

Revelation 1:13–16

¹³ “& in the midst of the Lampstands
one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe
& with a golden sash around His chest.

¹⁴ The hairs of His head were white, like white wool, like snow.
His eyes were like a flame of fire,

¹⁵ His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace,
& His voice was like the roar of many waters.

¹⁶ In His right hand He held 7 Stars,
from His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,
& His face was like the sun shining in full strength.”

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The Revelation of the Risen Christ

*UNVEILING AND INSTILLING A FRESH REVELATION OF
JESUS TO A NEW GENERATION*

Dr. Michael D. Gross | 5-Fold Global | September 2025

This work is dedicated to a new generation of leaders and disciples raised up and anointed by God to fulfill the book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit and to the spiritual fathers and mothers called by God to nurture and equip them for multiplying the harvest through strategic prayer, power evangelism, Spirit filled discipleship and house church planting aligned with God's word.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.

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Introduction

Revelation is an amazing book of the Bible. This final book of the Holy Scriptures continues to capture the attention of every generation. It is the only book that specifically promises a blessing when you read and hear its words. It was read in the Early Church because they anticipated the soon return of Jesus. This vibrant expectancy appears to be diminished in most churches today. But this is about to change!

The Holy Spirit is saying that “*This generation needs a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ.*” He is coming again, and the church needs to prepare for His coming. Our 5-Fold Global International Director, Dr. Samuel Isong of Nigeria, recently shared with me what to expect in this new season: “*New harvest shall be greatly in place. The remnants shall take roots deeper and grow up and spread all over the space and occupy by the power of the Holy Spirit. And the Lord God shall be greatly glorified. He will lead us into unique revelations, deeper revelations of the person of Jesus. He will empower us more than ever. More of God’s potency shall be unveiled to us. New generations will receive it fresh from above. The impact will be enormous. God will raise a mighty fearless army for Himself that will march through territories and take over for Jesus.*”

We believe this will begin with a fresh and deeper revelation of the Risen Christ, the One who sits enthroned and exalted at the right hand of God. His coming will be different than the first time He came. There must be an unveiling of this truth to this generation to be ready. The Bible says ***deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls*** (Psa. 42:7). The souls who thirst for the living God will go deeper into His word and His presence when the water of the Spirit falls upon them. They will long for His appearing like the Apostles and the Early Church. It will be a time of apostolic and prophetic revelation to those who are in the Spirit. They will enter a divine realm of communication with the Lord. They will hear things that are coming and receive strategic information and counsel from the throne room of heaven. The Risen Christ will open by the Holy Spirit ***their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures*** like never before (Luke 24:45).

There is a message about Jesus Christ that must be uncovered and unveiled for the new generation church. In this training manual, we will explore some prophetic encounters of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, described in the Bible. We will also examine the main topics of the Book of Revelation to discover the Risen Christ, the One who sits upon the throne. Our prayer is that the Lord will use us to usher this remnant generation within the veil for them to hear what the Spirit is saying today, where restrictions will be torn away just like the veil in the temple after Jesus was crucified. This training manual will take you and me deeper than ever before to unveil and instill in us a fresh revelation of Jesus Christ.

Michael Gross
5-Fold Global

Chapter 1: Forty Days with the Risen Christ

Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus

The Bible records that the Risen Christ spent forty days on earth before He ascended to heaven. What was He doing? Who did He meet with? What instructions did He give? These questions need to be answered in greater detail because the importance of what Jesus did and taught during those resurrected days on earth shapes all that we do and teach today. Fortunately, God provides us with a reliable account of what Jesus did and instructed His followers to do as they walked with Him during the forty days after His resurrection.

Acts 1:1-3 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ²until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Resurrected Jesus gave final ***commandments to the apostles, presented Himself alive***, and spoke to them of ***the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*** during the forty days. He did this ***through the Holy Spirit***. Jesus still spoke and did things through the power of the Holy Spirit after He was bodily raised from the dead. We will speak more of this later, but for now, we will review the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

The Bible records ten appearances of Jesus during the forty days after His resurrection. There were probably many more signs and appearances according to the Gospel of John:

John 20:30-31 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 21:24-25 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

John made the above statements after recording the resurrection appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem and later at the Sea of Tiberius. In this section, we will examine these, and other post-resurrection appearances recorded in the Bible. Appendix 1 divides these living appearances of Jesus between those on the day of His resurrection, those occurring afterwards but before His ascension, and those after His ascension.ⁱ These resurrection appearances provided ***many infallible proofs*** (Acts 1:3). This means Jesus showed His followers many certain and decisive signs to convince and cause the

disciples to know He was alive. He had been resurrected from the dead. Each of the four Gospels records the morning of the resurrection of Jesus:

Matt. 28:1-10 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*. ⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.” ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. ⁹ And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

Luke 24:1-12 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” ⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

Mark 16:1-11 Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” ⁸ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. ⁹ Now when *He* rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

John 20:1-10 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” ³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were

going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

The first accounts of the resurrection of Jesus prepare His weeping and mourning disciples to believe and rejoice that He is alive. All accounts agree that Jesus appeared first to certain women. Mary Magdalene is given prominence in each account. Mark and Luke acknowledge through the Holy Spirit that Jesus had freed her from seven demons (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2). She demonstrates that those forgiven much love Jesus more, while *to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little* (Luke 7:47). In addition, it signals that the Risen Christ has now delegated the responsibility of His disciples to cast out demons in His name (Mark 16:17). Her transformation is significant. Still, her testimony of the Risen Christ, empowered by her experience at the tomb, drew the most attention. The Gospel of John gives us the most detailed account of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the Risen Christ.

John 20:11-18 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." ¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' " ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her.

The tomb was empty early on the morning of the third day. Although Mary Magdalene saw two angels at both ends where Jesus had been laid, she did not recognize Jesus, who suddenly appeared nearby. She thought He was a caretaker until Jesus called her by name. Jesus said, *Do not cling to Me*. It would be a normal reaction for Mary to desire to spontaneously touch or take hold of Jesus. Other women who encountered the Risen Christ also *held Him by the feet and worshiped Him* (Matt. 28:9). But more may have been involved in Jesus' restriction than Mary's desire to touch the Risen Christ. The Greek word reveals that the clinging was far from ordinary.

Cling: 681. ἅπτω *háptō*; fut. *hápsō*. To handle an object so as to exert a modifying influence upon it, to fasten to. As a trans. verb when spoken of fire as applied to things, it means to set fire to, kindle, light (Luke 8:16; 11:33; 15:8; 22:55). *Háptō* involves a self-conscious effort to touchⁱⁱ

The primary meaning is *to cause illumination or burning to take place, light, kindle, to make close contact*.ⁱⁱⁱ It is possible that the radiant fire of heaven was still present on His resurrected body because Jesus appears later to two disciples in another form. There is a transformation in the relationship with the Risen Christ.

“What the Lord asks of Mary is that she not merely cling to what is familiar but step back and see what is new. Jesus is no longer a mere rabbi or teacher. He is not merely the Jesus she knew; He is Lord and He is risen. when Jesus says that He is ascending to “My Father and your Father,” He does not use the “and of equivalence” but the “and of comparison.” As a man, Jesus can speak of God as His Father, but His human nature is hypostatically united to His divine nature as God, the Second Person of the Trinity. So, although God is our Father and Christ’s Father, He is Christ’s Father in a far richer and more profound way. Jesus says, “My God and your God” not by way of equivalence, but by way of comparison. In all these ways, the Lord Jesus must ascend in our understanding. He will do that provided we do not go on clinging to Him in a merely human and familiar way.”^{iv}

In addition, it was never Jesus’ plan to stay on the earth. His bodily resurrection was not the promised return. What was His plan? He had told His disciples before of His suffering, death on the cross, and resurrection on the third day. This had been accomplished. He appears to Mary Magdalene and to His disciples to show Himself alive, instruct them, ascend to heaven, and send them the promised Holy Spirit (John 16:7; 20:22; Acts 2:1-8). His relationship with them has changed from a physical presence to a close communion with the Holy Spirit.

Mary Magdalene has the honor of being the first human to witness the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Of course, angels were the first because they were involved in removing the stone and announcing His resurrection, declaring, ***He is not here, but is risen!*** You will see in Chapter 2 how angels also delivered ***the Revelation of Jesus Christ*** to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:1-2). Although each account indicates disbelief among the disciples, the Gospels of John and Luke report Apostles John and Peter running to the tomb only to find it empty. Peter’s response is described as ***marveling to himself***, while John responds that ***he saw and believed***. (Luke 24:12; John 20:8). Was Peter astonished at what he saw? Did it disturb him? What did John see that caused him to believe Jesus had indeed risen and is alive? They saw ***the linen cloths*** but also ***the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself*** (John 20:7). Herein lies a secret providing certain evidence of His resurrection. Grave robbers would not take the time to fold and carefully place by themselves any of the burial cloths of Jesus. Recent findings, including X-ray tests, flax and blood stain analysis, indicate that the *Shroud of Turin* could, as many believe, be the burial cloth of Jesus.^v The soldiers assigned to guard the tomb reported all things to the chief priests and elders who deliberated what to do. This is what their consultation produced:

Matt. 28:11-15 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹²When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’” ¹⁴And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and

make you secure.” ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The news, however, about the resurrection of Jesus could not be denied. On that first day, the Risen Christ also walked with two disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

Mark 16:12-13 After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

Luke 24:13-35 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, “What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” ¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” ¹⁹ And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.” ²⁵ Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Mark says Jesus ***appeared in another form***. Apparently, this means His outward appearance had changed, and the two men did not recognize Him. Luke gives us a detailed account of this event, identifying one of the men as Cleopas. Jesus dialogues with them, but most importantly ***beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scripture the things concerning Himself*** (Luke 24:27). Spiritual fire ignited and burned in their heart when Jesus talked with them and opened the Scriptures to them. But it was when He was at the table with them, ***took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them that their eyes were opened and they knew Him*** (Luke 24:30-32, 35). The Bible says, ***Jesus vanished from their sight*** (Luke 24:31). He suddenly became invisible. We learn from these accounts that the

Risen Christ's outward appearance could change and that He could appear and disappear at will. It makes us wonder what we will be able to do in our resurrected and glorified bodies.

Jesus continued to make appearances on the first day after His resurrection. He appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other women in the morning, to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and later He appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem.

Mark 16:14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Luke 24:36-43 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." ⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³ And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

John 20:19-25 Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained." ²⁴ Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

The above accounts point to the bodily resurrection of Jesus. He was not a spirit as they first suspected. Jesus invited them to touch Him, feel Him, and know it was Him. These were ***infallible proofs***. But Thomas, who was not present, informed them that he needed to see and touch the nail prints and the hole in His side to believe. Eight days later, Thomas would see for himself the Risen Christ.

John 20:26-29 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

There is little evidence in the above passage that Thomas actually put his finger on the nail prints of Jesus' hands or put his hand into His side that was pierced. Instead, based upon what he saw, Thomas answered, ***My Lord and my God!*** And Jesus just appeared

in their midst when the doors were shut. These were the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem.

The scene now shifts to the Sea of Tiberias in Galilee and a mountain in Galilee for two more post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

John 21:1-14 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself*: ² Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. ⁴ But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." ⁶ And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. ⁷ Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. ⁹ Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." ¹¹ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come *and* eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. ¹⁴ This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Matt. 28:16-17 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

The infallible proofs and signs of the bodily resurrection of Jesus continue in Galilee. The command of Jesus to cast the net on the right side of the boat resulted in a large catch of fish, causing these seven disciples to declare, ***It is the Lord!*** Furthermore, the net with 153 fish was unbroken. And none of these fish were used in the breakfast! Note that ***as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread*** (John 21:9). Where did Jesus get the fish? Jesus had resisted Satan's temptation in the wilderness ***if You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread*** (Matt. 4:3). But this is now the Risen Christ, and He is serving His disciples a breakfast He has supernaturally prepared. Satan failed to defeat Jesus when He walked the face of the earth. He thought he won in the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross, but the open tomb sealed Satan's defeat forever. In addition, the resurrected Christ had appointed a mountain in Galilee for His eleven disciples to meet Him. This was the mountain where He would issue the Great Commission. It is difficult to see how some still doubted when they encountered the Risen Christ. But many doubt today in the face of ***many infallible proofs***. The words of the Risen Christ ring true today: ***Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*** (John 20:29).

Post-Resurrection Commands of Jesus

Jesus gave commands to His disciples during the forty days following His resurrection. His first commands were to Mary Magdalene and the women to go and tell His disciples, and for them to go to an appointed place in Galilee where they would see Him. It would be days before they would be in Galilee, but Jesus made two appearances to His disciples in Jerusalem, one without Thomas and the second with Thomas present. Jesus appears a third time to seven of His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias in Galilee and then on a mountain in Galilee before His ascension. Post-resurrection commands are included in several of these appearances of the Risen Christ. The commands that follow deal mainly with the Great Commission:

1. Go, Make Disciples, Baptize, Teach

Matt. 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

2. Preach, Believe in Jesus, Baptize, In His Name Cast out Demons, Speak in New Tongues, Do not Fear Deadly Things, Lay Hands on the Sick

Mark 16:15-18 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

3. Preach Repentance and Remission of Sins, Wait to be Clothed with the Power of the Holy Spirit

Luke 24:44-49 Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

4. Receive the Holy Spirit, Forgive Sins

John 20:21-23 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

5. Love Jesus More, Feed Young Disciples, Tend and Feed the Flock of God, Follow Jesus

John 21:15-19 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. ¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish." ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

6. Wait to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit, Receive the Power of the Holy Spirit, Witness for Jesus throughout the World

Acts 1:4-8 And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "*which*," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The above summary of the instructions and commands of the Risen Christ during His forty days of post-resurrection appearances provides a foundational basis to proceed in ministry today from generation to generation. The Apostles and the Early Church followed these commands after receiving the power of the Holy Spirit. Their obedience to each instruction, each command, produced the results we see recorded throughout the New Testament. A resurgence of this obedient commitment to continue the ministry of the Risen Christ on earth is needed today. We read the same instructions and commands He gave them during these forty days. It is time for this generation to follow what He has instructed us to do.

The Ascension of the Risen Christ

The Apostles and the Early Church continued the ministry of Jesus on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit after His ascension. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus and His commands to His disciples are followed by His ascension.

Mark 16:19-20 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Luke 24:50-53 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

Acts 1:9-14 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son of Alphaeus* and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son of James*. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

The above references to the Ascension of Jesus use several Greek words to describe the event.

Received up: 353. ἀναλαμβάνω *anambánō*; fut. *analépsomai*, aor. pass. *aneléphthēn*, 2d aor. *anélabon*, from *aná* (303), up, and *lambánō* (2983), to take. To take up (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:2, 11, 22; 7:43).^{vi}

Parted From: 1339. διίστημι *diístēmi*; fut. *diastēsō*, aor. *diéstēsa*, from *diá* (1223), denoting separation, and *hístēmi* (2476), to stand. Trans., to separate, place asunder. Intrans., to separate oneself, go away. In the NT, spoken of place used intrans. meaning to depart from (Luke 24:51; Acts 27:28 where the meaning is departing a little or going a little further); spoken of time, to pass away, to elapse (Luke 22:59).^{vii}

Carried up: 399. ἀναφέρω *anaphérō*; fut. *anoísō*, aor. *anénegka*, 2d aor. *anénegkon*, from *aná* (303), up, and *phérō* (5342), to carry, bring, bear. To carry, bring up.^{viii} To cause to move from a lower position to a higher, *take, lead, bring up*, of pers. ἃ. αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλόν *he led them up a high mountain* Mt 17:1; Mk 9:2. Pass. ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τ. οὐρανόν *he was taken up into heaven* Lk 24:51.^{ix}

Taken up: 1869. ἐπείρω *epaíró*; fut. *eparṓ*, from *epí* (1909), upon, and *aíró* (142), to lift up. To raise up. Trans., to hoist up as a sail (Acts 27:40); in the pass., to be taken up, be borne upward (Acts 1:9)^x

Received: 5274. ὑπολαμβάνω *hupolambánō*; fut. *hupolēpsomai*, from *hupó* (5259), under, and *lambánō* (2983), to take, receive.^{xi} To cause to ascend, *take up* τινά *someone* (Jos., Ant. 11, 238) νεφέλη ὑπέλαβεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν *a cloud took him up, out of their sight* Ac 1:9.^{xii}

A review of these words displays important details of the ascension. The event occurred on Mount Olivet, about one kilometer or 2/3 mile from Jerusalem. Jesus had to move a short distance from His disciples. This separation was necessary because His resurrection and ascension involved great power. This was not earthly power but heavenly power. The same power that created the world in the beginning was now taking Jesus up to heaven. The Risen Christ was about to be moved to a higher position to be enthroned at the right hand of God. It is the position of all power, authority, strength, honor, and protection. The Apostle Paul prayed for believers at Ephesus to understand this power:

Eph. 1:15-23 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The power is described as something beyond anything known to man, meaning, *to attain a degree that extraordinarily exceeds a point on a scale of extent, go beyond, surpass, outdo*^{xiii} Paul also refers to this power as ***His mighty power***, meaning it has the *capability to function effectively*.^{xiv} Everything flows from the right hand of the throne room of heaven. Believers left on earth at any time in history are connected with the Risen Christ through the Holy Spirit. Spiritually speaking, God has ***made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ*** (Eph. 2:5-6). This means that you can tap into the flow of this power to continue the ministry of Jesus on earth. It saddens all of heaven when disciples of Christ resist the Holy Spirit, failing to seek Him and to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. Those who, for whatever reason, are not filled with the Holy Spirit like the Apostles and the Early Church can still do important work for the Kingdom, but they will do far more after receiving the power of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples had to stand back and observe as a cloud came under Jesus and took Him up to heaven. One cannot blame the disciples for standing there with their eyes locked onto the resurrected Jesus disappearing before them. However, God sent two angels to break up their relentless stare, saying, ***Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven*** (Acts 1:9).

Here, you have a certain promise of His return. Surely, they had heard this before. Jesus had taught them that He would prepare a place for them in heaven and promised them, ***I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*** (John 14:3). The response of the disciples to the ascension of the Risen Christ was to return to the Upper Room in Jerusalem and begin a 10-day prayer vigil. They were intent on following the commands Jesus had given them during the forty days leading up to His ascension to heaven. The activities of the eleven disciples and those who were with them after the ascension of the Risen Christ can be summarized in the following way:

- They Began a 10-Day Prayer Vigil in the Upper Room (Acts 1:12-14).
- They Selected Matthias to Replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26).
- They Praised and Blessed God in the Temple (Luke 24:53).
- They were Filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
- They Preached the Word Everywhere with Miracles Confirming God's Word (Mark 16:20).

Post-Ascension Appearances of Jesus

The resurrection appearances of the Risen Christ did not end with His ascension. Paul also chronicles the resurrection appearances of Jesus before and after the ascension in this way:

1Cor. 15:3-8 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

The mention of the Risen Christ appearing to over 500 followers at once, most of whom were still alive, provides a strong public witness to His resurrection. The inclusion of James, the brother of Jesus, agrees that His brothers believed and gathered with 120 disciples for the ten-day prayer vigil following the ascension of Jesus.

Acts 1:14-15 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. ¹⁵And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said...

The ascended Jesus also appeared to Saul (Paul) on the Damascus Road. Although the account appears in Chapter 9 of Acts, Paul shared his experience when he addressed the mob after being arrested in Jerusalem and also in his defense at Caesarea before Governor Felix and King Agrippa, along with his wife, Bernice.

Acts 9:3-9	Acts 22:6-11	Acts 26:13-18
<p>As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." ⁶So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord <i>said</i> to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. ⁸Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought <i>him</i> into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.</p>	<p>"Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. ⁷And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' ⁸So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' ⁹"And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. ¹⁰So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' ¹¹And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.</p>	<p>"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? <i>It is hard for you to kick against the goads.</i>' ¹⁵So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. ¹⁷I will deliver you from the <i>Jewish</i> people, as well as <i>from</i> the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸to open their eyes, <i>in order to turn them</i> from darkness to light, and <i>from</i> the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'</p>

Saul's (Paul's) encounter with the Risen and Ascended Jesus was not an optical illusion or erroneous perception of reality. He saw with his own eyes the glorious light of the Lord Jesus Christ. He heard His audible voice. He dialogued with the Risen Christ. Ananias also talked with the Lord about Saul (Paul) in a vision. He mentions to Paul that it was ***the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road***. Review the following account. What can you conclude about this and other post-ascension appearances of the Risen Christ? Compare them with the resurrection appearances of Jesus before His ascension. Take note of any similarities or differences.

Acts 9:10-19 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” ¹³ Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” ¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. ¹⁹ So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

The above account reveals that these post-ascension appearances of Jesus also involved specific instructions and commands. Paul returned to Jerusalem, where Jesus appeared again to him in a trance.

Acts 22:17-21 “Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance ¹⁸ and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’” ¹⁹ So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. ²⁰ And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’” ²¹ Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’”

Trance: 1611. ἔκστασις *ékstasis*; gen. *ekstáseōs*, from *exístēmi* (1839), to remove out of its place or state. A putting away, removal of anything out of a place. An ecstasy in which the mind is for a time carried, as it were, out of or beyond itself and lost. A trance, sacred ecstasy or rapture of the mind beyond itself when the use of the external senses are suspended and God reveals something in a peculiar manner (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17 [cf. 2 Cor. 12:2; Ezek. 1:1])).^{xv}

The Bible views the appearances of the Ascended Christ in trances and heavenly visions as reality. Both Annanias and Paul see and talk with Him. Likewise, Peter encountered the Risen and Ascended Christ in a trance while praying in the house of Simon the tanner in Joppa. The following accounts provide significant details of his experience:

Acts 10:9-16 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. ¹⁰ Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ¹³ And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” ¹⁴ But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” ¹⁵ And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” ¹⁶ This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. ¹⁷ Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate. ¹⁸ And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname

was Peter, was lodging there. ¹⁹ While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you. ²⁰ Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

Acts 11:4-12 But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. ⁶ When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ⁷ And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸ But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ ⁹ But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ ¹⁰ Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹ At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³ And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ¹⁴ who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave us* when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” ¹⁸ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

Annanias, Paul, and Peter all encountered the Lord Jesus in trances or visions. They entered this specific realm of the Spirit while praying. They knew the voice was that of the Lord who ascended to heaven. They called Him, **Lord!** In addition, the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter to go with the three men sent by Cornelius, ***doubting nothing***. It’s important to understand that when the Risen Christ appears to His disciples in such a way, something big is about to happen. In this case, the entire household of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius, believed and were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Gentiles. We refer to this event as *the Gentile Pentecost*. Although an angel came to Cornelius, it was the ascended Jesus, seated at the right hand of God, who sent him. The Risen Christ has all authority over the angels of heaven. He commands the angels. Peter realized this when the angel delivered him from prison.

Acts 12:5-11 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. ⁶ And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. ⁷ Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” And his chains fell off *his* hands. ⁸ Then the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.” ⁹ So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. ¹¹ And when Peter had come to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people.”

