

Studies in the Book of Revelation

Geoffrey Bingham 1984

Contents

Study 1: The Vision and the Prophecy	2
Study 2: Christ the True Lord	4
Study 3: The Preparation of the Bride	4
Study 4: the Lord Who is the Spirit.	6
Study 5: The True Worship	7
Study 6: The Judgements of God (1)	8
Study 7: The Judgements of God (2).	9
Study 8: The Plan and the people of God.	11
Study 9: The Temple and the Witness	12
Study 10: The Beast and the Battle	13
Study 11: The Judgements of God (3)	15
Study 12: The Unholy Harlot.	16
Study 13: The Holy Bride and the Holy War.	18
Study 14: The Final judgement	19
Study 15: The Holy City and the Holy People.	20
Study 16: The Vision is For Now and For All.	22

Study 1: The Vision and the Prophecy

1. THE PROPHECY

1 Introduction- Revelation 1:1-3.

Points in the passage:

- (i) 'The revelation of Jesus Christ' = 'the revelation which belongs to Jesus Christ'. See (a) Gal. 1:11,16, I Pet. 1:13, (b) John 6:44, Matt. 11:27, (c) John 1:18, Matt 11:27, John 14:6,7,9. Jesus gives his revelation to John.
- (ii) The revelation is brought by an angel to John.
- (iii) The revelation = the whole prophecy of this book.

2. The Nature of Prophecy

- (i) Prophecy as is shown in Exodus 7: 1-2.
- (ii) Prophecy by dreams and visions prophecy=revelation) Numb. 12:6-7, Jer. 23:23-29, Acts 21:7-20.
- (iii) The key lies in Rev. 19:1, 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'. See Luke 24:2-26, 44f. Acts 26:26:2=23, 17:2-3, I Cor 15:3.
- (iv) The action of the prophetic community, Rev. 19:10, Acts 1:8, Rev. 1:2,9; 3:10; 6:9, 11:3, 12:11,17, and 20:4.

3. The Book of the Revelation is 'The Prophecy

- (i) 1:1 'what must soon take place. 'Soon' = surely, and quickly when it happens. Cf. Luke 18:1-8, II Pet. 3:9ff. Also Rev. 1:19 'thereafter'.
- (ii) 4:1, 'what will take place after this.'
- (iii) 5: 1ff. The scroll is the book of prophetic history & happenings.
- (iv) Ch. 10 - the announcement that God's plan will be shortly fulfilled
- (v) 1 1:3-13 shows the witnesses being prophets. Note 'fire' here; and in Jer 2 3:2 9, and Rev. 20:9. Fire = the prophetic word.
- (vi) 22 :7, 'Blessed is he who keeps the word of this book'.

22: 9 -1 0, Do not seal up the words of this book...

22:16, 'I, Jesus, have sent my angel with this testimony for the churches.

22: 18 -19, The warning in regard to the prophecy

2. The Vision

1. Introduction To The Vision: Revelation 1:9-20

- (i) The vision is the basis for prophecy. God first takes the prophet into himself before he sends him out (cf. Isaiah 6: 11ff.). See Num. 12:6, Acts 2:17-20.
- (ii) John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. A special effusion of the Spirit preparing him for (a) the vision and so, (b) the prophecy. See Acts 2:4,4:8, 4:31-33, 7:55, 13:9. The Spirit reveals and brings Christ's true Lordship (1 Cor 12:3)

2. The Vision

(i) John had seen Jesus as man (John 1:14), as God's revelation (John 1:14,18), as transfigured (Matt. 17:2 as resurrected John 20:19-23) how he saw him as glorified but apocalyptically, i.e. in vision.

(ii) The vision is as follows:

- (a) 'the voice of a trumpet', i.e. loud and clear.
- (b) 'the command' shows the vision to be practical. The Prophecy is to go all the churches.
- (c) 'the seven golden lampstands' speak of worship of God, and in particular the worship of God's true people. See Exod. 25:36ff, Zech. 4:2.
- (d) 'Christ is in the midst of the church.' Lord, Guide, Teacher, protector, exhortor.
- (e) 'like a son of man'. See Dan. 7:13ff., Matt. 9:6, 19:29, 26:64. 'Son of man' = humanity, a prophet (Ezekiel), the Messiah.
- (f) 'clothing.' See Dan. 10:5-6, i.e. celestial raiment.
- (g) 'the glory of his hair and head.' See Dan 7:9,13. The Son of Man is as 'the Ancient of Days'.
- (h) 'his feet are pure and strong' (cf. Isaiah 52:7, Rom. 10:1.
- (i) 'his voice like the sound of many waters,' i.e. the roaring of the seas and oceans, majestic, and awe inspiring. Ezekiel 43:2.
- (k) 'the churches are in his right hand,' the hand of authority, cf. John 10:27-29, and are protected.
- (l) 'the sharp two-edged sword issues from his mouth' i.e. the word of God. Heb. 4:12, Ephes. 6:17, Rev. 2:16, 19:19, II Thess. 2:8.
- (m) 'his face was as the sun shining in full strength', i.e. nothing to darken it Eccles 12 :2). Sheer purity, truth, and authority.

3. The Person, the Encouragement, and the Command

- (i) The prophet swoons at the sight of such glory. Cf. Exod. 20:19, Heb. 12:18-21, Jude. 6:22, Isaiah 6:1ff., Dan 8: 17f., 10: 8,9,15.
- (ii) The glorified Jesus is as the God of glory, with His authority.
- (iii) The 'mystery of the church and its angels'.

Study 2: Christ the True Lord

1. Introduction: 'Jesus is Lord!'

The Lordship of Christ is established in the Acts and the epistles. Rom. 10:, 14:7-9 are key verses. Acts 2:38 and 10:36 announce this fact, but rising from the dead made the man Jesus to be more powerful than death and sin, hence Rom. 4:2 5. Matt. 28:18 with Acts 1:8 cf. Palm 2:6-7, Gen. 49:10 seal the ministry and mission of Jesus as Lord. Rev. 17:14, and 19: 15 also make it clear.

2. Christ's Lordship in the Revelation-

Passage 1. 1:4-7. Christ the faithful -witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of flue earth.

Passage 2. 1:17-18. The first and the last, the living one, having the keys of Death and of Hades.

Passage 3. 5:1-8. The Lion of Judah, the Lamb of Gael, the only one worthy to open the sealed books of history and prophetic outworking. Note- this working covers the remainder of the prophecy in one way or another.

Passage 4. 5:8-14. The one worthy too have the same adoration and worship as God because of his salvation-work.

Passage 5. 11:1 5-18. The kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

Passage 6: 12 :10. The same as 11:1 5.

Passage 7: 14:14ff. Christ the judge and rear.

Passage 8: 19:11-21. Christ conquers all evil (cf. 20:4-10).

Passage 9. 20:4-6. Christ reigns in the millenium.

Passage 10: 22:12-16. He is the Alpha and the Omega, i.e. as God.

