

# THE APOCALYPSE OF JESUS

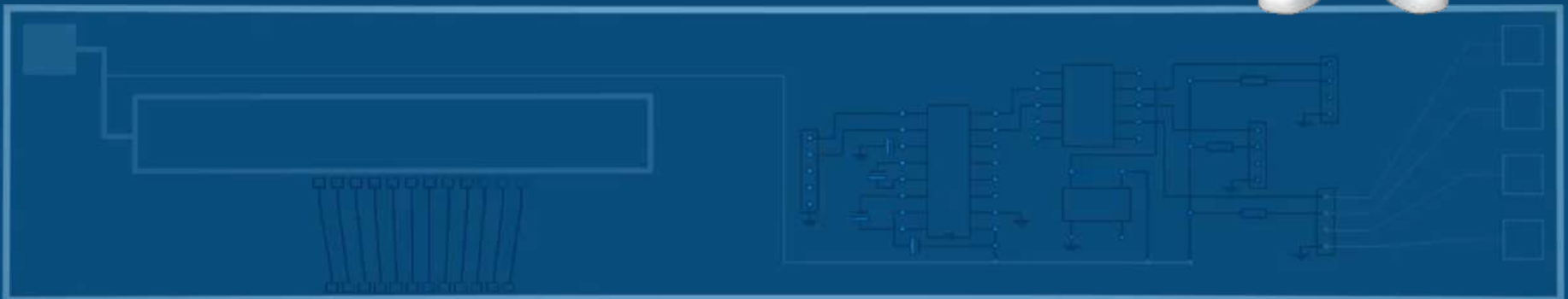
## INTRODUCING APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Examples of  
apocalyptic literature

Hardin Valley's Scholars' Class  
the Early Bird – *gets the coffee!*

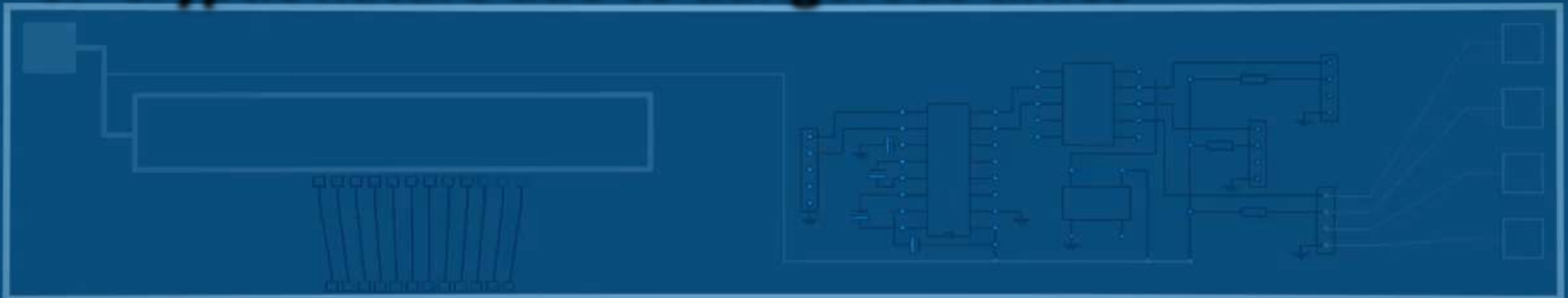
# Principles of Interpretation

1. Revelation is a document of prophecy
2. Revelation is written in largely symbolic language
3. Revelation is written in Old Testament style with New Testament application
4. Revelation employs symbolic numerology



# Apocalypse Numerology

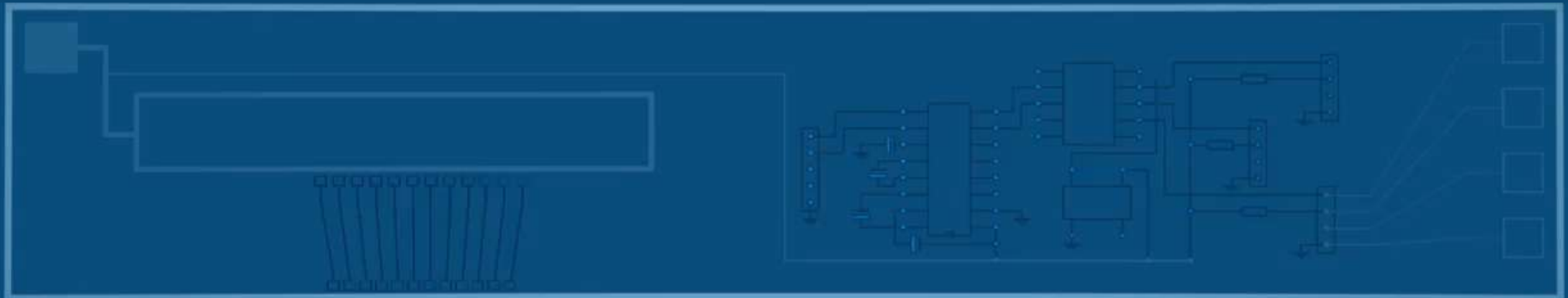
1. Always possessed historical significance
2. Use of symbols
3. Appeared between 210 B.C. and 200 A.D.
4. Always pointed to a glorious day of release from darkened conditions of the fateful present political events
5. Stressed the virtue of loyalty and stimulated faith by demonstration of certain overthrow of evil and victory for God
6. Cryptic nature due to dangerous times



# Characteristics of Apocalypse



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# Keys to Interpretation



1. Revelation is Written in Symbols cf: 1:14-16; 6:7-8; 8:8-9; 12:1-4
2. Revelation is Written Primarily about Events Which Will “Shortly Come to Pass.” cf: 1:1; 1:3; 3:11; 22:6
3. Revelation Was Given to Comfort Persecuted Christians. cf: 1:9; 2:13; 6:9; 12:17; 13:7
4. Revelation Identifies Key Characters in Its Drama. cf: 2-3 Seven Churches of Asia Minor, 5 - The Lamb, 12 - Dragon, 13 - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Beasts, 17 - the Prostitute