Angels are involved in most of the post-resurrection and post-ascension appearances of Jesus. The Bible reveals that Jesus could have called upon twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from the cross, but He humbled Himself, becoming lower than the angels. Remember what Jesus said when Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant:

Matt. 26:52-54 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

A legion consisted of 6,000 men in the time Jesus walked on earth. He could have asked for 72,000 angels to deliver Him from suffering and death. Jesus in the flesh could have prayed to His Father for this provision. He did not pray in this way to fulfill the Scriptures. Instead, ***He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*** (Phil. 2:8). But the Risen and Ascended Christ is ***highly exalted and given the name which is above every name*** (Phil 2:9). The contrast is remarkable.

Heb. 2:1-9 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ²For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, ⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? ⁵ For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. ⁶ But one testified in a certain place, saying: "*What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?*" ⁷ *You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.* ⁸ *You have put all things in subjection under his feet.*" For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

The Crucified Christ wore a crown of thorns; the Ascended Christ wears a crown of glory! The Jesus who walked on the face of the earth refused to pray for angelic assistance; the Ascended Christ commands the angels. He sends them to do His bidding. Therefore, we can pray and ask the Risen and Ascended Christ to send angels to assist us. Some believe we can command angels, but nowhere is this found in the Bible. They are subject only to the command of the Risen Christ. He sends them forth as ministering spirits to help us.

Heb. 1:13-14 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "*Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool*"? ¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

The point is that angels are sent forth by the Risen Christ, who ascended and is seated at the right hand of God. They are subject to Him. He commands them and sends them forth to help you in the ministry. Do not hesitate to pray and ask the Risen Christ to

dispatch angels to assist or even deliver you from difficulties but understand that you don't command them. Their chain of command is with the Risen and Ascended Christ.

The Lord also appeared to Paul one night in a vision during his mission in Corinth.

Acts 18:9-11 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” ¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Earlier, Silas and Timothy had joined Paul in Corinth. The Holy Spirit directed Paul to testify to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. The Jews opposed and blasphemed Paul, who declared, ***From now on I will go to the Gentiles*** (Acts 18:6). Although the Jews restricted the Gospel in Corinth, the appearance of the Ascended Christ in a vision encouraged Paul to continue the ministry to the Gentiles without restrictions. Nothing could hold him back. This was not like Paul's experience in other cities, where opposition drove him out. He could remain in Corinth teaching the Word because of this post-ascension appearance of the Risen Christ.

The Risen and Ascended Christ exercises all authority in the ministry of the Apostles. A final appearance to Paul after the ascension of Jesus again demonstrates how the Risen Christ is orchestrating the ministry. The following incident occurred when Paul was arrested in Jerusalem:

Acts 23:11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

The ***Lord stood by him***. The connotation is one of suddenness. Although some assume this appearance was in a vision, the Bible does not indicate this. Rather, the verse refers to the Living Christ standing at or near a specific place. Jesus encourages Paul to be confident in the face of danger and adversity.

Good Cheer: 2293. θαρσέω *tharséō*; contracted *tharsō*, fut. *tharsēsō*, from *thársos* (2294), boldness, courage. In the NT, only in the imper., *thársei*, and in the pl. *tharseíte*, be of good cheer, have courage, spoken by way of encouragement (Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; 10:49; Luke 8:48; John 16:33; Acts 23:11;). Equivalent to *tharréō* (2292), to be confident.^{xvi}

Christ followers today need the same encouragement in the face of increasing danger, adversity, and persecution. Governments and religious leaders continue to oppose and restrict the glorious ministry of Jesus in many places of the world. But the Risen, Ascended Christ, seated at the Right Hand of God, stands by you to show you His purpose. There was a reason for the difficult situation Paul was in. The Lord, from His heavenly command center, was sending him on a mission assignment to Rome.

The post-resurrection and post-ascension appearances of Jesus display great encouragement and direction for His followers. Confidence and faith in the Risen Christ soars to new heights, especially in the face of opposition and adversity. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, saw Jesus standing at the right of God as religious leaders rushed upon him to stone him.

Acts 7:54-55 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Rest assured that the Risen Christ is standing with you in the ministry. You are not alone. You are not forgotten. This is the Revelation of the Risen Christ. We cannot proceed with our study without mentioning Paul’s report of the ascension of Jesus.

Eph. 4:7-16 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: “*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.*” ⁹ (Now this, “*He ascended*”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Verse 8 in the above account begins with ***Therefore He says***. This clearly indicates that Jesus spoke what follows to Paul and the other Apostles after His ascension. However, the Risen Christ ***first descended into the lower parts of the earth*** before His ascension. Why was this important? This appearance of Jesus was a triumphant procession to demonstrate His victory over all principalities and powers. The Risen Christ ***disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it*** (Col. 2:15). According to the Faithlife Study Bible, *this verse describes Christ exposing, defeating, and subjugating the hostile spiritual powers (compare Luke 10:18; John 12:31; 1 Pet 3:22).*^{xvii} These verses give us a glimpse of what is to come in the battle with Satan and his evil, demonic forces in Revelation. Jesus knew the intensity of His fight with the devil when He was on earth. Even then, His authority and power had been secured in heaven. Luke reports that Jesus ***saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven*** after hearing of the seventy casting out demons in the authority of His name. John says that judgment of the world has begun, and ***the ruler of this world will be cast out***. Peter acknowledges that the Risen Christ is ***at the***

right hand of God, with all authority and power. A careful review of these verses reveals that all is subject to Him.

Luke 10:18-19	John 12:30-31	1 Peter 3:21-22
And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.	Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all <i>peoples</i> to Myself.”	There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

The above verses also reveal that Jesus fully understood His mission on earth and ultimate victory over Satan. If we do not have this understanding of the victory we have in the Risen Christ, we will struggle with confidence and confronting the enemy. After this revelation of Christ's victory over death to the principalities and powers of hell, Jesus ***ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things*** (Eph. 4:10). Once again, Jesus displays His authority over His church and all things from an ascended position at the right hand of God. He gives to the church what is called the *Ascension Gifts* or *Leadership Gifts*: *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers* (Eph. 4:11). Their purpose is ***for the equipping of the saints and the edifying of the body of Christ*** (Eph. 4:12). ***He Himself***, the Ascended Christ, did this. We need to see Jesus today as the Risen and Ascended Christ in all His glory and honor. He is still appearing and speaking to His church. It's time for this generation to get acquainted with the Risen, Ascended, Exalted, and Enthroned Christ.

Chapter 2: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

His Revelation

The Book of Revelation has a distinct structure, inspired by the Holy Spirit. John is instructed to write past, present, and future things in the context of what he sees and hears (Rev. 1:19). Therefore, we can divide the revelation into three parts. The following chart helps us to view the remarkable organizational structure of the book in its entirety:

REVELATION			
"I am the Alpha . . ." (1:8)	"The things which you have seen . . ."	"The things which are . . ."	"The things which will take place . . ." (Rev. 1:19)
	Personal and biographical	Christ's letters to the seven churches	Christ as Judge (chaps. 4–5) The Tribulation (chaps. 6–18) The Coming of Christ (chap. 19) The Millennium (chap. 20) The Eternal State (chaps. 21–22)
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTERS 2–3	CHAPTERS 4–22
Scope	History: looking back		Prophecy: looking ahead
Style	Dialogue		Observations and questions
Scene	On earth		Shifts between earth and heaven
Main Theme	Christ's future triumph over the forces of evil and His re-creation of the world for the redeemed		
Key Verses	1:7, 19; 22:12–13		

The first three verses of the Book of Revelation establish the foundation for the most important and unique revelation ever given to man. Take a moment and read these verses.

Rev. 1:1-3 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John,² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

The above three verses represent what is called a *superscription*. You know these verses are a *superscription* because John's greeting immediately follows. A *superscript* is a name, title, or numerical value that is written or engraved on or above something. It can be inscribed on a stone, a sign, or at the beginning or also the end of a document. The practice of using inscriptions in this way to communicate the value of something or someone appears throughout the Bible. For example, remember the question Jesus posed to the Pharisees when they questioned Him if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. They brought Him a coin and Jesus asked, ***Whose image and inscription is this?*** (Matt. 22:20). And even Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross of Jesus. The title read: ***JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS*** (John 19:19-20) It

appeared in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The Apostle Paul used *superscriptions* at the beginning and ending of many of his epistles. Below is a clear picture of the *superscription* used at the beginning of the Book of Revelation:

“**The Superscription** (1:1–3) falls into three parts, each part of which in turn is formed of three elements. The first sets forth the source of the Apocalypse, the second its contents, and the third the blessedness of those who receive and fulfil its teachings. As regards the source—it was God by whom the Apocalypse was given to Christ: it was Christ who sent His angel and signified it to John: it was John who bare witness to it as from God and Christ. As for its contents—these were the word of God and the truth attested by Christ, which were embodied in the visions which John had seen. As for the blessedness that attends on its reception—this blessedness is to be the portion of those that read it in the Churches, of those that hear, and of those that observe it.”^{xviii}

The very first thing you notice is that this is ***the Revelation of Jesus Christ***. There can be no question about the source of what is to be revealed and its value for believers today. The 2nd century title of the book **Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου** may assign authorship to the Apostle John, but this in no way represents the source. The source is clearly and unquestionably Jesus Christ, ***who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty*** (Rev. 1:4, 8). It is His revelation, **ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**, the revelation of the Risen Christ!

God the Father has given this revelation to His Son, who has now been glorified and enthroned at the right hand of God. The order of this unveiling is important.

1. From God, the Father
2. To Jesus Christ, His Son
3. To an Angel
4. To John, His servant
5. To His servants

The fact that Jesus received the revelation from His Father to give to those who serve and follow Him establishes the absolute necessity of receiving and understanding what He desires to show us. God has things He wants us to see and understand. And He gave it to Jesus, the Risen Christ, to get it to us. The Risen Christ received two things, among others, from His Father to give to us. One was the Promise of the Father. Look at these words the Risen Christ spoke to His disciples, followed by Peter’s acknowledgement:

Luke 24:49 “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:4-5 And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 2:33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

How remarkable it is that the entire Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is involved in the outpouring of the Spirit upon believers in the Risen Christ! Of course, the promise

Jesus referred to was that of the Holy Spirit. It was the promise they had heard about from Him when He walked on the earth. It was the promise that would only be received when Jesus ascended to heaven because He was to receive it from His Father. Again, this is coming from God the Father to His Son, and then to us.

The second thing Jesus received for us in this revelation was to show us **things which must shortly take place** (Rev. 1:1). There are things the Risen Christ wants us to know before He returns. These things are only revealed by the Holy Spirit. Recall what Jesus told His disciples when He was on earth.

John 16:12-15 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

Note how Jesus said He, the Holy Spirit, would **tell you things to come**. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul prayed for believers to receive **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**:

Eph. 1:17-23 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Keep in mind that Jesus is now located at **the third heaven**, which is the highest place in the heavens (2 Cor. 12:2-4). The Bible says, **He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things** (Eph. 4:10). The Bible also speaks of the *heavens* and *heaven*. The *heavens* first refer to the sky and clouds where birds fly. Scripture describes this as **the firmament of the heavens** (Gen. 1:20). Then there is what we call outer space, consisting of all the stars, planets, and galaxies of the universe. It also includes the sun and the moon, created by God **to give light on the earth** (Gen. 1:14-19). The third heaven mentioned before is far beyond. It is where God dwells. Therefore, the revelation given to the Risen Christ for us comes from this location. It is the place Paul was taken, either in a vision or bodily was unknown to him. Nevertheless, it was the same place Jesus ascended to and where the Holy Spirit carried the Apostle John to receive the revelation of the Risen Christ.

Jesus wants to show us things to come because He says **the time is near**. The time that is being talked about is *kairos* time; not *chronos* or chronological time. You can

be misled into setting chronological dates for end-time events and assigning meanings to symbols beyond the boundaries of Scripture if you do not understand *kairos* time. So, take a careful look at these important Greek meanings:

καιρός *kairós*; A season, opportune time. It is not merely as a succession of minutes, which is *chrónos*, but a period of opportunity (though not necessity). There is really no Eng. equivalent to the word *kairós*, appropriate or opportune time, which when used in the pl. with *chrónoi* (times), is translated as “seasons,” times at which certain foreordained events take place.^{xix}

καιρός, οὔ, ὅ, a point of time or period of time, *time, period*, freq. with implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology, a moment or period as especially appropriate, the right, proper, favorable time ἐν καιρῷ at the right time, a defined period for an event. definite, fixed time, a period characterized by some aspect of special crisis, time, one of the chief terms relating to the endtime: ὁ καιρός the time of crisis, the last times.^{xx}

The above definitions will serve you well in receiving a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ. Remember, Jesus came preaching that ***the kingdom of heaven is at hand*** (Matt. 4:17). He instructed His disciples to preach the same (Matt. 10:7). I discovered a remarkable thing regarding the expression about the kingdom of God, that it ***is at hand***. The Greek verb ἐγγίζω (*eggizo*) is a *reference to space, meaning that something is here*.^{xxi} Another Greek dictionary says, *to move in space and so draw closer to a reference point, draw near, come near, the approach of humans and transcendent beings*.^{xxii} And the same word is used ἐγγύς (*eggus*) *pertaining to being in close proximity spatially, near, close to* when in Revelation it says ***the time is near***.^{xxiii} I pray you have captured the same thing in this revelation; that you will move closer to Christ and His kingdom as we study together ***the Revelation of Jesus Christ***. You and I will be in close proximity to the One ***who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty***. He’s going to fill the space in our hearts, our minds, our lives, and our ministries like never before. His revelation brings you closer to Him in all His glory.

An Apocalyptic Revelation

Revelation at the outset identifies itself as the *Apocalypse*. Although the entire Bible can be, generally speaking, a revelation or *apocalypse* to mankind, there are only two books of the Bible that can strictly be considered entirely *apocalyptic* in nature. They are the book of Daniel in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation in the New Testament. You can easily see why these two books are special when you examine the word *apocalypse* in the New Testament. The *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* provides an overview of the dynamic *apocalyptic* nature surrounding these two books of the Bible from the perspective of the New Testament:

“ἀποκάλυψις (‘revelation’) occurs some eighteen times in the NT. The general sense is ‘instruction concerning Divine things before unknown—especially those relating to the Christian salvation—given to the soul by God or the ascended Christ, especially through the operation of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 2:10)’ (Grimm-Thayer) The word was important to St. Paul when he wished to express his independence of the first apostles in reference to his knowledge of the gospel and even to the steps taken to come to an understanding with them (Eph 3:3, Gal 2:2). The object of

ἀποκάλυψις is, therefore, a *mystery* (Ro 16:25). The gospel without it would remain unknown, with it it is an 'open secret.'* The source, as also the end or object, of ἀποκάλυψις is God or Jesus Christ, and the mode may be vision or ecstasy (2 Co 12:1). It may also be, however, events which strike the general eye, e.g. 'the righteous judgment of God' (Ro 2:5); 'ἀποκάλυψις of the sons of God' (8:19), *i.e.* 'the glory that is manifestly given to some, showing them to be sons of God'; 'ἀποκάλυψις of the glory of Christ' (1 P 4:13), *i.e.* 'the glory with which He will return from heaven' (Grimm-Thayer). The return is called the 'ἀποκάλυψις of the Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Th 1:7, 1 Co 1:7, 1 P 1:2, 13)."^{xxiv}

The above overview demonstrates that the *Apocalypse* or Revelation deals with things previously veiled or hidden to us that are now being unveiled, uncovered, and shown to us. Jesus wants to make these things fully known to you. Revelation gives you a disclosure or inside look into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

Paul received revelation on God's plan concerning the salvation of the Gentiles. He could not have received or understood this except for ***the dispensation of the grace of God*** given to him.

Eph. 3:1-12 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, ³ how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, ⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), ⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, ⁷ of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power ⁸ To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

It was ***by revelation*** that Paul was shown the mystery of Christ concerning the Gentiles being joint heirs through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It had been a mystery hidden for ages. Note this: it ***was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets*** (Eph. 3:5). This means the mystery in this way and at this critical moment in history had not been fully disclosed or manifested before Jesus came to bring salvation to the world. In addition, it is amazing to learn that it is God's will for all to ***see what is the fellowship of the mystery*** revealed to Paul. In other words, when you receive the revelation by the Spirit, you ascend into a heightened understanding, partnership (Greek *koinonia*), and participation by the same Spirit with the revelation given by God. We can better understand how John received ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ*** or *Apocalypse* by examining how Paul also received revelation from God. Keep in mind that it was ***by revelation*** that the mystery of Christ had been made known to him. Therefore, let's take a closer look at how the Apostle Paul received from God such revelatory understanding into the mystery

of Christ concerning the Gentiles. He received revelation according to the Scriptures in the following way:

- By a dispensation of God's grace (Eph. 3:2)
- By the word of God (Eph. 3:3-4 what is written & read before)
- By the Spirit (Eph. 3:5)
- By the working of God's power (Eph. 3:7)

Each of the above was essential for Paul and for Christ's ***holy apostles and prophets*** to receive the timely revelation that the Gentiles were equally and fully included as ***fellow heirs, of the same body*** (the church), and ***partakers*** of God's promise in Christ through the Gospel. None of us needs to be reminded how important this revelation was for the Early Church and for us today. Although there was much debate on this by believing Jews, ***the apostles, the elders, and the brethren*** in Jerusalem, in fact ***the whole church***, acted on the revelation God had given. A review of the following account provides us with a clear picture of the importance of receiving and acting upon the revelation given by God.

Acts 15:6-21 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. ⁷ And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: "Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸ So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, ⁹ and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." ¹² Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men *and* brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴ Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ¹⁶ *After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;* ¹⁷ *So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.*" ¹⁸ "Known to God from eternity are all His works. ¹⁹ Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰ but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. ²¹ For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Acts 15:23-29 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely*, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. ²³ They wrote this *letter* by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. ²⁴ Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must be circumcised and keep the law*"—to whom we gave no *such* commandment—²⁵ it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols,

from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

What was happening here in the church of the Living God? What brought them to this understanding? It was the same revelatory things we mentioned before that were active in this historic account in the Early Church. It was by God's grace. It was by God's spoken word written and recorded in the Bible centuries before through the prophet Amos. It was by the Holy Spirit. It was by God's power that they were able to understand and partner with the revelation Peter and Paul both received. These confirmed revelations given by God are essential for new generation leaders and disciples to receive and act upon. You will get a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ when you approach the book of Revelation in this way. Jesus wants to take you within the veil, behind the curtain, to see by revelation what the Spirit says to the churches. I believe a season of unveiling is coming upon us, taking us beyond the need to dissect the meaning of symbols to hearing the voice of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is about to uncover things about the second coming of Jesus, His appearance, His nature, and His purpose that have been somewhat hidden.

A Prophetic Revelation

The revelation John received by the Spirit is described as ***the words of this prophecy*** (Rev. 1:3). The prophetic nature of the *apocalypse* is again emphatically confirmed in the last chapter of the book of Revelation.

Rev. 22:6-7 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ⁷ "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Rev. 22:10 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

Rev. 22:18-19 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Note how Jesus is referred to as ***the Lord God of the holy prophets***, and the revelation given is repeatedly declared as ***the words of the prophecy of this book***. It is necessary, therefore, to properly view and understand the revelation as a prophetic one. Every word, every verse, every chapter ***of this book*** is unveiling things about the Risen Christ; things He wants you to know. Why? Because ***the time is at hand!***

The Book of Revelation has nine references to the word *prophecy*. Only First Corinthians with sixteen occurrences has more in the New Testament. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel account for around 44% of all references of *prophecy* in the Old Testament. It is important to have a basic knowledge and understanding of prophecy simply because Revelation is identified as a book of prophecy. 5-Fold Global has two

Training Manuals to help leaders and believers fully grasp biblical prophecy and **the things which must shortly take place**. One is entitled: *Biblical Prophets and Prophecy: A Prophetic Reset for the New Generation Church*.^{xxv} This manual is designed to assist young emerging leaders to understand prophecy, evaluate prophecies, correct prophetic abuses, and equip the saints in the beneficial operation of prophecy in the church. The second training manual is *God's Plan for the Ages: What the Bible Says About the End Times*.^{xxvi} This is a study that follows God's plan through the Bible from beginning to end, including the signs of the end, the rapture, the rise of antichrist, the great tribulation, Armageddon, the millennial reign of Christ, and much more. These equipping manuals will also be beneficial in receiving a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ. It will be helpful for you to review the following Greek meanings of prophecy before we go inside ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ***.

προφητεία *prophēteía*; gen. *prophēteías*, fem. noun from *prophēteúō* (4395), to prophesy. A prophesying or prophecy. (I) Particularly prediction, the foretelling of future events, including the declarations, exhortations, and warnings uttered by the prophets while acting under divine influence; of the prophecies of the OT (Matt. 13:14; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21); the revelations and warnings of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19, equal to *marturia* [3141], witness, as in Rev. 19:10. See also Sept.: 2 Chr. 15:8). In 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14, *prophēteía* refers either to the prophetic revelations or directions of the Holy Spirit by which persons were designated as officers and teachers in the primitive church (cf. Acts 13:2; 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:4–8ff.; 14:24, 30, 31), or to the authoritative declaration made by the presbytery of the fitness for ministry of one whom they are ordaining.^{xxvii}

προφητεία, ας, ἡ (προφήτης; ① **act of interpreting divine will or purpose, prophetic activity** αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν **Rv 11:6**. μισθοὺς λαμβάνει τῆς προφητείας αὐτοῦ *he accepts pay for his activity as prophet* Hm 11:12. ② **the gift of interpreting divine will or purpose, gift of prophesying**. Of Christians **Ro 12:6**; **1 Cor 12:10**; **13:2**, 8 v.l.; **14:22**. The pl. of various kinds and grades of prophetic gifts **13:8**; **1 Th 5:20**. τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πρ. *the spirit of prophecy* **Rv 19:10**. ③ **the utterance of one who interprets divine will or purpose, prophecy**: a) of OT inspired statement ἡ προφητεία Ἡσαΐου **Mt 13:14**. Gener. of OT sayings **2 Pt 1:20f**. b) of inspired statements by Christian prophets ἐν προφητείᾳ *in the form of a prophetic saying* **1 Cor 14:6**; **1 Th 5:20** (s. 2 above); **1 Ti 1:18**; **4:14**. οἱ λόγοι τῆς πρ. *the words of the prophecy* **Rv 1:3**. οἱ λόγοι τῆς πρ. τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου *the words of prophecy in this book* **22:7, 10, 18**. οἱ λόγ. τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς πρ. ταύτης *the words of this book of prophecy* vs. **19**.^{xxviii}

The above definitions and references firmly establish the value of prophecy in the Bible. It also indicates the importance of the words of prophecy in the book of Revelation.

Remember, the Risen Christ of the Revelation identifies Himself as **the Lord God of the Holy Prophets**. He is the Lord of Revelation! There is something very profound about this statement when considering He alone is the One worthy of our worship. Although we will later discuss the topic of worship as a response to what is unveiled in Revelation, the following accounts have a special meaning regarding **the words of this book of prophecy**.