Study 3: The Preparation of the Bride

1. Introduction: The Perfection of the Bride

(i) The marriage of the Bride and the Lamb - the total union of Christ and his people - is the climax of the end-time. Rev. 19:6-9, 21:9-21, cf. Ephes. 5:21-33. Cf. Rev. 21:22 where the temple is now God and the Lamb.

(ii) (a) it is acclaimed by all in thunderous ways . Rev. 19:6.
(b) the Bride has made herself ready.

(c) it was granted to her to be clothed with fair linen, the righteous deeds of the saints.

(iii) the ultimate purity (adorning', Rev. 21:2) has been Gads eternal plan, and work for the church. Ephes. 1:4, 5:25-27, Col. 1:22, Phil. 1:6, I Thess. 5:2 3-2 4.

Note:- On the one hand the church - as 'the saints' - does her, 'righteous deeds', and on the other 'it is granted to her', i.e. the works proceed from God. Phil 2:12-i3 shows this (cf. Matt. 5:16). Thus (a) we are sanctified, I Cor 6:11, Thus 3:5, Heb. 9:14, and fib) we purify ourselves, I John 3:3, II Cor 7:1, II Tim. 2:21-22, cf Rev. 22:14. Linked with Ephes. 5:25-27 is Rev. 7:i4.

Q. How could the Bride not be the antithesis of the, gaudy whore, Babylon, and the perfect match for he Bridegroom, Christ the Holy One of God?

2. The Perfecting and Purification of the Bride.

Passage 1. Rev. chapters 2 and 3

- (i) The Letters are Christ's word to the churches, via the angels of the churches.
- (ii) each demands solemn attention to the Lord of the church with descriptions drawn from the Vision of chapter 1.
- (iii) Because he walks among the golden candlesticks they must hear him and obey.
- (iv) He brings commendation and rebuke where appropriate.
- (v) It is the Lord the Spirit who is speaking too the churches for the Spirit is never apart from the Lamb (5:6).

Note: (a) the whole prophecy is to the whole church (1:4, 11,22:16. (b) the dreadful state of many of the churches, only 2 of them having, high commendation, 5 of them being soundly chastised

Passage 2. Rev 7:9-17

- (i) The totality of the redeemed.
- (ii) They are purified by the Cross.
- (iii) They have been prepared by suffering (cf. Rom. 1:: 7-25, II I._ or. 4:1 cf, Matt 5:10-11, II Thess 1:5). See 6:9-11,13:5-10, 14:12 -13
- (iv) They are ready for the Marriage.

Passage 3. Rev- 6:9-11

- (i) Preparation by suffering and martyrdom. Cf. 2:10(b).
- (ii) They are given white robes, i.e. are prepared for the Marriage

Passage 4. Rev. 12 :11-17.

- (i) The saints overcome the dragon by the blood of Christ.
- (ii) The saints are persecuted because they 'held the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, i.e. suffer for their prophetic faith and action.

Passage 5. Rev. 13: 5-10:

- (i) The Beast-Babylon system is out too destroy the Bride.
- (ii) They can only be victorious when they are weak (.vs.9-10)

Passage 6_ Rev. 14:9-13.

The same principle as in the former passage but the limitations of the beast are shown by God's judgement of him.

Passage 7. Rev. 15::1-4

The saints have participated in the conquest of the beast

Passage 8. Rev. 17:1-19:2.

- (i) The people, the Bride, have rejected the solicitations of the gaudy whore, Babylon and have suffered persecution and martyrdom.
- (ii) God has vindicated the Bride by avenging her blood shed in the pursuit. of holiness i.e. 'the righteous deeds of the saints.

The bride is now ready for marriage with the Lamb Rev. 22:17cf 19:7, 21:2

Study 4: the Lord Who is the Spirit.**1. Introduction: 'The Lord Who is the Spirit (II Cor. 3:18)'**

- (i) Christ was subject to the Lordship of the Spirit. See Mark 1:12, 'Matt 12 :2 8, Acts 10:38. He was The man of the Spirit'.
- (ii) Christ poured out the Spirit Acts 2:33) and so the Holy Spirit is 'the spirit of the Man'. See Rom. 8:9-11, Gal. 4:6, Acts 16:7. See Rev.3:1.
- (iii) In Rev. 5:6 the Spirit and the Lamb are inseparable. See Rev.3:1; II Thess 2:8; Isaiah 11:4(b); Rev. 3:1.
- (iv) The church is led by the Spirit, Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:18, 25.
- (v) In Rev. 1:4 the salutation to the church is equally from Christ arid the sevenfold Spirit.

2. The Spirit Always Was the Lord. .

- (i) He was Lord in creation. Gen. 1:1-2, Psalm 104:29-30, Job 3.3:4.
- (ii) He has always been the Spirit of life. Psalm 104:2 9-30, Isaiah 2:1.c.f., IICor. 3:6, Rom 8:9-11.
- (iii) He led Israel through the wilderness. Isaiah 63:10ff.
- (iv) He is the Spirit of judgement. Isaiah 4:4, Matt. 3:11, II Thess. 2:8. Isaiah 11:4(b), Ephes 1:13, 4:30, cf. 7 'torches of fire', Rev. 4:5.

3. The Sevenfold Spirit of God.

- (i) For 'the seven spirits' see Rev. 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6.
- (ii) For 'the sevenfold Spirit of God' see Isaiah 11:2

4. The Spirit Speaks to the Churches_

- (i) The Spirit brings the prophecy to the churches. Rev. 1:10-11.
- (ii) The Spirit speaks to the church - as in the 7 letters of Rev. chs v and 3. See 2:7, 11,17, 2:1, 3:1, 13, 2:2. See (a) Rev. 14:13, 20:17, (b) the commands of the Spirit in the book of Acts, i.e. 8:29, 10:1, 13:2,4, 15:2,8, 16:6-7.

5. The Spirit is the Lord of Prophecy

- (i) John can only see the vision, i.e. hear and know the prophecy because he is 'in the Spirit'. Rev. 1:10, 4:2, 17:3, 21:10. Cf. I Cor. 2:14.
- (ii) The Spirit takes the initiative in all matters of the prophecy of the Revelation. 1:10, chs. 2 and 3, 4:2, 14:13, 17:3.
- (iii) The Spirit has always been the Lord of prophecy. 1 Pet 1:10,11 Peter 1:21, 1 Tim. 4:1, John 16:13(b). cf. rev 19:10

Study 5: The True Worship

1. Introduction: Creation Originally at Worship.

- (i) Rom. 1:20-25 gives worship in reverse (a) knowing God was honouring Him, and being thankful. This came from the knowing the truth of God, and (b) nothing else was worshipped but God. Man was alive, and so worshipped God in his spirit (cf. Rom. 1:9. Phil. 3:3) and in the truth and did not worship the creature'.
- (ii) The creation worships God. Job 38:7, Psalm 145:10, Rom 8:19-22.