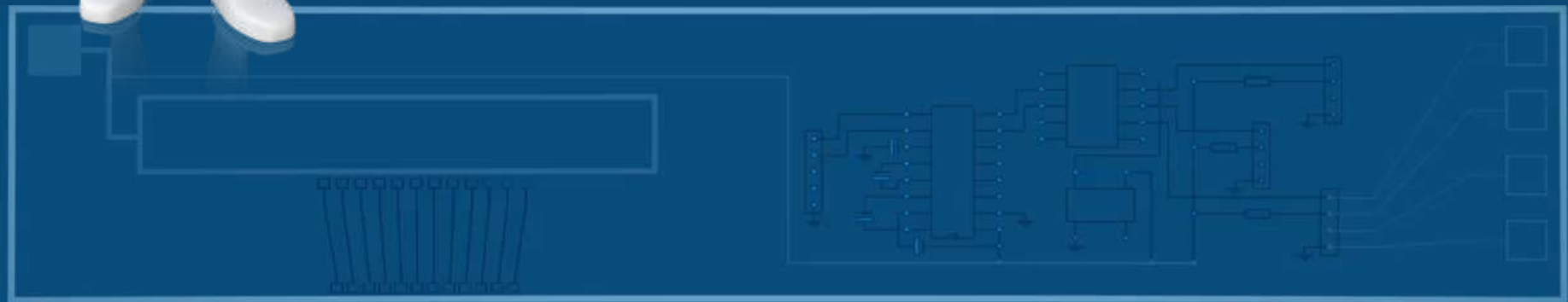


# Apocalyptic Characteristics

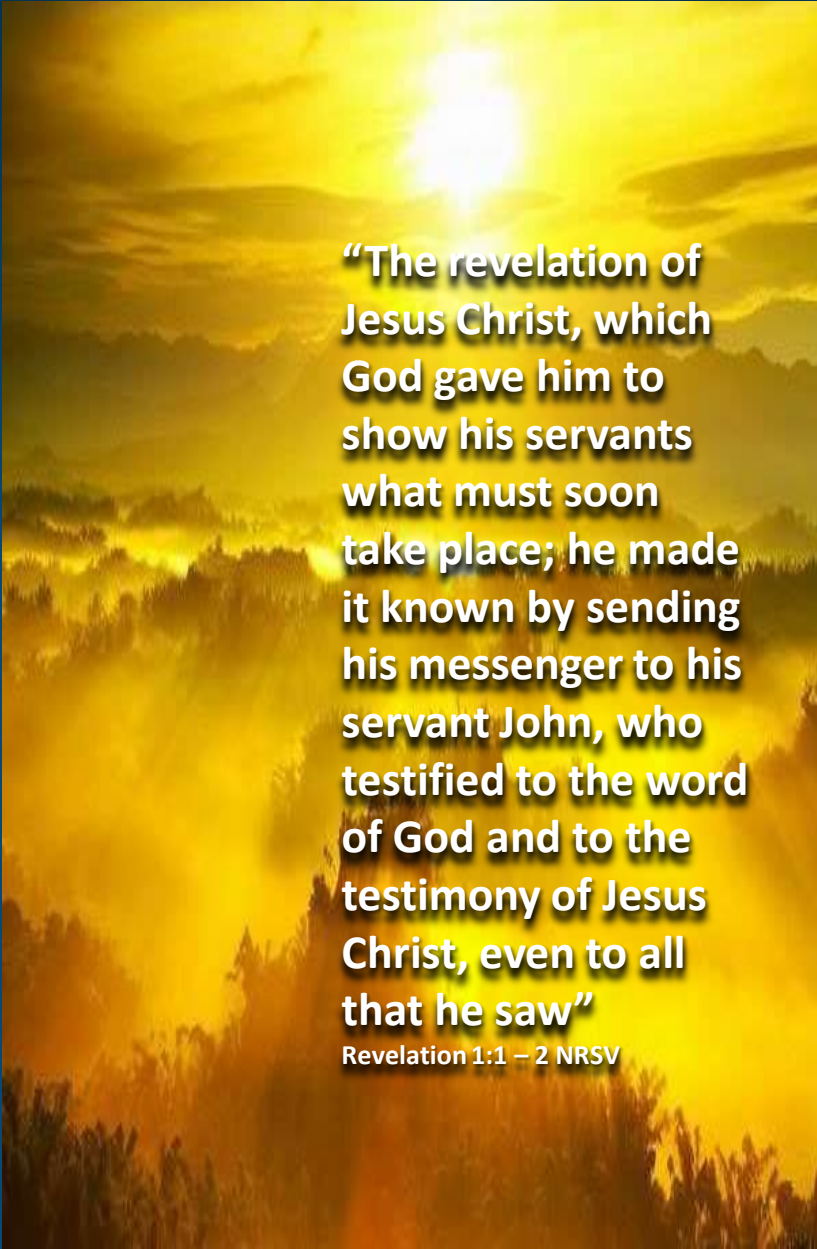
αποκαλυψις [apokalupsis] Apocalypse = literally: 'off/away the veil;' thus, 'revealing.' As a genre of literature, it is marked by distinct, general characteristics including:



1. *Pseudonymous authorship* (John's revelation is an exception).
2. Message (the 'revealing') *originates from deity*.
3. Message is mediated through *human agency* (a 'seer').
4. Message has a *future orientation/emphasis*.

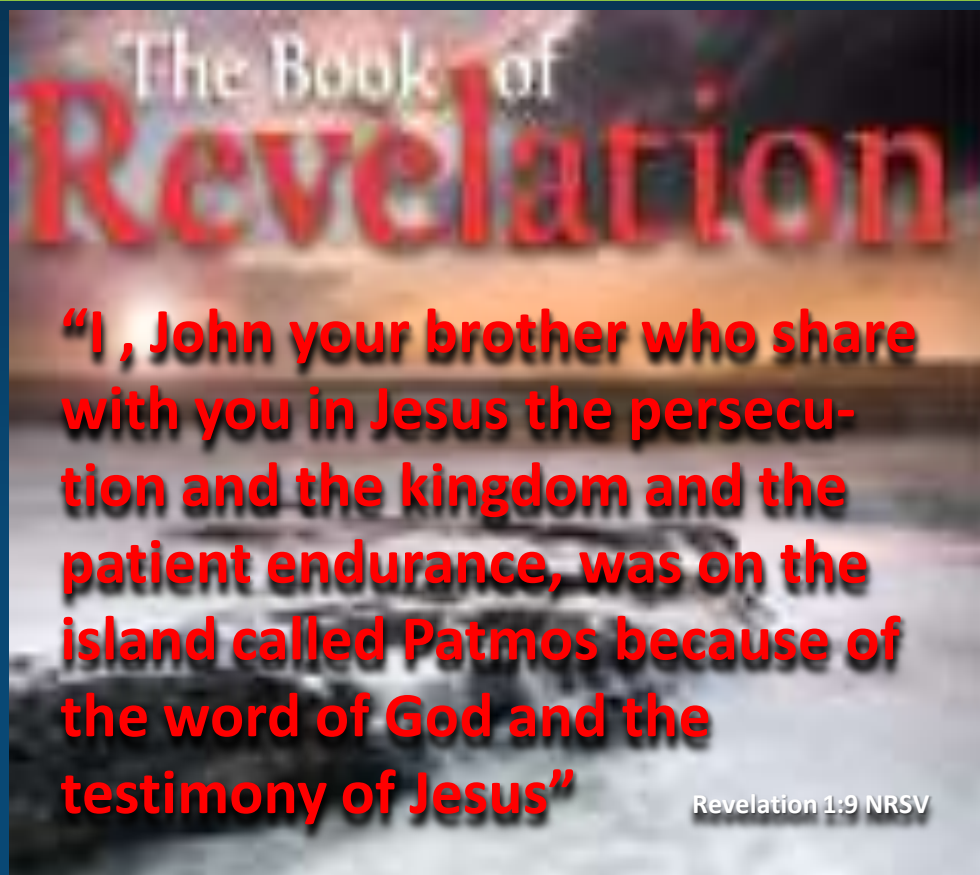


5. Message *contains an admonition.*
6. Message includes *description of the response* of the seer to the 'other worldly' *revelatory experience.*
7. Message is *stated in* a series of *visions (symbolic language), epistle, doxology, victory song, and blessing.*
8. Messenger experiences a '*heavenly journey.*'