Rev. 19:9-10	Rev. 22:8-10
<p>Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See <i>that you do not do that!</i> I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”</p>	<p>Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.⁹ Then he said to me, “See <i>that you do not do that.</i> For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.</p>

The above verses clearly show that angels are not the source of the prophecy or revelation given to John for us. Jesus is the source! The angel emphatically exhorts John to **Worship God** based upon **the testimony of Jesus**, which **is the spirit of prophecy**. Both the worship of Jesus and the testimony of Jesus are intimately linked with prophecy and dependent upon knowing Him. Let explore more deeply what the testimony of Jesus is all about. The Greek word for testimony is *marturia*. This word has a rich biblical meaning.

μαρτυρία *marturía*; gen. *marturias*, fem. noun from *marturéō* (3140), to witness. A witness, certification (John 1:7), testimony (Mark 14:55, 56, 59; Luke 22:71), that which someone witnesses or states concerning a person or thing (Acts 22:18; 1 Tim. 3:7; Titus 1:13). Used of the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus (John 1:19; 5:36); of the declarations of Jesus concerning Himself (John 5:31; 8:13, 14). It is a declaration by a witness who speaks with the authority of one who knows (John 5:34; 3 John 1:12). In 1 John 5:9–11, John refers to the record of witness as being the fact that God in His Son has given eternal life to believers. In John 3:11, 32, 33, the testimony of Jesus is that which He declares with the authority of a witness, of one who knows (v. 11). However, in Rev. 1:2, 9, “the testimony of Jesus” is the announcement of the gospel, the apostolic preaching of Christ as determined by the Apostle’s testimony (v. 2, “all things that he saw”). This testimony especially concerns Christ and is based upon a personal knowledge of Him (Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 20:4). That *marturía* is used in the NT to denote martyrdom is an untenable inference from Rev. 11:7; 12:11.^{xxx}

The writers of *Got Questions Ministries* of Colorado Springs list *three common understandings of the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*.^{xxx}

1. *Jesus is the substance of all prophecy, or, put another way, Jesus is the common theme among all prophecy.*
2. *All true prophecy bears witness about Jesus. Therefore, all prophecy should cause us to worship Him alone.*
3. *The message or testimony given by Jesus is the essence of true prophecy. Jesus is the Word, and no prophecy comes to us except through Him, ultimately pointing to God as the source of all true prophecy.*

Actually, all of the above capture the fact that Jesus Christ remains **the spirit of prophecy** from beginning to end. Look at these prophetic words by the Risen Christ from the first and last chapters of the book of Revelation.

Revelation 1

Rev. 1:8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Rev. 1:11 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Rev. 1:17-20 Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

Revelation 22

Rev. 22:7 Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Rev. 22:12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*, the First and the Last.”

Rev. 22:16 I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

Rev. 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The conclusion is that the unveiling of the apocalypse given to the Apostle John by the Risen Christ is a prophetic revelation throughout. No other conclusion can be reached.

A Blessed Revelation

Revelation is the only book of the Bible that promises a direct blessing to ***he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it*** (Rev. 1:3). Revelation is perhaps the most important prophetic book of the Bible because it brings us close to the divine will and purpose of God in what lies before us as His followers. You are especially favored, privileged, and in a fortunate position of blessing to receive this prophetic revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ. Did you notice there are three things prescribed to experience the blessing?

1. Read
2. Hear
3. Keep

The above words are all verbs of action that place you in a position of blessing. Reading the words of this prophecy is not merely an academic exercise. The Greek *anaginosko* (read) emphatically means *to know, to perceive accurately, to recognize with the consequential meaning to know by reading*.^{xxx} You may recall what Jesus said in response to those who questioned Him for healing on the Sabbath:

Matt. 12:3-7 But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? ⁶ Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. ⁷ But if you had known what *this* means, ‘*I desire mercy and not sacrifice*,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

The religious leaders had read the above, but without recognizing and understanding the Lord as the *Lord even of the Sabbath*. Numerous other instances are recorded of Jesus using the same phrase, *Have you not read?* Here are just a few:

Matt. 19:4-6 And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Matt. 21:14-16 Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant ¹⁶ and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘*Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise*’?”

Matt 21:42-43 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘*The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes*’? ⁴³ “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴ And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

Matt. 22:29-33 Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. ³¹ But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² ‘*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” ³³ And when the multitudes heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching.

Matt. 24:15-26 Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. ²³ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He *is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*.

Whoever reads, let him understand in the above selection indicates that Jesus wants you to understand, to recognize something when you read the Scriptures. There is a spiritual insight to be gained, a spiritual revelation to understand and apprehend, a thought by the Spirit to be taken to heart and acted upon. The same characterization of

reading is emphasized by reading the words of this book of prophecy we refer to as *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

There is an equal focus upon hearing the words of this prophecy. You cannot be blessed unless you also hear the words of the prophecy. This is not speaking about hearing in general. Rather, it means *to hear with attention, hearken or listen to, to hear with the ear of the mind to understand, comprehend*.^{xxxii} At times, Jesus would gather His disciples and the multitude to Himself saying, ***“Hear Me, everyone, and understand:”*** (Mark 7:14). The heavenly counsel is for everyone to listen to Jesus:

Matt. 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35)

It would be a far different world if more people listened to Jesus. Jesus emphasized the importance of hearing when He walked on the earth. When asked why He spoke to the people in parables He answered, ***Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand*** (Matt. 13:13). Typically, when Jesus taught or told parables like the Parable of the Sower He would say, ***he who has ears to hear, let him hear*** (Matt. 13:9). The Risen Christ of the Revelation is no exception. Seven times in His messages to the churches He says, ***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). The emphasis on attentive hearing, a hearkening to the voice of the Spirit, is essential for the effective working of every church. There are churches in very difficult situations around the world today that need to hear what the Spirit says. Heaven echoes the same message, ***Hear Him!*** In the context of the revelation, the church is required to exercise this ear of the mind and heart regarding the words of this prophecy. In fact, in the account of the rise and identity of the Antichrist, you find the admonition, ***If anyone has an ear, let him hear*** (Rev. 13:9). And those who hear with spiritual understanding will be able to comprehend things like the number of the Antichrist.

Rev. 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

This is also true with all the words of the prophecy from the Risen Christ. If you have wisdom and spiritual understanding, you will be able by the Spirit to know and figure out things that have been hidden. What a blessing to be privileged in this way as a faithful servant of the Lord.

The Parable of the Sower mentioned earlier is a prime example of the importance of hearing and understanding the word of God.

The Parable of the Sower

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Parable of the Sower Explained

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; ¹⁷for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*. ¹⁸ "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

You can see the focus on hearing in the Parable of the Sower with multiple references to hearing. However, the emphasis on hearing with understanding brings the hearer of the Word into a blessed position. It is a position to see and hear by the Spirit what even many prophets and righteous men desired to see and to hear. The devil is able to engage a successful mission against hearers that have no understanding. Only those who hear and understand by the Spirit bear fruit. The Holy Spirit is the hearing aid every believer needs today.

Isa. 50:4-5 "The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to *him who is weary*. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned. ⁵ The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

This is talking about an ear that the Lord has opened for revelation. Many believers today say that God does not speak to them. This means their ears are not accustomed to hearing from Him. Their ears have not been opened. Their ears need to be aroused, stirred up, and awakened by God to hear revelation and to understand revelation. There is an inability to learn when the ear is not accustomed to the voice of the Spirit. But when the ear is opened, hearing and understanding will merge together by the Spirit of God. But there is more to the blessing of reading and hearing the words of the prophecy.

The blessing of Revelation also applies to those who keep what is written. The privileged position of blessing is for those who ***keep those things which are written in***

it; for the time is near (Rev. 1:3). What does it mean to keep the things written in the book of Revelation?

τηρέω *tēréo*; contracted *tērō*, fut. *tērēsō*, from *tērós* (n.f.), a warden, guard. To keep an eye on, watch, and hence to guard, keep, obey, trans.: Particularly to watch, observe attentively, keep the eyes fixed upon, with the acc. (Rev. 1:3, keeping for the fulfillment of the prophecy; 22:7, 9; Figuratively, to obey, observe, keep, fulfill a duty, precept, law, custom, or custom meaning to perform watchfully, vigilantly^{xxxiii}

The above word occurs twenty times in John's writings, and eight of those appear in the book of Revelation.

1. Rev. 1:3 Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.
2. Rev. 2:26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—
3. Rev. 3:10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
4. Rev. 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.
5. Rev. 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.
6. Rev. 16:15 Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”
7. Rev. 22:7 Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”
8. Rev. 22:9 Then he said to me, “See *that you do not do that*. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

All of the above references instruct those who carry the testimony of Jesus Christ to watch closely to observe what is written in this book of prophecy called Revelation. And, if you look closely, five of the eight verses are the voice of the Risen Christ Himself. This confirms the strong emphasis on keeping and obeying the words of the Revelation of the Risen Christ.

What is your experience when you read the book of Revelation? Do the words of prophecy come alive? Is there a heightened watchfulness in your spirit? Do you hear the voice of the Risen Christ when He speaks from His heavenly throne? Is there a renewed passion in you to keep yourself pure in the world, to persevere in the faith to the end, and to worship in spirit and in truth the One ***who is and who was and who is to come***? If such things are ignited in you through the revelation of the Risen Christ, then you are in the privileged position of blessing. Although you may be anxious to dig deeper into Revelation at this time, we need to first examine the prophetic revelations about heaven and the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in the Old and New Testaments.

Chapter 3: Prophetic Revelations of the Messiah in the Old Testament

The Angel of the LORD

What is a *Christophany*? How does it relate to the Book of Revelation? The following is a good summary from biblical scholars of Christophanies in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament contains several instances of Christophanies, which are appearances of Christ before his incarnation. These manifestations are often referred to as theophanies or appearances of God in human form. Some notable Christophanies include appearances to Abraham (Gen. 18:1-8), Jacob (Gen. 31:11, 13), Moses (Ex. 3:1-11), Joshua (Josh. 5:13-15), Gideon (Judg. 6:11-24), and Manoah (Judg. 13:2-25)¹². These appearances were typically for specific individuals rather than large groups. Some scholars also consider the angel of the Lord appearances as Christophanies, though this interpretation is debated. Other forms of divine manifestation in the Old Testament include the pillar of cloud and fire, the glory of the Lord, and the Shekinah. While not all scholars agree on every instance, these appearances are generally seen as foreshadowing Christ's incarnation and revealing God's nature to his people.^{xxxiv}

When we think of these appearances, we are drawn to the familiar accounts of God's appearing to Abraham as one of three men (Gen. 18:1-15), Jacob's wrestling with God at Bethel (Gen. 32:22-32), Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3-4), and the fourth Man suddenly seen in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Dan. 3:24-25). These accounts reveal that Jesus was present from the beginning. One of the early designations for God is *Elohim*. It appears 34 times in the creation account, and it is always in the plural, revealing the Godhead or what we call the *Trinity*.

A number of the revelations of Christ are cloaked in the term, ***The Angel of the LORD***. Below is another excellent summary of what biblical scholars see in this mysterious designation of Christ:

The Angel of the LORD is a significant figure in the Old Testament, appearing approximately 59 times, with one-third of these occurrences in the book of Judges. This entity is often described as a divine being sent by God to interact with humans as His personal agent and spokesperson. In many instances, the Angel of the LORD is virtually indistinguishable from God Himself, speaking in the first person as God and being addressed as such by those who encounter Him. This has led some theologians to interpret the Angel of the LORD as a Christophany, or a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament. The Angel of the LORD appears in various roles throughout the Old Testament, including as a warrior, deliverer, and messenger. Key appearances include encounters with Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and various judges and prophets. While some scholars view these appearances as references to created angels, others see evidence of a divine being, possibly the second person of the Godhead⁴. The Angel of the LORD's functions include protection, guidance, judgment, and delivering important messages, often appearing at crucial moments in biblical history.^{xxxv}

A closer examination of three selected **Angel of the LORD** accounts gives us a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ that He **is the same yesterday, today, and forever** (Heb. 13:8).

Joshua and **the Commander of the LORD's Army**.

Josh. 5:13-15 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴ So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” ¹⁵ Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.” And Joshua did so.

Jesus is revealing Himself as the King of kings in the LORD’s army. If you have carefully read the book of Revelation, then you will realize this is relevant to the New Testament revelation of the return of Christ as a Mighty Warrior. Joshua suddenly begins to worship Him in a way that recognizes and declares the Messiah Christ as **my Lord**. There is a notable distinction between **the Lord** (Hebrew *Yahweh*) and **my Lord** (Hebrew *Adhonai*). The below Hebrew meanings of these designations for God show their relationship and importance:

The Word. The Tetragrammaton *YHWH* is the personal name of the God of Moses. The correct pronunciation of the name was lost from Jewish tradition some time during the Middle Ages; late in the period of the Second Temple the name had come to be regarded as unspeakably holy and therefore unsuitable for use in public reading, although it continued to be used privately. Early in the modern period, scholars began to try to recover the pronunciation. The form *yahweh* is now accepted almost universally. The structure and etymology of the name have been much discussed. While no consensus exists, the name is generally thought to be a verbal form derived from the root *hwy*, later *hyh*, “be at hand, exist (phenomenally), come to pass.”^{xxxvi}

3068. יהוה *y’hōwāh*: A noun meaning God. The word refers to the proper name of the God of Israel, particularly the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 6:2, 3). The divine name has traditionally not been pronounced, primarily out of respect for its sacredness (cf. Ex. 20:7; Deut. 28:58). Until the Renaissance, it was written without vowels in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, being rendered as YHWH. However, since that time, the vowels of another word, *’āḏōnāy* (136), have been supplied in hopes of reconstructing the pronunciation. Although the exact derivation of the name is uncertain, most scholars agree that its primary meaning should be understood in the context of God’s existence, namely, that He is the “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex. 3:14), the One who was, who is, and who always will be (cf. Rev. 11:17). Older translations of the Bible and many newer ones employ the practice of rendering the divine name in capital letters, so as to distinguish it from other Hebrew words. It is most often rendered as Lord (Gen. 4:1; Deut. 6:18; Ps. 18:31[32]; Jer. 33:2; Jon. 1:9) but also as God (Gen. 6:5; 2 Sam. 12:22) or JEHOVAH (Ps. 83:18[19]; Isa. 26:4). The frequent appearance of this name in relation to God’s redemptive work underscores its tremendous importance (Lev. 26:45; Ps. 19:14[15]). Also, it is sometimes compounded with another word to describe the character of the Lord in greater detail (see Gen. 22:14; Ex. 17:15; Judg. 6:24).^{xxxvii}

The above in-depth understanding of these primary terms for God is important to recognizing and acknowledging who He is and how He presents Himself throughout the Bible. God is *Elohim*, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is *Yahweh*, the God of Israel and our God. He is *Adonai*, Lord and Messiah. Joshua is not worshipping an angel. Scripture does not permit the worship of angels. In addition, we do not serve angels, but they serve us as ministering spirits. This Angel here is the Lord!

Gideon and *The LORD is Peace*.

Judges 6:11-27 Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites. ¹² And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, “The Lord *is* with you, you mighty man of valor!” ¹³ Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where *are* all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” ¹⁴ Then the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?” ¹⁵ So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father’s house.” ¹⁶ And the Lord said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.” ¹⁷ Then he said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set *it* before You.” And He said, “I will wait until you come back.” ¹⁹ So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*. ²⁰ The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so. ²¹ Then the Angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. ²² Now Gideon perceived that He *was* the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face.” ²³ Then the Lord said to him, “Peace *be* with you; do not fear, you shall not die.” ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-*Is*-Peace. To this day *it is* still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. ²⁵ Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him, “Take your father’s young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that *is* beside it; ²⁶ and build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.” ²⁷ So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the Lord had said to him. But because he feared his father’s household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night.

The above biblical account provides us with significant details of Gideon’s encounter with *the Angel of the LORD*. God first sent an unnamed prophet to the children of Israel who cried out to Him due to the severe oppression of the Midianites (Judg. 6:7-10). Then the Angel of the Lord came and appeared to Gideon. Note the progression in the conversation.

<i>Gideon</i>	<i>The Angel of the LORD</i>
<i>"O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?"</i>	"Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"
<i>"O my Lord, how can I save Israel?"</i>	Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."
<i>If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. 18 Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You."</i>	"I will wait until you come back." The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay <i>them</i> on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. ²¹ Then the Angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.
<i>Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face."</i>	Then the Lord said to him, "Peace <i>be</i> with you; do not fear, you shall not die."

Gideon advances in his understanding of who he is talking to. His perception moves from chatting with a man sitting nearby under a tree, *my lord*, to *O my Lord*, to *Alas, O Lord God*. The final recognition is spoken with great emotion. The One Gideon had spoken with was none other than *Yahweh Adonai*, the Messiah, the Second Person of the glorious Trinity. How do you know this? Because in verse 20 *the Angel of the LORD* connects Himself with *the Angel of God (Elohim)* as we discussed earlier.

Manoah, his wife, and *the Man of God*.

This remarkable account is often overlooked by the spectacular feats of strength against the Philistines that follow in the life of Samson. However, the details point to another divine appearance of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

Judg. 13:1-25 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. ² Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. ³ And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. ⁴ Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. ⁵ For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." ⁶ So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. ⁷ And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.' " ⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born." ⁹ And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰ Then the woman ran in haste and told her

husband, and said to him, “Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!” ¹¹ So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, “Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?” Manoah said, “Now let Your words come to *pass*! What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?” ¹³ So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. ¹⁴ She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe.” ¹⁵ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, “Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You.” ¹⁶ And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord.” (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.) ¹⁷ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, “What is Your name, that when Your words come to *pass* we may honor You?” ¹⁸ And the Angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?” ¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—²⁰ it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground. ²¹ When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord. ²² And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!” ²³ But his wife said to him, “If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things*, nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time.” ²⁴ So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. ²⁵ And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

The following chart breaks down significant details of this second appearance of the Angel of the Lord:

<i>Manoah</i>	<i>The Angel of the LORD</i>
<i>“Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?”</i>	And He said, “I am.”
<i>“Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?”</i>	“Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. ¹⁴ She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or <i>similar</i> drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe.”
<i>“Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You.”</i>	“Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord.” (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.)
<i>“What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?”</i>	“Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?”
<i>So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord.</i>	And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— ²⁰ it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar!
<i>When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.</i>	When Manoah and his wife saw <i>this</i> , they fell on their faces to the ground.

The **Angel of the LORD** first appears to Manoah's wife. She perceives the Angel as **a man of God**, but something about His countenance leads her to believe there is much more to this person. She describes to Manoah what she saw as a brilliant radiance in His presence that made you want to tremble. It was comparable to the shining light of a glowing fire. This Angel of God was **very awesome!** His appearance indicated an exalted position, steaming with the abundance of might and power. No wonder Manoah prayed for **the Man of God** to come again and to teach them. God heard Manoah's prayer and sent the Angel of the LORD again. The Lord always honors a teachable spirit. The conversation with the Angel that followed describes a learning curve where Manoah and his barren wife, who was looking on, attempt to understand details about the prophecy of a promised son.

The conversation details reveal a progression from recognizing a man of God to an Angel of the LORD, to seeing God. This is confirmed by Manoah when he declared to his wife, **We shall surely die, because we have seen God** (Judg. 13:22). His wife, however, cautions Manoah, **If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands** (Judg. 13:23). Did you notice how she connects the true identity of **the Angel of the LORD** with the offering given unto Him. Offerings are given to the LORD and not to angels. She also adds, **Nor would He have told us such things as these at this time**. As with Gideon, the entire Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is involved in this account because the child, Samson, grew, was blessed by God, and the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him (Judg. 13:24-25). Perhaps, most compelling of all, is when the LORD identifies His name as **wonderful**. What does this mean?

Wonderful: 6383. פִּלְיָא *pil'iy*, פִּלְיָא *peliy*: A masculine adjective meaning wonderful, incomprehensible. The feminine form of this adjective is *peli'āyāh* or *pil'iyāh*. It was used as a description of the name of the angel of the Lord (Judg. 13:18); and as a description of the knowledge of the Lord (Ps. 139:6).^{xxxviii}

Above all, the LORD did a wondrous act in front of Manoah and his wife: **He ascended in the flame of the altar** (Judg. 13:19-20). The dialogue, the promise of a son to a barren woman, the offering unto the LORD (*Yahweh*), the involvement of the Godhead (*Elohim*), and the wonderful name and wondrous act of ascension in a flame of fire, all of these, point to the appearance of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as **the Angel of the LORD** before He humbled Himself to become as a man and walk on the face of the earth. These things are seen and understood by the Spirit. John was in the Spirit when He encountered the Risen Christ and received His revelation on the isle of Patmos. The things you see in the Spirit from these Angel of the LORD accounts will help you to more clearly see the Revelation of the Risen Christ received by John on the isle of Patmos. The message is the same: Jesus Christ is who He says He is throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. He is **the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End** (Rev. 1:8). You will see other similarities as we turn our attention to more key prophetic visions of Messiah Jesus in the Old Testament.

Isaiah: The Throne of Heaven

People wonder about heaven. Does it exist? What is it like? Some attempt to describe heaven from their own imaginations in vivid and attractive details of things we love and enjoy on earth. People imagine fields of flowers, their pets, athletic fields, golf courses, and many other things associated with their lives on earth; however, this is not the heaven of the Bible. You will see in this chapter and the next that the heaven in the Bible is so much better. More scenes from heaven occur in the book of Revelation than anywhere else in the Bible. It is essential, however, to examine the prophetic revelations from heaven in the Old Testament to fully appreciate what takes place and is described in the New Testament, particularly in the book of Revelation. In addition, we will begin to receive a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ. So, let's begin with the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah was privileged to see the throne of heaven and the Lord seated on the throne.

Isa. 6:1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. ² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!" ⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ So I said: "Woe *is* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts." ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here *am* I! Send me."

Note in the above account, the prophet saw the Lord, a throne, the temple of heaven, seraphim, doorposts, and the house filled with smoke. Although nothing resembles what many visualize heaven to be, Isaiah's heavenly vision is an example of the transforming power of a single divine encounter. Isaiah **saw the Lord!** Most likely, Isaiah experienced an open vision because the Hebrew word *roeh* denotes physically seeing with the eyes outside of oneself. This word is used extensively in the Angel of the LORD accounts examined in the previous section. Again, there is a dialogue with the Lord, instructions and commands are given, and angels are involved. However, there is a fresh revelation of the Messiah in the vision. The designation of the Lord in Hebrew as *'ādhôn* or *'adhonāi* reveals something Jesus and the Apostles of the Early Church alluded to from the Messianic Psalm 110.

Psa. 110:1 The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The above verse was taught by Jesus and the Apostles to prove that Jesus was both Lord and Christ. The following verses overwhelmingly demonstrate the consistency of their teaching:

Matt. 22:41-44 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "*The Son of David.*" ⁴³ He said to them, "How then

does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: ⁴⁴*'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" '?*

Mark 12:34-37 Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? ³⁶ For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: *'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." '?* ³⁷ Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He *then* his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly. (See Also Luke 20:41-44).