2. The Nature of True Worship

- (i) worship is giving the worth to God that is His due.
- (ii) it is giving honour to all that comes from the hand of God.

3. Those Who Worship in the Revelation Prophecy.

- (i) The four living creatures, 4:6-9, 5:1 If.
- (ii) The twenty four elders, 4:4, 9-11, 5:8ff.5:14. 7: 11, 11:16,19:4f
- (iii) The angelic throng, 5:11f., 8:3-5, 14:6-7, 19:1f., 10, 22:8-9.
- (iv) The redeemed, 5:13, 7:9-15, 15:2-4.
- (v) The 144,440, 14:1-3.
- (vi) All creation. 5:13, 15:4 (cf. Phil. 2:11, 19:6).

4. Those Who Are Worshipped.

- (i) God is worshipped throughout the book.
- (ii) The Lamb is worshipped, 5:9-14, 6:10, cf. 21:2 2

5. The Causes and Bases of Worship.

- (i) The holiness of God, 4:8.
- (ii) His eternity, 4: 8, cf. 1: 8, 22:13.
- (iii) His creatorhood, 4:11.
- (iv) His redemption, 5:13, 6:10.
- (v) His victory, 11:16-18.
- (vi) His great deeds and righteous ways, 15:3.
- (vii) His just judgements, 16:5-7, 18:20, 19:1-3.
- (viii) For the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb.
- (ix) The Lamb is worshipped because of his salvation, 5:9ff, 7:10.

6. The Race and Modes of Worship.

- (i) Before the throne. 4:2ff., 5:6ff., 7:9fi., 11:16ff., 14: 1ff.,15:2ff. 19:4ff., 22:1-5.
- (ii) In the temple, 7:15, 11:16-19, cf . 21:22.
- (iii) Prostration is the general mode of worship, 4:10, 5:8, 11:16, 19:4.
- (iv) Worship is in purity, e.g. white garments, 4:4 (the elders), 6:11 (the martyrs), 7:9,13 (the redeemed), 14: 4 (the 144,000).
- (v) Worship is through adoration, crying, saying, singing, and music, 4:8, 10, 5:9, 12, 7:10,15,11:15, 15:3, 16:5, 19:1, 4, 6.

Study 6: The Judgements of God (1)

1. The One Worthy to Open the Book.

- (i) Rev. 5:1-8 shows that only Christ crucified is worthy to open the book. The reason? He has conquered, i.e. defeated all evil through the Cross and Resurrection. Note that in the action to come the Lamb and the Sevenfold Spirit are inseparable (vs. 6).
- (ii) In Rev. 5:6-14. the whole creation recognises his worthiness, the work he is about to undertake, and the source of his ability - the saving atonement, as also the goal of that atonement, i.e. the saved shall reign as kings an the earth.

2. The Opening of the First Six Seals: Rev. 6: 1-16.

- (i) **The first Seal:** vs. 1-2. One living creature speaks, commanding, and the rider comes (goes out) 'conquering and too conquer' (cf Rev. 19:11), The bow symbolises warfare (Hab. 3:9, cf. Isaiah 42:2, 49:2-3, Zech. 9:13) Is this physical or spiritual warfare?

(ii) **The Second Seal:** Vs.3-4. The second living creature makes demands, and the red horse and rider go into action. Peace is taken from men so that they slay one another. Red symbolises blood. Is his word such as in Rev. 19:15, i.e. the Word of God?

(iii) **The Third Seal:** vs. 5-6. The third living creature commands. The black horse signifies famine. but this is not total. The rich can afford special food. What, then, is the famine?

(iv) **The Fourth Seal:** vs.7-8> The fourth living creature commands death; the horse is a pale-green (corpse-like) colour. Hades is that which is beyond physical death. For such 'tribulation' see Matt. 24:21-22, Dan. 12:1.

(v) **The Fifth Seal:** vs.9-11. The subject is the martyrs. They are killed 'for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus'. The passage shows more will be killed in the warfare. God's sovereignty is underlined.

(vi) **The Sixth Seal:** the language is apocalyptic, signifying that man's independent system is doomed. See Matt. 24:29-31 for similar language, where the day of the Lord is indicated. The great day' is 'the day of the wrath of the Lamb. Cf. Isaiah 2:17, Hos. 10:1-8, Isaiah 24:21, I Thes. 2:2ff., Phil. 1:10, I Cor 1:8, II Cor 1:14, Rom. 2:5, 8phes 4:30.

3. The Interlude and the Seventh Seal: Rev. 7:1-8: 1.

(i) The first series of judgements is not closed without an interlude, (7:1-17) in which (a) the 144,004, and (b) the universal multitude of the redeemed are shown. The interlude opens (7:1-3) with a restraint against immediate destruction. See Zech. 6:1-8.

(ii) The seventh seal virtually opens up the action of the seven trumpets (8:1-5), i.e. more judgements whose nature is more intense than those of the seals. We are not told why the silence comes, but it presages something horrific, whilst the prayers of the church are shown too to be dynamic in their effects.

Study 7: The Judgements of God (2).

The Judgements of the 7 Trumpets

1. Introduction: The Prelude of Preparation.

Rev.8:1-6. The breaking of the seventh seal results in the appearance of the seven angels and their (seven) trumpets. In verses 3-5 the prayers of the saints are described. In 6:10 the martyrs cry out for God's judgements upon their killers. Here, in verse 5 the results of the saints' prayers are drastic and dramatic judgements on the earth. Thus the angels are now ready to do their tasks of judgement, showing the prayers of the saints to be effective and indeed indispensable. Their prayer can be summed up as, 'Thy Kingdom come!' for it calling for judgements and triumphant reigning.

Note:- a trumpet is essentially to give warning (Ezek. 33:3).

2. The Judgements of the Seven Trumpets: 8:7-9:21, 11:15-19.

(i) **Trumpet 1:** vs. 7. If the judgement is literal then we take hail, fire and blood as such, and the destruction of one third of the earth (cf. Exod. 9:23ff, Psalm 18:13). Note in 9:4 the judgement only comes on those under the mark of the beast. Does 'one-third' mean judgements do not come upon believers? If the language is apocalyptic then hail, fire and blood are symbols of judgement, but not literal. See 11:5-6, 20:9. **Note** 'green grass' i.e. the select and prosperous.

(ii) **Trumpet 2:** vss. 8-9. Again a third of the earth comes under drastic judgement. See Exod. 7:17ff. The judgement comes from above. **Note:** it is not a burning mountain but something *like* a burning mountain.

(iii) **Trumpet 3:** vss. 10-11. Water means life in the Scriptures. The source of life is contaminated. Wormwood means judgement, Jer. 9:1 S. cf. 33:15, Lam. 3:15, 19. Wormwood is not normally lethal. For bitterness see Heb. 12:15, Deut. 29:18.

