* us (what we do) and *hear* us. The church at Sardis *looked* and *sounded* alive but was, in fact, spiritually dead (see verse 1). They were *asleep*. When a person is asleep, like someone who is dead, they cannot hear or see anything or act.

Children of the Day

The Scripture clearly uses the picture of light and darkness, day and night, to reveal the difference between the believer and the unbeliever:

"You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet" 1Thessalonians 5:5-8 (see also Matthew 5:14-16).

Ephesians 5:8-14 describes the contrast between spiritual day and night:

- * *Fruit of the light (verses 8-10,13-14).*
- * *Fruitless deeds of darkness (verses 11-12).*

The Lord's Exhortation

The Lord's exhortation is five-fold... *"Wake up! Strengthen what remains...Remember, there-*

fore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent" verse 2-3.

In Isaiah 51 and 52, after exhorting his people three times to *"Listen to Me"* (51:1-7), the Lord exhorts them three times to *"Awake"* (51:9-52:2). The same message to His *"sleeping"* people of old applies to His *"sleeping"* church.

The Lord's Warning

"But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you" verse 3.

The Lord's Revelation

"These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" Rev.3:1 (note 1:4;16;20). See Isaiah 11:1-5

The Lord holds in His hand the answer to the need of the *"sleeping"* church - the Spirit of God Himself. In response to their obedience to His exhortation, and their subsequent repentance, the Lord will pour out from His hand a spiritual awakening.

The Lord's Promise

In verse three is the promise to the overcomer...

- * *Dressed in white - Rev.7:9-17; 19:8.*
- * *Name never blotted out of Book of Life - Philippians 4:3; Revelation 20:12.*
- * *Name acknowledged before the Father and His angels - the greatest "reputation" of all!*

"Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" Ephesians 5:14 (Romans 13:11-14).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Covenant

‘ ...See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut... Revelation 3:7 ’

Read Revelation 3:7-13

Revelation of the Lord

See Revelation 1:5;18.

Holy and true

“Philadelphia” means “brotherly love”. The city was so named to commemorate the loyalty and devotion of Attalus II (220-130 BC) to his brother Eumenes II. With this as the background of the city, the Lord Jesus reveals Himself to the church at Philadelphia as the One who is “holy and true”.

Also, the Christian believers are facing strong persecution from the unbelieving and hostile Jewish community.

“...those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars” v.9 (see John 8:31-47).

Thus, the Lord’s answer to the need of the church at Philadelphia is that He is “holy and true”.

Holds the key of David

“I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open” Isaiah 22:22.

In the face of the opposition the church in Philadelphia is facing from the Jews, the Lord Jesus declares who He is. He is the fulfilment of the covenant God made with David (1 Chronicles 17:7-14; Psalm 132:11-18). He is the Messiah, the one the Jews are waiting for (Isaiah 9:1-7). The eternal Throne, with all its glory, is His. He holds the key of David. Absolute, total authority is in His hands. He holds the key for entrance into the Kingdom, into the “palace” of the King with all its treasures, into the Throne room and into the very presence of the King (Daniel 7:9-

14; Hebrews 4:14-16; Matt.16:19; Col.2:2-3).

Commendation of the Lord

The Lord recognises their need...

“I know that you have little strength...” v.8.

...but He does not condemn them. Instead, in the light of their weakness He commends them for four things:

* **Their deeds (v.8)**

Acts 26:20; James 2:14-25; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Timothy 6:18; Colossians 3:17.

* **They have kept His word (v.8)**

Luke 6:47-49; John 15:7-8; Colossians 3:16; James 1:22-25.

* **They have not denied His Name (v.8)**

Ephesians 1:20-22; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 1:4; 1 John 5:1-1.

* **They have endured patiently (v.10)**

Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thess.1:3; 1 Peter 1:3-9; 2 Timothy 2:3-13; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

Like Paul, the believers in Philadelphia had learnt the secret of the grace of God (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Keeping their eyes on His soon return, the Lord exhorts them to “hold on” (Hebrews 12:2-3).

Promise of the Lord

* **A Pillar in the temple of God**

Strength and stability in the presence of God.

* **Three Names**

The name reveals the nature and character of the person (Genesis 17:3-7; 32:24-30). Imparted to the overcomer will be the very nature of God, the glory of His dwelling place, the New Jerusalem, and of the glorious, victorious, ascended Lord Jesus Himself.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Final Word

‘ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20 ’

The City of Laodicea

Read Revelation 3:14-22. Laodicea was the wealthiest city in Phrygia in Romans times. It took great pride in its...

Financial wealth. It was well-known for its banking establishments.

Extensive textile industry

Medical school - famous for its eye salve.

The major weakness of the city, however, was its lack of adequate water supply.

The Lord's Rebuke

Read Revelation 3:15-16. Nearby Laodicea were the hot, medicinal waters of Hierapolis. With this picture in mind, the church was failing to supply spiritual healing or refreshment for the spiritually sick and weary. The Church of Laodicea was "lukewarm". The Spirit of fire for the Lord and His Gospel had almost burnt out (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3) and the church had become self-focussed. It had taken on the spirit of the city.

Read Revelation 3:17. How they saw themselves is the exact opposite to how God saw them. They saw themselves rich. The Lord saw them wretched. They saw themselves in need of nothing. The Lord saw them pitiful. And what caused them to be wretched and pitiful was that they were spiritually poor, blind and naked.

So "sickening" to the Lord was the condition of the Laodicean church He declares He is about to spit them out of His mouth (literally "vomit")!

The Lord's Counsel

"I counsel you to buy from me..." Read Revelation 3:18. See also Isaiah 55:1-4.

Gold tried in the fire

As opposed to the natural financial wealth, God's riches are found through the trial of faith (1 Peter 1:6-7; Hebrews 11:8-16; 24; 32-12:2).

White clothes to wear

As opposed to the textile industry of the city, the all-important spiritual clothing supplied by the Lord is righteousness (Rev.19:8; 7:9,13-14).

Eye-salve that you may see (KJV)

They needed "healing" for their spiritual eyes. See Ephesians 1:17-23; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

The Lord's Revelation

Read Revelation 3:14; 1:5.

The Amen - "So shall it be" - He is the Lord of the final Word (2 Corinthians 1:20; Rev.22:13).

The Faithful and true witness - He is the One who reveals all God is (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18; 14:8-9).

The Ruler of God's creation - He is the One in charge! - King of the earth - above all things! (Colossians 1:15-20).

The Lord's Plea

Read Revelation 3:20. So self-focussed was the church, the Lord was on the "outside". He pleads with them to "open the door" to the Lord of the Final Word and experience again the closeness of fellowship with Him.

The Lord's Promise

The promise to the overcomer is the right to sit with the Lord on His Throne (Rev.3:21), experiencing and sharing all that is His as the great Overcomer (Ephesians 1:19-23; 2:6-7).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Heaven & Earth

‘ You are worthy, our Lord and God...for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. Revelation 4:11

The Open Door

Read Revelation 4. Unlike the vision given to Ezekiel where he says “the heavens were opened”(Ezekiel 1:1), John sees before him a door “standing open”(verse 1). Ezekiel was pre-Cross. John was post-Cross. The work of the Lord Jesus was finished. The dividing “veil” was now torn (Matthew 27:51; Heb.10:29). Heaven now stands open for the believer (Hebrews 4:16).

The Throne in Heaven

The Throne speaks of total authority and power. He is the Lord of Heaven and earth.

“For God is the King of all the earth...God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted” Psalm 47:7-9 (1 Tim.6:15).

The glory of the One on the Throne

*** The precious stones**

Depicting his beauty and glory.

*** The rainbow**

Reflecting the brilliance of His purity, holiness and glory (see 1 Tim.6:16; Ezekiel 1:26-28).

