

The Celestial Court

*The Judicial Criterion and Revelation of Why the Church
will be in Heaven During the 7-Year “Day of the Lord”
(Daniels 70th week)*

Message by Doug Riggs, Pastor

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Introduction

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Session 1 (of 4 messages) is a comprehensive and enlightening treatise on the creation of the universe, angels, and man. Pastor Doug Riggs carefully and thoroughly clarifies the background of sin from its inception in Lucifer and its outworking in Adam. The "star of the morning" lost his exalted place only to discover he would be replaced by man -- the corporate man, Christ Jesus the head, and the church, His body. Enraged, Satan levies a legal challenge to the Judge of all in the highest of all supreme court, but to no avail. As the accuser of the brethren, he continues to level charges against God's elect -- only to be defeated by our Advocate who defends us. Soon, his access to the heavenlies will be lost forever when the church takes its place there in Christ. The church will be the instrument through whom God's judgments will be executed in the coming Great Tribulation.

- *"Christ as the head and the body make up the Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12) - one spiritual organism - one new man (Ephesians 2:15) ... Jesus is the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star (Revelation 22:16). He is Lucifer's replacement as Son of Man, and as head of this new creation entity, the bride - the church - the temple of God ... **the church is the entity that displaces utterly and with finality Lucifer.**"*
- *"The church is God's final answer and criterion for the ultimate justification of carrying out the sentence and judgment of Satan to the lake of fire."*
- *"The church is the instrument and the divine criterion for God judging angels, because the church, and only the church, will displace Satan, principalities, and powers."*

Pastor Riggs, in **Session #2**, gives us the clear biblical proof that answers the question: *Why does the church HAVE to be in heaven during the Tribulation?*

- *"The church must be in heaven in the Tribulation - it HAS to be there, because the church is the criterion through which God judges Antichrist. It's not about an opinion - it's not about 'are you pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation?' ... It's absolutely critical to see it."*
- *"Antichrist will be executed from heaven through the church as the criterion."*

In **Session #3**, Pastor Riggs continues to systematically and thoroughly document with scriptural authority and irrefutable proof the Church MUST be in heaven prior to *The Day of the Lord, Daniel's 70th Week* (The Tribulation).

- *It will be through the Church the judgments of The Apocalypse will be administrated.*
- *The Church is God's instrument through which He will finally destroy Antichrist and annihilate his satanic kingdom forever.*

The final **Session #4** presented by Pastor Riggs in this series of messages clearly and Biblically explains the church's role in dispossessing Satan from the heavenlies as we take our place to rule and reign with Christ - the final and culminating event that takes place during the period of the Day of the Lord (a.k.a. *the Tribulation*). This is proof-positive the rapture of the Church is a single and comprehensive event that inaugurates the Day of the Lord on Earth as the Church in its entirety stands before Christ at the Judgment Seat.

- *Are we longing for our redemption - or building empires and nest-eggs here on Earth?*
- *Salvation is a gift - becoming an overcomer is a conquest.*
- *Is Jesus Christ, who is the Bright Morning Star, arising in our hearts - or are we too preoccupied with our self-gratification and pleasures of sin?*
- *Are we along for the ride with our eternal life insurance policies - or are we in the raging battle of the ages that will ultimately result in Satan's final overthrow, destruction and destiny as we take our place to rule and reign with Christ?*

Read on for these and other answers to the question, *"Why does a loving God allow such bad things to happen to good people?"*

Link to a substantial collection of messages by Doug Riggs: [John Mark - YouTube](#)

Note from the Editor: This transcription and its edits were completed in May of 2021. It was my hope Doug would have the time to read through it and make any adjustments he'd like before publishing it. His heavy workload and what responsibilities he believed were God's 'kingdom assignments' did not give him the time and opportunity to do this. In January of 2022 God ushered Doug home. If the reader has any questions or difficulties with this transcription from the spoken word, please feel free to contact me.

"We can take one of two attitudes toward the ways of God with us; we can get bitter, sour, hard; or we can have the enlargement by exercise, development by exercise, to develop capacity, to bring us into the large place that we may be intelligently His instrument for governing under His Headship in ages to come. Things that enter into our history we cannot always fathom, but the explanation

which we can give is that, whatever there may be as second causes, the Lord is Sovereign and He thinks it worthwhile sometimes to allow what the world would call the most terrible thing to overtake for the time being, and it would seem that His Name and interests suffer through that thing, but through that thing He brings His people to a place of maturity and they get to know the Lord for themselves. Through these terrible things we find the Lord produces something that is very much more worthy of Himself in the life of His children. That is His justification, His vindication; if He could do it in any other way He would.”¹

¹ T. Austin-Sparks from: [Maturity - The Lord's Desire For His People](#)