(iv) **Trumpet 4:** vs. 12. See Exodus 10:21ff. cf. Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:31, Amos 8:9, Acts 2:20. Now not only one-third of the earth is affected but one third of the heavenly powers.

Note:- In 8:13 the remaining three trumpets to be blown are announced as horrific. The eagle is the strongest of all birds and rises higher than all, and so can be seen by all. It often presages disaster (cf. Matt. 24:28).

(v) **Trumpet 5** 9:1-11. This trumpet-judgement moves into a larger dimension. The 'star' - a heavenly body or being - is not so much sent as it falls See Rev. 1:20; 6:13, 8:10,1; 12:4, cf. Isaiah 14:12-17, Luke 10:18; Job 38:7. If the star is Satan then he is under God's sovereign control. For 'locusts' see Exod 10:12ff., and, Joel chapters 1 and 2. The judgement is aimed solely at men who are under the beast (cf. 13:1ff.). Those who have the seal of God are protected (cf. Eph 1 :13-14, 4:30, II Tim. 2:19). Abaddon (Apollyon) means 'Destroyer'. This king is 'the angel of the pit' and possibly Satan. **Note** that a scorpion's sting is the most painful of all insects.

(vi) **Trumpet 6:** vss. 13-19. In Trumpet 6 the locusts' stings are not lethal. In Trumpet 7 they are. Again it is a third of mankind that is killed. In 6:9 the martyrs are under the altar, demanding avengement. Here *is* judgement, but only a third of evil mankind. Verses 20-21 show that evil mankind would not repent, even in the face of such horrific judgement. They continued with their idolatry. Thus they display themselves as ripe for total judgement.

(vii) **Trumpet 7** 11:14-19. The interval between the 6th. and 7th judgements is a powerful one. Two of the three woes (8:13, 9:12) have passed; now the third is to take place. In fact when the 7th. trumpet is blown it heralds the victory of 'our Lord and his Christ', so that the events of Rev. 12 rather than 11: 13-19 may be that third woe. Even so the imminent judgements are announced, and verse 19(b) is to be compared with 8:5, the beginning of the 7 trumpet-judgements.

3. Conclusion Regarding the Seven 'trumpet Judgements.

(i) The second round of judgement is more intense than the first, as the seven bowls of wrath judgements will prove more intense. It is a matter of theodicy, i.e. God leaving nothing of evil unjudged or and injustice unrequited. *The* book of the Revelation has as one of its purposes the revelation that God's judgements are 'righteous and true, altogether'.

Study 8: The Plan and the people of God.

1. Introduction: The Plan and the People,

Rev. 10:1-7 shows God has His plan for history. Its fulfilment is to come with the blast of the 7th. trumpet (10:7, 11: 15- 19). This plan can be seen in Gen 3:15, 49:10, Isaiah 43:6-7, Ephes. 1:3-14, 2:7, 3: 1-11, cf. I Cor 15:24-18, Matt 28:19-20. All history is 'salvation history', and it all concerns the people of God (a) Seth and his descendants, (b) Israel, (c) the church, the new people of God.

2. The People of God in the Book of the Revelation.

These can be seen under the following categories:-

- (i) The 144,000 in 7:4-8. aid 14:1-5. There are two views (a) that this represents Israel since it is the multiple of the square of 12 (Israel's number) and the cube of 10 (the number of perfection), and (b) that it represents the church 'the Israel of God' (Gal. 6:10), since the church is the 'new Israel (cf. James 1:1, I Pet. I:I, 2:9,10 - with Egod. 19:5 - Ephes. I:11, 14, Tit. 2:14, Gal 3:29, Phil 3:3). Whatever the case they are the people of God. Note in 7:2-3 that the sealing is against being harmed by the 4 winds, i.e. 4 angels (7:1-2, 9:13-15).
- (ii) The 'great multitude' as in S"9-10 and ?:9-17. This is the universal church, all the redeemed (cf. 14:3 where the 44,000 are the 'redeemed from the earth'). Their white robes speak of purification and justification. These are not sealed, but then see Ephes: I :13-14, 4:30.
- (iii) The 'overcomers' or 'conquerors'. in 12:10-17. See each letter in chapters 2 and 3, and also 21:7. These are the people who (a) hold the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (vss. 11,17), and (b) who are continually persecuted, but who overcome the dragan (Satan).
- (iv) Those refusing the beast. in 13:5-10. 14:9-13. These have patient endurance, not fighting back with 'carnal weapons' (c.f.. II Cor. 10:3-5), but submitting to persecution, and ultimately entering into life (14:13).
- (v) Those defeating the beast as in 15:2-4, cf 19:14ff We are not told how this happens, but gather that it was by using God's weapons, which are 'spiritual, mighty to the pulling down of many strongholds' (II Cor. 10:3-5).
- (vi) Those constituting the Bride of Christ (previously in Study 3), the Holy City (later, in Study 15), and the Temple (later, in Study 14).

- (vii) Those who have become a 'kingdom of priests' in 1:6, 5:10, 22:5 and will exercise their priesthood, reign on the earth, and reign forever.

3. Some Details Concerning the People of God and the Plan.

- (i) The plan is fulfilled when the people (i.e. the elect) of God are complete, when evil has come to ripeness for judgement, and, being judged, is defeated and destroyed (put out of action).
- (ii) The plan of God is fulfilled when the people of God are resurrected, glorified, receive their inheritance, are the Bride, the powerful Holy City, the true nation of royal priests.
- (iii) Some of the marks of the true people are as follows:- they are sealed with the seal of God, are washed and purified through the Lamb (7:14,14:5, 21:27, 22:11) refuse the mark of the beast but have the mark of the Father and the Lamb on their foreheads (14:1, 22:4) they reject idolatry and follow the Lamb wherever he goes (14:4-5), they are overcomers of evil (12:11, 21:7), and open to martyrdom, (12:11, cf 6:9f.).

Study 9: The Temple and the Witness

1. Introduction: The People of God Are His Temple.

It is clear from the Scriptures that the Tabernacle has, (i) always represented God's presence among His people, and, (ii) signified the very people of God themselves. Exod. 19:6 (cf. I Pet. 2:9-10) makes Israel the priest-nation amongst all the nations of the earth, thus meaning it is God's witness to the nations. Likewise 'the Israel of God' -the church, the new people of God is His priest-people amongst all the peoples of the earth, I Pet. 2:9-10.

Practically, now, the church is the (new) temple of God. See I Cor. 3:16, I I Cor. 6:16, Ephes. 2:21, cf. I Pet. 2:4-10. The word *naos* (shrine) is used in the Epistles and the Revelation, and not *heiron* (the whole temple building). Christ is the new Temple, John 2:19-21. The new people are the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, the Bride of Christ, and as the church is the Bride of Christ (Ephes. 5:25-33) so she is the Temple of God. See Ezek 37:26-28 (cf. chs. 40-44, Rev. 11:1-2) and Rev. 21: 1ff. See also Isaiah 56:6ff, with Isaiah 2:1-4, 66:1-2.