*** Lightning and Thunder**

Symbolic of His awesome majesty and power (see Exodus 19:16-19; Psalm 18:12-15; 77:18; Revelation 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

The 24 Elders

*** Dressed in white**

Rev.3:4-5;18;7:9 - the gift of righteousness the result of faith (Romans 1:16-17).

*** Crowns of gold**

Souls won to the Lord (1 Thess.2:19;

Phil.4:1); reward to the overcomer (Revelation 2:10). See James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; 61:3; Proverbs 4:9.

The 24 elders, representing the whole body of believers, constantly respond in worship and lay their crowns at His feet.

Seven lamps blazing (v.5)

The Holy Spirit before the Throne - constantly “blazing” to bring life and revelation to believers, conviction and judgment to Satan and his followers, and glory to the Lord Jesus (see John 16:7-15; 15:26).

The sea of glass (v.6)

Picturing the peoples of the world (Revelation 22:1; 10:2;13:1) and the glory of the Lord over the earth (Habakkuk 2:14).

The 4 Living Creatures

Ezekiel 1,10:10 and Genesis 3:24 describe the Cherubim.(In Isaiah 6:1 we also see the Seraphim before the Throne). These angelic beings are the expression of God’s character. Each face depicts an aspect of God’s involvement down on earth. The fulfilment in the Lord Jesus coming to earth can be seen in the different emphases of the four Gospels.

*** The lion - kingly warfare - Matthew**

*** The ox - servant of all - Mark**

*** The man - identification - Luke**

*** The eagle - lifter to His heights - John**

The living creatures are covered with eyes, as are the wheels, speaking of nothing escaping their vision and constant movement and activity, moving with the Spirit to answer the needs of God’s people.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord - The Lion of Judah

“ ...See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed... Revelation 5:5 ”

The Scroll

So important is the sealed scroll held in the hand of the glorious One on the Throne, John weeps because no-one is found worthy to open it (Revelation 5:1-4). Each seal of the scroll represents a major event that will take place on earth leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, two distinct and seemingly opposite revelations of the Lord Jesus are given - the only One found worthy (verses 5-7) - He is revealed as the *Lion* and the *Lamb*.

The Lion of Judah

A lion depicts majesty, strength, power, warfare.

The Tribe of Judah

The Lord Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophecy Jacob gave over his son, Judah. Judah is “the lion’s cub”. Jesus is the “full grown” Lion of the tribe of Judah. Read Genesis 49:8-10.

“Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons will bow down to you” v.8.

With a play on his name (Judah means “praise”), he is pictured as the victorious warrior returning home from the battle being greeted by the shouts of praise from his brothers. Jacob prophesies of the praise due to the Lord Jesus because of His total victory over the Enemy (1 Peter 2:9).

“The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his” v.10 (see also Ezekiel 21:26-27).

The sceptre speaks of the exercising of authority. Jacob prophesies of the climax of the ages when all nations will bow at the feet of Jesus (Philippians 2:9-11).

The Root of David

Jesus is both the “root” and the “offspring” of David (Revelation 22:16; Matthew 22:41-46).

In 1 Chronicles 17:7-14, in the covenant God makes with David, he promises him a son whose throne will be established forever. Isaiah 9:1-7 describes the Son of David...

- * *The Light in Darkness - v.2*
- * *The Victor over the Enemy - v.3-5*
- * *The government on His shoulders - v.6*
- * *Wonderful Counselor*
- * *Mighty God*
- * *Everlasting Father*
- * *Prince of Peace*
- * *Reigning on David’s throne - v.7*
- * *Establishing and upholding justice and righteousness forever*

This was the One all Israel was waiting for (Mark 10:46-52).

He has triumphed

“In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O God will last forever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom” Psalm 45:4-6.

He is able

He is able because He is worthy. John then sees the Lamb on the Throne, looking as if it had been slain. He is worthy to open the scroll because of His total identification with mankind, the shedding of His Blood to redeem them. The Lion of the tribe of Judah triumphed by becoming the Lamb! (Revelation 5:9).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord - The Lamb of God

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain,
standing in the centre of the throne...
Revelation 5:6

The Lamb of God

A lamb depicts meekness, gentleness, sacrifice. This is how He triumphed. The Lion of Judah triumphed by becoming the Lamb.

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth" Isaiah 53:6-7 (See also 1 Corinthians 5:7; Philippians 2:5-11).

From the moment sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), down through the centuries to the coming of Jesus, substitutional sacrifice was instituted by God as the answer to mankind's salvation, acceptance by God and restoration into fellowship with Him again.

- * *Clothed with animal skins (Genesis 3:21)*
- * *Abel's "better" offering (Genesis 4:1-5; Hebrews 11:4).*
- * *The altar of sacrifice (Leviticus 4:1-6:7).*
- * *The Passover Festival (Exodus 12; Leviticus 4-8; 1 Corinthians 5:7)*

At Jesus' first public appearance, John's declaration of Who He is would have been understood by all who heard him...

"...John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" John 1:29.

We are redeemed by His Blood

Through Adam's fall and our own sin, we belonged to the Enemy by right. Jesus paid the

cost - his own life - to purchase us back from the Enemy (Revelation 5:9).

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" 1 Peter 1:18-19 (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The last, once for all, sacrifice

"...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" Heb.10:10 (read through verses 1-23).

The Cross is our victory

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" Colossians 2:15 (Revelation 17:14).

Worship of the Lamb

Read Revelation 5:6-14.

The combined choir

We join the Heavenly host in worship of the Lamb as earth responds to Heaven's worship and Heaven responds to earth's worship.

"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand...In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain...' Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth...singing: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever!'....." Revelation 5:11-14.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Whole World

‘...the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals’
Revelation 5:5

The 7 Seals

Read Revelation chapter 6:1-17; 8:1. The contents of the scroll reveal mankind's depravity and God's authority over the events of human history. The seven seals are the first of three periods of judgment on the earth. Each seal, when opened, represents a major event taking place down on earth, effecting the whole world.

The first four seals are seen as horses whose riders set out to bring major catastrophes on the earth. These catastrophes are, in fact, the outworking of Man's own sin.

The Four Spirits of Heaven

"...I asked the angel who was speaking to me, 'What are these, my lord?' The angel answered me, 'These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world....When the powerful horses went out...he said, 'Go throughout the earth!'..." Zechariah 6:1-7 (see also Zechariah 1:8-12).

The white horse

Some see this rider on the white horse as the Lord Jesus going forth in victory (Revelation 19:11-16) - "white" speaking of righteousness. Others see it as the Antichrist conquering the world as he rides the counterfeit white horse. Others see it, in line with the other horses, as *the spirit of conquest*.

The fiery red horse

This rider rides to "take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other". He brings *bloodshed and worldwide war*.

The black horse

This rider holds a pair of scales in his hand. He

brings *inflation and famine* to the earth.

The pale horse

The rider on this horse is named "Death" with Hades (the realm of the dead) following close behind. "Pale" pictures the ashen colour of death. He brings *plague and disease* - pandemics.

"...They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth" Rev.6:8

In His Sovereignty, the Lord "gives power" to these spirits as they go throughout the earth.

3 Kinds of Overcomers

Ezekiel 14:12-23 tells us that, in the midst of the troubles coming on the earth, the Lord is looking for those with the spirit of Noah, Daniel and Job.

Noah - prepared for the judgment

"Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God" Genesis 6:9-7:5.

Noah believed God's word of the coming judgment, prepared for it and saved his family. By his faith he found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8; Hebrews 11:7).

Daniel - refused to compromise

Read Daniel chapter 6. Daniel was willing to die rather than compromise his faith with a sinful, idolatrous world.