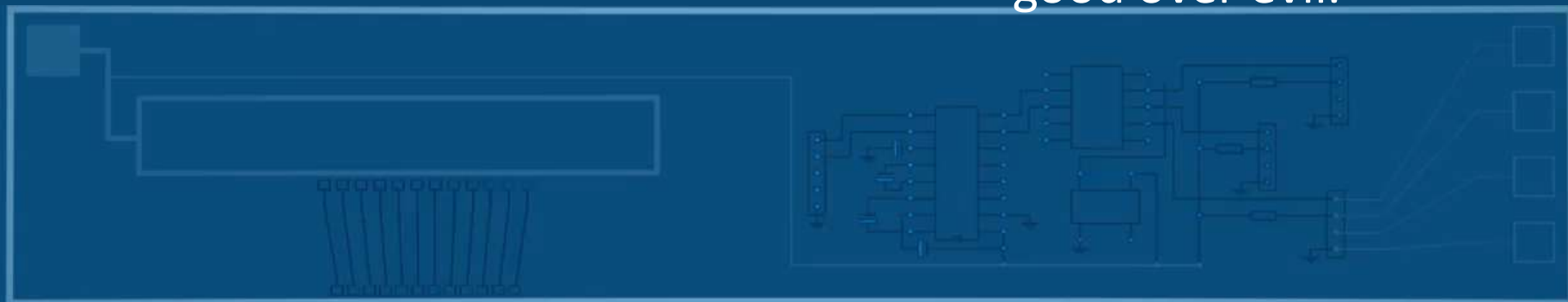


**“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his messenger to his servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw”**

Revelation 1:1 – 2 NRSV



9. Messenger *often writes from experience of oppression.*
10. Message reflects *distinct dualism.*
11. Message is often *pessimistic regarding change for the better in the present age.*
12. Message anticipates *ultimate victory* of good over evil.



## Expanded definition

### Society of Biblical Literature Study 1970's

“‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world”

(Collins 1979: 9).



# Apocalypse & Numerology

**1** = unity; independent existence

**2** = strengthening; redoubled courage/energy

**3** = trinity; Divine completeness

$7/2 = 3\frac{1}{2}$  = incomplete; imperfect; aspirations unrealized

**4** = earth; world; cosmos;

**6** = falling short; failing; doom

$3+4 = 7$  = completeness through union of earth and heaven

$5 \quad 2 = 10$  = human completeness

$3 \quad 4 = 12$  = organized religion

How do you prevent **'spiritual  
upset stomach'** from  
Biblical/apocalyptic numerology?

**ANSWER:** *Take regular doses  
of 'RESTRAINT;' do not get in self-  
authenticating rut of 'majoring in  
minors.'*

# Apocalypse of Jesus: Principles for Interpretation

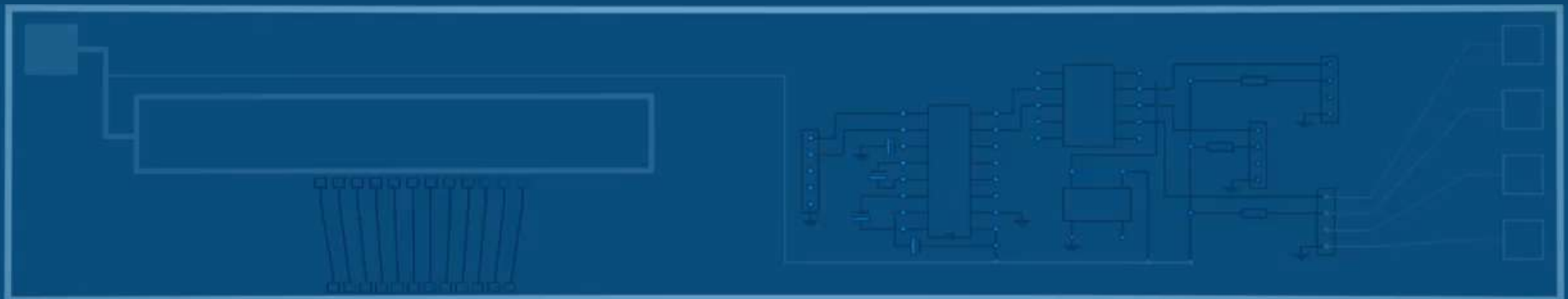
Revelation is a document of *prophecy*

Revelation is written in largely *symbolic language*

Revelation is written in *Old Testament style* with *New Testament application*

Revelation employs symbolic *numerology*

Revelation is *apocalyptic*



# Jewish Apocalypses

## Books of Enoch

After having been quoted in Jude and noticed by several of the Fathers, this work disappeared from the knowledge of the Christian church. Brought to light after 1870 by James Bruce (three copies in Ethiopic).

### Chapters 1 - 5

Purpose stated (1); account of the heavens (2 – 5).

### Chapters 6 - 19

The fallen angels and Enoch's relation to them.

### Chapters 20 - 36

Description of Enoch's wandering the universe; place of punishment; secrets of the West and earth's center.

### Chapters 37 - 71

The Similitudes (in three sections: 37 – 45; 46 – 57; 58 – 71).

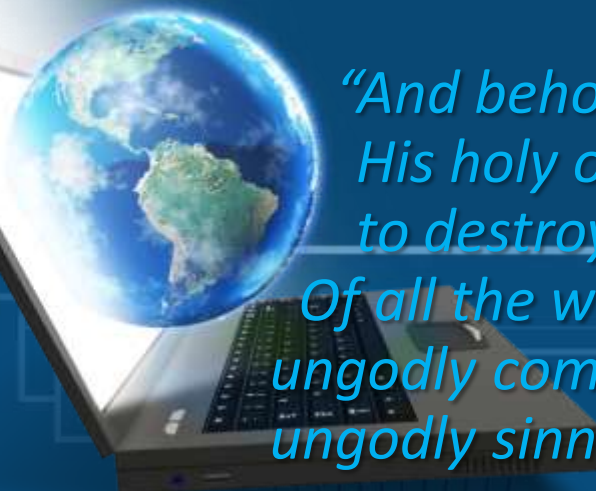
### Chapters 72 – 105, ff.