2. The Temple in the Book of the Revelation.

- (i) The true believer will be part of the temple, 3:17. See I Pet. 2:4-5, Ephes. 2:21, I Cor. 3:16 for the fact that believers are part of the temple.
- (ii) The true believers worship in the temple, 7:15.
- (iii) The temple is measured, i.e. measuring is either for destruction (Ezek. 40:3f.) or preservation. 7:3 shows the church sealed for protection, and now measured for protection.
- (iv) In 11:1-3 the temple appears on earth. In 11:19 it is in heaven. Also it is in heaven in 14:15, 15:5,6,8, 16:1 and 16:17.

- (v) The altar in heaven is mentioned in 6:9, 8:3, 8:5, 9:13, 14:18 and 16:7. Possible 6:9 and 16:7 refer to the sacrificial altar and the other references to the altar of incense. In fact they may both be represented by the one altar. See Ezek. 47:1 and Rev. 21:1 where the 'altar' and the 'throne' seem to be one. The altar is before God (9:13). In 14:15 an angel comes from out of the temple, and in 14:18 from out of the altar. In 16:7 the altar cries (cf. 6:9-10).
- (vi) In 11:19 'the ark of His covenant' is present. It is not hidden from view by the curtain, showing grace is available to all, and God is present to His people. See Jer. 3:15ff.

3. The Witness and the Temple

The people of God are God's witnesses. In the O.T. (Exod. 19:5-6) Israel was the priest nation. In the N.T. (I Pet 2:9-10) this has passed over to the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 5:16, I Pet. 2:9-10). How the people of God behave & and in the temple of God, i.e. worship, God and serve Him, is part of their witness. Yet, also, how they live, and how they operate in the face of the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, and Babylon, is the full witness. That we saw, partly, in Study 8. The Plan of God, and the People of God', and will see even more in Study 10, 'The Beast and the Battle'.

If we look at Rev. 1:2, 9, 6:9f., 12:10-11, 17, and 19:10, we will see that the true witness to God, to Christ, and to the truth lies in 'keeping' the 'ward of God and the testimony of Jesus', 'the ward of God and the testimony they had borne', 'keeping the commandments of God and having (holding) the testimony of Jesus'. This means they hear the ward of God and do it, they are Christ in history working out his plan according to the will of God.

Being the temple of God on earth (I Cor. 3:16, Ephes. 1:22-12, I Peter 2:4-10, Heb. 13:15-16, Isaiah 56:6-8) means that their daily worship witnesses to God and the Lamb who are seated on the throne. No less when they worship Him in His temple in heaven (7:15) they are testifying to His grace which has brought them there, and made them the people of God. To have the names (marks) of the Father and the Lamb on their foreheads (14:1, 22:4) is to proclaim that they have refused the mark of the beast, and are prepared for the suffering that is entailed in this confession. Thus martyrdom is part of the witness. See 2:13 - 'Antipas my faithful witness' 6:9 - 'slain for the word of God and the witness they had borne' - and 1:5, 'Jesus Christ the faithful witness' with 3:14, 'the Amen, the faithful and true witness'. Note also 19:10, 'The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus'. Witness is one of the key words to the Revelation.

Study 10: The Beast and the Battle

1. Introduction: The Constant Battle

Anyone doing a first reading of this prophecy would come to the conclusion, quickly, that there is a constant battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. That battle commences in Gen. 3 with the temptation of man by the serpent. In Rev. 12:9 he is directly linked with the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world'. A reading of the whole Bible shows Satan (the Devil) to be opposed to God and His plan (job

1:6ff., 2:1ff., Zech. 3:1ff) and depicts him as a creature who is in rivalry with God (cf. 14:12ff., Ezek.28:1-5). He seeks to bring both heavenly and earthly creatures to fight on his side against God. The world of mankind 'lies in the Evil One' (I John 5:19, Ephes 2:1-3, Heb. 2:14-15), and the nations are rebellious against God (Psalm 2).

2. Satan and the Beast in the Revelation

(i) **9: 1-5.** A mention of those without the seal of God (cf. 7:2-3) is made in verse 4, whilst evil powers issue from the bottomless pit.

(ii) **11:1-13.** Mankind as 'the nations' is set against God and His two witnesses.

(iii) **12:1-7.** The dragon (Satan, the Devil, 'that old serpent') is cast out of heaven, attacks the child of the woman, then the offspring of the woman.

(iv) **13:1-18.** The beast arises out of the sea (cf. 17:15), and is given all the authority of the dragon, by the dragon. It apes God's Son the Messiah in having a 'mortal wound' which heals. It makes war on the saints and conquers them. A second beast apes the Holy Spirit - 'two horns like a lamb' (cf. 5:6) - and creates an image of the beast. Its function is to cause worship of the evil. It (this unholy spirit) causes evil mankind to be sealed, with the mark of the beast (Cf. Ephes. 1:13-14, 4:30).

(v) **14:8-14.** The first mention of Babylon is made. Those sealed by God are warned against following the beast.

(vi) **15:1-4.** The conquerors of the beast as shown as triumphant.

(vii) **16:12-21.** The 'false prophet' (cf. 19:2 Q) who appears to be the second beast is mentioned, and an unholy trinity of 3 spirits apes God's wonders, gathering the world against God for (the battle of) Armageddon. The great city (Babylon) is shattered and the nations defeated.

(viii) **17:1-19:3.** There is given an unmasking of Babylon, a revealing of her true nature, the division in the ranks of evil (17:16-17), the destruction of Babylon, and the avengement of the martyrs.

(ix) **20:1-15, 21:8.** The battle of Christ against the dragon, the beast, the false prophet and evil mankind, the liberation of Satan from the bottomless pit, the nations following him to fight the saints of God, the defeat of all evil, the casting into destruction of the Devil, the judgement of the nations, and the triumph of God.

3. Conclusion: All Evil is Defeated, and God is Vindicated

The judgements of God are shown to be 'true and righteous altogether

Study 11: The Judgements of God (3)

The Judgements of the Seven Bowls of wrath

1. Introduction: The Intermission.

The sixth trumpet was blown in 9:13-21. This was followed by an intermission in which the fulfilment of God's plan is announced by 'another mighty angel' (10:1-7), John is commanded to eat 'the little scroll' and prophesy to the nations. The two witnesses appear and the second woe takes place (11:14). Only then - and in anticipation of the third woe - the seventh trumpet is blown. Following its action a further intermission takes place concerning the defeat of the red dragon (ch. 12), the rise of the beast, the second beast, and the making of the evil image (ch. 13). Chapter 14 is still occupied with the (a) the 144,040, (b) conflict with the beast, and (c) the judgement of wrath, Chapter 15 brings us to the seven angels who have the bowls of wrath. Our study is from 15:5 to 16:21.