Job - kept his heart pure

Job kept his heart right before the Lord even though he was going through great personal and physical trials (Job 1:22; 2:9-10; James 5:10-11).

Read Hebrews 11:32-40

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Time

“ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. Isaiah 46:10 ”

Read Revelation 6:9-17. These two seals reveal that all events on earth and in our lives are in the Lord's control and governed by His determination (Acts 1:6-7; Psalm 31:15).

Martyrs - "How long?"

The martyrs are given a time-frame for the judgment of God against their persecutors (v.9-11)

Signs of the Times

Just as David's mighty men, knew the signs of the times and, therefore, "knew what Israel should do (1 Chronicles 12:32), we too need to understand the day in which we live. It will effect our whole attitude to the way we live (Heb.11:13-16;24-26; 32-40; 12:1-3). The Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for not recognizing the signs of the times in which they lived (Matt.16:1-3). He wept over Jerusalem because they had failed to understand their day (Luke 19:41-44).

Great earthquake (verse 12)

This earthquake is a sign of the spiritual reality about to take place. God is about to "shake everything that can be shaken". The believer in Christ, however, will stand strong in the midst of the shaking (Hebrews 12:22-29; Haggai 2:6).

Sign in the Sun (verse 12)

The sun is a picture of God the Father. No one can look into the light of the sun and no one can look into the "face" of God - seeing the fulness of His glory (Exodus 33:20).

Sign in the Moon (verse 12)

The moon is a picture of God the Son. As we look at the moon we are looking at the reflected light of the sun. Jesus reveals the glory of the

Father (John 1:18; 14:8-9). Just as the moon shines in the darkness, so the Lord Jesus came as "the light of the world" (John 1:4-9; 8:12).

Sign in the Stars (verse 13)

The stars are a picture of God the Holy Spirit indwelling believers (Philippians 2:15). They too shine in the darkness and Jesus said we too are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-16).

God gives the sign of the sun turning black "like sackcloth made of goat hair" and the moon turning "blood red". Sackcloth was worn for mourning (Matt.11:21; Dan.9:3; Psalm 30:11). Here we see the heart of God because of the righteous judgments that are about to take place. He is in "mourning" over mankind's rejection of the shed blood of His Son (Matt.26:28; Rom.5:9; Heb.9:12). Stars falling to the earth possibly picture the martyrdom that is about to take place.

The Lord's Exhortation

Read Luke 21:25-36 . The Lord Jesus gives a special exhortation to the believers who are living in the days when these signs begin to take place (see also Matthew 24; 25:1-30; Mark 13).

Stand up - change from a position of rest to a position of readiness.

Lift up your heads - change focus from looking down, influenced by all that is happening around, to a heavenly focus - looking for His coming (Colossians 3:1-4).

Be careful - avoid the dangers of being earth-bound (2 Peter 3:8-14).

Be always on the watch - keep alert to the world's events in the light of His coming.

Pray - keep a constant awareness of total dependency on God (1Peter 4:7).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Purpose

“...do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Romans 13:11”

At the same time as the dramatic signs are happening on the earth, the Lord is moving dramatically in His people.

Fulfilment of the Festivals

We will see in the next lesson that all that is described in Revelation 8:1-5 is part of the Day of Atonement ceremony. God had instructed Israel to annually celebrate His supernatural interventions in their history. These feasts, or festivals, were not only remembrances of past events but were prophetic of the coming of the Lord Jesus, the birth of His Church and the fulfilment of His glorious plan and purpose. The Feast of Passover, made up of three minor feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Sheaf of Firstfruits - Exodus 12; Lev.23:4-14) pre-pictures our salvation through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Feast of Pentecost (Ex.19-20:21; Lev.23:15-22) pre-pictures the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon the believers (Acts 2). The Feast of Tabernacles, also made up of three minor festivals (Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles proper - Lev.23:23-44), pre-pictures the Church of the last days, climaxing in the Second Coming of Christ. Prior to the Day of Atonement was the Feast of Trumpets. If the 7th Seal is the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement then the time preceding that is the fulfilment in the Church of the Feast of Trumpets.

The Feast of Trumpets

In Scripture, trumpets are equated with the prophetic voice (see Isaiah 18:3; 58:1). The trumpet blasts at the Feast of Trumpets had three distinct messages, calling God's people to:

Repent!- The distinctive message of the Feast of Trumpets was the call to get hearts and lives

right with God. The Lord is calling his people today in exactly the same way (Acts 3:19)

Awake! - The Feast of Trumpets was also known as “The Day of the Awakening Blast.” So the call has come to the Church in these last days: “Awake!” (Rom.13:8-12; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph.5:14). Three specific calls to Israel to “awake” in Isaiah 51:9-52:12 have strong significance for the Church today: “*Awake, awake...as in generations of old...*” (51:9); “*Awake, awake! Rise up...*” (51:17); “*Awake, awake...put on your garments of splendour*” (52:1).

Prepare! - The message of the trumpets was a message of preparation, for in just ten days would be the Day of Atonement - the day of national cleansing, the highlight of Israel's year. These ten days of preparation were often called “the ten days of awe”. The trumpets were ram's horns picturing that the central truth of the message is the sacrifice of Christ. They were blown by the priesthood, foreshadowing the task of the five-fold ministry:

“It was he (Jesus) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” Eph.4:11-13

So it is, prior to the 7th Seal, the fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets is taking place and the trumpet message is being sounded out to the Church - “Repent”, “Awake!”, “Prepare!” for what God is about to do!

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Fulfilment

‘ And we...are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory... 2 Corinthians 3:18 ’

So awesome is what is about to take place at the opening of the 7th Seal Revelation 8:1 declares "...there was silence in heaven for about half an hour". Two major events are represented...

* *Judgment to the world*

For the world, it is the beginning of God's judgments expressed in the 7 Trumpets about to be blown by the 7 angels (Rev.8:2;6-9:21).

* *Fulfilment to the Church*

For the Church, it is the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement. Everything described in Revelation 8:3-5 is part of the Day of Atonement ceremony (Leviticus 23:26-32).

The Golden Censer

Read Rev.8:3-5. Here is the Heavenly enactment of the Day of Atonement, when the high priest would take the golden censer off the altar of incense, just before the 3rd veil, and take it through with him into the glorious presence of God. The altar of incense, and the golden censer taken from it, represents the prayers of the saints (Psalm 141:2; Rev.5:8). "Gold" pictures genuine faith (1 Peter 1:6-7). This results in "peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake" being "hurled" on the earth - all speaking of God's power being manifest in answer to the prayers of the believers (Job 37:5; Ps.29:3; Ex.19:16-18).

The Day of Atonement

Read Leviticus chapter 16. The Day of Atonement was the most awesome day of all the Festivals. The whole purpose of the Feast of Trumpets was to prepare the people for this day. It was the day of the cleansing of all sin for the priesthood, the sanctuary, and the whole nation.

* *A time of self-denial* (verses 29-31)

It was a day set aside as a day of national fasting (Numbers 29:7). It was called "The

Fast"(Acts 27:9).

* *A day of total rest* (verse 31)

No manner of work was to be done. The high priest did all the work for that day. In a similar way, our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, has done all the work. We rest in faith in his finished work (Heb.4:14-5:10; 6:19-10:25).

* *A removal of sin* (verse 5-10,15)

The sacrifice of the first goat pictures once again the shed blood of Jesus for us (Eph.1:7). The scapegoat - "Azazel", literally means "an entire removal".

* *The cleansing of the sanctuary* (verse 14)

Again picturing the cleansing of the Church, which is now His temple (Ephesians 2:19-22; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

* *The entry into the Holiest of All* (vs2,12-13)

On this day alone, once a year, the high priest, on behalf of the whole nation, entered through the veil into the Holiest of All into the brilliance of God's full glory (Heb.9:7-9;6:19-20).