Acts 2:32-36 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. ³⁴ "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: *'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." '?* ³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

1Cor. 15:23-28 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy *that will be destroyed is death.* ²⁷ For *"He has put all things under His feet."* But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is evident* that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Eph. 1:20-21 ...He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Jesus says David was *in the Spirit* and spoke *by the Holy Spirit* concerning the true identity and divine nature of Jesus as both Lord and Christ. John was also in the Spirit when he received the revelation from the Risen and Ascended Christ. Although we have mentioned this before, it bears repeating. The Trinity is involved in these encounters with the Living Messiah from the beginning of time.

Isaiah sees the Lord sitting on the heavenly throne, but the position of the Lord is of great importance. The One on the throne is ***high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.*** This is a kingly, ruling position of extreme exaltation. The Lord is in this all-ruling and exalted position before the Father sends Him to suffer and die for the sins of the world. It's a divine position of the Messiah, a pre-deposed position ***Till I make Your enemies my footstool.*** The Risen Christ ascends, is carried, lifted up again to this exalted position of all authority and power after His resurrection from the grave. This gives a fresh revelation and meaning to the words of Jesus: ***And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself*** (John 12:32). Today, the church of the Living Christ, needs to see by the Spirit that the Lord whom Isaiah saw and whose robe filled the heavenly temple is the same Lord who fills all now. Those who believe in Christ from generation to generation need this fresh revelation of the Risen Christ. It is not only about the power, but the position of Jesus sitting on the throne.

Eph. 1:22-23 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,
²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Those who see the Lord almost always have a ***woe is me*** reaction. This is because the divine position of the Lord is also a holy place. Remember, Joshua was commanded to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. The holiness of the Lord cannot be taken lightly. The Lord's holiness is protected and declared by the seraphim who cry to each other, ***Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!*** Even the voice of the Lord is holy and causes a physical shaking and trembling in Isaiah. There's a burning fire in heaven, and a cloud of smoke and glory fills the temple. How would you respond to such a sight? Isaiah believed he was undone, meaning he was about to cease living, because he was impure in the sight of God and had seen with his eyes ***the King, the LORD of hosts*** (Isa. 6:5).

Unclean: 2930. **אָמַעַר** *tāmē'*, **הִאָמַעַר** *tām'āh*: A verb meaning to be unclean, to desecrate, to defile, to make impure. The main idea of the action was that of contaminating or corrupting, especially in the sight of God. The Levitical Law often spoke in terms of sexual, religious, or ceremonial uncleanness. Any object or individual who was not clean could not be acceptable to the Holy God of Israel.^{xxxix}

The presence of the Lord can be a terrifying experience for a sinful man. The light and fire alone bring one to that moment of acknowledgement before God that I have sinned and will die in the presence of the holy God of Israel. But God had a remedy on that side of the cross before the death and resurrection of Christ. It required a burning coal from the fires of heaven, administered by one of the seraphim. Who were these seraphim, literally fiery or burning ones? The following synopsis provides us with a good understanding of these angels:

Seraphim are described as supernatural beings associated with God's presence and throne. According to one of the articles, they are mentioned only once in Scripture, specifically in the book of Isaiah chapter 6. These angelic creatures are depicted as having six wings: two covering their faces, two covering their feet, and two used for flying. The seraphim are portrayed as attendants or guardians surrounding God's holy throne. They are known for declaring God's holiness, might, and glory, proclaiming "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory". The articles mention that seraphim have the ability to speak in audible voices, handle fire without being burned, and possess human-like hands. In Isaiah's vision, one seraph used a live coal to touch the prophet's lips, symbolically purifying him and taking away his guilt. It's noted that seraphim are considered to be of a high angelic order, similar to cherubim, with a special focus on holiness and morality.^{xl}

Although the Bible presents a system of angels consisting of archangels, cherubim, and seraphim, it is important to see in this vision that only one seraph and one burning coal from the heavenly throne are needed to purify Isaiah. This foreshadows the offering of Jesus Christ for our sins, ***for by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*** (Heb. 10:14). This revelation must never escape our understanding. Seeing the Lord led to an awareness of Isaiah's sinful condition, followed immediately by his purification. The Hebrew words reveal the impact of what took place.

Iniquity: 5771. **עוֹן** *‘āwōn*: a masculine noun meaning iniquity, evil, guilt, punishment. This is one of the four main words indicating sin in the Old Testament. This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrongdoing (Gen. 44:16; Jer. 2:22). The punishment that goes with this deliberate act as a consequence is indicated by the word also (Gen. 4:13; Isa. 53:11).^{xli}

Sin: 2403. **חַטָּאת** *ḥaṭṭā’t*: A feminine noun meaning sin, transgression, sin offering, punishment. The word denotes youthful indiscretions (Ps. 25:7); evil committed against another (Gen. 50:17); trespasses against God (2 Chr. 33:19; Ps. 51:2[4]; Amos 5:12); a general state of sinfulness (Isa. 6:7); and the specific occasion of sin, particularly in reference to idolatry (Deut. 9:21; Hos. 10:8). It also implies an antidote to sin, including purification from ceremonial impurity (Num. 19:9, 17); the sacrificial offering for sin (Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:3); and the punishment for sin (Lam. 4:6; Zech. 14:19). In the story of Cain and Abel, sin appears as a creature, ready to pounce, lurking “at the door” of Cain’s heart (Gen. 4:7).^{xlii}

Purged: 3722. **כָּפַר** *kāpar*: A verb meaning to cover, to forgive, to expiate, to reconcile. This word is of supreme theological importance in the Old Testament as it is central to an Old Testament understanding of the remission of sin. At its most basic level, the word conveys the notion of covering but not in the sense of merely concealing. Rather, it suggests the imposing of something to change its appearance or nature. It is therefore employed to signify the cancellation or “writing over” of a contract (Isa. 28:18); the appeasing of anger (Gen. 32:20[21]; Prov. 16:14); and the overlaying of wood with pitch so as to make it waterproof (Gen. 6:14). The word also communicates God’s covering of sin. Persons made reconciliation with God for their sins by imposing something that would appease the offended party (in this case the Lord) and cover the sinners with righteousness (Ex. 32:30; Ezek. 45:17; cf. Dan. 9:24). In the Old Testament, the blood of sacrifices was most notably imposed (Ex. 30:10). By this imposition, sin was purged (Ps. 79:9; Isa. 6:7) and forgiven (Ps. 78:38). The offenses were removed, leaving the sinners clothed in righteousness (cf. Zech. 3:3, 4). Of course, the imposition of the blood of bulls and of goats could never fully cover our sin (see Heb. 10:4), but with the coming of Christ and the imposition of His shed blood, a perfect atonement was made (Rom. 5:9–11).^{xliii}

Isaiah sees the Lord, his sin is removed, and then he hears **the voice of the Lord** calling him, **Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?**” (Isa. 6:8). Again, we see the interplay between the Messiah, *Adhon/Adhonai*, and the godhead or Holy Trinity, *Elohim*. The consistency of the oneness demonstrated by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is amazing, to say the least. Isaiah can now respond without hesitation, **Here I am! Send me**. The instructions and assignment given to Isaiah have Messianic implications.

Isa. 6:9-13 And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’”¹⁰ “Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.”¹¹ Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered: “Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate,¹² The Lord has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.¹³ But yet a tenth *will be* in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump *remains* when it is cut down. So the holy seed *shall be* its stump.” (See also Matt. 13:10-16; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10; John 12:37-41; Acts 28:23-28; Rom. 11:7-8)

This prophecy is repeated in all four gospels, the book of Acts, and is alluded to in Romans. Jesus explained its fulfillment in the context of his use of parables with the

people. The Lord is indicating that the people of Israel will not listen to Isaiah and have a predisposition towards disobedience. There is both judgment and warning in the prophecy, with a marked difference between those who hear and those who don't. Jesus and the Apostle Paul apply the prophecy in the same way and announce its fulfillment among the disbelieving Jews in the New Testament. It must be noted that a remnant of God's people will believe and be saved.

Ezekiel: The Visions of God

Ezekiel experienced the first of six visions of God in the 30th year of the Babylonian captivity. However, we will examine only the initial vision in this section. All six visions convey divine judgment, the need for repentance, and deliverance with the hope of future restoration.

Six Visions in Ezekiel^{xliv}

1. **Vision** of God (1:4–28)
2. **Vision** of the Scroll (2:9–3:3)
3. **Vision** of the Plain (3:22–23)
4. **Visions** of Jerusalem (a) Wickedness in the Temple (8:1–18) (b) Inhabitants of the city killed (9:1–11) (c) Burning of the city (10:1–22) (d) Wicked princes & the departure of God's glory (11:1–25)
5. **Vision** of Dry Bones (37:1–10)
6. **Vision** of the New Temple (40:1–48:35).

The above visions came to Ezekiel when ***the hand of the Lord was upon him***. This was similar to the other accounts we have examined when the recipients were ***in the Spirit***.

Ezek. 1:1-3 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. ² On the fifth *day* of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, ³ the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.

Ezekiel means *God strengthens*. The vision of God that follows serves to strengthen and prepare Ezekiel for a difficult mission.

Ezek. 1:4-28 Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. ⁸ The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. ⁹ Their wings touched one another. *The creatures* did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, *each* had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two *wings* of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. ¹² And each one went straight forward; they

went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went. ¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. ¹⁴ And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning. ¹⁵ Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. ¹⁶ The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. ¹⁷ When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. ¹⁸ As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them. ¹⁹ When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. ²⁰ Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, *because there the spirit went*; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹ When those went, *these went*; when those stood, *these stood*; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²² The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads. ²³ And under the firmament their wings *spread out* straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. ²⁴ When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁵ A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings. ²⁶ And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. ²⁷ Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

It would be an enormous task to dissect every aspect of Ezekiel's initial vision of God. Therefore, we will limit our study to the key details of what he saw. He looked (*roeh*). Remember, this means the vision was an open vision. Ezekiel saw with his physical eyes. An open vision requires *the individual to see physically outside of himself or herself: to see so that one can learn to know, whether it be another person or God.*^{xlv} Ezekiel looked and saw **a whirlwind coming out of the north** (Ezek. 1:4). Although the specific word for whirlwind is not used in the text, the description of the wind as a great cloud engulfed with raging flashes and fiery bolts of lightning leads one to believe Ezekiel was seeing an approaching storm or tempest. But these details speak more of the approaching power and judgment of God. The Bible reveals the following about a whirlwind:

- Generally came from the south. Job 37:9. Isa. 21:1. Zec. 9:14. Sometimes came from the north. Eze. 1:4.
- Called the whirlwind of the Lord. Jer. 23:19. Jer. 30:23.
- Arose up from the earth. Jer. 25:32.
- Miracles connected with; Elijah taken to heaven in 2 Kin. 2:1, 11.
- God spoke to Job from. Job 38:1. Job 40:6.
- Frequently continued for a long time. Jer. 30:23.
- Destructive nature of. Pro. 1:27.

- Illustrative of the Speed with which God executes His purposes. Nah. 1:3. Velocity of Christ's second coming. Isa. 66:15. Velocity of the chariots in hostile armies. Isa. 5:28. Jer. 4:13. Fury of God's judgments. Jer. 25:32. Jer. 30:23. Sudden destruction of the wicked. Psa. 58:9. Pro. 1:27. Isa. 17:13. Isa. 40:24. Isa. 41:16. Jer. 30:23. Unavoidable fruit of a life of sin and vanity. Hos. 8:7.^{xlvi}

The whirlwind seen by Ezekiel demonstrates that God is on the move. He is all-knowing and all-powerful. His presence has departed Jerusalem due to rebellion against God after many warnings from His prophets. Now the Lord is coming to His people who have submitted to His judgment in the Babylonian exile. Let us break down this unique vision of ***the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD*** (Ezek. 1:28).

1. **Four Living Creatures:** Ezekiel later reflects on these living creatures saying, ***I knew they were cherubim*** (Ezek. 10:20). The presence of these angelic beings causes the prophet to see God's glory and holiness. They constantly worship the Lord and follow the Spirit of God ***straight forward*** (1:9).
2. **The Spirit of God:** All is moving forward by the Spirit. The cherubim, the wheel beside each one, and the wheel in the middle of the wheel, ***each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went*** (1:12, 17, 20-21). This reveals that the forward movement was done with divine purpose. The direction was to a specific location. In this case, God was moving to those in exile.
3. **Burning Coals of Fire:** God's fire represents His holiness and fiery judgment against sin. It is associated with the purification and spiritual refinement of all it touches. This holy fire consumes what it touches. Ezekiel sees the fire ***like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures*** (1:13-14). The illumination of the fire is breathtaking, and there are flashes of lightning. The active power of the Holy Spirit is seen in the fire of God.
4. **The Voice above the Firmament:** Ezekiel describes that the voice was ***like the noise of many waters, like the voice of Almighty God, a tumult like the noise of an army***. (1:24). The voice of the Lord is heard by those who see Him.
5. **The Throne and the Man of Fire above the Firmament:** Ezekiel describes the throne as something ***in appearance like a sapphire stone*** (1:26). The Bible says Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and 70 elders of Israel also saw God. They said that ***under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity*** (Exodus 24:9-11). What is the biblical significance of this beautiful, pure blue stone with gold specs? It was in the Garden of Eden (Ezek. 28:13), one of the precious stones in the breastplate of the High Priest (Ex. 28:18), in the descriptions of the throne and glory of God (Ex. 24:10; Ezek. 1:26), and the prophetic foundation of the new Jerusalem (Isa. 54:11; Rev. 21:19). The brilliant splendor, light, glory, and solidity of the appearance of the throne and the One who appears above it are described in the best way Ezekiel could. The sight must have been indescribable because he repeatedly uses the terms *like* and *likeness* 20 times in his description. This means he was comparing what he saw with something familiar on earth. But human terms cannot fully embrace seeing the Living God. Although the Man looked like a human, He was ***high above*** the throne, and ***the appearance of fire with brightness*** surrounded the throne and Him. (1:27). The Bible consistently reveals the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as the Man of Fire. He is surrounded by and carries holy fire. Ezekiel compares the brightness to ***a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day*** and concludes ***this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD*** (1:28).

Ezekiel has a typical reaction to what he saw and described. He says, ***I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking*** (1:28). The Lord, the One in the

highest position, the One with the holy fire, the One with the brilliant light of God's glory, is ready to speak to Ezekiel. The Bible records the following conversation:

Ezek. 2:1-8 And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." ² Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. ³ And He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. ⁴ For *they are* impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' ⁵ As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for *they are* a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them. ⁶ "And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though *they are* a rebellious house. ⁷ You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for *they are* rebellious. ⁸ But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

The moving of the Spirit of God upon Ezekiel is of great importance. The phrase ***the Spirit entered me*** and ***the Spirit lifted me up*** is repeated in the subsequent chapter (3:12, 14, 24). This reveals again the participation of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the calling and assignment to the captives. The identification of God as ***Lord God*** (*Adonai Yahweh*) confirms that Ezekiel is hearing from the Messiah. It's a difficult assignment as we've seen before because the instruction that ***you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse***, is also repeated at least three times (2:5, 8; 3:11). The following two verses capture the specific nature of Ezekiel's calling and strategic assignment:

Ezek. 3:17 Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

Ezek 3:27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for *they are* a rebellious house.

These verses remind us how essential it is to hear, understand, and obey what the Lord says. There is no hearing loss by Ezekiel. Although the Lord says, ***I will leave a remnant*** (Ezek. 6:8), the only ones refusing to hear among the captives are those who are rebellious. Multiple times, the Lord describes the captives as ***a rebellious nation*** and ***a rebellious house*** (2:3, 5, 7-8; 3:9, 27; 12:2, 3, 9). God reveals the key features of a rebellious person: impudent, stubborn, and hard-hearted. This is why the church needs watchmen like Ezekiel. The Risen Christ says to the churches of every generation, ***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

Daniel: The Vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man

Daniel is the book of Revelation in the Old Testament. Daniel was a man of dreams and visions. One night he had a dream followed by ***night visions*** and he ***wrote down the dream, telling the main facts*** (Dan. 7:1). He saw ***four great beasts*** coming out of the sea (1:2).

Dan. 7:1-8 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head *while* on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. ² Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. ³ And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. ⁴ The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. ⁵ “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’ ⁶ “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. ⁷ “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

The CSB Study Bible says, *Belshazzar became co-regent with Nabonidus in 553 BC. Assuming Daniel was about fifteen when he was exiled to Babylon, he would have received this vision when he was approximately sixty-seven years old.*^{xlvii} A series of night visions follows the above account. These visions include seeing the seating of ***the Ancient of Days*** and ***the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven***:

Dan. 7:9-14 “I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; ¹⁰ A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. ¹¹ “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³ “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

Dan. 7:13-14 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.

The above verses reveal heavenly thrones, with God, the Father, as the Ancient of Days seated on a throne with wheels of fire, His Son, the Messiah, given dominion over the nations, and an everlasting kingdom, and the rise and fall of the Antichrist. The characteristics and details of the Godhead and environment of heaven that are revealed are much the same as we read in Revelation. First, let’s break down the literal description of God and the Messiah in the vision.

Verse	Event/Description	Characters/Entities	Details
Dan. 7:9-10	Thrones set, Ancient of Days seated	Ancient of Days	Garment white as snow, hair like pure wool, throne a fiery flame, wheels burning fire, fiery stream, thousands ministered, court seated, books opened
Dan. 7:11	Beast slain	The horn, the beast	Pompous words from horn, beast slain, body destroyed and given to burning flame
Dan. 7:12	Other beasts' dominion taken away	The rest of the beasts	Dominion taken away, lives prolonged for a season and a time
Dan. 7:13	Vision of the Son of Man	Son of Man, Ancient of Days	Son of Man coming with clouds of heaven, brought near before Ancient of Days
Dan. 7:14	Dominion and kingdom given	Son of Man	Given dominion, glory, kingdom; all peoples, nations, languages serve Him; dominion everlasting, kingdom shall not be destroyed

The *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* provides a good explanation of these appearances of God and His Son, the Messiah:

Ancient of Days is another way of recognizing God as the Eternal One, the One Abraham acknowledged as “the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25). He is pictured as judging all people and all kingdoms at the end of time. The description of God in this verse also reveals his holiness (i.e., his complete purity and separation from evil – “his clothing was white as snow”), majesty (i.e., dignity and authority – “the hair of his head was white like wool”) and pure justice (“his throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze”).^{xlviii}

One like a Son of Man. This unique and majestic being enters the presence of God the Father in order to claim power and authority over all nations and to receive an eternal kingdom that will never give way to any other power (as did all the previous kingdoms). The clouds of heaven likely represent his glory (cf. Ex. 40:34, 38; Acts 1:9, 11; 1Th. 4:17; Rev. 1:7), suggesting that he is the Son of God (Mt. 26:64), our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 21:27; John 1:51).^{xlix}

What was Daniel’s reaction to what he observed in the night visions? We see his reactions within the context of the vision of the four beasts, the little horns, the one little horn, and his desire to know the meaning and interpretation of all he had observed.

Dan. 7:7-8 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Dan. 7:11-12 “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

Dan. 7:15-28 “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. ¹⁶ I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: ¹⁷ ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings *which* arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’ ¹⁹ “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. ²¹ “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. ²³ “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings *Who* shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first *ones*, And shall subdue three kings. ²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. ²⁶ ‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy *it* forever. ²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’ ²⁸ “This *is* the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.”

The following chart provides an excellent overview of the details of what Daniel observed. Note how he considered, watched, was grieved and troubled in his spirit, and how his countenance changed. He was about to receive an introduction from heaven to God’s plan for the ages.

Verses	Visions	Beasts/ Entities	Key Features	Actions/ Events	Interpretation
Dan. 7:7-8	Night visions	Fourth beast	Dreadful, terrible, exceedingly strong, huge iron teeth, ten horns, another little horn with eyes like a man, mouth speaking pompous words	Devouring, breaking in pieces, trampling residue, three horns plucked out by the little horn	
Dan. 7:11-12	Watching the horn	Beast, other beasts	Horn speaking pompous words	Beast slain, body destroyed and given to burning flame, rest of beasts had dominion taken away, lives prolonged for a season and a time	
Dan. 7:15-16	Daniel troubled by visions	Daniel, one who stood by	Daniel grieved in spirit, visions troubled him	Daniel asks for truth, receives interpretation	

Dan. 7:17-18	Interpretation	Four great beasts, saints of the Most High	Four kings arise out of the earth	Saints receive and possess the kingdom forever	Beasts = four kings; saints inherit the kingdom
Dan. 7:19-20	Desire for truth about fourth beast	Fourth beast, ten horns, another horn	Teeth of iron, nails of bronze, devoured, broke in pieces, trampled residue, horn with eyes and mouth, appearance greater than fellows		
Dan. 7:21-22	Horn's actions	Horn, saints, Ancient of Days	Horn made war against the saints and prevailed until the Ancient of Days came	Judgment made in favor of saints, saints possess kingdom	
Dan. 7:23-25	Further interpretation	Fourth beast, ten horns, another horn	Fourth kingdom on earth, different from others, devours whole earth, ten horns = ten kings, another shall rise, subdue three kings, speak pompous words, persecute saints, intend to change times and law	Saints given into his hand for a time and times and half a time	Fourth beast = fourth kingdom; ten horns = ten kings; another horn = different king
Dan. 7:26-27	Court judgment	Saints, people, Most High	Court seated, dominion taken away, kingdom and dominion given to saints	Kingdom is everlasting, all dominions serve and obey Him	
Dan. 7:28	Daniel's reaction	Daniel	Thoughts greatly troubled, countenance changed	Keeps matter in heart	

Daniel says, ***I came near to one of those who stood by and asked him the truth of all this*** (Dan. 7:16). Who was this one? He is not described as ***One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven*** (Dan. 7:13). He is only ***one of those who stood by***. However, the fact that he is near the Son of Man and the Ancient of Days and can reveal the truth and interpretation of the night visions of Daniel, means he has and can announce and communicate revelation knowledge. This one can only be the Archangel, Gabriel, because he is identified later in subsequent visions (Dan. 8:16; 9:21-23). Although Daniel continued to have visions over the years revealing God's eternal plans, it is this first vision of the Ancient of Days and the Messiah as the Son of Man that shows who is in charge of our destiny. And Gabriel is sent by God to bring understanding and interpretation to Daniel. This all took place around 550 years before the birth of Christ.

We have only presented a few selected appearances of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament. These revelations of heaven took place hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. They reveal God's sovereignty over His people and all of

creation itself. This is consistent with the words loudly spoken like a trumpet repeatedly by the Risen and Ascended Christ of Revelation: ***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last*** (Rev. 1:7, 17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13). The prophetic visions of Christ in the Old Testament capture this truth.