2. The Seven Bowls of Wrath.

(i) The angels and their bowls. 15:5-6:1. The temple is opened (cf. 11:19), the angels emerge from it, described in detail. They are pure and holy: the bowls are not to be poured out in an evil way. The bowls are 'full of the wrath of God'. A voice from the temple commands them. The seven bowls contain 'the seven plagues'. Note also that the seven plagues are really the ending of the seven seals, including the seven trumpets. This is really an unbroken, action of history as planned by God and executed by Christ. .

(ii) The First bowl. 16:2. Wrath upon these who bore the mark of the beast and worshipped its image. It took the form of sores or ulcers. See Exod. 9:10ff. and Deut. 28:35. Note that God will not tolerate false worship. This first judgement is on man.

(iii) The Second Bowl. 16:3. A reminder of another Exodus plague (Exod 7:17-21, cf.) Rev. 8:8-9, the second trumpet and one third of the sea into blood). This however is more horrific 'like the blood of a dead man', i.e. dark and congealed. Every living thing (lit. 'living soul') died, so that the judgement is not only on man.

(iv) The Third Bowl. 16:4. Now not only the sea but the rivers and fountains of water, i.e. the source of life for all creatures. Note 'the angel of waters', just as there were 'angels of the winds' (7:I -3). It is 'blood for blood' but need not be taken literally, but rather 'as they have destroyed, so shall they be destroyed' (cf. 6:9-10. 18:24, 19:2). Here is God's vindication in the justice of retributory judgements.

(v) The Fourth Bowl. 16:8-9. 'Was allowed', i.e. 'was given' shows the wrath is under God's sovereign control. Whatever the meaning of 'the sun' (cf. 6:12, 8:12, 9:2) its judgement is linked with fire (cf. I I:S, 20:9, 13:13). Rather than receive the grace of judgement (judgement releases from guilt) men curse the name of God, knowing their plague came from him. They did not repent.

(vi) The Fifth Bowl. 16:10-11. Darkness (cf. Exod. 10:21-23, Rev. 9:2) is a fearful visitation. It is poured on the centre of evil ('the throne of the beast'), and causes great

pain, 'men gnawed their tongues in anguish'. The counter-irritant of self-inflicted pain seeks to neutralise the fearful effects of the former plagues, and - now - the plague of darkness. The beast could do nothing about this revelation and experience of his evil kingdom, which had doubtless seemed to be 'light' to its members. Again God is cursed for his actions, and men are impenitent.

(vii) The Sixth Bowl. 16:12-16. The river is dried up, becoming a pathway for invasion. This river (Euphrates) is used as a symbol for evil and judgement (cf. 9:13-19, Isaiah 8:7f.). Who are 'the kings from the east'? They are not mentioned again. Are they the instruments of judgement who aid the forces of-evil for Armageddon, as in 16:14, Le among 'the kings of the whole world'?

(viii) The Seventh Bowl. 16:17-21. 'It is done!' (cf. 21:6) is pronounced from the temple, from the throne, and causes great activity (cf. 8:5). It means 'It has happened!'. The 'great city' is Babylon (cf. I I:8) - as against 'the Holy City - and is 'great' but not 'holy', as we see in chapters 17-19. The cities allied with it also fell. It is certain that here is not literal happening, but the symbol for the reality is powerful. The vast complex of Babylon comes under God's wrath. 'God remembered Babylon' is evidence of His 'righteous judgement'. The crushing burdens that come upon devotees of Babylon do not cause them to repent, but only to curse more deeply.

3. Conclusion To God's Judgements.

Much of the Revelation is given over to what has been called 'the vindication of God', i.e. He is just, does bring about judgements at the right (ripe) moment, leaves no evil unpunished and undestroyed. He avenges injustice only when opportunity and incentive have first been given for repentance. Thus His love and holiness are one together. Whilst evil and impenitent humanity goes on cursing Him, yet 'His judgements are true and righteous altogether'. The creation is not a moral hotch-potch, nor God a prevaricator. He 'faithful creator' but in redeeming and judging.

Study 12: The Unholy Harlot.

The Bride's Impure Counterpart.

1 Introduction: Babylon the Great City.

Babylon as a symbol of evil, and signified by a city has a long history. First there is the principle of a city (Gen. 4:17, 10:11, 11: 1ff.). The building of Babel, then later Babylon (Dan. 4. d'. Isaiah 14:41;f.). Some see Babylon as Rome, and I Pet. 5:13 may refer to this use. However Babylon is the-symbol of power, pleasure and seductive evil. In the book of the Revelation is has seduced 'the kings of the earth' and 'the dwellers on earth'.

2. References in the Revelation to Babylon

The following passages speak of Babylon, her coming doom, her nature, and her doom:- Rev. 11:7-13, 13:8, 17:1-19:3.

3. Babylon the Unholy Harlot.

- (i) We must keep remembering that Satan (the dragon) has his counterparts to all that is God, or of God, i.e. an unholy trinity, an unholy kingdom, and an unholy city. He an unholy father, has an unholy family, an unholy spirit, and an unholy worship. The church is the holy Bride, and Babylon the unholy woman, is no bride but a whore, clothed in crimson and purple - i.e. crimson for sin and purple for a false royalty.

Note: in 17:1. the angel is not showing Babylon, but 'the judgement of the great harlot'.

- (ii) Details about Babylon (chapter 7-19)

- (a) the harlot and the beast are one - in the wilderness,
- (b) the golden cup of the harlot promises something rich, but it is 'full of abominations, impurities of her fornication',
- (c) the harlot is cruel 'drunk with the blood-"of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus',
- (e) John is impressed, i.e. ' marvels', but it told not to 'marvel',
- (d) she is linked with the beast and his kings,
- (f) 'the many waters' (vss. 1, 15), are 'peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues'. The beast came out of the sea (13:1).
- (g) in accordance with God's plan the beast will hate the harlot and destroy her.

- (iii) The contrast between the Bride and Babylon:

- (a) The Bride is one with Christ, the Bridegroom: Babylon is one with the beast and the dragon,
- (b) The bride is dressed in pure linen, i.e. the righteous deeds of the saints: the gaudy whore is decked with the unrighteous deeds of evil humanity, and lacks ' the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit'.
- (c) the Bride has the name of the Father and the Lamb on her forehead: the whore has on her forehead 'Babylon great mother of harlots and of earth's abominations',
- (d) Babylon 'plays the wanton' : Christ's bride is faithful and submitted to her Husband,
- (e) the Bride is the Holy City: Babylon is. 'the great [unclean] city', all nations are seduced by Babylon, but ultimately into the Holy City shall come all the nations,
- (f) the Holy City is for ever, eternal: the 'great city' is doomed to (and meets) destruction.

4. Good and Evil Are Both 'Masculine' and Feminine

The dragon, the beast, the second beast (the false prophet) are all masculine. Babylon is feminine. These are both macho, i.e. aggressive. By contrast the church is feminine as

the Bride, the temple, the Holy City, and Christ is Warrior-King, Husband, and Son of God. Their femininity and masculinity are not macho, so that they are weak by worldly standards, although they have true strength from the point of view of God's way of truth.