God's Plan Fulfilled

The Day of Atonement is prophetic of the cleansing of the Church. It marks the maturity of the Body of Christ when all that Christ has accomplished in His finished work on the Cross and in His Resurrection (John 19:30; Matt.27:50-51; Heb.10:19-20; 7:26-27), ministered in revelation and experience to the believers by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18; 26; 15:26; 16:13-15), now comes to full manifestation, seen on earth not only in the individual believer but corporately in the Body of Christ (read Eph.5:25-27). God's glorious plan for His Church involves a transformation process (2 Cor.3:18; Proverbs 4:18; Rom.8:18-30; Heb.10:14) which climaxes in the Body of Christ coming, as "one man", to full maturity (see Ephesians 3:14-21; 4:11-16).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Harvest

“...The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom...The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Matthew 13:37-39”

Two major events happen prior to the opening of the 7th Seal. One has a dramatic effect on the people of the world. The other on the believers.

Revelation to the World

At the opening of the 6th Seal the world is given a revelation of the Lord in His full glory (Rev.6:14-17). This revelation leaves no excuse for people's rejection of Him but it also ploughs the ground of peoples' hearts for the great harvest which is about to be reaped.

Sealing of Servants of God

The second major event is the sealing of the 144,000 (Rev.7:1-8). There are two main interpretations as to who these are. Some believe it refers to members of actual Jewish tribes, the faithful Jewish remnant of the "great tribulation". Others, that it is symbolic of all faithful believers alive at the time. The servants of God are "sealed" to protect them from the judgments of God that are about to come on the earth (Rev.7:3; 9:4). The Name of God is "written" on their foreheads (Rev.14:1; 22:4). They then go forth proclaiming the Gospel at the same time God's judgments begin to fall and experience in full reality the promises to the believer in Psalm 91:

"You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence...nor the plague...A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you make the Most High your dwelling...then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways..." verses 7-11.

The Great Last Day Harvest

For Israel, following the Day of Atonement came the harvest of their fruit - the grape and the olive - the "oil and the wine" (Lev.23:39; Deut.14:22-23). So, too, for the Church. Having experienced the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement, the believers now move out in great glory, ministering the Gospel at the same time the world is experiencing God's judgments. The result will be a great ingathering of souls.

Examples in the Word

"These things happened to them [Israel] as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" 1 Corinthians 10:11.

*** Prayer**

Like Abraham interceded before the Lord (Genesis 18:16-33) the prayers of the saints are rising before the Throne (Rev.8:2).

*** Judgment and mercy**

Like the two angels who went down to Sodom - one bringing Lot and his family out, and the other bringing down the judgment of God against the city - judgment and mercy will go hand-in-hand (Genesis 19:1-29).

*** Supernatural protection**

Like the Children of Israel, who were untouched by God's judgments that came upon Egypt (Exodus 8:22-23; 9:3-6,10-11,25-26; 10:6,22-23; 11:6-7), so the believers at this time will be untouched as judgment happens all around them.

These realities result in multitudes coming into the Kingdom of God - the great last day harvest for the Lord of the Harvest (Luke 10:2).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord - the Shepherd-Lamb

6 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.
Revelation 7:17

The Worship in Heaven

With the perspective of Heaven always the central focus, John sees the glory belonging to those "who have come out of the great tribulation" (read Revelation 7:9-17).

* **White Robes - righteousness, purity**

"...they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" v.14.
See Rev.1:5; 3:4; 6:11; 19:8; 22:14 Rom.3:25; 5:9; Eph.1:7; 2:13; Col.1:20; 1 John 1:7.

* **Palm Branches - festival celebration**

"They...were holding palm branches in their hands" v.9.

See Leviticus 23:40-44; John 12:12-13.

They worship the One on the Throne and the Lamb with "a loud voice" - and all Heaven responds - declaring all praise, glory, thanks and honor belong to Him....

* **For what He has done** (verse 10).

* **For who He is** (v.12).

For all eternity we will praise Him for His wisdom, power and strength that has brought us salvation. Judgment and mercy met at the Cross.

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 (see also Romans 11:33; Ephesians 1:17-23; 3:10-11; Col.2:2-3).

Blessings of the Persecuted

Four wonderful realities belong to the ones who suffer trials, hardships and persecutions for the Name of Jesus. They are constantly...

Before the Throne (v.15)

God's Throne is where the fullness of His glory

is seen (Ezekiel 1:26-28; Daniel 7:9-10).

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you" Psalm 89:14 (read to v.17).

Serving Him in His temple

This had been the greatest heart's desire of David as he expresses it in Psalm 27:4...

"One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (read through to verse 6).

Covered by His Presence

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge..." Psalm 91:4 (see also Isaiah 4:5-6).

The Psalmist uses the picture of a hen gathering her chicks under her wings to give them protection from threatened danger. There they are unseen. There they are safe. So, too, is the believer in Christ in the face of all threats or danger. See Romans 8:31-39; 2 Cor.4:6-12.

Led by the Shepherd-Lamb

 (v.16,17)

The Lord Jesus became totally identified with us as the "Lamb" (Isa.53:6-7; Heb.2:9-18), and thus is the perfect "Shepherd" (John 10:11-18, 26-30). He protects, nourishes, refreshes and comforts His "sheep" (Isa.49:8-10; 35:8-10; John 6:35)

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" Psalm 23:1-4 (read through to verse 6).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Righteous Judgment

‘ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. ’
Joel 3:14

The Seven Trumpets

Read Revelation 8:6-12. The first four trumpet-judgments are natural catastrophes that effect one third of the physical earth...a third of the trees and the grass; a third of the seas; a third of the fresh water rivers and springs and a third of the light from the sun, moon and stars. Each of these judgments indicate mankind's rejection of who the Lord Jesus is. He is...

The Creator

"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers of authorities; all things were created by him and for him" Colossians 1:15-16 (John 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:2).

The Water of Life

"If you knew the gift of God...you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" John 4:10 (John 4:13; 6:35; 7:38).

The Light of the World

"In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it...The true light that gives light to every man..." John 1:4-9 (John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).

The Three Woes

Read Revelation 9:13-19. The last three trumpet-judgments are declared to be three "woes" coming upon "the inhabitants of the earth"(8:13). Unlike the first four, these are not natural catastrophes but are evil spiritual realities released into the world and directly effecting sinful mankind itself (9:4).

Woe 1

Read Revelation 9:1-11. A "star" falls from the sky to the earth. This is not a physical star or asteroid (Greek "aster") but a person. This is possibly the Anti-Christ...not yet known to the world but known to believers (1 John 2:18-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He releases hordes of evil spirits whose king is the fallen angel of the Abyss - Satan himself - "the Destroyer". They physically torment the unbelieving world for five months.

Woe 2

Read Revelation 9:12-19. Four powerful fallen angels who, it seems, have been bound until now, are released to impact mankind in one special moment of time. They empower an army of two hundred million who kill a third of mankind by "the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur"- a description of volcanic action and possibly allegorical of nuclear warfare.

Decisions Finalised

In the full light of the revelation of God seen in and through the believers as they proclaim the Gospel in power and demonstration of the glory of God, and in the face of the awesome judgments being poured out (mercy and judgment hand-in-hand together) multitudes come into the Kingdom of God. However, those who still reject the Lord despite the full knowledge of who He is, are now - like Pharaoh in Egypt - hardened in that decision (Revelation 9:20-21; Exodus 8:32;9:35).

Woe 3

Some dramatic events take place before the third "woe" which we will look at in the next lessons.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Accomplishment

There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished... Revelation 10:7

No More Delay

All that is about to happen as the 7th angel blows his trumpet will bring to fulfilment all that God has planned since the beginning of time.