Chapter 4: Prophetic Revelations of the Christ in the New Testament

John the Baptist and The Open Heaven

John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. He made it clear to everyone that he was not the Christ. He preached a baptism of repentance and emphatically declared to the people that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. Although Jesus was revealed as the coming Messiah to Elisabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, it was when He came to the Jordan to be baptized by John that He was revealed to the world. Review the following parallel accounts of the baptism of Jesus and what was seen when He came out of the water:

Matt. 3:13-17	Mark 1:9-11	Luke 3:21-22	John 1:29-34
Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."	It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."	When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."	The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

The above accounts have some interesting details. There's praying, an open heaven, the Holy Spirit descending, a heavenly voice, and the testimony of John the Baptist. What does it mean that heaven or the heavens were opened or parted? The Greek words used are strong in the sense that it was a forcible action.

Opened: 455. ἀνοίγω *anoigō* to move something from a shut or closed position; to render something readily accessible; open closed spaces whose interior is thereby made accessible; to disclose contents by opening; to remove an obstruction, open.¹

Parted: 4977. σχίζω *schizō* To split, rend, divide with violence, trans. Used of wood (Sept.: Gen. 22:3; 1 Sam. 6:14); rocks (Matt. 27:51); the veil of the temple (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45); the heavens (Mark 1:10); a garment (Luke 5:36; John 19:24); a net (John 21:11). See Is. 37:1; 48:21; Zech. 14:4.ⁱⁱ

The things from the sanctuary and the throne room of heaven manifest when the heavens are opened or divided so that man can receive revelation. This requires God's action for His light to shine in the darkness. This occurred while Jesus prayed. There is a forcible breaking upon the earthly realm whenever the heavens are opened to us to see into the heavenly realm. The same is true when it comes to the advance of Christ's kingdom on earth. Jesus explained it to His disciples in this way:

Matt. 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Although there are several interpretations of the above verse, it cannot be denied that the Kingdom of God comes with great power and encounters violent opposition to His reign on earth. Furthermore, Jesus proclaimed that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet and person ever born, with the disclaimer that **he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he** (Matt. 11:11). Jesus revealed to them that John represented the promised return of Elijah. John the Baptist ushered in the Messianic and everlasting Kingdom on earth. Heaven was opened, the Holy Spirit fell upon Jesus, and **suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased** (Matt. 3:16). We see again the direct participation of God, the Father, Jesus, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. But this time, it's in the New Testament and Jesus is on earth. The revelation of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, on earth fits perfectly with the prophetic revelations of Him in the Old Testament.

John the Baptist also witnessed **the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He** (Holy Spirit) **remained upon Him** (Jesus). John 1:32. The testimony of what John the Baptist saw when heaven was opened was a revelation from heaven. He could not rely upon his natural impulses, but only what heaven revealed to him. Two times John says, **I did not know Him** (John 1:31, 33).

Reference	Action	Revelation/Statement
John 1:29	Saw Jesus coming	Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
John 1:30-31	Explained purpose	I came baptizing with water that He should be revealed.
John 1:32	Bore witness	I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.
John 1:33 He who sent me	Spoke to John	Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
John 1:34	Testified	This is the Son of God.

The revelation of Jesus Christ to the world is still a mystery to many. Millions of people continue to oppose the testimony of John the Baptist. Jesus asked this question in the context of John the Baptist's witness from the open heaven:

Matt. 11:16-18 "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, ¹⁷and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.' ¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

This generation of young leaders and disciples of Christ needs to take very seriously the revelations of heaven because Jesus will continue to open heaven and reveal Himself to us.

Peter, James, & John on The Mount of Transfiguration

Jesus began to ***show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on the third day*** (Matt. 16:21). After six days He took Peter, James, and John alone with Him to a high mountain where ***He was transfigured before them*** (Matt. 17:1). The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke record what took place at this remarkable event. Review these accounts side by side and note the important details of each.

Matt. 17:1-9	Mark 9:2-20	Luke 9:28-36
Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" ⁶ And when the disciples heard <i>it</i> , they fell on	Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. ³ His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. ⁴ And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"— ⁶ because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid. ⁷ And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear	Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. ³⁰ And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. ³³ Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, <i>that</i> Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for

their faces and were greatly afraid. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” ⁸ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. ⁹ Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”	Him!” ⁸ Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. ⁹ Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.	Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. ³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” ³⁶ When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.
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Some may be tempted to have a critical view of the Bible or even discredit these accounts due to the perceived discrepancy between six and eight days. But there is no error if you correctly see that ***after six days*** and ***about eight days*** corresponds exactly to day seven when Jesus took them up the mountain. The Bible says Jesus was transfigured before them. What does this mean?

Transfigured: 3339. μεταμορφόω *metamorphōō*; To transform, transfigure, change one's form. In the NT, only in the mid., *metamorphóomai*, to be transfigured. Used of the Lord's transfiguration on the mount (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2) involving the miracle of transformation from an earthly form into a supernatural form which was externally denoted by the radiance of His garments and countenance. This suggests what the bodies of the righteous may be like as a result of the resurrection of our bodies (1 Cor. 15:51f.). In Rom. 12:2 and 2 Cor. 3:18, the idea of transformation refers to an invisible process in Christians which takes place or begins to take place during their life in this age.^{lii}

Although Luke reports that these three disciples fell sound asleep at the beginning, they were in for a sudden surprise when they awoke. They were afforded a glimpse of the appearance of the Risen Christ in His supernatural form. The proof is in the details. Here are the descriptions of the transfiguration of the appearance of Jesus:

1. ***His face shone like the sun: to give out rays of light; to shine out or forth, to gleam.*** This glorious and radiant light corresponds to the heavenly light commanded by God at creation. In Christ, His light has now pierced the darkness of our hearts.

2Cor. 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. ***His clothes became white as the light:*** His garments were *bright, shining, and gleaming*. This was not ordinary light but that which is an element of heaven. Jesus was showing Peter, James, and John that He was the Light.

John 12:46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

3. ***His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them:*** This radiant, divine light gleaming forth from His clothes was whiter than anything they had ever seen. No laundry service could duplicate what they saw. Recall that Daniel's night vision described God's clothing ***was white as snow***.

Dan. 7:9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire.

4. ***His robe became white and glistening:*** The air would have been cool on a high mountain, so this speaks of an outer garment or robe. It too cast forth the same glorious light. But this time, it is a glittering divine light that is flashing like lightning. The Risen Christ of Revelation promises that those ***who overcome shall be clothed in white garments***.

Rev. 3:4-5 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

The above details portray Jesus much like His appearances before His birth and also after His death, resurrection, and ascension. John described the Risen Christ on the Isle of Patmos with seven details (Rev. 1:12-16).

1. ***One like the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to the feet.***
2. ***His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow.***
3. ***His eyes like a flame of fire.***
4. ***His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace.***
5. ***His voice as the sound of many waters.***
6. ***Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword.***
7. ***His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength***

We will look more closely at the above description of the Risen Christ at the end of the chapter.

We cannot overlook the significance of the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus. Luke records that they appeared in glory (Luke 9:31). This reveals that Peter, James, and John also saw Moses and Elijah with the brightness, splendor, and shining radiance we discussed earlier. The closer one gets to the Risen Christ, the more they will shine. While some theologians provide a detailed analysis of why it's Moses and Elijah who are with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, we will simply observe the importance of what they are doing. All the accounts reveal that ***the two men talked with Him***. What does this mean? The Greek word *sullaleo* (talked) means *to exchange thoughts with, talk/discuss/converse with*.^{liii} Therefore, they were conferring with Jesus.

This was a heavenly conference being conducted on earth. It was a discussion of the highest degree. Luke records that Moses and Elijah ***spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem*** (Luke 9:30-31). They were strategizing with Jesus concerning His death on the cross. They spoke of it as an accomplishment that would complete and bring to a full end God's plan of salvation to mankind. This consultation took place on earth, not in heaven, because Jesus had not yet suffered, died, been raised from the dead, and been glorified.

Paul and the Third Heaven

The Apostle Paul saw and dialogued with the Risen Christ on the Damascus Road. We examined this life-changing experience of the Post-Ascension Appearances of Jesus in Chapter One, pages 17-19. Now, Paul shares the encounter where he was ***caught up to the third heaven***.

- **2Cor. 12:1-6** It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—⁴how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. ⁶For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

The above event occurred 14 years earlier, depending on the exact date of Paul's writing of Second Corinthians. This means it took place sometime between AD 40-43 or about 10 years after Paul's conversion.

Chronology of Paul's Experiences and Ministry

- **Paul's Conversion** – AD 33: This marks the pivotal moment when Paul encountered the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, leading to his dramatic transformation from persecutor to apostle.
- **Paul's Vision of Heaven** – AD 40–43: Several years after his conversion, Paul was caught up to the third heaven, as he would later describe in his letters, experiencing visions and revelations from the Lord.
- **Paul Plants the Church at Corinth** – AD 50-51: Paul established the church in Corinth, initiating his apostolic relationship with the believers there and beginning a correspondence that would become central to his ministry.
- **Paul Writes 1 Corinthians** – AD 54–56: During this period, Paul authored his first letter to the Corinthians, addressing doctrinal issues, ethical concerns, and practical matters within the church.
- **Paul Writes 2 Corinthians** – AD 55–56: Following his initial correspondence, Paul wrote a second letter to the Corinthian church, offering further guidance, encouragement, and defense of his apostolic calling.

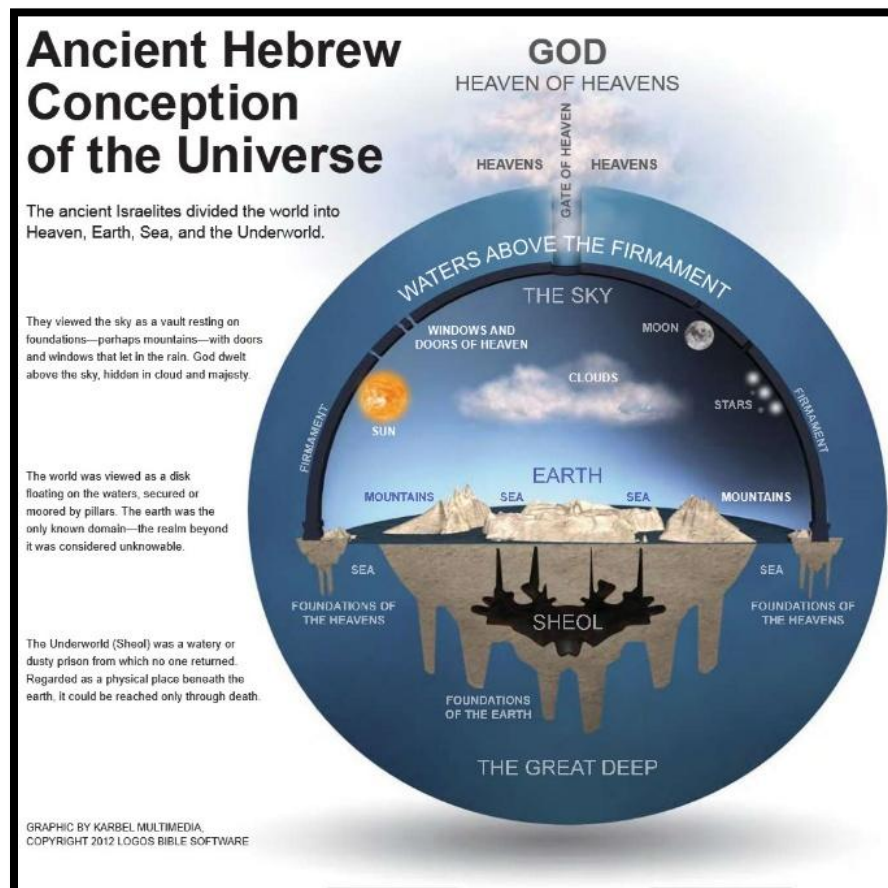
Paul was no stranger ***to visions and revelations of the Lord***. He is careful to avoid boasting to elevate himself, but only to defend his calling and apostolic ministry. This is why he uses the third person, ***I know a man in Christ***, and ***I know such a one***, in speaking about the experience. Paul's statement, ***of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities***, confirms he is defending his calling

and ministry rather than pridefully bragging about his vision. This is consistent with how Paul introduces himself in many of his letters to the churches. For example, ***Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*** (2Cor. 1:1) and ***Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)*** (Gal. 1:1). The Scriptures forbid boasting in oneself, but boasting in the Lord is greatly encouraged.

2Cor. 10:17-18 But “*he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.*” ¹⁸ For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Paul uses the same Greek word, *kauchaomai* in the above passage, meaning *to take pride in something, boast, glory, pride oneself, brag in or about a person or thing*.^{liv} Spiritual leaders who are careless about what and how they share about themselves with others need to pay attention to this admonition. You might desire to boast, like Paul, but look what he says, ***But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me*** (2Cor. 12:6). Always boast and glory in the Lord!

Paul did not know whether he was in his physical body or not when he was taken to what he called ***the third heaven*** and ***into Paradise***. The Hebrews understood the universe in the following way:



Paul, as we discussed earlier, understood three levels of heaven: the sky, then outer space, and above all, the place where God dwells. This is where he was taken. The fact that **he was caught up**, mentioned twice in the account, reveals it was the Lord who initiated the transport to heaven. The same is said about the supernatural transport of Phillip to Azotus (Acts 8:39-40), and the approaching rapture of the church (1 Thess. 4:17). *The word “caught up” is from the Greek word harpazo {har-pad’-zo}, which means “to seize or carry off by force; to snatch away with eagerness.”^{lv}* The same thing happened to Enoch in the Old Testament **who was not, for God took him** (Gen. 5:24). He was seized by God and taken up. The Risen Christ is eager to take us to the heaven of heavens, the highest place where He and all the redeemed dwell. This is our blessed hope in Christ.

Paul heard things spoken in the presence of God. He describes what he heard as **inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter** (2Cor. 12:4). Apparently, the words Paul heard in Paradise were so sacred and holy that they could not be repeated. It was beyond human power for him to speak of what was spoken. God did not authorize Paul to talk about what he heard. The Apostle John was also forbidden to reveal what he heard the seven thunders speak.

Rev. 10:4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

This is the only time in the Book of Revelation where John was commanded not to write something to reveal what was to take place. If he had disobeyed and written what he heard, then it would not have been inspired, commissioned, or authorized by God. Neither Paul nor John had authorization to disclose confidential information in these unique situations. However, the Risen Christ has prepared a fuller revelation of all things for those who love Him.

1Cor. 2:9 But as it is written: “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*”

John on the Isle of Patmos

The Apostle John had some of the most graphic descriptions of the Risen Christ in the Bible. The similarities with the prophetic revelations we examined in the Old Testament are remarkable. For example, compare the images of Christ that John saw in Revelation with those of Daniel.

Rev. 1:12-20 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands **One** like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the

keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

Dan. 7:9-14 “I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; ¹⁰ A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. ¹¹ “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³ “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.

Dan. 10:5-6 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

<i>Descriptive Item</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Daniel</i>
<i>Clothing & Appearance</i>	Garment down to the feet, girded about the chest with a golden band, countenance like the sun	Garment was white as snow, clothed in linen, waist girded with gold of Uphaz, body like beryl; face like the appearance of lightning
<i>Head & Hair</i>	White like wool, as white as snow	Hair like pure wool
<i>Eyes</i>	Like a flame of fire	Like torches of fire
<i>Voice</i>	Sound of many waters	Sound of his words like the voice of a multitude
<i>Feet & Arms</i>	Feet like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace	Arms and feet like burnished bronze in color
<i>Other Details</i>	Right hand: seven stars; mouth: sharp two-edged sword; keys of Hades and Death; seven lampstands: seven churches; seven stars: angels of the seven churches	Throne: fiery flame, wheels burning fire; fiery stream issued; thousands ministered; court seated; books opened; beast slain; dominion and glory and a kingdom given; everlasting dominion

We see from the above details that the image of the Risen Christ includes similar phrases used in the description of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man. Most importantly, John describes the Risen Christ in the same way as the Ancient of Days. This affirms heaven’s declaration that the Messiah, the Risen Christ, is God.

The prophetic revelation of the Risen Christ, as seen by John on the Isle of Patmos, is also detailed in each message to the seven churches.

1. Ephesus: *These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands* (Rev. 2:1).
2. Smyrna: *These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life* (Rev. 2:8).
3. Pergamos: *These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword* (Rev. 2:12).
4. Thyatira: *These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass* (Rev. 2:18).
5. Sardis: *These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars* (Rev. 3:1).
6. Philadelphia: *These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens"* (Rev. 3:7).
7. Laodicea: *These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God* (Rev. 3:14).

The descriptions of the Risen Christ in the messages to the seven churches of Revelation apply to the churches of every generation. How do we know this? We know this because every message contains this identical statement from the Risen Christ: **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Therefore, the churches today that have an ear toward what the Holy Spirit is saying will hear what the Risen Christ speaks about the churches. Churches today cannot afford to disconnect with the Holy Spirit. There is revelation, information to be unveiled by the Spirit, that Jesus desires to share with His church. It begins with Him revealing and describing Himself to the churches.

Do churches today know the Risen Christ of Revelation? Or do they just talk about Him in human terms? What does He mean when He reveals to the church that He is the One **who holds the seven stars in His right hand** or **has the sharp two-edged sword**, or **eyes like a flame of fire**, etc.? A closer examination of these descriptions can provide us with fresh insights into the true nature of the Risen Christ. Therefore, let us carefully examine each description in the seven churches of Revelation to see what is revealed about the Risen Christ and His relationship to the churches.

Ephesus: Jesus revealed to John that the seven stars are the angels of the churches and the seven golden lampstands are the churches (Rev. 1:20). He holds in His right hand the angels of each church, and He walks in the midst. Two verbs give us insight into the message Jesus is unveiling to the church.

Holds: 2902. κρατέω *kratēō*; contracted *kratō*, fut. *kratēsō*, from *kratos* (2904), strength. To take hold of, grasp, hold fast, meaning to have power over, rule over^{lvi}

Walks: 4043. περιπατέω *peripatéō*; contracted *peripatō*, fut. *peripatēsō*, from *perí* (4012), about, and *patéō* (3961), to walk. To tread or walk about, generally to walk^{lvii}

The Risen and Ascended Christ is revealing that He actively reigns over His church. He's present and active. He's involved. He knows what's going on. He knows how to fix

what's wrong. Churches that fully recognize this are under the dominion, the power, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Those who don't are disconnected from Him and the Holy Spirit.

Smyrna: Jesus reveals that He is ***the first and the last*** and that He ***was dead and came to life***. Jesus reminds the church that He is the Living God, ***the same yesterday, today, and forever*** (Heb. 13:8). He is the Risen Christ. Two truths are often repeated in ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants*** (Rev. 1:1).

1. ***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last*** (Rev. 1:7).
2. ***I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore*** (Rev. 1:18).

Three times in the first chapter of Revelation and once in the last chapter, Jesus declares that He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Throughout the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ is alive. There's no one like Him. He alone is the One ***who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty*** (Rev. 1:8). The church serves a living God. God's not dead! The Lord reveals Himself throughout the Bible with the living declaration that ***I AM WHO I AM*** (Ex. 3:14). This is how the Risen Christ is revealing Himself to the church today:

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

I am (Greek *eimi*) is a verb of existence. He is showing them the greatness of God's power in the resurrection, the same power that will also raise us from the dead. Churches need to believe this and conduct themselves accordingly. Churches that declare and serve the Living God are alive in Him.

Pergamos: The Risen Christ reveals Himself to the churches as having ***the sharp two-edged sword***. The following Scriptures confirm that Jesus is referring to the Word of God.

Heb. 4:12 For **the word** (*logos*) **of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Eph. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word** (*rhema*) **of God**.

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, '***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word*** (*rhema*) ***that proceeds from the mouth of God.***'"

Rom. 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by **the word** (*rhema*) **of God**.

1Pet. 1:22-25 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word (*logos*) of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because "***All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,*** ²⁵ ***But the word*** (*rhema*) **of the Lord** ***endures forever.***" Now this is **the word** (*rhema*) which by the gospel was preached to you.

In the above verses, *logos* refers to the whole Bible, all Scripture, and *rhema* refers to a verse or spoken word that a believer or church can apply or use as a sword in spiritual battle and strategic assignments from the Lord. The Risen Christ reveals that the word of God is *sharp*. The Greek *ὀξύς oxús* refers to *having a keen edge for cutting and being rapid in motion, quick, and swift*.^{lviii} The Apostle Paul described the Word as ***living and powerful, and sharper***. Jesus Christ is the Living Word from the beginning of time and for all eternity (John 1:1, 14). The Word that proceeds out of His mouth is effective, active, and powerful. The Word the Risen Christ speaks to the churches is capable of piercing and discerning what's going on in the churches and how to restore things. What type of Word are we talking about? We know that God breathes all Scripture. Those whom God used to pen the written Word did so by the Holy Spirit. The Word and the Holy Spirit accomplish all of God's objectives assigned to His church. The word of God is useful ***for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness***, that churches can mature in Christ and be fully equipped to do His work and fulfill His word on earth (2Tim. 3:16-17). This is exactly what we see in the messages by the Risen Christ to the churches.

Although there are principles that apply to the church as a whole, the Risen Christ also speaks specific words to each church, depending on its unique circumstances. These words of encouragement, correction, and warning are what Jesus and the New Testament described as ***sharper than any two-edged sword***, and they are coming out of the mouth of the Risen Christ to each church. These are what we call *rhema words*. The Risen Christ speaks these words to His churches to penetrate and move them away from compromise with the world. Errant doctrines and sexual immorality continue to plague and defile churches today. Many churches need a definitive *rhema word* from the Risen Christ that will provide a course correction and realignment with His word and His agenda.

Thyatira: Jesus, the Son of God, reveals Himself with eyes of flaming fire and brass feet (Rev. 2:18). Naturally, eyes are for looking and searching; feet are for standing and moving. The Risen Christ has a fiery desire for repentance and purification in His church. He is looking and searching for it, but too many churches are silent about this aspect. He declares to the corrupt church that He is the One ***who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works*** (Rev. 2:23). Therefore, the fiery eyes of the Risen Christ are searching and warning eyes that will be strong and powerful in judgment. The Bible warns that ***the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God*** (1Pet. 4:17)? The Second Coming of Jesus is described in the context of vengeance and judgment.

Rev. 19:11-16 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with

it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

Fine brass unveils the foundational aspects of the refinement and purification that the Risen Christ desires in the churches. It also points to the coming judgment upon the unbelieving and disobedient. Brass is the metal of judgment in the Old Testament, and it appears to be a similar application for the churches of Revelation. Many churches today do not see or take notice of the flames of fire in the eyes of Jesus or what the Holy Spirit is speaking to them. Many will not recognize this judgment aspect of the Risen Christ, but it remains strong in the true nature of who He is.

Sardis: The Risen Christ reveals Himself as the One ***who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars*** (Rev. 3:1). Although there is more than one possible view on both identifying descriptions, the Lord is referring to the complete role and nature of the Holy Spirit working in the churches through the assigned messengers, whether they be the angels or the spiritual leaders of the church. John the Baptist announced that Jesus is the One ***who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire*** (Matt. 3:11). The seven Spirits of God are present around the throne where the Risen Christ sits, overseeing the seven churches.