The Book of the Courses of the Luminaries; history of the world; Enoch's exhortations; 105 – ff are appendices.

# Excerpts: The Book of Enoch

- *“The words of the blessing of Enoch, wherewith he blessed the elect and righteous, who will be living in the day of tribulation, when all the wicked and godless are to be removed. And he took up his parable and said - Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, which the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw, but not for this generation, but for a remote one which is for to come”*

– 1:1 – 3.



*“And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones To execute judgement upon all, And to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh Of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him”*

– 1:9.

## Book of Enoch Chapter 85:

*“And after this I saw another dream, and I will show the whole dream to thee, my son. And Enoch lifted up (his voice) and spake to his son Methuselah: 'To thee, my son, will I speak: hear my words-incline thine ear to the dream-vision of thy father. Before I took thy mother Edna, I saw in a vision on my bed, and behold a bull came forth from the earth, and that bull was white; and after it came forth a heifer, and along with this (latter) came forth two bulls, one of them black and the other red. And that black bull gored the red one and pursued him over the earth, and thereupon I could no longer see that red bull. But that black bull grew and that heifer went with him, and I saw that many oxen proceeded from him which resembled and followed him. And that cow, that first one, went from the presence of that first bull in order to seek that red one, but found him not, and lamented with a great lamentation over him and sought him. And I looked till that first bull came to her and quieted her, and from that time onward she cried no more. And after that she bore another white bull, and after him she bore many bulls and black cows. And I saw in my sleep that white bull likewise grow and become a great white bull, and from Him proceeded many white bulls, and they resembled him. And they began to beget many white bulls, which resembled them, one following the other, (even) many.”*

# Book of Enoch: *Exhortations of Enoch*



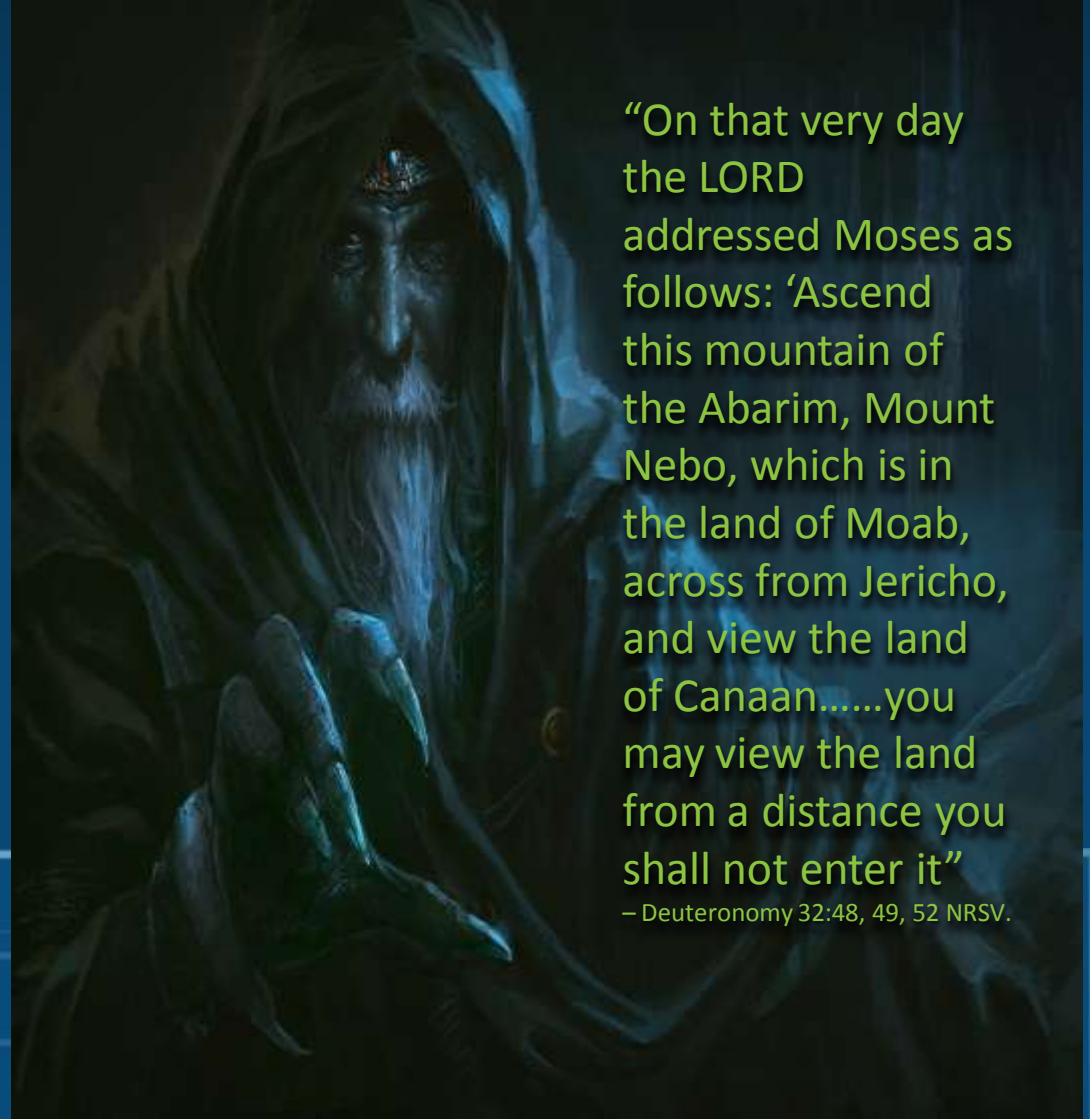
“In those days the angels shall descend into the secret places And gather together into one place all those who brought down sin And the Most High will arise on that day of judgement To execute great judgement amongst sinners. And over all the righteous and holy He will appoint guardians from amongst the holy angels To guard them as the apple of an eye, Until He makes an end of all wickedness and all sin, And though the righteous sleep a long sleep, they have nought to fear” - 100:4 – 5.

And now I know this mystery, that sinners will alter and pervert the words of righteousness in many ways, and will speak wicked words, and lie, and practice great deceits, and write books concerning their words. But when they write down truthfully all my words in their languages, and do not change or minish ought from my words but write them all down truthfully -all that I first testified concerning them. Then, I know another mystery, that books will be given to the righteous and the wise to become a cause of joy and uprightness and much wisdom. And to them shall the books be given, and they shall believe in them and rejoice over them, and then shall all the righteous who have learnt therefrom all the paths of uprightness be recompensed”

- 104:10 – 13.

1

“The Testament of Moses even the things which he commanded in the one hundred and twentieth year of his life, that is the two thousand five hundredth year from the creation of the world: [But according to oriental reckoning the two thousand and seven hundredth, and the four hundredth after the departure from Phoenicia], when the people had gone forth after the Exodus that was made by Moses to Amman beyond the Jordan, in the prophecy that was made by Moses in the book Deuteronomy: “



“On that very day the LORD addressed Moses as follows: ‘Ascend this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho, and view the land of Canaan.....you may view the land from a distance you shall not enter it”

– Deuteronomy 32:48, 49, 52 NRSV.