Session One

This is a theme that has been developing through the years, especially working with ritual abuse survivors and having to deal with the enemy - basically hand-to-hand combat and face-to-face warfare for so many years. When I talk to people about our enemy, I often say that Satan is just as real to me as God is, and that may sound kind of strange, but he really is. He is a very intelligent entity who thinks things out and he particularizes his strategy on each individual; he has a case file on every person; he knows each person personally; he knows each person's generational propensities and sins all the way back to Adam. He has an immense intellect and an immense table of organization. This is all allowed under the sovereignty of God. God is the Most High; Satan is a *kosmokratōr* (κοσμοκράτωρ) - a world ruler - whereas our Lord Jesus Christ, as we see in Revelation 1:8, is *pantokratōr* (παντοκράτωρ) - that is, He is *all-powerful*.

We have this *mystery* (2 Thessalonians 2:7) - the origin of evil - with man's fall in our original parent, Adam. We are now accomplices, and we are subject to the fallen angel, the fallen cherub who is now known as Satan. We were born dead in trespasses and sins, as we see in Ephesians 2:1-3. We also see in 1 John 5:19 that the whole world, the *kosmos diabolos* (κόσμος διάβολος) - the entire world system, lies in the power, or in the sphere, of the evil one. We could go on and on with passages like 2 Corinthians 4:4 where Paul refers to Satan as *the god of this age*. In John's gospel, Jesus refers to Satan as *the prince of this world* (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), a *ruling prince*. So, how did he get into this position - *world ruler* - the *god of this age* - the one whom the Bible refers to as *our adversary*?

If we were able to stand back and just look at the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, we would see some very interesting sequences of how God's plan is unfolded to us. Perhaps I could just give a little background before we actually move into *the celestial court* - or *the heavenly court* - so that people can see the landscape before we begin to look at some of the particulars, because you can get lost in something so vast as this. So, we'll stand back with a broad brush and just look at *beginnings*. For example, in the scriptures we have four beginnings - four acts of creation. If we look at the absolute beginning, we have John 1:1-2 (literal translation), 'In *the beginning*, the Word ever was...' - imperfect tense - '... and the Word ever was in face-to-face communion with the Father; and the Word, as to His essential nature and character, was absolute deity. That one was *in the beginning* with the Father.' That's a paraphrase. That *beginning* is absolute. When it comes to God, He has no beginning; but if man tries to conceive of a beginning, you have to start with God, or you default in your intellect; you don't really go anywhere. John 1:1 is an absolute beginning from man's perspective; it's a beginning which precedes creation. 'In the beginning, the Word ever was...' and, 'The word *became* flesh' (John 1:14). That's the first beginning with reference to man as you reach all the way back from our perspective into eternity past prior to creation.

Then what's the next creative act? Well, people might think that Genesis 1:1 would be the next creative act. But we will see that possibly there's an act of creation prior to that. Genesis 1:1 says, 'In *the beginning*, God created the heavens and the earth.' That could also be translated as *the universe - the cosmos*. When He created the heavens and the earth, in the sequencing of His creation, when were angels created? Satan is already there in the garden when God on the sixth day created Adam. And we see him in the form of *nāḥāš* (נָחָשׁ) - *the shining one*, also translated *serpent*, and in Latin referred to as *Lucifer*, there in the garden having already fallen. Before Adam was created, there were the angelic hosts.

I'll just read a short passage that I think will help us to orient to the sequence. Because we have the absolute beginning where the reference is to God Himself (John 1:1-3), we can go to Job 38 and I'll read that brief passage where Job sought a hearing with God. We know that he was greatly tested and he suffered greatly. He sought an appearance with God to be able to set his case before Him; and he was very disgruntled. God speaks to him out of a whirlwind (Job 38), and He says, 'Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man and I will ask you, and you instruct Me...' - somewhat of an irony there - '... Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?' - obviously He's talking about the creation of the earth - '... Tell me if you have understanding. Who sets its measurements? - since you know - or stretched the line upon it...' - in other words, everything that constitutes the earth is measured by God. '... For on what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone?' (Incidentally, the rabbis see that that cornerstone as in the Temple Mount) - '... Or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy?' - *the sons of God* here, the *bēn ʾēlōhîm* (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), are referred to in Job 1:6 and again in Job 2. These are also referred to in Genesis 6:1 where a group of the *bēn ʾēlōhîm*, or angels, cohabited with human women and produced an offspring we know as *Nephilim*.

The point is that verse 7 indicates that the angelic hosts were *already created beings prior to the creation of the earth*, and obviously *prior to the creation of man*. So, in that sequence we see that they were obviously created with the ability to choose for or against God. We know from a reference in Revelation 12 that one-third of the angels aligned themselves with Satan and his rebellion, and they were thrown out of heaven.