Rev. 1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

Rev. 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Rev. 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

We learn several important points from the above references. The first is that the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is communicating to the church. Secondly, seven is the number of fullness and completion in the Bible. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit is identified as seven lamps of burning fire. The connection with churches as seven lampstands is obvious. Lampstands are useless unless they are burning. There can be no light without the fire of the Holy Spirit in the church. Fourthly, the Holy Spirit is sent into all the earth with the full identity as the seven horns and eyes of the Risen Christ. Horns represent an exceptional kind of might and power. The Risen Christ has this power. The full power of the Holy Spirit is available to churches. Churches without the power and fire of the Holy Spirit are dead. The prophet Zechariah saw a golden lampstand with a bowl on top, and seven lamps with seven pipes attached to the lamps in the rebuilding of the temple:

Zech. 4:2, 6, 8-10 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there *is* a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps... ⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This *is* the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of

hosts...⁸ Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ⁹ “The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish *it*. Then you will know That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. ¹⁰ For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”

The seven in the above prophetic vision are ***the eyes of the Lord***. Bowls are for containing oil or water; pipes are for pouring it out. The Risen Christ desires to pour out the anointing of the Holy Spirit and power upon His church.

Philadelphia: Jesus Christ reveals Himself to the church as ***He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”*** (Rev. 3:7). Churches are on sacred and holy ground when in the presence of the Risen Christ. He is high and lifted up! He is real! He is authentic! He is who He says He is! There is nothing untrue about Him or about who and what He represents. He is ***the way, the truth, and the life*** (John 14:6). There is no lie in Him. If the Risen Christ says He has ***the key of David***, then He has the governmental authority to open and shut doors for the churches. The Lord of glory declares that He is pure, holy, and true and has control over the churches. This is also a fulfillment of prophecy that ***the government shall be upon His shoulders*** (Isa. 9:6) and that ***the key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open*** (Isa. 22:22). The Risen Christ is He who has been given and is building the everlasting Kingdom spoken to David by the prophet Nathan: ***And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever*** (2Sam. 7:16). Herein lies the root of all Messianic hope for Israel. The throne of the Risen Christ has been established forever. Both the Angel Gabriel and Jesus Himself testify to this.

Luke 1:30-35 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*”

Rev. 22:16 I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

It is upon this prophetic and Messianic foundation that He builds His church. Churches that see Him in this way and give Him control will hear and obey what the Spirit is saying to them. The churches are built to operate under the supreme authority and power of the Risen Christ.

Laodicea: The Lord Jesus Christ unveils Himself to the Laodiceans as ***the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God*** (Rev. 3:14). The words that the Risen Christ speaks to the churches are certain, dependable, and worthy of our trust. His Lordship over His church cannot be denied.

Col. 1:15-18 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Rev. 21:5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Rev. 22:6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

The above verses provide an undeniable testimony that what Jesus Christ speaks to the churches is trustworthy. Did the churches of Revelation believe or accept what the Risen Christ spoke to them? Did they hear what the Spirit was saying to them? Did they repent and obey His words? The same questions could be asked of churches today. If churches hear and follow the Lord, He will purify His church with spiritual fire and make all things new.

The descriptions of the Risen Christ of Revelation to the seven churches can be summarized in the following way:

- I rule and am actively involved in the affairs of the churches
- I am the Living God and have great power to raise the churches from death to life.
- I am the Living Word and speak definitive words of encouragement and correction to the churches.
- I search with eyes of flaming fire for repentance and purification in the churches and will judge the unbelieving and disobedient with righteous judgment.
- I have the complete power of the Holy Spirit to give and fully supply the churches with the power to continue My work on earth.
- I sit on the throne of the everlasting kingdom with governmental authority and have placed an open door before the churches that man cannot shut.
- I testify to the churches that all My words are certain, dependable, and trustworthy.

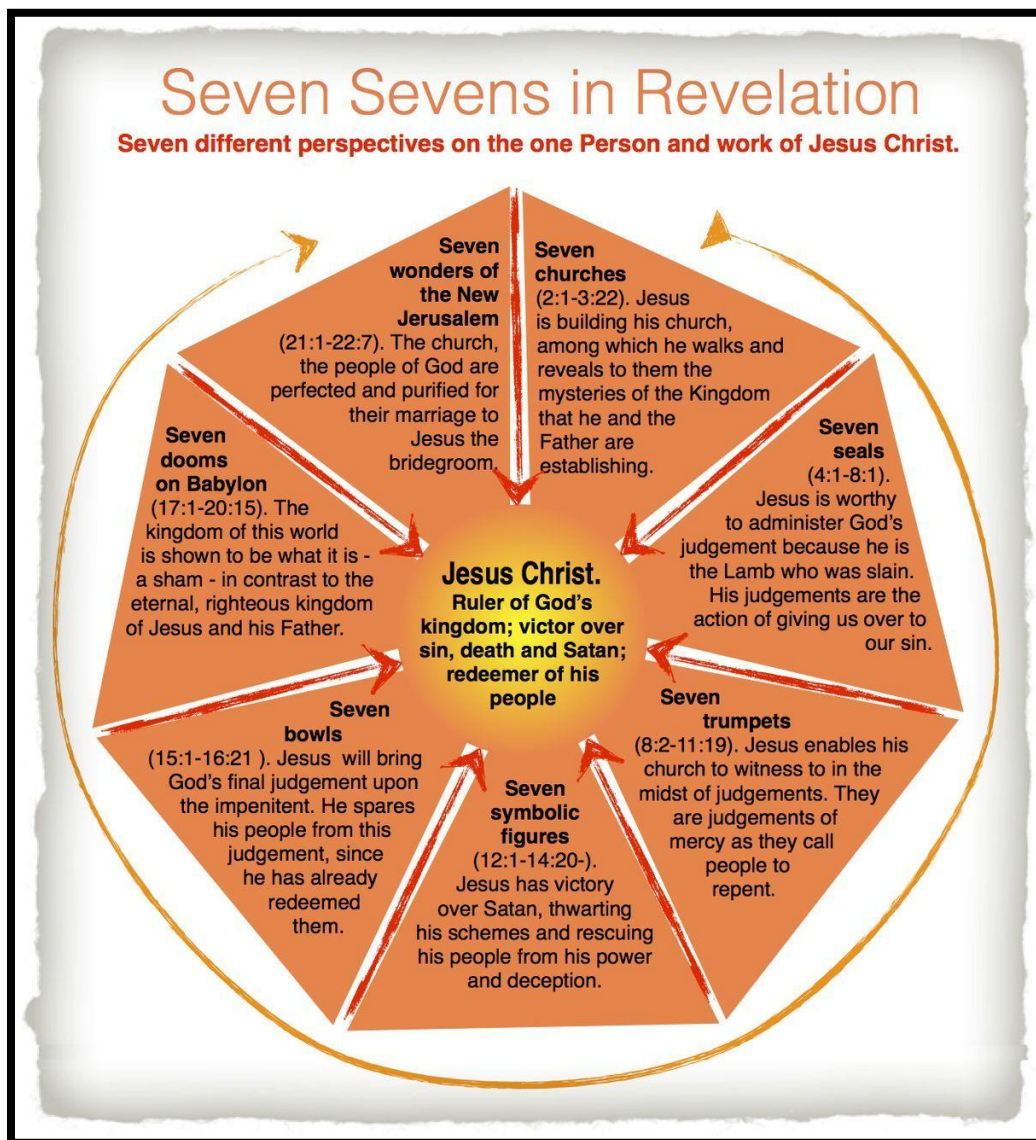
Churches and their leaders that see and do, hear and obey, the words of the Risen Christ will overcome the world and reap the rewards of everlasting life in His kingdom. These messages to the churches by the Risen Christ represent different spiritual conditions that continue to exist in churches today. They provide an apostolic and prophetic profile to guide churches and their leaders in every generation; the key element being their understanding and relationship with the Risen Christ. He is not only the Head of the churches, but their Chief Apostle, High Priest, Shepherd, and Overseer of every soul in the churches.

Heb. 3:1-6 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, ²who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house. ³For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is God*. ⁵And Moses indeed *was faithful* in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which

would be spoken *afterward*,⁶ but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

1Pet. 2:25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The following chart presents an accurate perception of the Risen Christ to the church and world through the series of sevens mentioned earlier:



His messages to the seven churches reflect who He truly is and what He expects of His churches today and His leaders. The Risen Christ of Revelation is not a servant like Moses over the church, but **a Son over His own house**. The church is His house! Churches that fail to hear and obey His voice are in rebellion. Sister Grace Shepherd of *Grace Filled Pathways* presents a full guide to *What the 7 Churches of Revelation Teach* and *Why the 7 Churches of Revelation Matter Today?* She correctly indicates:

These letters, written by Jesus Himself through the Apostle John, reveal deep truths about faith, obedience, and the spiritual dangers that churches (and believers) still face today. The 7 churches in Revelation represent different spiritual conditions that still exist today. Jesus' messages to these churches provide crucial warnings and lessons for believers...As I reflect on these seven churches, I see how their struggles, strengths, and warnings still apply to us today. Each letter from Jesus holds a message for every believer and church in every generation. Here are the major lessons we can take from them:^{lix}

1. Ephesus – Return to Your First Love

- Don't let your faith become **routine or mechanical**.
- Love for Christ should be **at the center** of everything we do.

2. Smyrna – Stay Faithful in Trials

- Suffering for Christ is **temporary, but His reward is eternal**.
- When facing hardships, trust that Jesus sees **your struggles and your faithfulness**.

3. Pergamum – Stand Firm Against Compromise

- Do not mix **biblical truth** with the world's values.
- False teachings and sin can **slowly creep in**—guard against them!

4. Thyatira – Do Not Tolerate Corruption

- Love and service are important, but they **cannot replace holiness**.
- Be discerning—**don't let sin and false teachers take root** in your life.

5. Sardis – Wake Up Spiritually

- Looking alive on the outside means nothing if you are **dead inside**.
- Revival starts with **repentance, remembering, and returning** to Christ.

6. Philadelphia – Remain Faithful, Even When You Feel Weak

- You don't have to be **the biggest or strongest**—just obedient and faithful.
- Jesus promises **open doors** to those who remain true to Him.

7. Laodicea – Don't Be Lukewarm

- Jesus wants **full commitment, not half-hearted faith**.
- He is knocking—**will you let Him in?**

Review the chart in Appendix 2 that displays more details of her findings, including more lessons we can learn from the Lord's messages to the churches. We can locate ourselves and the churches today in one or more of these seven churches. The messages of the Risen Christ to the churches serve as the apostolic and prophetic guidebook for encouragement, assessment, and correction in churches today. We need to pray, listen, and respond to the Risen Christ. He knows the churches!

Chapter 5: The Risen Christ of Revelation

Times & Seasons to Come

The Risen Christ in the Book of Revelation purposes ***to show His servants-things which must shortly take place*** (Rev. 1:1). We have reviewed John's vision of the Risen Christ and Christ's assessment of the churches. In this chapter, we will examine some of the key themes related to the descriptions of the Risen and Ascended Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God and has been given all authority in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 24:1-14 about the signs of His coming and how they could discern the times and seasons that pointed to the nearness of His return. Jesus classified six signs as labor pains or ***the beginning of sorrows***, and not to be alarmed by them. However, he also shared six additional signs to take special notice of, as the end would surely follow them.

The Beginning of Sorrows <i>See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (Matt. 24:6, 8)</i>	Signs of the End at the Door <i>Then they will...And then many...and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:9, 10, 11, 14)</i>
1. False christs deceive many 24:5 2. Wars and rumors of war 24:6 3. Strife among nations and kingdoms (political, racial, religious, spiritual) 24:7 4. Famines 24:7 5. Pestilences (plagues & epidemic diseases) 24:7 6. Earthquakes in various places 24:7	1. Worldwide persecution of Christians 24:9 2. Apathy and intense conflict among brothers and sisters in Christ 24:10 3. Many false prophets arise to mislead many 24:11 4. Multiplication of lawlessness 24:12 5. Love of God grows cold in many believers 24:12 6. Gospel is preached to the whole world 24:14

Although no one knows the day or hour of His coming, we can discern when it is near. Jesus instructed His disciples to learn from the fig tree, carefully observe these signs, to know that the time is very near – ***even at the doors!***

Matt. 24:32-33 “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

Many disciples today do not take time to learn, and many church leaders fail to present what Jesus teaches about the time and season of His coming. The Risen Christ certainly wants us to know what is about to take place.

Jesus Christ revealed Himself to John on the isle of Patmos. It was an awesome vision when in the Spirit. Christ's messages to the churches represent the current time. The following verse is the first thing we read after His messages to the seven churches:

Rev. 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

Heaven's door was open for John to hear a voice. The first voice he heard was a familiar one. It was the same voice he heard when he ***was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*** and heard ***a loud voice as of a trumpet*** (Rev. 1:10). It was the voice of the Risen and Exalted Christ. John had to move or ascend to heaven to be shown ***the things which must take place after this***. He reports ***Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne*** (Rev. 4:2). This reminds us of the Rapture of the Church when those who remain alive in Christ will be immediately lifted out of this world in a moment to join Christ in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:13-18). It's alarming that many Christians today have little understanding of the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ. These events are not the same. Below is a detailed study on how to distinguish between these events:

How to distinguish between **Rapture** vs. **Return**

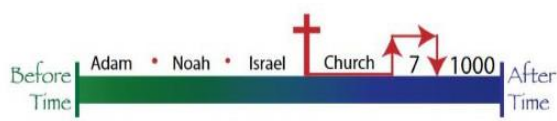
As prophesied, the Lord Jesus is coming again. First in the sky for Rapture, and again seven years later to defeat Satan and rule as King of the Earth from Jerusalem. The simplest way to distinguish between scriptures about the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ, is to determine if the verse in question is referring to the Lord coming "for" His saints (1 Thes 4:16), or "with" His saints (1 Thes 3:13). Here is a list (not exhaustive) of the differences in the two events:

Rapture/ Translation

1. Translation of all believers.
2. Translated go to heaven.
3. Earth not judged.
4. Any moment, signless.
5. Not in the Old Testament.
6. Affects believers only.
7. Before the day of wrath.
8. No reference to Satan.
9. Comes "for" His own.
10. He comes in the air.
11. He claims His bride.
12. Only His own see Him.
13. Tribulation begins.
14. A mystery.

2nd Coming/ Established Kingdom

1. No translation.
2. Translated saints return to earth.
3. Earth judged/righteousness established.
4. Follows definite predicted signs.
5. Predicted often in the Old Testament.
6. Affects all men.
7. Concluding the day of wrath.
8. Satan bound.
9. Comes "with" His own.
10. He comes to the earth.
11. He comes with His bride.
12. Every eye will see Him.
13. Millennial kingdom begins.
14. Predicted.



Rapture Verses:

John 14:1-3; Receive you to Myself
 Rom 8:19; Revealing of God
 I Cor 1:7-8; Revelation of God
 I Cor 15:51-53; Mystery, twinkling of an eye
 I Cor 16:22; Come quickly Lord
 Phil 3:20,21; Receive body like Jesus'
 Phil 4:5; The Lord is near
 Col 3:4; Christ revealed
 I Thes 1:10; Rescued from wrath
 I Thes 2:19; In presence of Jesus
 I Thes 4:13-18; Meet the Lord in the air
 I Thes 5:9; Not destined for wrath
 I Thes 5:23; Without blame
 II Thes 2:1; Gather together to Him
 II Thes 2:3; Apostasy comes first
 I Tim 6:14; Appearing of Jesus
 II Tim 4:1; His appearing
 II Tim 4:8; Love His appearing
 Titus 2:13; He redeems us
 Heb 9:28; We eagerly await Him
 James 5:7-9; Coming of Lord is near
 I Pet 1:7,13; The revelation
 I Pet 5:4; Shepherd appears
 I John 2:28-3:2; When He appears
 Jude 21; We wait anxiously
 Rev 2:25; Until He comes
 Rev 3:10; Keep from the hour of testing

Second Coming verses:

Ezek 21:27; He comes Whose right it is
 Dan 2:44,45; Kingdom endures forever
 Dan 7:9-14; Kingdom never destroyed
 Dan 12:1-3; Time of distress
 Zech 2:10; Will dwell in our midst
 Zech 12:10; Him Whom they pierced
 Zech 13:9; Jews call on Jesus
 Zech 14:1-15; All nations against Jerusalem
 Zech 14:4; Stands on Mt. of Olives
 Zech 14:5; Holy Ones come with Him
 Zech 14:9; King over earth
 Mal 3:1; Comes to His temple
 Matt 13:41; Angels gather offenders
 Matt 24:15-31; Great tribulation
 Matt 26:64; Jesus comes in the clouds
 Mark 13:14-27; Time of Tribulation
 Mark 14:62; Right hand of power
 Luke 21:25-28; Signs in sun, moon, stars
 Acts 1:9-11; Jesus will come in the sky
 Acts 3:19-21; Time of refreshing
 I Thes 3:13; Comes with His saints
 II Thes 1:6-10; Revealed from heaven
 II Thes 2:8; Jesus defeats Satan
 I Pet 4:12,13; We rejoice at His coming
 II Pet 3:1-14; Day of God
 Jude 14,15; Lord comes with holy ones
 Rev 1:7; Every eye will see Him
 Rev 19:11-20; Heavenly armies with Him
 Rev 20:1-6; Binds Satan
 Rev 22:7,12,20; I Am coming

The Risen Christ reveals to us what will happen after the Rapture. The following chart will help us to put these things in proper biblical and chronological order.




The above events represent what every disciple should know about the time and season of what will shortly take place. Our training manual, *God's Plan for the Ages* is designed to provide believers with a basic understanding of these events and their timeline.^{ix} We must also acknowledge that the church is no longer mentioned from this point forward. The church (*ekklesia*) is mentioned 19 times in Revelation 1-3, but there is no appearance of the word in the following 15 chapters until it symbolically appears as the Lamb's wife and bride:

Rev. 19:6-8 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Rev. 22:16-17 I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.


Why this absence? One reason is that these chapters address the Great Tribulation period, also known as the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy. Most likely, it's because the Rapture of the Church has taken place, and the church is in heaven with Jesus, and He brings them with Him when He returns. The following chapter-by-chapter layout of the Book of Revelation outlines the main events that will unfold.

Revelation Made Simple 										
Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11
John on Patmos Vision of Christ's Glory	Letters to the 7 Churches Ephesus Smyrna Pergamos Thyatira		Vision of God's Throne	Seven Seals Book Opened by the Slain Lamb	6 Seals 4 Horsemen White Red Black Pale Souls Under Alter Wrath Of God	Sealing of the 144,000 Great Multitude of Tribulation Saints	Tribulation Trumpets 7 th Seal Opened 4 Trumpets 1/3 Judgments Grass Sea Waters (Wormwood) Sun Moon Stars 2 Trumpets (2 Woes) Locusts 200 Million Army 1/3 of Mankind Killed		The Mighty Angel with the Little Scroll 7 Thunders	2 Witnesses 42 Months 1260 Days (3 rd Woe) 7 th Trumpet
Chapter 12	Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 15	Chapter 16	Chapter 17	Chapter 18	Chapter 19	Chapter 20	Chapter 21	Chapter 22
Woman With Child Red Dragon Woman In the Wilderness	7 Headed Beast Anti-Christ Govt. 42 Months Lamb/Dragon False Prophet	3 Angels Christ Reaps the Harvest	7 Vials Given to 7 Angels Victorious Saints Song of Moses	7 Vials of Wrath Full Judgement Sores Seas Rivers Sun Darkness Earthquake & Hail Armageddon	Mystery Babylon The Great	Babylon is Fallen!	Marriage Supper of the Lamb War Armageddon	Millenium Satan Bound 1000 yrs. Battle of Gog & Magog Lake of Fire White Throne Judgement	New Jerusalem New Heaven New Earth New Jerusalem Eternity With Christ	

Many look at the above overview of the Revelation of Jesus Christ and conclude there is nothing simple about it. Although it is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to understand, it is written with the clear message that the Risen Christ is Lord of all and that we ultimately win in the end! Therefore, we keep our eyes and focus upon the Risen Christ in our approach to understanding His Revelation. Our purpose in this study is not to explain all the mysterious symbols, visions, and images, but to capture the primary themes surrounding the Risen Christ.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the book of Revelation. We cannot state this enough. His voice and appearances throughout reveal and declare His supreme power and authority over all that will shortly take place. John hears a voice from heaven at least 35 times. At times, he hears the voice of the Risen Christ Himself. At other times, it's the voice of one of the living creatures surrounding the throne of God,

an angel under His command, or the voices of multitudes in heaven. All is coming from heaven, the dwelling place of God. One of the best ways to understand the Lordship of the Risen Christ and what He reveals will soon take place is to examine the *seven-ness* in Revelation. Although the number seven is consistently used throughout the entire Bible, it pervades the book of Revelation, occurring 57 times out of 88 occurrences in the New Testament. The number, as we saw before, is associated with completeness and perfection. The diagram below reveals the importance of the number seven in relation to the sovereignty of the Risen Christ.



IN REVELATION

**7 occurs 57 times in the Book of Revelation.
7 is used to describe 22 different things.**

<p>1. 7 SPIRITS OF GOD, Rev 1:4, 4:5, 5:6</p> <p>2. 7 CHURCHES, Rev 1:11, 20</p> <p>3. 7 LAMPSTANDS, Rev 1:12, 20</p> <p>4. 7 STARS, Rev 1:16, 20</p> <p>5. 7 LAMPS OF FIRE, Rev 4:5</p> <p>6. 7 SEALS, Rev 5:1, 5, 6:1</p> <p>7. 7 HORNS, Rev 5:6</p> <p>8. 7 EYES, Rev 5:6</p> <p>9. 7th SEAL, Rev 8:1</p> <p>10. 7 ANGELS, Rev 8:2, 6, 15:1, 6, 7, 8, 16:1, 17:1, 21:9</p> <p>11. 7 TRUMPETS, Rev 8:2, 6</p>	<p>12. 7 THUNDERS, Rev 10:3, 4</p> <p>13. 7th ANGEL, Rev 10:7, 11:15, 16:17</p> <p>14. 7,000 KILLED, Rev 11:13</p> <p>15. 7 HEADS, Rev 12:3, 13:1, 17:3, 7, 9</p> <p>16. 7 CROWNS, Rev 12:3</p> <p>17. 7 LAST PLAGUES, Rev 15:1, 6, 8, 21:9</p> <p>18. 7 BOWLS OF WRATH, Rev 15:7, 16:1, 17:1, 21:9</p> <p>19. 7 MOUNTAINS, Rev 17:9</p> <p>20. 7 KINGS, Rev 17:10</p> <p>21. "BELONGS TO THE 7," Rev 17:11</p> <p>22. 7th CHRYSOLITE, Rev 21:20</p>
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A similar way of presenting the centrality of the Risen Christ and the revelation He is showing us is provided in *The Bible Guide* by Andrew Knowles of Chelmsford Cathedral and St. John's College, Nottingham, England. Knowles sees God's plan unveiled in eight visions with seven scenes each:

"The whole book of Revelation is written to a plan of eight major visions. Each of the visions has seven scenes, which follow a similar sequence. The effect is to repeat the central message several times in different forms:

- ◆ Seven churches receive a message from Christ.
- ◆ Seven seals release trouble on the world.
- ◆ Seven trumpets announce terrible judgments.
- ◆ Seven bowls pour out destruction from God.