# The Assumption of Moses 3

“And in those days a king from the east shall come against them and his cavalry shall cover their land. And he shall burn their colony with fire together with the holy temple of the Lord, and he shall carry away all the holy vessels. And he shall cast forth all the people, and he shall take them to the land of his nativity, yea he shall take the two tribes with him. Then the two tribes shall call upon the ten tribes, and shall march as a lioness on the dusty plains, being hungry and thirsty. And they shall cry aloud: 'Righteous and holy is the Lord, for, inasmuch as ye have sinned, we too, in like manner, have been carried away with you, together with our children.' Then the ten tribes shall mourn on hearing the reproaches of the two tribes, and they shall say: 'What have we done unto you, brethren? Has not this tribulation come on all the house of Israel?' And all the tribes shall mourn, crying unto heaven and saying: 'God of Abraham God of Isaac and God of Jacob, remember Thy covenant which You made with them, and the oath which You didst swear unto them by Yourself, that their seed should never fail from the land which You hast given them.' Then they shall remember me, saying, in that day, tribe unto tribe and each man unto his neighbor: 'Is not this that which Moses did then declare unto us in prophecies, who suffered many things in Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness during forty years: and assuredly called heaven and earth to witness against us, that we should not transgress His commandments, in the which he was a mediator unto us? Behold these things have befallen us after his death according to his declaration, as he declared to us at that time, yes, behold these have taken place even to our being carried away captive into the country of the east.' Who shall be also in bondage for about seventy and seven years.” - 3

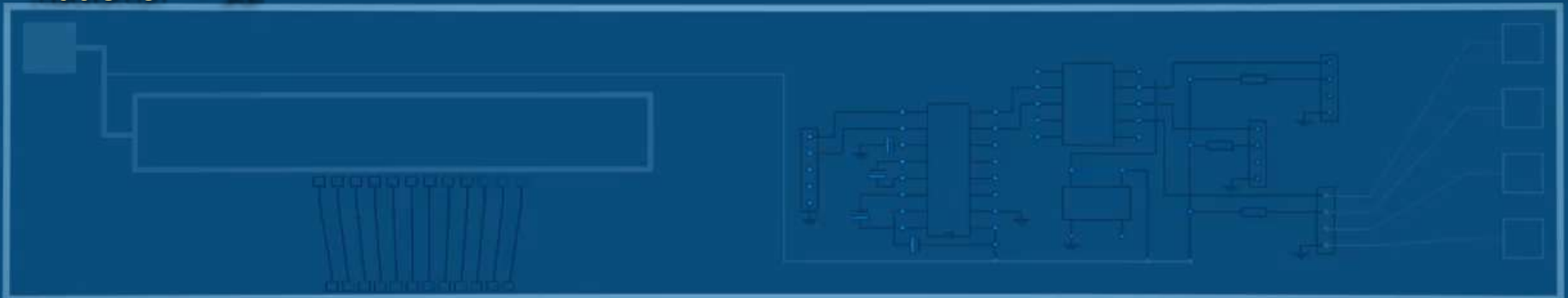
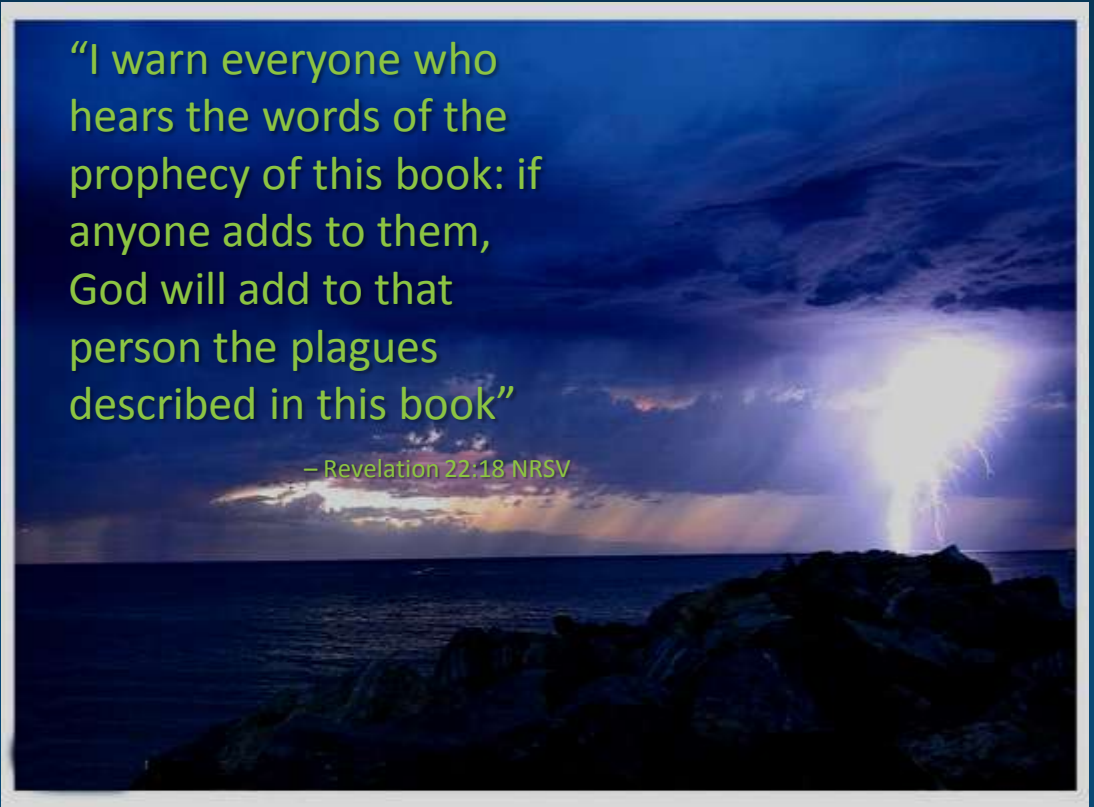
# Assumption 12

# Apocalypse of Jesus 22

“The lights of the heaven, the foundations of the earth have been made and approved by God and are under the signet ring of His right hand. Those, therefore, who do and fulfill the commandments of God shall increase and be prospered: but those who sin and set at naught the commandments shall be without the blessings before mentioned, and they shall be punished with many torments by the nations.” - 12

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book”