The mystery of God

"The mystery of God will be accomplished". The "mystery of God" is that which has to be revealed Divinely. What has been a "mystery" to unbelieving mankind will be accomplished.

- * **The mystery of the Gospel**
Romans 16:25-27; Ephesians 6:19.
- * **The mystery of Christ**
Colossians 4:3.
- * **The mystery of unity in Christ**
Ephesians 2:11-3:9; John 17.
- * **The mystery of godliness**
1 Timothy 3:16.
- * **The mystery of God hidden in Christ**
Colossians 2:1-3.
- * **The mystery of His eternal purpose**
Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:10-11.
- * **The mystery of glory in Christ**
Colossians 1:25-29.

All that is a "mystery" to unbelievers is revelation by the Holy Spirit to the believer.

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory

of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe" Ephesians 1:15-19; (see also 2 Corinthians 2:9-10; Eph.3:3, 14-21).

A mighty angel

This mighty "messenger" from God comes in the revelation of the glory of the Lord (read Ezekiel 1:26-28:

- * **Robed in a cloud**
Exodus 40:38; Luke 9:34-35.
- * **Rainbow above his head**
Revelation 4:3.
- * **Face like the sun**
Matthew 17:1-2.
- * **Legs like fiery pillars**
Revelation 1:15.

The 7 thunders

Revelation 10:1-4. What the thunders are "saying" is not revealed but, from the Word of God, we see that thunder always depicts the voice of God speaking in power.

"The Lord thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded" 2 Samuel 22:14 (see also Psalm 68:33; Isaiah 33:3; John 12:29).

The little scroll

The little scroll is God's word about to be proclaimed to "many peoples, nations, languages and kings". John, confined on the Isle of Patmos, is about to fulfill the words of the angel (Rev.10:11) by prophesying through what he is about to write and declare. They are revelation to his spirit (sweet in the mouth) and harsh words of judgment to an unbelieving world (sour in the stomach - hard to digest). See Ezekiel 2:1-3:4.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Final Witness

“...all Israel will be saved...‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins’ Rom.11:26-27”

Measuring of the Temple

Read Revelation 11:1-2: Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 2:19-22 that the believers in Christ have now become the temple of God, as Stephen states in Acts 7:48...

“The Lord does not dwell in temples made by hands” (KJV).

The physical Temple is a picture of the true temple - the people of God. Situated as it was, right at the entrance to the 3rd compartment of the temple - the Holiest of All - where the presence of God and His glory was revealed - the altar of incense represents all the true worshippers of God with a sincere heart to know Him and His purposes.

Three dramatic events

Three dramatic events take place at the beginning of the 7th Trumpet, each of which will involve three different groups of people during the “times, time and half a time” - “42 months” - three and a half years (Revelation 11:2; 12:14; 13:5)...

* ***The Jews*** (chapter 11)

* ***The believers in Christ*** (chapter 12)

* ***The unbelieving world*** (chs.13-20)

The Jews

As we saw in Lesson 21, the Gentile nations have, by this point in time, made their decision. Now, at the climax of the 6th trumpet, just prior to the blowing of the 7th trumpet, the Lord brings his final witness to the nation of Israel. Read Romans 11:25-31; Isaiah 59:20-21; Jer.31:31-34. There will be a great ingathering of the Jews to the grace of God in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul’s prophecy will be fulfilled.

The Two Witnesses

Read Revelation 11:3-14. For three and a half years the two witnesses testify to Israel in the midst of the judgments falling upon the earth. The description given of them is identical to the ministries of Moses and Elijah.

Moses: Ex.7:17-21; Ex.ch.8-11 - Rev.11:6.

Elijah: 1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 1:10 - Rev.11:5-6

These two men are the most important characters in the Covenant that God made with Israel.

* ***Moses - representing the Law***

* ***Elijah - representing the prophets***

It was Moses and Elijah who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord Jesus, talking with Him of what lay ahead - His death on the Cross (read Luke 9:28-36). In this tremendously significant event on the mountain, God revealed to the disciples, Peter, James and John, a total change in His relationship with His people. It was no longer based on the Law and the Prophets. When Peter desired to build tabernacles to keep Moses and Elijah there with the Lord, a cloud descended and hid them from the disciples view. God’s voice resounded...

“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him” Luke 9:35.

...and when the cloud lifted they saw only Jesus. It was the beginning of a New Covenant...the fulfilment of the covenant He made with Abraham (read Galatians chapter 3).

The 7th Trumpet

Read Revelation 11:15-18. The announcement is made! The time of the end has begun! Before it is seen in the natural, the seventh angel declares the final consummation of all things.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of All Authority

“ You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery. Psalm 2:9 ”

The wondrous sign

“A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven” Revelation 12:1.

Read Revelation chapter 12. There are three main points of view in the Body of Christ as to who this woman, described in verses 1-2, represents. Some believe she is a picture of the nation of Israel who brought the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, into being. Others believe she pictures Mary who gave birth to the Lord. Still others see her as the picture of the Church spiritually bringing to birth a victorious company of believers. Maybe truth is in all three.

The NIV Study Bible describes this statement in verse 1 as “an extraordinary spectacle or event that points beyond itself”. As Grant R. Osborne describes it, this sign in heaven is a “cosmic scene”. Chapter 12 is picturing an overview of salvation’s history from Heaven’s viewpoint.

The woman

The woman may symbolise the people of God through the ages. She is the true Israel (Romans 9:4-8) - the believers like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah and the prophets, and those listed in Hebrews chapter 11 - who looked ahead to the coming of the Messiah and by their faith brought to birth the Saviour of the world. And she is the Church - the believers who by faith look back and take hold of the finished work of the Saviour. This was why He came. This was why He was born.

So the woman is a sign of the people of God right through to the present day (Rev.12:14-16). Thus the description of the woman is indeed “wondrous”. Note again the sign of the sun, moon and stars in Lesson 16 and compare the “sign” of this woman. It is a picture, as God sees them, of His faithful people throughout history who, as

a glorious company, have come, in unity, into the fullness of all that Christ accomplished on the Cross and by His resurrection (Ephesians 4:11-16; Luke 9:30-31):

- * **“Clothed with the sun”** - covered by the glory of God.
- * **“the moon under her feet”** - standing on the solid foundation of Christ.
- * **“a crown of twelve stars on her head”** - bearing the authority of the Holy Spirit.

The male child

This child is the centre of the whole of human history. It is the Lord Jesus.

- * **Rules all nations with an iron scepter**

Revelation 19:15 also describes the Lord Jesus as ruling with an iron sceptre (see also Rev.1:5). The messianic prophecy of Psalm 2:9 describes the same. From Rev.12 onwards, as the Enemy comes to full expression of his tyranny, the Lord Jesus is revealed as the strong, righteous, immovable, ruling judge of the nations.

- * **Snatched up to God and to his throne**

“The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born” Revelation 12:4.

Satan attempted to destroy the Saviour at His birth (Matthew 2:13-18) and by the Cross but He is “caught up to God and His throne”, speaking of His resurrection and ascension (read Luke chapters 23-24). Right now the Lord Jesus is seated upon the throne at the righthand of His Father (Ephesians 1:19-23). From that position of total authority He is ruling the nations. The climax of His authority is about to be described in the chapters ahead.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of the Overcomers

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11

The dragon

The dragon is identified in Revelation 12:9 as Satan. The vision reveals the power he has exercised on earth over time. His 7 heads with 7 crowns speak of his power expressed in the empires that have ruled over the God's people - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and finally Antichristal (Daniel 2:27-45; Revelation 17:9-10). Behind him in time (his tail) he swept a third of the stars to the earth (v.3-4) - speaking of the angelic beings who had followed him in his rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-15).