The eighth vision is different from the rest. It isn't another vision of judgment and destruction, but of new creation. Like a Jubilee (fiftieth) Year of celebration and renewal, the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven. Like a resurrection morning, the eighth vision bursts forth—with the dazzling glory of the Lamb and his bride. Like the first day of a new week, this vision is God's new beginning.

Eight Scenes: *The book of Revelation is made up of eight major scenes. Each of the eight scenes contains seven shorter visions.*

Scene 1: Christ speaks to his church (1:9–3:22). At first, John sees Jesus in glory and receives messages for seven churches in the province of Asia.

Scene 2: The worship of heaven and the scroll of history (4:1–8:5). John sees into heaven and watches as Jesus the Lamb unseals a scroll. The scroll is the history of the world in the last days. Each of its seven seals reveals an aspect of God's judgment and victory.

Scene 3: Seven trumpets are sounded (8:6–11:19). After the seven seals come seven trumpets. They teach the same insight over again. They warn of destruction and death in every part of the cosmos, and the Judgment Day of God.

Scene 4: Seven visions: a woman and a dragon, great beasts defying God, the Lamb and Judgment Day (12:1–15:8). We are shown the tyranny of evil in the world, the suffering of the church and the ultimate triumph of Christ.

Scene 5: Seven bowls of God's anger are poured out (16:1–21). The bowls are full of God's anger, which brings destruction on the earth. Again, we are seeing the same message and sequence repeated in another way.

Scene 6: The fall of Babylon (17:1–18:24). Babylon is the great prostitute that seduces humankind away from God. Now God sentences her to destruction.

Scene 7: The victory of Christ (19:1–20:15). Jesus is the king of kings, who defeats Satan (Babylon and the beast) and establishes the reign of God.

Scene 8: The new Jerusalem and the wedding of the Lamb (21:1–22:6). God finally establishes the perfect community, in which he himself lives among his people. His heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, is a place of perfect light, harmony, healing and peace. The key to Revelation is the lordship of Jesus Christ. He was there at the beginning when creation was made. He will be there at the end, when he comes to complete God's new creation.^{1xi}

The above review of the Revelation may not be a perfect way to understand it, but it is unique and deepens our understanding of the plan and purpose in what the Risen Christ is unveiling to us.

The Lamb & The Lion

The Lamb is the title most often used for the Risen Christ in Revelation. This title occurs 29 times throughout the book. *The Lamb* designation of Jesus is so prominent and distinctive that it warrants a closer examination. The first occurrence appears in Chapter 5 of Revelation. In fact, there are four references in the context of **who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals** (Rev. 5:2).

1. A lamb **as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes** (5:6).
2. The four living creatures and the 24 elders **fell down before the Lamb** (5:8).
3. Innumerable angels join in with loud voices saying, **Worthy is it Lamb who was slain** (5:11-12).

4. Every creature speaks blessing, honor, glory, and power **to the Lamb forever and ever** (5:13).

We notice in the above references that they point to the atonement that Jesus accomplished on the Cross. It is presented in the past tense, referring to the finished work of Christ as the Lamb of God. This is the reason given for Jesus Christ being the only one found worthy to take the scroll and open it.

Rev. 5:9-10 You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

In addition, a great multitude that cannot be numbered are later seen **standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes** (Rev. 7:9). Who are they? They are those **who come out of the great tribulation**.

Rev. 7:14-17 These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Risen Christ in Revelation is portrayed as the Atoning Lamb and the One heaven loudly cries out about, saying, **"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb"** (Rev. 7:10). Although there remains an emphasis upon the cross in several passages, the declaration of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is made in His exalted state. The Risen Christ of Revelation is the Lamb of God. Besides being the sacrificial Lamb who atoned for the sins of the world, He is enthroned in heaven. The following references to Christ as the Lamb of God in Revelation identify Him in His full exalted state as the Lamb of Glory.

1. **The Enthroned Lamb:** He is exalted above all. Even those on earth and under the earth speak out about His position of honor, glory, and power on the throne.

Rev. 5:13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power **Be** to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Rev. 22:3-4 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name **shall be** on their foreheads.

2. **The Worthy Lamb:** He alone is worthy to open the seals.

Rev. 5:11-12 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

3. **The Holy Spirit Lamb:** He has the complete package of the Holy Spirit and fire.

Rev. 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Rev. 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

4. **The Overcoming Lamb:** He prevails over all evil, Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet.

Rev. 12:10-11 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Rev. 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

5. **The Salvation Lamb:** He holds the Book of Life.

Rev. 21:27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

6. **The Worshipped Lamb:** He is worshipped by all in heaven.

Rev. 5:14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

7. **The Married Lamb:** Jesus is married to the church in heaven, represented in the new Jerusalem and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Rev. 19:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

8. **The Illuminating Lamb:** His glory provides eternal light.

Rev. 21:23-25 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

9. **The Shepherding Lamb:** He continues to conduct Himself as the Great Shepherd of the sheep in heaven.

Rev. 7:15-17 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

10. **The Refreshing Lamb:** He renews everything with living water from the pure river coming from His throne.

Rev. 22:1-2 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The visual image of the Risen Christ as the Lamb of God in Revelation is contrasted with that of a lion.

Lion	Lamb
So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, <u>the Lion</u> of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” (Rev. 5:4-5)	And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a <u>Lamb</u> as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6)

Although Satan likes to act like a roaring lion to scare the people of God, the Risen Christ is ***the Lion of the tribe of Judah***. This means He is the powerful deliverer of His people. He returns to earth as the Lion. Lions have reputations as fierce kings of the jungle. The lion is feared in the animal kingdom. The Risen Christ in Revelation is also portrayed as carrying out ***the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God***. Many churches do not understand the Lion nature of the Risen Christ. Disciples often fail to recognize or accept this description of Jesus Christ when they read the book of Revelation. The Child in Chapter 12 of Revelation is identified as Jesus, the Messiah. It chronicles His birth, the prophetic promise of His rule over all nations, and His ascension and enthronement in heaven. The Risen Christ will come a second time ***to rule all nations with a rod of iron***.

Rev. 12:5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

The above verse is pointing to the prophetic and Messianic declaration of the coming judgment and wrath of God against the nations and people who rage and literally plot to bring a lynch mob against God and **His Anointed Messiah**.

Psa. 2:1-12 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, *saying*, ³ “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.” ⁴ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. ⁵ Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: ⁶ “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.” ⁷ “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ ” ¹⁰ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in the way*, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

At first, God mockingly laughs from His throne in heaven at their foolishness to oppose Him. He speaks to them in a tone many do not recognize or acknowledge as a part of His nature or His Anointed Messiah’s nature. It is **in His wrath!** There is a teaching today proclaiming that *God is not angry with you!* Although on the surface this phrase correctly portrays God as loving and merciful, it tends to eliminate the possibility that God could ever speak angrily to us **in His deep displeasure**.

Wrath: 599. אָנַף *’ānaph*: A verb meaning to be angry, enraged, or to breathe through the nose. The word derives its meaning from the heavy breathing and snorting typical of anger. It is used solely in reference to God’s anger or severe displeasure with His people: Moses (Deut. 1:37; 4:21); Aaron (Deut. 9:20); Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:9); and Israel (Deut. 9:8; 1 Kgs. 8:46; 2 Kgs. 17:18; Ps. 60:1[3]; 79:5) all provoked this divine anger. In Psalm 2:12, this word is used in reference to the Messiah.^{lxii}

Deep Displeasure: 2740. חֲרוֹן *hārôn*: A masculine noun meaning heat, fierceness, anger. It is used metaphorically of God’s anger (2 Kgs. 23:26) in the phrase *hārôn ’ap* or its equivalent, meaning literally, “the heat of (one’s) nose.” But it is used of the Lord’s anger always (Ex. 32:12; Num. 25:4; Deut. 13:17 [18]; Josh. 7:26; 1 Sam. 28:18; Ps. 2:5; Jer. 4:8, 26; 25:37; Hos. 11:9; Nah. 1:6).^{lxiii}

The same Hebrew word (*anaph*) is used for wrath and anger in Psalm 2. Its Greek counterpart (*thumos*) appears seven times in Revelation, referring to the wrath of God (14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 19:15). The above meanings reveal that God and the Messiah display a burning and scorching anger. And yet, there are instructions and a warning that reflect what the churches of Revelation received from the Risen Christ, **Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.** (Psa. 2:11-12).

The Risen Christ rules the nations with a rod of iron. This is a prophetic picture of His rule over nations and peoples. The rod is a symbol of sovereignty. There is no time left for rebellion against Christ. The Risen Christ unveils to the church of Thyatira that He has been given the power to **rule them with a rod of iron**. He prophesies that those

who teach and seduce His servants to commit sexual immorality, etc., will be ***dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels*** (Rev. 2:26-27). He will send them and those who follow them ***into great tribulation unless they repent of their deeds*** (Rev. 2:20-23). Does this mean the faithful servants of Christ will not be sent into the Great Tribulation? Amen, let it be so. For those who are sent into the Seven-Year Great Tribulation, the rod of iron and the wrath of God will be on full display. The following revelations of the Risen Christ describe the time period and the unleashing of His rule and judgment:

Rev. 14:9-12 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." ¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Rev. 19:11-16 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

Rev. 20:11-14 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

You may look at the above events and feel it is hopeless for those who are alive during this time of such severe tribulation. This is what Jesus said about the Great Tribulation:

Matt. 24:21-22 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Will anyone get saved during these seven years? The answer is yes! Some falsely teach that only 144,000 will be saved, but the tribulation saints will be ***a great multitude which no one could number*** (Rev. 7:9, 14). How did they get to heaven after coming out of such great tribulation? They are the ones who did not take the mark of the beast or worship his image. In conclusion, the Lamb and the Lion image of the Risen Christ of Revelation describes His true identity. We need to recognize, acknowledge, and worship Him for who He is.

Worship Him

The Revelation of the Risen Christ is filled with heavenly worship. Worship is mentioned two dozen times in Revelation. Seventeen of these references refer to the Worship of God and the Exalted Lamb, the Risen Christ. The remaining seven occurrences relate to the worship of demons, the devil, the antichrist, and his image. There are stern warnings against worshipping them and taking the mark of the beast.

Rev. 9:20-21 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. ²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Rev. 13:4-8 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" ⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Rev. 14:9-11 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Rev. 16:2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Note six sin categories are common during the seven-year great tribulation (Rev. 9:20-21):

1. Demon worship
2. Idol worship
3. Murders
4. Sorceries
5. Sexual immorality
6. Theft

The above six major sin categories cause great devastation upon the earth. These things are rapidly accelerating at present, but will reach their highest and most severe point during the Great Tribulation. For example, sorceries are linked with the deception of the world in the end times. What does this mean? Occult practices will be connected with the drug industry, deceiving and preventing many from the worship of God.

Soceries: 5331. φαρμακεία *pharmakeía*; gen. *pharmakeías*, fem. noun from *phármakon* (n.f.), a drug, which in the Gr. writers is used both for a curative or medicinal drug, and also as a poisonous one. *Pharmakeía* means the occult,

sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs (Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21; 18:23; Sept.: Ex. 7:22; Is. 47:9, 12).^{lxiv}

Remember what Jesus said about this time:

Matt. 24:21-22 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Why does the Risen Christ of Revelation want us to know the details beforehand of this most severe time? It's because He is **coming quickly** and we need to keep our eyes on **the words of the prophecy of this book** (Rev. 22:7). Two of the Scripture references are followed by two similar statements of truth:

Rev. 13:9-10 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Rev. 14:12-13 Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. ¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

Patience, obedience, and faith are keys to overcoming persecution and severe circumstances of life. Patience is better translated as perseverance or endurance.

Patience: 5281. ὑπομονή *hupomonē*; gen. *hupomonēs*, fem. noun from *hupoménō* (5278), to persevere, remain under. A bearing up under, patience, endurance as to things or circumstances. This is in contrast to *makrothumía* (3115), long-suffering or endurance toward people. *Hupomonē* is associated with hope (1 Thess. 1:3) and refers to that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial.^{lxv}

These are the qualities that will get them through the Great Tribulation. They are also the things that will get us through persecution, severe circumstances, and trials today. Our worship of God must remain pure.

The contrast between the worship of God and the worship of man is evident in the Revelation. Man drifts toward the sins and the worship of Satan, the antichrist, and his image, while heaven worships God and the Exalted Lamb of glory. The call to worship Him extends throughout the Revelation of the Risen Christ. Although praise is important, it is only mentioned in Revelation 19 in the context of the fall of wicked, mystery Babylon, followed by the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Rev. 19:1-8 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God! ² For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her." ³ Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" ⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" ⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb

has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The heavenly worship and praise in the above selection is a true *alleluia chorus* involving **a great multitude saying, Alleluia!** A closer examination of the Greek words for worship and praise gives us a deeper understanding and desire to worship and praise the Risen Christ. One of the first things we notice in this segment of heavenly worship and praise is that they all use this word, *alleluia*. It spontaneously erupts four times from their voices. And their voices are loud, exceeding all standards of worship and praise in churches today.

Alleluia: 239. ἀλληλουῖα *allēlōúia*; a transliteration of the Hebr. *halēlū* (1984), to praise, and *yāh* (3050), Yah. Hallelujah, literally, praise ye Yah. Yah is the shortened form of Yahweh, Jehovah, or God, which occurs 24 times in the Psalter. With one exception (Ps. 135:3), *allēlōúia* is always found at the beginning or end of psalms, suggesting that it was a standardized call to praise in the temple worship. In the NT, only in Rev. 19:1, 3, 4, 6, all related to the judgment of God and His glory (cf. Ps. 104:35).^{lxvi}

Praise: 134. αἰνέω *ainēō*; contracted *ainō*, fut. *ainēsō* or *ainésō*. To sing praises. In the NT, it only refers to praising God (Luke 2:13, 20; 19:37; 24:53; Acts 2:47; 3:8, 9; Rom. 15:11; Rev. 19:5).^{lxvii}

The reason for the above reaction is the recognition of **the Lord our God!** The desire to praise the Risen Christ cannot be contained. The desire to worship Him overwhelmed them. What was it about the Risen Christ that caused such an outburst in heaven?

- **Salvation:** The Risen Christ is the resurrection and the life. He delivers and preserves us from death from the hand of antichrist enemies.
- **Glory:** The Risen Christ is the Light of the World. He is the bright and radiant morning star, distinguished from all others.
- **Honor:** The Risen Christ is alone worthy. He deserves respect, reverence, and the highest esteem because of His rank as the Lord of lords and King of kings.
- **Power:** The Risen Christ is all-powerful. He is capable of fulfilling all things with might, strength, and a forceful advance.
- **True and Righteous Judgments:** The Risen Christ is the Judge of the world. He judges all things fairly and truthfully according to the Word of God and the highest standards of what is right in the eyes of God.

Although the praise in heaven was loud, far beyond what churches on earth are accustomed to today, **the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who sat on the throne, saying, 'Amen!' Alleluia!** (Rev. 19:4). This is immediately followed by the command for everyone, no matter their status in life, to **Praise our God!** (Rev. 19:5). It's important to understand that both of these responses to the Risen Christ are present in heaven. However, the Revelation of the Risen Christ emphasizes the worship aspect more than any other response to His presence. The following accounts of worship confirm its necessity in heaven and on earth:

Rev. 4:8-11 **The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”**
⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders **fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him** who

lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Rev. 5:8-14 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.” Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” ¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power *Be* to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!” ¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Rev. 7:9-12 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Rev. 11:15-19 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.” ¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

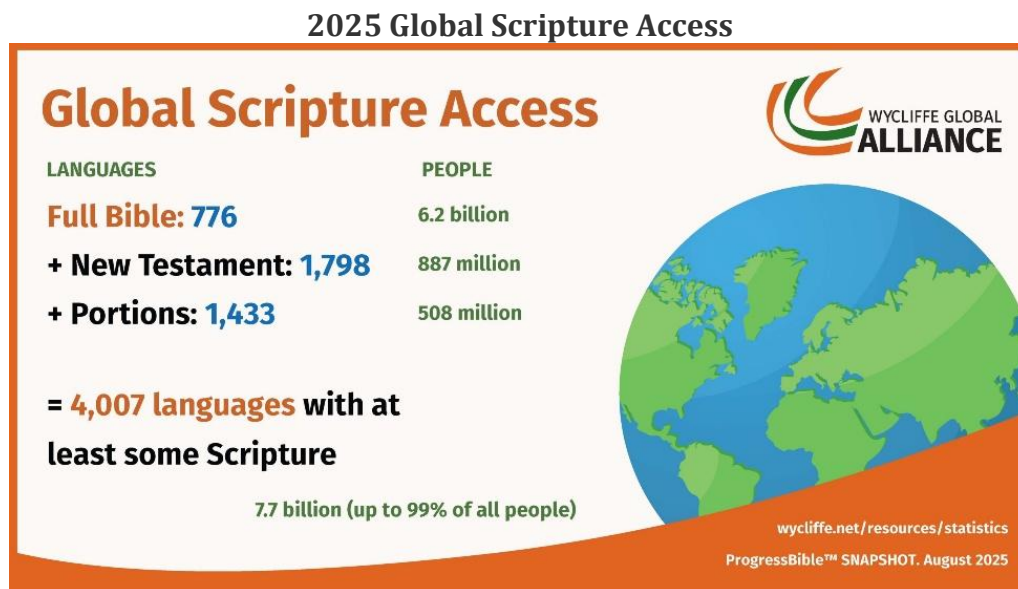
The episodes of the inhabitants of heaven falling down and worshiping the Risen Christ are frequent and present in all these examples in Revelation. The Greek *proskuneo* is used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before persons and kissing their feet or the hem of their garment, the ground, etc.; to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure, to fall down and worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully.^{lxviii} It is a notable characteristic of worship with the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, and the angels in heaven. They are described as **before the Lamb**, **before the throne**, and **around the throne of God**. It shows that the closer we get to the Risen Christ and His throne, the deeper we worship Him. This truth also applies to the quality of our worship of God on earth. Churches that capture a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ will ultimately engage in new levels of worship. If crying *alleluia* is central to praising Him, then *holy, holy, holy* and *worthy is the Lamb* is central

to those who fall down and worship Him. The rich depth in these words is apparent in their Greek meanings.

Holy: 40. ἅγιος *hágios*; fem. *hagía*, neut. *hágion* (39), adj. from *hágos* (n.f.), any matter of religious awe, expiation, sacrifice. Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. It has a common root, *hág-*, with *hagnós* (53), chaste, pure. Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement. Pure, clean, ceremonially or morally clean, including the idea of deserved respect, reverence. It particularly means perfect, without blemish (Rom. 12:1).^{lxi}

Worthy: 514. ἄξιος *áxios*; fem. *axía*, neut. *áxion*, adj. from *ágō* (71), to weigh. An estimate or value. Some believe it refers to a set of scales where the weights bring or draw down (*ágousi*) the beam to a horizontal level when the weights are equal on each side. Worthy, indicating inherent value as contrasted to *tímios* (5093), worthy from attributed value.^{lxx}

We need to go deeper into the original language of the Scriptures to understand more fully the worship John observed in heaven. Although the chart below illustrates that the Bible has been translated into many languages today, we must not overlook the significance of its original language.



Worship in Revelation is all-encompassing. It happens when they fall before Him, with the sudden realization of two things:

1. The Risen Christ sits and reigns upon the throne of God.
2. The Risen Christ lives forever and ever.

These two aspects of the Risen Christ are repeated throughout the sequences of worship in heaven. The living phrase, ***Who was and is and is to come***, occurs five times in Revelation and is also repeated in their worship (Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5). The worshipers in heaven give the Risen Christ a wide range of worthy responses. They give Him glory, honor, thanks, power, wisdom, riches, strength, might, and blessing. We cannot lose the revelation that we worship and serve the Living God, the Risen Christ,

the Lamb of Glory! He is alive! Our God reigns! The twenty-four elders sit on thrones around the throne of God, but nothing takes precedence over the Risen Christ. They **cast their crowns** before His throne, declaring He alone is worthy (Rev. 4:8).

Worship is so much more than what we have thought or made it to be. For example, John was also overwhelmed with the desire to worship the Risen Christ. He fell at the feet of the Risen Christ as if dead at the beginning of the Revelation (Rev. 1:17). However, he was too terrified and apprehensive to worship. The Lord had to lay His right hand on John to deliver him from his frightened state so he could write what He saw. We should not be surprised by this response because ***it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*** and ***our God is a consuming fire*** (Heb. 10:31; 12:29). Two additional accounts of John's desire to worship the Risen Christ in the book of Revelation are misdirected.

Rev. 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "***See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.***"

Rev. 22:8-9 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "***See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.***"

Undoubtedly, John was overcome with adoring feelings toward the majestic angel delivering the revelation of the Risen Christ. The angel, however, corrects John, clarifies, and directs worship back to God. Remember, Peter corrected Cornelius on the same matter, and there is a strong prohibition in the Bible against the worship of angels.

Acts 10:24-27 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.

Col. 2:18-19 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

Although we esteem and encourage others, to do this more highly than Scripture permits, can limit our understanding and the depth of our worship of the Risen Christ. We can appreciate and thank God for charismatic leaders, but our adoration belongs to the Lamb of Glory. The Risen Christ is the only worthy recipient of our worship throughout the Revelation. The Revelation of the Risen Christ confirms the day is coming when ***at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*** (Phil. 2:10-11). This revelation discloses to us the fulfillment of this prophetic word. Now is the time for those who call upon the name of the Risen Christ to ***Worship Him!***

Heavenly Warfare, Victory, and Judgment

The battle between good and evil has yet to cease on earth. The Risen Christ unveils to us through the Apostle John the things to come and the ultimate victory over evil. However, the glorious victory at the end is not attained according to the Revelation of the Risen Christ without much warfare. The warring that takes place is both on the earth and in the heavenlies. The primary Greek word for war in the New Testament is *polemos*.

War: πόλεμος (*polemos*). n. masc. **war, battle, conflict.** *This term denotes either military conflict or a general state of hostility and antagonism.* The word is most frequently used to denote literal warfare, i.e., military conflicts in a national or international level (e.g., Matt 24:6; Mark 13:7). The term can also be applied to spiritual warfare. God and Christians are said to engage in a cosmic battle against God's enemies before the coming age of peace (Rev 19:19; 20:8).^{lxxi}

The above word for war occurs 18 times in the New Testament. Its verbal counterpart (*polemeo*) for making war appears 7 times according to a reliable dictionary of the New Testament.^{lxxii} Out of these 25 occurrences, 15 or 60% appear in Revelation. The book of Revelation is filled with images of warfare. These images fit at least two categories: War against the saints on earth and war against the Risen Christ and His angelic army. However, we begin with something seldom mentioned by church leaders. The Lord exhorts churches that allow the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans to have influence and dominance over them to repent. What may surprise many is what the Risen Christ says He will do if they do not repent.