– Revelation 22:18 NRSV

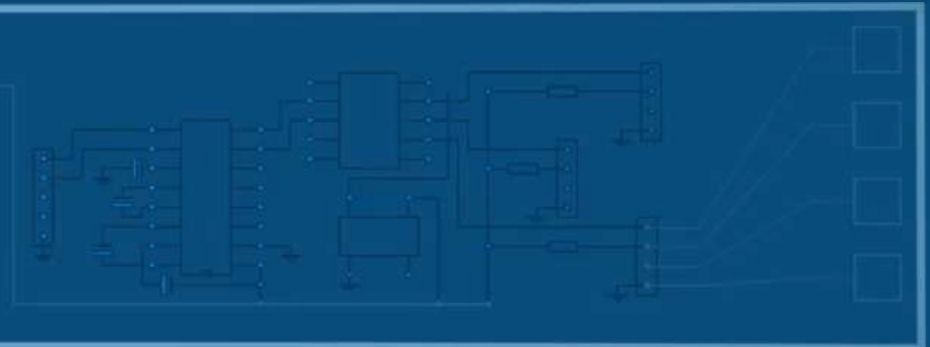


## Word and Revelation of Esdras: The Holy Prophet and Beloved of God

“It came to pass in the thirtieth year, on the twenty-second of the month, I was in my house. And I cried out and said to the Most High: Lord, give the glory, <sup>1</sup> in order that I may see Thy mysteries. And when it was night, there came an angel, Michael the archangel, and says to me: O Prophet Esdras, refrain from bread for seventy *weeks*. <sup>2</sup> And I fasted as he told me. And there came Raphael the commander of the host, and gave me a storax rod. And I fasted twice sixty <sup>3</sup> weeks. And I saw the mysteries of God and His angels. And I said to them: I wish to plead before God about the race of the Christians. It is good for a man not to be born rather than to come into the world. I was therefore taken up into heaven, and I saw in the first heaven a great army of angels; and they took me to the judgments”



-- Esdras 1:1 – 3(a).



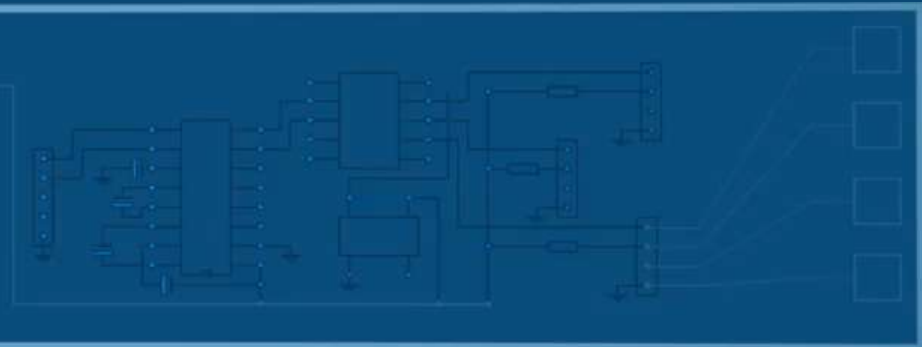
## Revelation 22

## Esdras 36

*“Blessed are those  
who wash their robes,  
so that they will have  
the right to enter the  
city by the gates”*

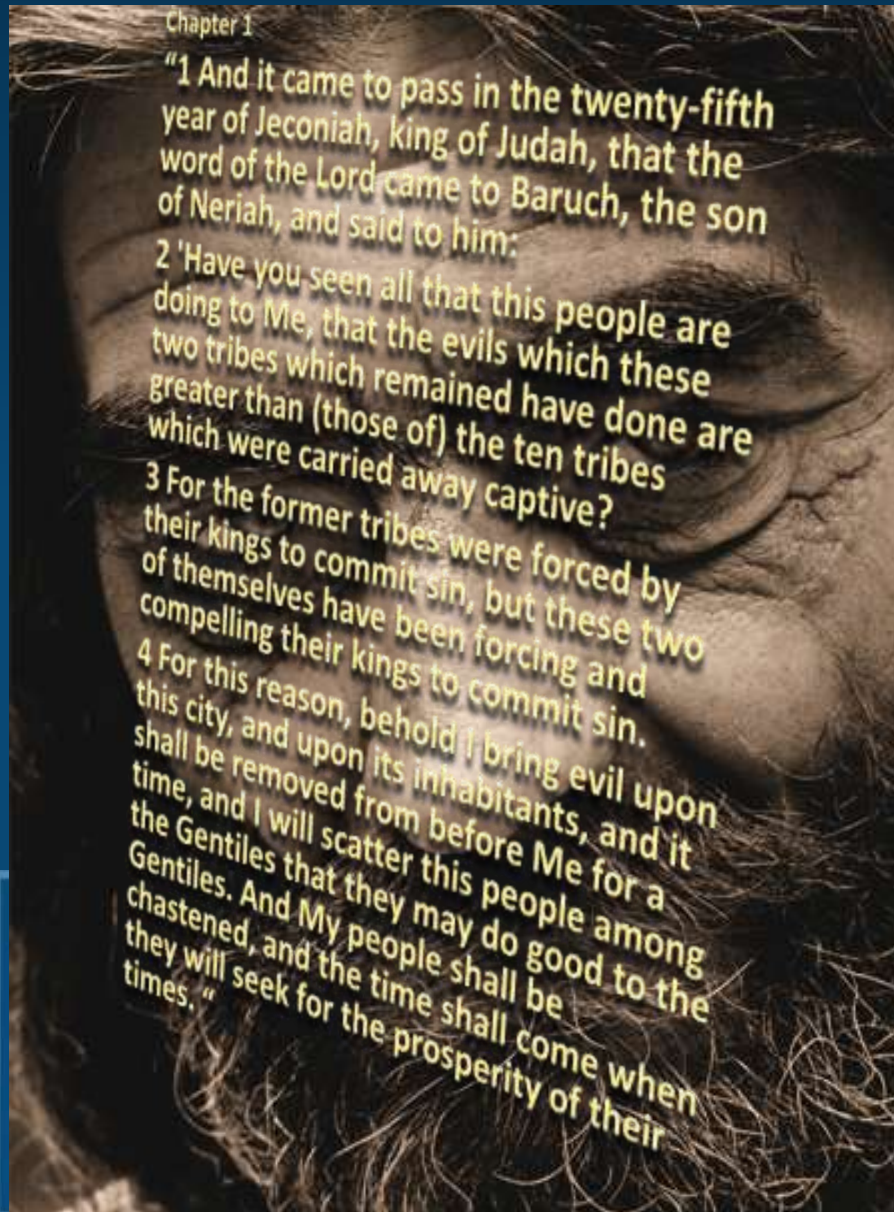
*— Revelation 22:14 NRSV.*

“And as many as have not believed this book shall be burnt up like Sodom and Gomorrah. And there came to him a voice, saying: Esdras, my beloved, all things whatever thou hast asked will I give to each one. And immediately he gave up his precious soul with much honour, in the month of October, on the twenty-eighth. And they prepared him for burial with incense and psalms; and his precious and sacred body dispenses strength of soul and body perpetually to those who have recourse to him from a longing desire. To whom is due glory, strength, honour, and adoration,-to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen” -- Esdras 36.