War in heaven

The accuser cast down

The name "Satan" means "accuser". God hurls him to the earth (Rev.12:7-10). He loses altitude!...loses his strategic position as "the prince of the power of the air"(Ephesians 2:2 KJV).

Heaven's prophetic declaration

A call goes out for all believers in heaven who, down through the ages, have triumphed. Three realities in the life of the believer result in total victory over the Enemy -

*** The blood of the Lamb**

The finished work of Christ on the Cross won the eternal victory over Satan 2000 years ago. All accusation of Satan is futile against the believer. Jesus shed His blood, taking the punishment we deserved setting us free from all sense of guilt and shame.

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" Romans 8:1-2.

*** The word of their testimony**

As believers we openly give glory to God for all that He has done in our lives.

"But you are a chosen people...that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" 1 Peter 2:9 (read to v.12; Rom.10:9).

*** Not loving their lives so much as to shrink from death**

A believer's love of the Lord is total, with a commitment to Him even to the point of death.

"Death has been swallowed up in victory" 1 Cor.15:54 (read through to v.57).

The call is to rejoice! The time of the full outworking of Christ's victory has come! Satan's time is short.

Supernatural protection

Wings of an eagle

Unable to destroy the Son, the dragon then turns on the woman. She is given the wings of a great eagle. Just as God pictured His deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, so He pictures the deliverance of His people from the attack of Satan.

"...I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" Ex.19:1-4 (see Isa.40:31).

All true believers down through history have been "pursued by Satan" and delivered by God. In the last days the dragon has left (three and a half years) God delivers from his final attack (Revelation 12:6,14-16).

War against believers

The dragon turns his attention on "the rest of her offspring", speaking of believers brought to birth by faith in Christ (Rev.12:17;13:7,10;14:12-13).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Celebration

“ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Psalm 23:5 ”

During the events taking place in the last days, prior to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, the Church - all true believers in Christ - experiences the prophetic fulfilment of the final major festival of Israel. Comprised of three minor festivals - the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, we saw in Lessons 17 and 18 the fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. In Revelation chapter 12 we see the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Read Revelation 12:13-17. The flood of the enemy's attack against the woman is "swallowed up" and believers, delivered and separated for three and a half years (whether speaking literally or spiritually), celebrate together God's salvation.

The Feast of Tabernacles

There were seven characteristics of this final festival of celebration:

A Festival of Rest

In this festival, Israel was instructed to build tabernacles (booths) outside their homes (see Lev.23:33-43). They were to live in them for the seven days throughout the celebration, remembering how they had lived in tents as they had journeyed through the wilderness. It was commemorating them living in "tabernacles" and God "tabernacling" with them (Exodus 25:8-9). It was a celebration of how God had brought them through the journey to their place of rest, the Promised Land..how He had provided for them, protected them, taught them and fellowshiped with them on their journey. In the same way, the believers in Christ rejoice in all that God has done for them as they have journeyed through life.

A Festival of Unity

Everything in this final Feast is a corporate experience and pre-pictures the affect of the Body of Christ in unity (see Ezra 3:1-4; John 17).

A Festival of Dedication

Solomon dedicated the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chron.chs 6 and 7). It speaks of the dedication of the Church in the last days and the glory of the Lord filling it (Eph.2:21-22).

A Festival of Joy

There was great rejoicing in this Feast (Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Neh.8:9-17; Psalm 126). To express the joy, Israel added to the celebration - the water pouring ceremony. This outpouring of water developed into an outpouring of intense, and sometimes riotous, joy. The Lord used the water-pouring to picture the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon and through the believer (see John 7:37-39; Isaiah 12).

A Festival of Light

Again adding to the celebrations, by Jesus' day they would flood the Temple with light. The spiritual leaders would hold bright torches and dance and sing praises to God and the city would be filled with light. It was during this festival that Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12; 7:2) and of His followers:

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden" Matthew 5:14.

A Festival of Harvest

Read Exodus 23:16. The fall of the Autumn rains brought the fruit (the grape and the olive) to full ripeness. This was the harvest of their wine and oil. Wine speaks of the joy of the Lord, the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:13-18; Ephesians 5:18). The oil speaks of the anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 89:20-29; 104:15).

A Festival of the Nations

The harvest, in the prophetic fulfilment of this Feast, is a great ingathering of people - from every tribe, nation and language (see Rev.7:9-10; Matt.13:30,39).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Foreknowledge

‘ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. Isaiah 46:10. ’

Throughout the vision given to John in the Book of Revelation, the Lord constantly reveals to him the end result before revealing the event to him. In Revelation 11:15-19, John sees Heaven rejoicing over the ultimate victory prior to the revelation of the evil that he is about to see.

Reign of Satanic Trinity

Read Revelation 13; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

The Dragon - Satan

"But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you. He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" Revelation 12:12.

In his fury, Satan now sets about in a last desperate attempt to overthrow God and get what he has desired all along - ultimate authority, power and worship (Isaiah 14:13-14; Daniel 7).

Counterfeit of God the Father

- * He gives his power, authority and throne to the Antichrist (verse 2) - political power.
- * He gives power to the False Prophet to perform "great and miraculous signs" (v.13-14).
- * Through them he receives the worship of the people (verse 8).

Beast 1 - Antichrist

Like the dragon in chapter 12 this beast has 7 heads and 10 horns. However, the difference is that now the crowns are no longer on the heads but are on the horns. A time change has taken place. Whereas the heads picture the empires that have ruled over God's people throughout history, the horns picture the 10 kings of the last day. He comes out of the sea of humanity (Revelation 17:15) - and is given power and authority by the dragon. The spirit of antichrist which has

been a reality throughout the last 2000 years comes to full expression in this man (1 John 2:18,22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Read also 2 Thessalonians 2.

Counterfeit of God the Son

- * The Antichrist is Satan in full expression in a man (as Jesus was the full expression of the Father on earth - Colossians 2:9).
- * His reign lasts for 3 and half years (as did the ministry of Jesus on earth).
- * He has a fatal wound which is healed (verse 3) (a counterfeit of the death and resurrection of Jesus - Luke 24:7).

Beast 2 - False Prophet

Coming out of the earth (mankind) he, deceptively, appears gentle and harmless like a lamb (13:11; Matthew 7:15).

Counterfeit of God the Holy Spirit

- * He speaks the words given by the Dragon.
- * He performs signs and miracles and by them deceives all the inhabitants of earth (vs 13-14)
- * He forces everyone to worship the Antichrist and the image he makes of him (verse 14).
- * He imitates the sealing of the servants of God (Eph.1:13-14; Revelation 7:3), marking those who have rejected Christ with the number of the Antichrist - 666 (the fullness of man) (vs 16-18).

The Lord is in control

With John receiving the full understanding of the evil that will be revealed he is also told that the Satanic Trinity are under time control by God (Rev.13:5) and receives the assurance from the Lord that God's people are sealed by Him (Rev.14:1-5; 7:3 - see again Lesson 19).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Holy Vengeance

“ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19 ”

God's righteous judgment is about to fall on the earth and three angels are sent with the message to pre-warn of what is about to happen.

The eternal Gospel

The first angel proclaims the message to all who live on earth....to every nation, tribe, language and people...

"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" Revelation 14:6-7.

The fall of Babylon

"...Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries" Revelation 14:8.

The second angel makes a prophetic declaration of what is about to happen. Read Revelation chapters 17 and 18. Babylon was an evil, immoral city and empire that took nations into captivity (Psalm 137). It was a world centre for idol worship. It is symbolic of all evil ruling powers throughout history (e.g. Rome of John's day which was built on 7 hills - Rev.17:9). Described as a "prostitute" it speaks of all worship that is not the worship of the true and living God (2 Cor.11:2). This "adultery" with the world system involved three areas...