Rev. 2:14-16 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

The Lord is not messing around with churches that compromise to this extent. He will be fast in responding to make war against them with the sword of His mouth. This description of the Risen Christ is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Compare the following prophetic descriptions of Jesus, the Messiah, and Risen Christ:

Old Testament

Isa. 11:1-5 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. ³ His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; ⁴ But with

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Rev. 1:16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Rev. 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. ⁵ *Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.*

Isa. 49:2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me."

Hos. 6:4-7 "O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away. ⁵ Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And your judgments are like light that goes forth. ⁶ For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. ⁷ "But like men they transgressed the covenant; There they dealt treacherously with Me.

Rev. 2:16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Rev. 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev. 19:19-21 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The above descriptive elements of Jesus Christ show that the sword is the word of judgment proceeding from His mouth. It is a weapon of righteous judgment, even vengeance. And the context is warfare against those who practice evil. This judgment, as we mentioned before, begins in the house of God.

1Pet. 4:17-18 For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now "*If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?*"

Therefore, the church needs to get its act together now rather than later. Because those who adhere to doctrines that the Risen Christ detests and practice evil will be judged and punished in the end by the word of His mouth. Heaven rejoices that the devil has been kicked out, but the devil knows his time is short, so he intensifies his warring against the churches and the saints.

Rev. 12:11-12 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Rev. 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Although there is much debate over the meaning of the woman and the Child, the offspring is certainly a faithful remnant. The devil's rage against the saints cannot be underestimated. However, the victory is in the Risen Christ because we all overcome him in the same way: the blood of Christ, the word of our testimony, and our willingness to die for Him (Rev. 12:11).

The warfare in Revelation also vividly describes the final battles against Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet. The war imagery intensifies from Revelation 12 onward. It begins with the disclosure that **war broke out in heaven**.

Rev. 12:7-10 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Although the time period of the above war in heaven surrounds itself with mystery, the woman and her Child are **nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent** (Rev. 12:14). We know this is a reference to Daniel's prophecy speaking of the rise of the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation period.

Dan. 7:25-27 He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. ²⁶ 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy *it* forever. ²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

The above mirrors exactly what we read in Revelation. **A time and times and half a time** is calculated at 3 ½ years based upon the cycle of a sabbatical year on the Jewish calendar of one year, two years, and half a year.^{lxxiii} Other references in Revelation to 42 months, 1260 days, are far from coincidental (Rev. 11:2; 3; 12:6; 13:5). They are intentional and fit the narrative of God's judgment and final victory over the devil during the seven-year Great Tribulation period. The rise of the Antichrist and the false prophet to deceive the world and wage war against the Risen Christ is met with several battles culminating with the war of all wars, Armageddon. An outrageous and arrogant description of the Antichrist sets the stage for a cataclysmic battle.

Rev. 13:4-7 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" ⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Note the emphasis on making war in the above verses. The world at this time sees the Antichrist as invincible. No one is like him! No one is capable or foolish enough to make

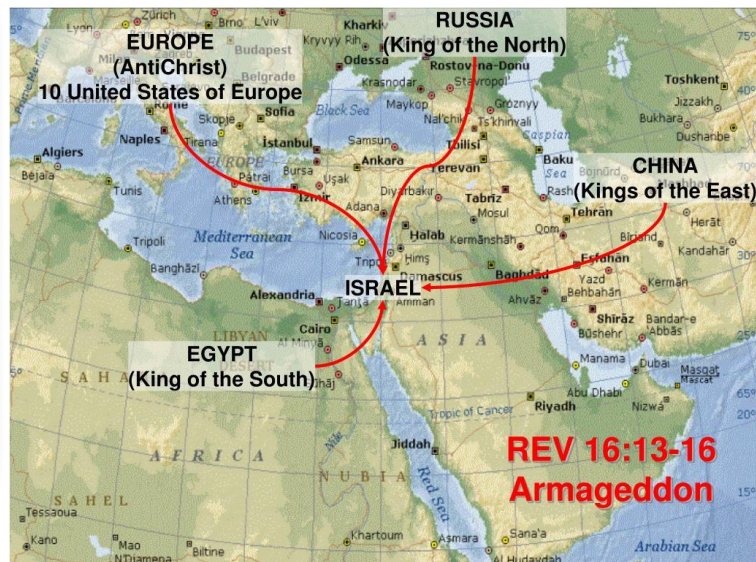
war with him. Not only will the Antichrist slander, revile, and defame God, His name, and His dwelling place, but he will also blaspheme those who dwell in heaven. However, he can only continue this onslaught against God and the saints for 42 months or 3 ½ years.

Rev. 16:13-16 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

The conflict escalates toward the final showdown. Demonic spirits gather earthly kings to the battle. The battle is described as ***that great day of God Almighty***. God’s ultimate triumph over the devil and his forces of evil is predicted before this final global war takes place. The location of the end-time battle is revealed to John and to us. It is called ***Armageddon***. Almost everyone has heard of this term, even though it is only mentioned once in the entire Bible. It literally means *Mount Megiddo*, and historically is identified at the edge of the Jezreel Valley. Decisive battles had been fought at this location before, making it a familiar battlefield. Now it is the location for one last final battle.



Megiddo was at the crossroads of several ancient invasion and trade routes (indicated in red) in ancient Israel. Megiddo overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon, which Bible prophecy indicates will be the gathering place of massive armies just before Christ's second coming. Those armies will fight the returning Jesus Christ near Jerusalem.



John is also shown the immense scope of Satan’s system and program entrenched in ***MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*** (Rev. 17:5). Babylon is described as ***a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird*** (Rev. 18:2). It is a city which ***reigns over the kings of the earth*** (Rev. 17:18). Revelation says they proceed with one mind.

Rev. 17:13-14 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.*”

Rev. 4:17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

Demon spirits gather them together in one place for war, but they all seem unaware that in doing so, they are fulfilling God’s purpose and His words. Although they are united against the Risen Christ, He will overcome them because ***He is Lord of lords and King of kings!*** Victory is a major theme in Revelation, occurring 18 times, or approximately 64% of all occurrences in the New Testament. The following Greek definition unveils the power associated with the word.

Overcome: 3528. νικάω *nikáō*; contracted *nikō*, fut. *nikēsō*, from *nikē* (3529), victory. To be victorious, prevail. Used trans., meaning to overcome, conquer, subdue (Luke 11:22; Rom. 12:21). Spoken of Jesus or His followers as victorious over the world, evil, and all the adversaries of His kingdom with the acc. expressed or implied (1 John 5:4, 5; Rev. 3:21; 12:11; 17:14). In the perf., for pres. or fut. (John 16:33; 1 John 2:13, 14; 4:4). As a part., without any qualification, he that overcometh (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5; 21:7). Used in an absolute sense in the nom. (Rev. 2:26; 3:12, 21; 15:2). Of the adversaries of Christ’s kingdom as temporarily victorious (Rev. 11:7; 13:7).^{lxxiv}

The most important thing to understand about the Revelation is this: We win! Those who are in Christ and with Him to the end, ***called, chosen, and faithful***, are victorious with Him. We do not have to understand every symbol and image in Revelation, but we must be among the overcomers in Christ. The Risen Christ desires His churches to overcome. This is confirmed with each message to the seven churches where He repeats seven times the phrase, ***to him who overcomes*** and ***he who overcomes*** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Some translations say ***to him who is victorious***. Interestingly, these statements are in the singular tense meaning they are personally addressed by the Risen Christ to each individual follower. Victory is not automatic. Each disciple of Christ must courageously fight to prevail over the spirit of the world, evil, and all obstacles to the Word and Spirit of Christ. The Revelation is pointing us to the fulfillment of what was already revealed to John when Jesus walked with him on the earth.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

1John 2:5:4-5 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1John 2:13-14 I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

All of the above Scriptures show us that victory depends upon our spiritual state. Victory belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ and to those who know Him, are bold in Him, have faith in Him, are spiritually strong, and remain faithful in God's word.

The Risen Christ, the Exalted Lamb of God of Revelation, is presented as a victorious warrior against the Devil, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, the Great Harlot of Babylon, and the kings of the earth gathered at Armageddon. Recall that they fight, but He subdues them all. An angel descended from heaven with great authority, loudly declaring victory, saying, ***Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*** (Rev. 18:2). Although this angel comes down from heaven, another voice is heard from heaven:

Rev. 18:4-8 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' ⁸Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

Several things are revealed in the above declaration. First is the call for God's people not to be involved with anything related to the sinful activity of this evil regime. Secondly, this headquarters of evil will receive a double portion of God's wrath. The Lord will take care of this center of evil. It will only take Him one day of plagues and one hour of judgment to completely burn it down with His fire, ***for strong is the Lord God who judges her***. The kings and wealthy merchants of the earth will mourn the destruction of the great city of evil, Babylon.

Rev. 18:9-11 The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' ¹¹"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

However, heaven rejoices along with the holy apostles and prophets because ***God has avenged you on her*** (Rev. 18:20). This is a final judgment against this headquarters of evil.

Rev. 18:21-24 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. ²²The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. ²³The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. ²⁴And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

The Risen Christ next deals with the kings of the earth, the Antichrist, the false prophet, and their armies.

Rev. 19:19-21 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

It's not difficult to understand that the final battle involves those gathered ***against Him who sat on the horse and against His army***. They make war against the Risen Christ. Although this represents the final battle that is coming, it replicates the war against sin and evil each of us is engaged in today.

What about the head of the snake, Satan himself? The Risen Christ declared to John at the beginning of the Revelation, ***I have the keys of Hades and Death*** (Rev. 1:18). The devil never had the key to his own house. Therefore, an angel came from heaven with the key to the pit.

Rev. 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

This is more than a house arrest because the Devil is restrained in chains, prevented from moving about, and kept under tight security. It's beyond a maximum security prison for the dragon. His ability to deceive will be made impossible for a thousand years. The thousand years is called the *Millennial Reign of Christ* because He will rule and exercise authority at a royal level with the saints over the earth. Although multitudes will perish during the Great Tribulation, others will survive to experience what it's like to be governed by the King of kings and Lord of lords on the earth. However, Satan will be released after the thousand years, but only for a limited time

Rev. 20:7-10 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

God doesn't mess around with the devil. Heaven's fire comes down and swallows up the rebellious nations, and the devil is permanently thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone to be reunited with the antichrist and false prophet. They will literally be tortured day and night forever. This is a total victory for the Risen Christ and His saints. However, it is a resounding and eternal defeat for Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, the rebellious kings and nations, and all who reject the rule of the Exalted Lamb of God. The scenes describing the first resurrection and the second death unveil the Righteous Judgment of the Risen Christ.

Those of the First Resurrection	Those of the Second Death
<p>Rev. 20:4-6 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received <i>his</i> mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.</p>	<p>Rev. 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is <i>the Book of Life</i>. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.</p>

The distinction cannot be clearer. A person's name is written in the Book of Life, or it is not. The second death has no power over those who are with the Risen Christ. Everything becomes new for them from this point because Christ says, ***Behold, I make all things new*** (Rev. 21:5). The Risen Christ will provide ***the fountain of the water of life***, and they will ***inherit all things*** because they have overcome.

Rev. 21:6-8 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and *the* End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Note again the distinction between those victorious in Christ and those who are unbelieving and practice evil. Those who partake of the second death receive a final condemnation at the *Great White Throne Judgment*. No place is found for them in heaven. They are forced to stand before God to receive their final sentence. They are cast into the lake of fire for all eternity. If there was ever a reason to get serious about our faith in Christ and help lead others to Christ, it is here. On the other hand, those with the Risen Christ will have their part in His eternal reign. The final triumph of the Risen Christ over evil will pave the way for a new eternal situation and environment. Their address will be in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven (Rev. 21:1-4). The dimensions are amazing and provide plenty of space for everyone who has ever lived on the earth (Rev. 21:9-21). Unfortunately, not everyone has believed and followed Christ. In addition, the depictions of the holy city's environment and the river of life are more than enough to attract the worst of sinners to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rev. 21:22-27 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Rev. 22:1-5 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

This is the inheritance of those who follow and are faithful to the Risen Christ. What a glorious heritage it is! The Revelation of the Risen Christ concludes with an admonition to do what He commands us and not to alter anything written in the Revelation.

Rev. 22:12-19 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. ¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

The constant reminder from the Risen Christ that He is coming soon should gain our attention. Insiders who do His commandments will be permitted to enter the gates of the holy city; outsiders will not. The Risen Christ speaks these things to the churches with the Holy Spirit's invitation to **Come!**

The reaction of those who read and hear the Revelation of the Risen Christ is of urgent concern. We are not referring to understanding every symbol or image presented. Rather, it is the truth of what is received from the Holy Spirit in the words of the prophecy in this book. Because He is the Spirit of Truth, and Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would tell us things to come (John 16:13). But it is difficult to see and hear what the Holy Spirit is saying without a fresh revelation of the Risen Christ. Therefore, let us ask ourselves how Revelation presents the Lord Jesus Christ and the effect it has upon our hearts and lives. We have seen that those who encountered the Messiah, Christ Jesus, in His exalted, heavenly position before and after the Cross and Resurrection, reacted in unique and similar ways. Their encounters with Him went deep into their hearts and affected their relationship with Him and their lives. Revelation gives us a view of the glorified Jesus. His blood has been shed once for all. He suffers no

more. He is now the warring Lamb and Lion of Judah who reigns and judges the nations enthroned at the right hand of God. Our heritage, our destiny, is with the Risen and Exalted, and Enthroned Christ. This is a fresh revelation for many in this generation, but one that is needed. The Risen Christ of Revelation is waiting for us to encounter Him, bow down before Him, and cry out with a threefold, ***Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come*** (Rev. 4:8). We seal our study with the closing words recorded by John on the Isle of Patmos:

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Rev. 22:20-21

Appendix 1

The 40 Days of Post-Resurrection Appearances

The Day of the Resurrection – Christ's First Appearances

- The Resurrection Morning
 - Matthew 28:1-10
 - Luke 23:56 - 24:12
 - Mark 16:1-11
 - John 20:1-18
- The report of the watch
 - Matthew 28:11-15
- The walk to Emmaus
 - Mark 16:12-13
 - Luke 24:13-35
- The appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem (Thomas being absent)
 - Mark 16:14
 - Luke 24:36-43
 - John 20:19-25

Subsequent Appearances and the Ascension

- The appearance to Thomas with the other disciples present
 - John 20:26-29
- The appearance to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee
 - John 21:1-24
- The appearance to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee
 - Matthew 28:14-20
 - Mark 16:15-18
- Christ's final appearance and his ascension (Ascension on Thursday May 18, 30 A.D.)
 - Mark 16:19-20
 - Luke 24:44-53
 - Acts 1:1-14

A Post-Ascension Appearance

- Note: Christ did appear to Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus. (Referred to in 1 Corinthians 15:8)
 - Acts 9:3-6
 - Acts 22:6-11
 - Acts 26:13-18

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

- 1 "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,
 - 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain.
 - 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
 - 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.
 - 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.
 - 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.
 - 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.
 - 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."
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Appendix 2

Church	Strengths	Weakness	Lesson for Today
<p><u>Ephesus:</u></p> <p>A Church of Hard Work and Discernment</p> <p>Ephesus was a thriving church in a major city, and Jesus had much to commend them for.</p>	<p>Hard-working and persevering – They labored tirelessly for the gospel and didn't give up.</p> <p>Doctrinally sound – They resisted false teachers and didn't tolerate evil.</p> <p>Faithful to Christ's name – They endured trials without wavering.</p>	<p>They had become so focused on defending truth and doing ministry that they lost the deep, personal love for Jesus that once fueled their passion.</p>	<p>Remember the love they once had.</p> <p>Repent of their spiritual coldness.</p> <p>Return to doing the things they did when they first fell in love with Christ.</p>
<p><u>Smyrna</u></p> <p>The church of Smyrna holds a special place in my heart because it was one of only two churches that received no rebuke from Jesus—just encouragement. This was a church that remained faithful even under intense persecution, and their example challenges us to stand strong in our faith no matter what we face.</p>	<p>They endured poverty – Many Christians in Smyrna were socially and economically oppressed.</p> <p>They suffered persecution – They faced hostility from both Roman authorities and local religious groups.</p> <p>They remained faithful – Despite hardship, they did not renounce Christ.</p>	<p>None mentioned</p> <p>Unlike many of the other churches, Smyrna received no correction from Jesus. Instead, He encouraged them to stay strong in the face of trials.</p>	<p>Smyrna's story is a reminder that being faithful to Christ doesn't mean life will be easy. Jesus didn't promise to take away their suffering, but He did promise eternal victory:</p> <p>For those facing trials today—whether it's opposition for your faith, workplace challenges, or personal struggles—Smyrna's example calls us to hold on to Jesus, knowing that He sees our suffering and will reward our faithfulness.</p>
<p><u>Pergamum</u></p> <p>Pergamum had a different struggle—it compromised with the world. This is a powerful warning for believers today who may feel pressure to blend in rather than stand firm.</p>	<p>They remained faithful even in the midst of intense spiritual opposition.</p> <p>They did not renounce Christ, even when one of their own was martyred.</p>	<p>While they stood strong in some areas, they allowed false teachings to creep in:</p> <p>The teachings of Balaam – A reference to Old Testament stories where compromise led Israel into sin.</p> <p>The Nicolaitans – A group that promoted moral and doctrinal corruption.</p>	<p>Pergamum's warning is clear: Holding on to Jesus' name is not enough if we tolerate sin and false teachings in our lives. I find this so relevant today, where many churches and believers struggle with balancing cultural acceptance and biblical truth. Jesus' command? Repent.</p> <p>Am I truly standing firm in truth, or am I allowing the world's values to shape my beliefs?</p> <p>This reminds us that true fulfillment comes from Christ, not the world.</p>

<p><u>Thyatira</u></p> <p>It had genuine strengths—love, faith, and service—but it also had a major weakness: it tolerated corruption within. This letter is a powerful warning about allowing compromise in our spiritual lives.</p>	<p>Their love and faith – They had a strong heart for God and others.</p> <p>Their service and perseverance – They were actively serving in ministry and growing in faith.</p> <p>Their spiritual growth – Jesus says their “latter works are greater than the first” (Revelation 2:19), meaning they were maturing.</p>	<p><i>“You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet.”</i> (Revelation 2:20, NIV)</p> <p>This “Jezebel” wasn’t the actual queen from the Old Testament, but she represented a similar spirit of corruption and false teaching. She led people into sexual immorality and idolatry—two major sins in that time (and still today!). Jesus warns that He gave her time to repent, but she refused. This reminds me that God is patient, but He also calls us to reject sin and false teaching in our lives.</p>	<p>This message is clear: Loving God and serving others isn’t enough if we allow sin to take root.</p> <p>Do we turn a blind eye to sinful influences in our own lives?</p> <p>Do we compromise biblical truth to fit into the culture around us?</p> <p>This tells me that those who remain faithful to God’s truth will reign with Christ. That’s an incredible encouragement to stand strong in our faith, even when it’s hard.</p>
<p><u>Sardis</u></p> <p>The church in Sardis is perhaps the most tragic of the seven. Unlike Thyatira, it wasn’t known for corruption—its problem was spiritual complacency. Sardis looked alive on the outside, but inside, it was spiritually dead.</p>	<p><i>“I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”</i> (Revelation 3:1, NIV)</p> <p>This means they probably looked like a thriving church—maybe they had great attendance, ministries, and programs. But something was missing... spiritual life.</p>	<p>The real issue was that their faith was shallow: Their works weren’t complete before God. They were asleep spiritually, unaware of how far they had fallen. They needed revival, or else judgment would come like a thief in the night.</p>	<p>Wake Up Spiritually!</p> <p><i>“Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die.”</i> (Revelation 3:2)</p> <p>This is a direct call to spiritual revival! If our faith has become routine or lifeless, Jesus invites us to:</p> <p>Remember the passion we once had for Him.</p> <p>Repent and turn back to Him.</p> <p>Hold fast to His truth and live with urgency.</p>
<p><u>Philadelphia</u></p> <p>Philadelphia is the second church (along with Smyrna) that received no rebuke from Jesus. Instead, Jesus praised them for their faithfulness and endurance. This church is a beautiful example of what it looks like to stay committed to Christ, even in the face of challenges.</p>	<p>Jesus had nothing negative to say about Philadelphia. Instead, He commended them for: Keeping His word – They remained obedient to Christ.</p> <p>Not denying His name – Even when faced with opposition, they stayed faithful.</p> <p>Having little strength but great faith – Though small in number, their faith was strong. Jesus tells them: <i>“I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”</i> (Rev.3:8 NIV)</p>	<p>None mentioned! Philadelphia had no correction from Jesus—only encouragement!</p>	<p>Jesus’ message to Philadelphia encourages us to remain steadfast, even when we feel weak or small. He promises: <i>“I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.”</i> (Revelation 3:8)</p> <p>This reminds me that God opens doors for His faithful followers—opportunities, spiritual growth, and eternal rewards.</p> <p>Jesus also reassures them: <i>“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial.”</i> (Revelation 3:10)</p> <p>This could mean protection from future persecution or a reference to Christ preserving His followers during end-time tribulations. Either</p>

	<p>This reminds me that God doesn't measure our faithfulness by size or status, but by obedience and endurance.</p>		<p>way, it's a promise of divine protection. Philadelphia's reward? A permanent place in God's kingdom (<i>"I will make them a pillar in the temple of my God."</i> – Revelation 3:12). Jesus' name written on them, symbolizing eternal belonging. This church inspires me to keep running the race of faith, knowing that Jesus rewards endurance and obedience.</p>
<p><u>Laodicea</u> Laodicea is perhaps the most famous of the seven churches—and for the wrong reason. It was the only church that received no praise from Jesus. Instead, they were rebuked for being lukewarm, complacent, and spiritually blind.</p>	<p>None mentioned! Unlike the other churches, Laodicea had no commendations. This immediately sets a serious tone for Jesus' warning.</p>	<p>Lukewarm Faith and Spiritual Blindness Laodicea was neither passionate about Christ nor completely rejecting Him—they were indifferent. Jesus' response? <i>"So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth."</i> (Rev. 3:16) That's a strong warning! Lukewarm faith is offensive to God because it represents a heart that is self-satisfied and complacent. They also thought they were rich and successful, but Jesus reveals their true condition: This hits home for me because it reminds me that earthly success means nothing if we are spiritually empty.</p>	<p>Laodicea's warning is one of the most urgent in Revelation. Jesus calls them to: Repent and pursue true faith. Seek spiritual riches, not earthly ones (<i>"Buy from me gold refined in the fire."</i> – Revelation 3:18). Open their hearts fully to Him. One of the most beautiful invitations in Scripture is found here: <i>"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 that person, and they with me."</i> (Revelation 3:20) Jesus is always inviting us into deeper fellowship with Him. But it's up to us to respond, repent, and rekindle our love for Him.</p>

End Notes

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