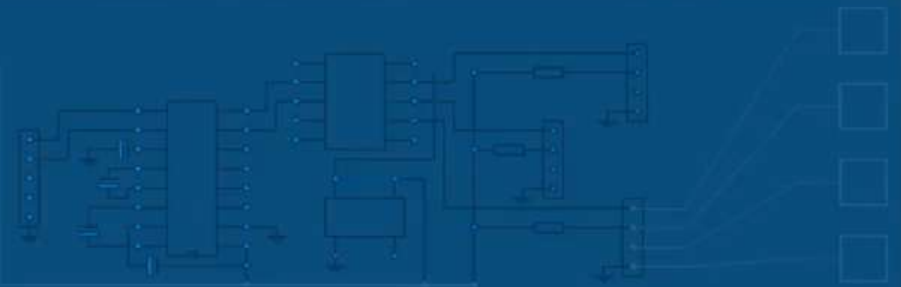
## The Apocalypse of Baruch

## The Baruch of Jeremiah



“In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar in order that they may last for a long time”

– Jeremiah 32:13 – 14 NRSV.



## Baruch 21:19 – 25 Prayer to God to hasten judgment and fulfill promise

“19 How long will that which is corruptible remain, and how long will the time of mortals be prospered, and until what time will those who transgress in the world be polluted with much wickedness?

20 Command therefore in mercy and accomplish all that you saidst you wouldst bring, that Your might may be made known to those who think that Your long-suffering is weakness. “

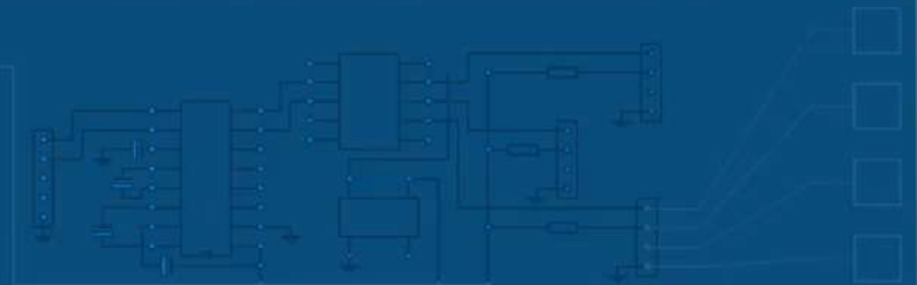
faith is  
being sure  
of what  
we  
hope for

hebrews 11:1

“they cried out with a loud voice, ‘Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?’”

– Revelation 6:10 NRSV.

and  
certain  
of what  
we  
do not see



## **The Life of Adam and Eve** (after forty days' fast and standing on a stone in the Jordan in water up to his neck; Eve has done the same in the Tigris in an effort to appease God):

### **IX**

*And eighteen days passed by; then Satan was wroth and transformed himself into the brightness of angels, and went away to the river Tigris to Eve, and found her weeping, and the devil himself pretended to grieve with her, and he began to weep and said to her 'Come out of the river and lament no more. Cease now from sorrow and moans. Why art thou anxious and thy husband Adam? The Lord God hath heard your groaning and hath accepted your penitence, and all we angels have entreated on your behalf, and made supplication to the Lord; and he hath sent me to bring you out of the water and give you the nourishment which you had in paradise, and for which you are crying out. Now come out of the water and I will conduct you to the place where your victual hath been made ready.'*



**II Corinthians 11:14(b) – 15**

“Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds” NRSV.

# The Life of Adam and Eve

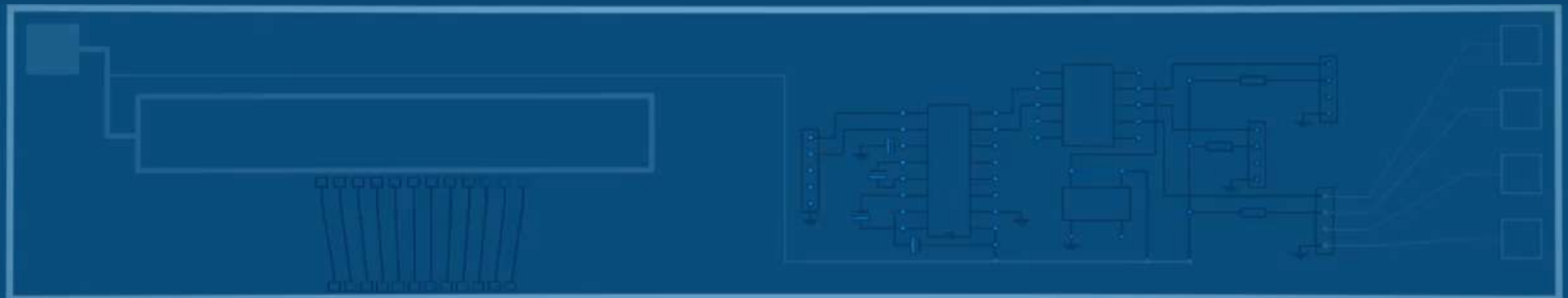
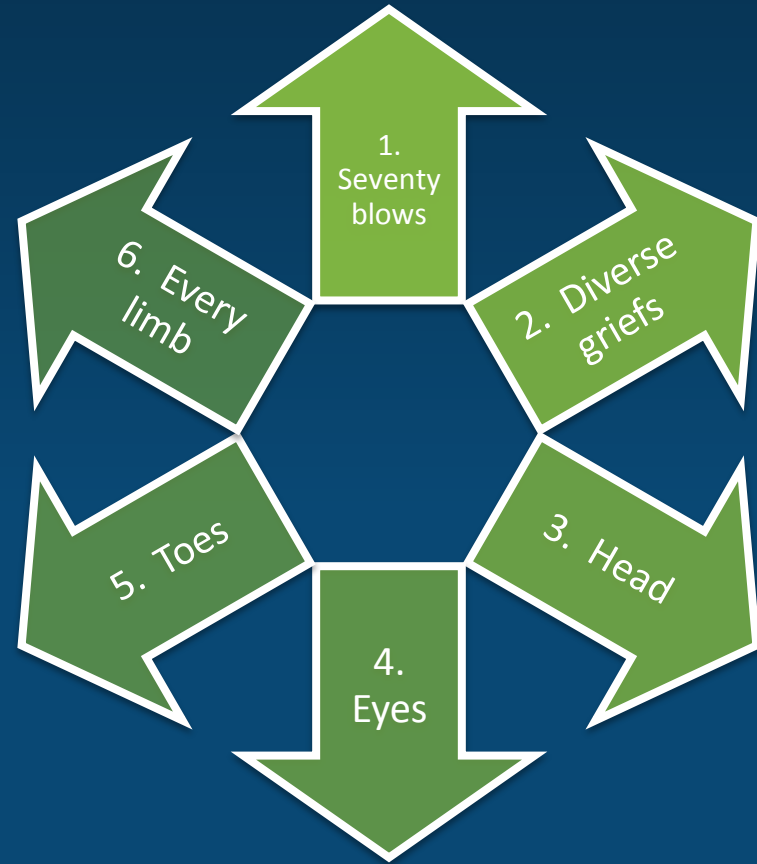
(Adam, in death throes, explains to his sixty-three children the details of the fall and its consequences)