Study 13: The Holy Bride and the Holy War.

1. Introduction: God is Holy.

In Revelation holiness is a powerful theme. The word 'holy' is used in 3:7, 6:10 (directly for God), 11:2 (holy temple), in 14:10 (holy angels), in 20:6, 22:11 (man is holy), and in 21:2, 10, 22:19 (holy city). As elsewhere in Scripture, God's holiness is dynamic, redeeming man and purifying him (cf. Rev, 7:14), whilst attacking evil and destroying it.

2. The Bride is Holy.

- (i) In Ephes. 5:25-27 Christ purifies his bride. In Acts 15:9, 22:16, I Cor 6:11, I Tim. 1:5, Titus 1:15, 3:5, Heb. 10:22, I Pet. 1:22, I John 1:-) purification by the blood of Christ through the work of the Spirit is for persons who believe. In this sense the church is holy.
- (ii) The church is the sanctified people of God i.e. set apart to be His people as Israel in its time was holy to God. See ,John 17:17 (cf. ,John 15:3) Rom. 1:7, I Cor. 1:2, I Cor. 7:14f., II Thess. 2:13, I Pet. 1:2, 15 (cf. Lev 11:44), 2:9-10 (cf. Exod. 19:5-6).
- (iii) The people of God (the Bride) live in holy manner. It is assumed in Rev. chs. 2 and 3 that the churches recognise the unholiness rebuked by Christ and reject it, whilst recognising the holiness commended by him, and continue to live in it. (Note the terrible forms of impurity that invade the church) The holy people reject the impurity of the dragon, the beasts, and Babylon. Rev. 14:4 shows the 144,000 'have not defiled themselves with women' i.e. 'idolatry'.
- (iv) In Rev. 19:7-8 the Bride 'has made herself ready Her garment is; 'fine linen, bright and pure' symbol of her virginal purity. 21:2, 11 show the same thing. She has 'all the glory of God'.
- (v) The Bride is also the holy temple and the holy city. Both of these are without defilement. . . . nothing unclean, nor anyone who practice; abomination or falsehood' shall enter this holy city.
- (vi) Only the pure in heart shall see God (Matt. 5:8); and in Rev. 22:4 it is said of the saints 'they shall see His face'.

3. The Holy War.

As we saw in Study 14 ('The Beast and the Battle') we now see the unholy war that evil executes. It is political, cruel, and filled with beasts that are blasphemous and impure. Babylon likewise is the unholy harlot, and her golden goblet is 'full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication' (17:4). We see how ultimately it is the 'sharp two-edged sword' of the king of kings and Lord of lords', which defeats the nations, as also it is 'fire from heaven' which conquers all evil.

What we must now see is the place the redeemed (the holy Bride) have in the conquest of evil. The saints wage holy war by 'holding the word (commandments) of God and the testimony of Jesus' (1:9, 6:9f., 12:11, 17, 14:12-13). They wage war by refusing the mark of the beast, preferring to suffer death than to use unspiritual weapons, the same political weapons as their enemy. Having the holy seal of God upon them - the 'mark' of the Father and the Lamb - they fight only in holy manner. 12:11 shows they overcome the dragon by 'the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony', and by not 'loving their life unto death', i.e. by willingness to give up their lives (2:10, 13, 6:9ff., 14:13). Those who appear to lose the battle through death are those who, in fact, are truly victorious.

The redeemed use the true weapons of warfare. In the epistles these are seen in Rom. 13:12, II Cor. 10:3-5, Ephes.6:10-17; I Thess. 5:8. In Revelation it is the prophetic power, the sword of the Spirit, 'the sharp-two-edged sword', i.e. 'they hold the word [and commandments] of God'. See Rev. 11:3,5). They fight impurity by purity, deceit by the truth, hatred by love. These are the only weapons they have, but they are powerful. In 12:11, 15:3, they have overcome the enemy. In 17:14 they are victorious with the Lamb and 'are called and chosen and faithful (cf. 2:10b, 14:13). If the redeemed are counted as amongst 'the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure', then they help in the defeat of the beast and the false prophet and mankind opposed to God.

Study 14: The Final judgement

1. Judgement Has Always Been Understood.

Paul states the principle that mankind innately knows of judgement, 'They know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die' (Rom. 1:32). The Flood indicates this righteous judgement. Abraham called God 'the fudge of all the earth' (Gen 18:25). Heb. 9:27 says that it is appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgement comes, James 4:12 represents God as ruler, judge, and lawgiver. Christ said the Father had authority to judge and had given this to His Son (John 5:22-29). He showed that there would be a resurrection unto judgement. Acts 10:42, 17:30-31 repeat the fact of universal judgement. II Cor. 5:10 says, 'We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.' We will see that the

2. Judgement and the judgements in the Revelation.

- (i) We have seen the judgements that come upon man and the powers of evil in the action of (a) the Seven Seals, (b) the Seven Trumpets, and (c) the Seven Bowls of Wrath.
 - (ii) We have seen that God's 'avengement' seemed to be coming slowly -if ever (6:1p, cf. II Pet. 3:3-10) but in fact God was judging 'speedily' (Luke 18:7-8). By waiting until the time was ripe for judgement even though He seemed to have 'passed over former sins' (Rom. 3:25), and 'overlooked the times of ignorance' (Acts 17:30), God's judgements thus proved, 'true and just' (19:2), for 'Just art thou in these thy judgements' (16:5).
 - (iii) The judgement of the evil powers is seen in (a) the judgement of Babylon when it is destroyed as a power in chapter 18, (b) 19:20 when the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, (c) 20:10 when the devil is thrown into the lake of fire, and (d) 20:14 when Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. (cf. I Cor. 15:26, II Tim. 1:10).
- Thus nothing is left unjudged, an avengement neglected and no evil or injustice unrequited.

3. The Final Judgement.

We now have to look at the event and nature of the Final Judgement. This is seen in Rev. 20:11-15, 21:7-8;

- (i) God is the judge (Gen. 18:28, Rom. 14:10); and with Him His Son, the Lamb. Rev. 20:11, cf. II Cor 5:10, Matt. 25:31ff., John 5:22, 27, Acts 17:30, Rev. 6:16-17. The Son has, authority because he is 'the Son of man' (John 5:27 with Dan. 7:13-15).
- (ii) Heaven and earth flee away from Him and the judgement (verse 11) because they have been defiled with evil, and need renewal (21:1). Nothing distracts from this great and awful judgement.
- (iii) All the dead - resurrected either to life or death (John 5:28-29) -stand before God. (cf. Dan. 7:9-10, 26).
- (iv) All are judged by what they have done - good or evil (II Cor. 5:10).
- (v) Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life whilst being judged for their deeds, are not judged in regard to eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46, cf. John 5:24, Rom. 8:1) for they already received life (cf. I Cor. 15:55-56, I John 4:16-18, Heb. 2:14-15, II Tim 1:10).