- * **Idolatry and false religion**
- * **Wealth and excessive luxuries through trade and commerce**
- * **Power and glory**

The harlot woman rides the Beast until he destroys her and gains, in the Antichrist, all her power for himself.

A warning and a blessing

The third angel warns of what will happen to those who worship the Beast and his image and receives his seal. But proclaims a blessing to the faithful to Jesus (14:12-13).

The harvest of the earth

In 14:14-20 a prophetic allegory is given of what is about to happen. Like a harvester, the Lord separates the faithful from the unfaithful (Matt.13:24-29). Then, again revealed ahead of time, those who had been victorious through the reign of the Antichrist are seen rejoicing and worshipping in Heaven (15:2-4).

Judgments poured out

Read again Rev.11:14-19. The 7th Trumpet is the 3rd Woe. His anger is pictured as seven bowls filling up with mankind's sin and tipping over with His righteous judgment. Once the trumpet begins to sound it continues to sound throughout the 3 and a half years (Rev.10:7; 12:6). Called down by the two witnesses during the 3 and half years, these judgments have similar affect to those experienced under the 7 trumpets but whereas then they were only partial - affecting one third of the earth, sea, waters, sun - now it is total and final. With these judgments God's anger is completed (15:1).

Read Rev.11:3-13 again. The world hates the 2 witnesses because of the judgments they have called down and celebrates when the Antichrist kills them. God raises them to life after 3 and half days, seen by all. At the same time a great earthquake shakes Jerusalem and seven thousand die. Having also heard their message confirming that Jesus is their Messiah, Israel gives glory to God.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Lords

6 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings... Revelation 17:14 9

Heaven responds

Read Revelation 19. At the fall of the sinful world system and the anticipated defeat of Satan and his cohorts, the inhabitants of Heaven burst out in praise and rejoicing.

"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah!' ...Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah!...'" Revelation 19:1-6.

Their praise is for five realities...

- * **The Lord's true and just judgment** - v.2-3.
- * **His righteous vengeance on behalf of His servants** - verse 2 (see 2 Thess.1:6-10).
- * **The Lord is the One who reigns** - verse 6.
- * **The wedding of the Lamb has come** - v.7.
- * **The Bride is ready** - verse 7.

Rider on the White Horse

"I saw Heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war...on his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" Rev.19:11-16.

The description of the Rider is identical to that of the Lord Jesus in chapter 1.

His weapons

* The two-edged sword

He is the Word of God (John 1:1-4)...the whole expression of the heart of God. He strikes down the nations with His word (verse 15).

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" Hebrews 4:12 (read also verse 13; Rev.1:16; 2:12).

* His glory - verse 15.

"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming" 2 Thess.2:8.

His army

"The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean" verse 14.

All the inhabitants of Heaven - the powerful angels (2 Thess.1:7) and the believers (19:8) - ride with Him as he comes to wage war against the armies of Satan (see Jude 14-15).

"...and with Him are His called, His chosen and His faithful followers" Revelation 17:14.

* His called

The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" Acts 2:39 (read vs 38-40).

* His chosen

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last..." John 15:16.

* His faithful followers

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service" 1 Timothy 1:12 (read Hebrews chapter 11).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Resurrection

‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies...’ John 11:25-26

Victory outworked

Following His total victory over the Enemy the Lord metes out their deserved punishment.

Punishment of the Enemy

Read Revelation 19:17-21; 20:1-3.

* **Antichrist and False Prophet**

The Antichrist and the false prophet are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:14-15). They are never released.

* **All those who followed them**

All who had taken the mark of the Beast and worshipped his image are...

"...killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse" (Rev.19:21).

"He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power" 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.

* **Satan**

Satan is chained and thrown into the Abyss which is then sealed. He remains there for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

The 1st Resurrection

The second coming of the Lord Jesus is a terrifying experience for the unbeliever but for the believer it is the most glorious event. All of us who love Him long to see this day. For us it means four wonderful realities. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13 to 5:11 and 1 Corinthians 15:35-53.

* **The dead in Christ are raised to life**

* **We are caught up to meet him in the air**

* **Our physical bodies will be transformed**

* **We will be forever with the Lord**

"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Saviour be glory..." Jude 24.

The thousand years

This is a glorious time of reigning with Christ and enjoying His presence (Revelation 20:4-6).

The 2nd Resurrection

At the end of the thousand years the second resurrection takes place (see Revelation 20:5). This is the resurrection of all the unbelievers. This is to bring them before the Great White Throne for final judgment. Satan will be released for a short time and will gather the newly resurrected host - all his followers - in a last attempt to overthrow God's people. Fire from Heaven "devours them" and Satan joins the beast and the false prophet in the eternal torment of the "lake of burning sulfur" (Rev.20:7-10)

The Great White Throne

Read Revelation 20:10-12; Daniel 7:9-14.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'" Matthew 25:31-34.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Bridegroom-King

‘...They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.
Matthew 24:30

Read Revelation 21

The Bridegroom's promise

In the traditional Jewish ceremony of betrothal - where the bride was engaged to the bridegroom in a contract as binding as the marriage that was to come - the bridegroom would make a public promise to the bride. Before he went to the Cross, Jesus spoke to his disciples the same words of the traditional betrothal promise:

"In my father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" John 14:2-3.

The Bride is ready

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready" Revelation 19:7.

The Lord Jesus is returning for a glorious Bride - all true believers who have grown, in unity, to the full expression of His glory (John 17).

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" 2 Corinthians 3:18 (see also Eph.4:11-16).

Her clothing - her righteous acts

"Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints)" Rev.19:8 (see also 21:2).

Her glory - the image of Christ

"...as is the man from heaven, so also are those

who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven" 1 Corinthians 15:48-57.

The City

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" Revelation 21:2 (read also vs 9-11).

A city is a place but it is not just buildings - it is people. Thus the City is the Bride. The heroes of faith, listed in Hebrews chapter 11, all had their eyes focused on the City. All knew and understood God's glorious plan for a redeemed people filled with the glory of God. This vision affected the whole way they lived on earth (Hebrews 11:8-16).

Its glory

"It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like a jasper, clear as crystal" Revelation 21:11.

Like brilliant light reveals all the component colours of a diamond, so the glory of God shines through the City - the light of God shining through each Christian's life in a completely unique way.

Its gates

Each gate was made of a single pearl. A pearl is formed through suffering. Only through the Lord Jesus, the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45) who suffered for us, is there access into the City.

Its foundations

Twelve different precious stones describe each layer of the foundation, all depicting unique aspects of the beauty and the glory of the Lord.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Lord of Eternal Glory

‘...No mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ - but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit... 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

Read Revelation 22. The glory of what the Lord has prepared for those who love Him is still beyond our comprehension but our hearts, by the Holy Spirit, catch glimpses of its wonder.

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” Romans 8:18.

Sharing His glory

“He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” 2 Thessalonians 2:14 (see also 1 Corinthians 2:7).

The dwelling of God

Our new home is the very home of God...God living with us, fellowshiping with us, and us living forever in His glorious presence (Revelation 21:3).

Everything new

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was not longer any sea...the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’” Revelation 21:1,5.

The river of life

The river pictures the very life of God flowing through the City. It speaks of eternal life and the eternal blessings that satisfy so that we never “thirst” again (Revelation 22:1-2).

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:7-14.

The tree of life

At the time of the creation of mankind, Adam and Eve were given the choice between two trees in the Garden of Eden. They chose the wrong one - the one that represented everything of Satan - the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Lord, in His love and grace, banished them from the Garden to keep them from the Tree of Life lest they ate of it and lived forever in their sinful fallen condition (Genesis 3:22-24).