**XXXIII**

*(Moreover) God the Lord gave us two angels to guard us. The hour came when the angels had ascended to worship in the sight of God; forthwith the adversary [the devil] found an opportunity while the angels were absent and the devil led your mother astray to eat of the unlawful and forbidden tree. And she did eat and gave to me.*

**XXXIV**

*And immediately, the Lord God was wrath with us, and the Lord said to me: 'In that thou hast left behind my commandment and hast not kept my word, which I confirmed to thee; behold, I will bring upon thy body, seventy blows; with divers griefs, shalt thou be tormented, beginning at thy head and thine eyes and thine ears down to the nails on thy toes, and in every separate limb. These hath God appointed for chastisement. All these things hath the Lord sent to me and to all our race.'*



# The Book of Jubilees

(“Apocalypse of Moses;” “The Life of Adam;” “Kufale” (in Ethiopic))

1. All narratives and stories are based on imaginative chronology of jubilee eras.
2. Author supposes solar year of 364 days, corresponding to the Jewish ecclesiastical year.
  - a. The whole is based on numerology of seven.
  - b. Week = seven days
  - c. Month = twenty-eight days
  - d. Year = three hundred sixty-four days.

Mentioned by: Jerome

Mentioned by: Dionysius of Alexandria

Mentioned by: Epiphanius

c. 153 B.C. – 105 B.C.

Date of Writing:

# The Book of Jubilees

Purpose: *To defend Judaism from influences of Hellenism.*

- a. Glorified Law as eternally binding.
- b. Glorified separatist profile of Israel.
- c. Mollified Gentiles.



“Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all you heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” – Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9 NRSV.

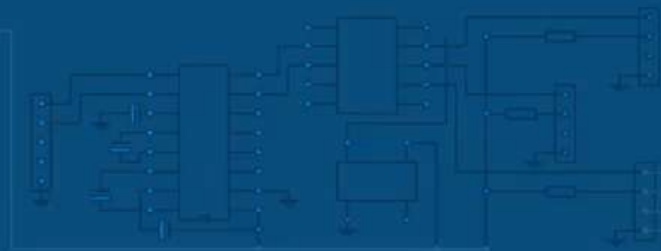
## Jubilees Chapter 1:

1 “And it came to pass in the first year of the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt, in the third month, on the sixteenth day of the month, [2450 Anno Mundi] that God spake to Moses, saying: 'Come up to Me on the Mount, and I will give thee two tables of stone of the law and of the commandment, which 2 I have written, that thou mayst teach them.' And Moses went up into the mount of God, and the 3 glory of the Lord abode on Mount Sinai, and a cloud overshadowed it six days. And He called to Moses on the seventh day out of the midst of the cloud, and the appearance of the glory of the 4 Lord was like a flaming fire on the top of the mount. And Moses was on the Mount forty days and forty nights, and God taught him the earlier and the later history of the division of all the days 5 of the law and of the testimony. And He said: 'Incline thine heart to every word which I shall speak to thee on this mount, and write them in a book in order that their generations may see how I have not forsaken them for all the evil which they have wrought in transgressing the covenant 6 which I establish between Me and thee for their generations this day on Mount Sinai”

# Jubilees 37:22 (account of Jacob and Esau meeting after the death of Isaac cf. Genesis 33 – 36. The Jubilees text is the words of Esau)



22 “And if the lion becomes the friend of the ox and makes peace with him And if he is bound under one yoke with him and ploughs with him, Then will I make peace with thee. 23 And when the raven becomes white as the raza, Then know that I have loved thee And shall make peace with thee Thou shalt be rooted out, And thy sons shall be rooted out, And there shall be no peace for thee”



# The Sibylline Oracles

These ancient collections of literature represent what were thought to be prophecies from female diviners (or 'seers').

1. Among the pagans, the oracles and predictions were carefully preserved in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (to be accessed in times of national crises).
2. Due the popularity of the documents and their influence in determining religious views of the period, Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria composed verses in the same genre and attributed authorship to the sibylls.
  - a. The documents were circulated among the pagans in efforts to promote Jewish doctrine and religion (not intended for conversion of Gentiles to Judaism)
  - b. The practice continued to the Christian era and was borrowed by early Christians resulting in a new class of 'Christian oracles' in the second and third centuries, the Sibylline Oracles.

# Sibylline Oracles (books 1, 2)

1. Origin of books 1 and 2 is spurious but probably based on original Jewish documents under the influence of Christian rewriting.
  - a. 1:1 – 323 Contains no Christian elements.
  - b. 1:324 – 400 Is distinctly Christian and patently anti-Jewish.
  - c. 2 Continues the Jewish element of the document, passing over all former generations and dealing only with the most recent generation.
  - d. 2:34 – 55 is Christian.
  - e. 2:56 – 148 is an instructional poem borrowing from pseudo-Phocylides.
  - f. 2:154 – ff represents Jewish eschatology mingled with Stoic concepts and a few Christian elements.

# The Sibylline Oracles: book 3

Book 3 is accepted as the most valuable for study due its primary section comprising a poem of lines 97 – 807.

1. Thought to be the work of an Alexandrian Jew in the period c. 170 – 160 B.C.
2. Three parts to the poem:
  - a. 97 – 294 Construction of tower of Babel originating due a controversy between three kings: Kronos, Titan, Japetus.
  - b. 295 – 488 Denunciations of and warnings to Babylon, Egypt, Gog, Magog, Libya, Syria, Phrygia, Troy (including a polemic against Homer), Lycia, Cyprus, and Italy.
  - c. 499 – 807 Denunciations of Gentiles which are sharply contrasted to the promises for Israel, with an announcement of the final judgment.
3. 808 – 828 is an epilogue in which the Sibyl discloses her nature (a daughter of Noah and native of Babylon).

# The Sibylline Oracles: books 4, 5, 6 - 14

Book 4 presents a more discernible unity as the sibyl predicts the future for man from the first to the tenth generations.

1. History is divided into ten eras.
2. This division served as basis for medieval historiographers.
3. The scene: All nations pass in review before the prophet who discerns omens in the names of the cities and nations (based on their etymology).

Book 5 is comprised of a number of Jewish passages with brief Christian additions.

Books 6, 7, 8 are regarded as Christian in origin. Book 11 traces history from the flood to Rome's founding and the siege of Troy.

Book 12 continues Roman history, assigning numeric values to the initials in the names of the emperors to Alexander Severus.

Book 13 contains no religious elements and continues Roman history of emperors from Maximinus to Aurelian. Book 14 is marked by obscurity.