Study 15: The Holy City and the Holy People.

1. The Holy City.

(i) The history of the 'holy city' is a long one.

In Matt. 5:35 Jesus calls Jerusalem 'the city of the great King, cf. Psalm 48:1-2; 99:4-5, Lam. 2:1, meaning it is God's city. Yet the earthly holy city in the O.T. is as type of the

city-to-come - the Holy City. In Hebrews 11:10 Abraham is said to look forward to 'the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God'. Heb. 11:40,12:22-23 direct us to the city built for the spirits of just men made perfect'. In both old and New Testaments, the 'Jerusalem above' (Gal. 4:26, **passim**) is the object of the hope of God's people. It is worth noting that the temple and the holy city (Jerusalem) are always linked, and are, indeed, the one, cf. Jer. 7. cf Rev. 11:1-2, Ezek. 40-48.

(ii) The Holy City in the Revelation is a vast theme.

Rev. 2:7 speaks of the tree of life in God's paradise, and Rev.22:2 confirms the tree of life being in the Holy City, so that the Holy City is paradise. Rev. 3:12 speaks of conquerors being pillars in the Holy Temple, and [thus] being identified with the Holy City. 11:2 speaks of the earthly holy city being trampled underfoot for a set period. In 20:9 'the camp of the saints and the holy city are identified as God's people on earth, beset by their enemies. Note that the new 'Jerusalem' had been prophesied in the O.T.(Isaiah 2:1ff, Micah 4:1ff.) and the 'new temple' was linked with such prophesies (see Isaiah 56:6ff.), and these would seem to be an earth. The Holy City (whether on earth or in heaven) is contrasted to 'the unholy city i.e. Babylon. In Chs. 21 and 22 the Holy City is seen in heaven, and described in great detail. 'We gather the following points in regard to it:

- (a) The Holy City, the Bride, the Wife, and the Temple are identified as the one.
- (b) The Holy City is set high - New Jerusalem - and the unholy city in a wilderness (f 17:3)
- (c) The Holy City descends from heaven: the unholy city is rooted on earth. with 'beastly' connotations.
- (d) The Holy City - as the Bride - 'has made herself ready' for 'it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure'. Thus adorned she has all the glory of God, and is radiant.. By contrast the 'unholy city' is gaudy and showy.
- (e) The unholy city is in total darkness, but the light of the Holy City is God and the Lamb, and these two constitute its Temple also.
- (f) The unholy city offered delicacies of all kinds for the gourmet tastes of the sinful, but 'the fruits of the tree of life' are for all, and whilst the unholy city could only wound, kill, or bring about the plagues of judgement, the Holy City has 'the tree of life' and 'its leaves were (are) for the healing of the nations'.
- (g) Holy worship is the true keynote of the Holy City and its inhabitants, as against the unholy worship of dragon, beast, and image of the evil trinity.
- (h) Whereas the evil 'bridegroom' (paramour) of the gaudy harlot destroys his female 'helpmeet', Christ unites himself to his Bride in holy wedlock.
- (i) The Holy City 'is also the Eternal City, its inhabitants are kept in eternal life, whilst the unholy city and its inhabitants are all doomed to destruction.
- (j) Evil people and creatures worship the image of evil, but the Holy People see God 'face to face', and become like Him, and are His priestly people, for ever.

Study 16: The Vision is For Now and For All.

1. The Vision is for Now.

- (i) The vision of the Revelation is for all readers, in all time.
- (ii) Blessing is promised to all who read it, and keen it (1:3, 22:6-7, 9), and cursing to those who would detract from it (2:18-19).
- (iii) The vision is for (a) the seven churches of Asia (1:4, 11, chs. 2 and 3. Note that each letter is for all the churches), and (b) for the sevenfold church throughout the whole church age (22:6).
- (iv) the action of the vision must not be placed simply (a) only in the past, or (b) only in the future. See 1:1 ‘what must soon take place’, 1:3 ‘the time is near, 4:1 ‘what must take place after this’, 22:6 ‘what must soon take place’. God’s soon and man’s ‘soon’ are certainly different (II Pet. 3:1-10). So see Rev. 2:25, ‘until I come’ , 3:3 ‘ I will come like a thief and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you’, 3:11, ‘I am coming soon, 22:20 ‘Surely I am coming soon’. Rev. 2:5, and 2:16 indicate that Christ will come if the churches do not repent of their evil.
- (vi) The prophecy of the Revelation comports with all prophecy and -Scripture (Jer. 23:23ff., I Pet. 1:10-11, II Pet. 1:20-21, Luke 24:25, 44f, Rev. 19:10, II Tim. 3:16f.), and Biblical prophecy is incomplete with it.

2. Jesus Christ, The Same Yesterday, and Today, and Forever.

- (i) The vision of Jesus Christ given in Rev. ch. 1 is for all the church, for all this age, and forever. Thus the ascriptions of Christ, taken from Rev. 1, and given in the 7 letters to the churches apply to all the church in this age
- (ii) The whole action of the book of Revelation, commencing at ch. 5 is what is happening in this age. Thus the vision of for now. We should, then, be continually reading these prophecies, and seeking to their principles working out in our present age. We should take warning from them.
- (iii) All history - as all prophecy - is ‘the testimony of Jesus’. Hence the immutable Christ will be working on the same principle in all the age (cf. Matt. 28:18-20, cf. I Cor. 15:24-28). Thus the judgements, the defeat of evil powers, the establishment of the Kingdom of God, with the new heavens and the new earth, and the Holy City, must be the constant understanding of our minds, and in them, for the action of life, every day.

3. The Vision is For All.

- (i) The vision is for the saints who read the prophecy.
- (ii) The vision concerns all, i.e. those who read the prophecy and those who do not. It concerns all evil powers, the vast system called ‘ the world system’ including the dragon, the beasts, and Babylon. It also includes impenitent mankind. It is God’s message for the whole creation, and those who do not read it, or refuse its

message do so to their own peril. They cannot plead ignorance as an excuse. To refuse the way out of evil will confirm the judgement. Evil will be finally judged.

- (iii) The prophecy is especially for the saints for it is they who will receive the Kingdom' (cf. Dan 7:13ff., Luke 12:32, 22:28, Matt. 25:34, Acts 14:22, II Thess. 1:5).
- (iv) The prophecy has personal concern and value for each saint. See the- seven promises in the seven letters, and other promises such as 5:13, 7:15ff., 14:13, 21:1-7, 22:45. Not only are there prophecies of life in eternity, but all these are grounds for present hope, for hope is a great dynamic to lead us on.

4. Conclusion to Our Theme Studies on the Revelation.

The fullest 'revelation of Jesus Christ' has been given to us. We now know the plan and purpose of God, see His holiness vindicated, and are given hope. To 'keep this prophecy' is the very substance of our living.