The fruit of the Tree of Life represents everything that God is - His very nature - now freely ours in the glory of Heaven (Revelation 22:2).

His face

“They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads” Revelation 22:4.

Read Exodus 33:18-23; 34:5-8;29. The greatest desire of Moses was to see the face of the Lord . In other words, to see Him in all the fullness of His glory. But, prior to the Cross, this was not possible. Now, living in His Presence, the fullness of all that God is - in all His radiant glory - is there for us to see and live in (Revelation 21:22-23). The name on their foreheads speaks of all that God is now also being their nature.

The invitation to come

Emphasising the importance and urgency of the message (22:18-19) and in light of all that the vision given to John has revealed, the Book of Revelation ends with the universal invitation...

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ ...whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life” (22:17).

...and the believer’s deepest desire...

“...Come, Lord Jesus”! (22:20).

Making the Truth Mine

Write out in full the scripture from this lesson which means the most to you. We encourage you to commit the verse to memory.

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Write out one statement from the study which you feel is most significant for your life.

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Write in your own words how you believe you should respond to the truth of this study. Are there any decisions you should make?

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You can make a difference!

For this study to have its full effect in your life, we encourage you to:

- * Read and digest the study - meditate on the Word of God.
- * Put into action what you have learnt (James 1:22).
- * Share the Word of God with others.

Your places of ministry have been pre-arranged by God: your home, the street you live on, your place of work and your church.

“I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free” Psalm 119:32

Food for Thought

Sending God's Word to the Ends of the Earth

| |
|---|
| The Word of God made available in a |
| clear, simple layout for personal study and |
| for use in sharing with others. |

The King's Table is designed to help...

- * ***Every believer for personal study***
- * ***Parents to teach their children***
- * ***Leaders of home groups***
- * ***Ministers of congregations***
- * ***Christian schools and home schooling***
- * ***Missionary projects to other nations***

Our Project 21 series for leaders has been widely received and multiplied throughout Asia and the Pacific. The reports from many places of growth and blessing encourage us greatly in the spreading of the life-giving Word of God. It is something that for us never loses its excitement.

The King's Table is an extension of the Project 21 teaching program which has many series of 21 lessons on different subjects. Our prayer is that this series might be a great blessing to you.

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The "How to" ...

Suggestions on how to run a "King's Table" gathering

Your Ministry

The fivefold ministry gifts that Jesus gave to the Church - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers - are given to train and equip every believer for the work of the ministry.

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" Ephesians 4:11-16.

This means that, under the New Covenant since Jesus death and resurrection, every believer is full-time in the ministry and we are all called to share the Word of God with others whatever our vocation in life is. We are full-time for the Lord working in a bank, a school, on a farm, as a student at school or university, or raising our children.

On top of this, each of us is called to teach others what we ourselves have received from the Lord, according to the principle of Matthew 10:8:

"Freely you have received, freely give."

This "receiving and giving" pattern in each believer's ministry is further described in Colossians 3:16:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

All over the world there are meetings in homes, schools, restaurants, factories, halls and church buildings. Any place is a good place to have a gathering.

Your House

The "breaking of bread" was a common cultural occurrence for every Israelite (Luke 9:16; 24:28-32). Each day, as the family gathered for the meal, the head of the household would "break bread". This was done as a remembrance of their Covenant with God. To Israel the bread that was broken was "the bread of affliction" which represented their fellowship in their sufferings as a nation. At the Passover Festival Jesus took the bread and declared:

"..this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" 1 Corinthians 11:24 (KJV)

He was taking all the suffering upon himself. He was broken for us, in our place, on the Cross.

The early Church carried on the "breaking of bread", celebrating together the New Covenant

they had become part of through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“.....They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” Acts 2:46-47.

Your social network, i.e. your neighbors, friends and workmates, is your world. God has positioned you in the house where you live. Your house is a mission station on your street. Proverbs 9:1 says...

“Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars.”

Built on seven pillars of faith your house can impact your world. The Lord has designed your house to be...

A house of redemption

You are the light of the world on your street (Matthew 5:14). In the storms of life that your neighbors constantly face, your home is like the lighthouse that can bring them to the peace and safety of God's presence.

A house of faith

As the Word of God is ministered in your home your house is a house filled with faith in the Lord (Romans 10:17).

A house of prayer

“...I will...give them joy in my house of prayer..for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” Isaiah 56:7 (also Mark 11:17).

Let your house become a house of prayer as you pray constantly for each of your neighbors, friends and workmates.

A house of joy

You possess a powerful tool to reach your world...your testimony. Your life and your testi-

mony is the “living” Word of God “read by everybody”.

“You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” 2 Corinthians 3:2.

As you gather together, other Christians sharing their testimonies and giving God praise for what He has done in their lives, will make your house a house of great joy.

A house of mercy

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” Luke 6:36.

As you hear of needs your neighbors or workmates may have, do acts of kindness for them. At their time of need they are more open to receive the Lord and the living Word.

A house of fellowship

True fellowship is expressed in the informal atmosphere of a home with the sharing of hearts and lives and love for the Lord being able to be expressed naturally.

A house of ministry

Paul encouraged and guided the Corinthian Christians in their gatherings together:

“What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church” 1 Corinthians 14:26.

In other words, *all* of them had something to contribute in their gatherings and he encouraged all to express what God had given them for the edification of all the others. The expression of everyone's ministry will be different but it will be the same in terms of the foundational beliefs

as instructed in the Word of God. The teaching of “The King’s Table” will bring that firm foundation in God’s Word.

Easy to Use Studies

“The King’s Table” studies are especially designed on one page with plenty of space around the study for easy photocopying for whatever number of believers are studying. The lessons are designed in such a way that the message can be given in 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 30 minutes or 1 hour, depending on the time and opportunity to convey its truth. The lessons can be freely given out to everybody so that they can study them further for themselves. With each series is a “Making the Truth Mine” page for those studying to fill out and express the impact the truth they have studied has had in their lives. Only one “Making the Truth Mine” is supplied but photocopies can be made for each lesson to be given to each student.

Add Testimony

The studies are written in such a way that the scriptures are speaking the main message and the limited comments simply give a quick flow of understanding to the truths. Personal experiences and testimonies can be used to reveal the impact of God’s Word in the believer’s life.

A Team

It is important to work with a team. This can be made up of three different types of ministries. Most people are one of these:

Gatherers

Those who have an ability to gather people and bring them to “The King’s Table” meeting.

Nurturers

Those who have an ability to encourage people in their growth in the Lord on a one-to-one basis.

Remember, always, that the Word of God does the counselling if we are sharing the wonderful truth of the Gospel.

Teachers

Those who have an ability to clearly teach God’s Word in an inspiring and positive manner, always focussing on the Lord, what He has done for us and the wonderful grace He gives us daily.

Prayer, Worship

Prayer and worship are also important factors in any gathering of believers. Encourage the believers to make their public prayers brief and Christ-focussed and let worship be simple with short Christ-centered songs.

Missionary Contributions

Generosity is a vital part of the Christian life, and every gathering should be encouraged to give outside of the group. Make a “giving plan” and each month designate the money for what the group has decided to give toward.

If you would like to give to help support the ministry of “The King’s Table” - going to the ends of the earth - contributions can be sent in several ways for your convenience:

1. Personal cheque made out to “Fountaingate Christian Foundation”, designated for “The King’s Table” and posted to P.O. Box 1033, Newcastle NSW 2300, Australia.
2. Money orders also mailed to the above address. However, any money order from outside Australia must be an *international* money order not a local one.
3. You can contribute by credit card by sending through our secure online facilities designated for “The King’s Table”:

<https://www.onlinebiblecollege.net/donations/>