In this sequencing, I think it'd be important to note in Ezekiel 28 a tremendous and very instructional passage. If you look at verses 1 and 2, we see the Lord is addressing through Ezekiel *the leader or the prince of Tyre*: 'Son of man, say to *the leader (the prince) of Tyre*, "Thus says the Lord God: because your heart is lifted up and you have said I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the seas, yet you are a man and not God, although you make your heart like the heart of God.' Right there, this human leader, this prince is like an antichrist. He is acting in that spirit claiming to be God; and we know Antichrist will ultimately do that in the middle of the tribulation period. But if you read on in this passage, verse 11-12, we see a break in the particular sentence

structure, and it says, 'Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Son of man, take up a lamentation over *the king of Tyre*..." - in verse 2 it says, '... say to *the leader of Tyre*...' - but here it says, '... take up a lamentation...' If we look at Isaiah 14:12: 'How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning...' There's a lamenting of the loss - a tremendous breach has occurred in God's universe prior to the creation of man.

Here we move from the *prince of Tyre*, which is a human being, to a *king* who stands behind the prince - in other words, operating in the invisible realm there is a king, and we will see that this king is a *cherub* - he's mentioned as a *cherub* in verse fourteen, and is mentioned as a *covering cherub* in verse 16. A *cherub* is not a human being. When you look at commentaries and they say this is just some poetic reference to a man - it's not! This is divine revelation. This *cherub* is an order of angels. If you go back and you read in Ezekiel 1, we see the living beings there. Then when you turn to Ezekiel 10, the Holy Spirit through Ezekiel identifies these living beings as *cherubim*. It is an order of angels.

As we read on in this passage (Ezekiel 28:12), we see that the *cherub* is defined in this passage; only this *cherub* is referring to Lucifer, who is now Satan. 'Son of man, take up a lamentation over *the king of Tyre*; say to him, "Thus says the Lord God..." - He's speaking to a *cherub* (see verse 14 and 16) - back to verse 12: "You had the seal of perfection..." - you were the one that obtained the sealing pattern of perfection ... "Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty."

If we just stop there for a moment - in the Bible we know that there are at least two other high ranking beings (*cherubim*, or *archangels*). One is Michael, and the other is Gabriel. When we think of the three Persons of the Godhead: *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* - Michael is referred to in Daniel (the end of chapter 11 and in chapter 12) as the guardian prince of Israel. *Michael* means *who is like God* - that is his name. Michael represents the Father - he's the protector - he's the guardian. Michael stands out as the one who represents God the Father. Then you go to Gabriel, and you see in Luke 1 and 2, and in Daniel 10, Gabriel is the teaching angel; he's the one that comes and instructs Daniel. He corresponds to the Holy Spirit - the Holy Spirit is our teacher - He is our advocate.

What about the second Person of the Trinity? Lucifer before he fell was *the anointed cherub who covers* (verse 14). You could translate that *messianic cherub* - and since the second Person of the Trinity is the manifest Person of the Godhead, Lucifer was *the light bearer* - his very being was created to represent God in the second Person of the Trinity, and he is called *the son of the morning (the morning star)*. When Lucifer rebelled and he fell, there's a gap. Who's going to replace him? If you look at the way he is defined in Isaiah 14:12 as *the morning star (or the son of the dawn)*, we see in Revelation 22:16 that Jesus Christ has replaced him. Jesus Christ as Son of Man replaces who Lucifer was as *the son of the dawn*, the original *morning star*. Jesus Christ now replaces him **as man!**

We go back to this passage and we look at the way he's described. He is an absolutely beautiful being in his original creation. Notice verse 13: 'You were in Eden, the garden of God...' - what is he talking about? Is he talking about when man was created? No! This is a pre-fallen statement. There was an Eden prior to man being put into paradise. The original earth prior to the fall of Lucifer was beautiful according to G. H. Pember in *Earth's Earliest Ages*. Lucifer functioned as a prophet, priest, and king in the presence of all the other angelic hosts. His entire body radiated and manifested in a measure - not in an absolute way - but in a tremendous measure the second Person of the Godhead, who is Jesus Christ, the manifest Person of the Trinity.

Ezekiel 28:12-13: And he was '... Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden in the garden of God...' - this is in an un-fallen state. In the sequence, we noticed that when man was created after which I believe is the restoration of the earth that had become devastated as a result of Lucifer's fall in Genesis 1:2, there was a devastation there - 'The earth was without form and void...' - God didn't create the earth in that state originally (Isaiah 45:18). As a result of Satan's rebellion, the earth was devastated, so God had to restore the earth for man's habitation. 'You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was yours covering...' It goes on and mentions nine stones there. By the way, the number nine, referring to numerology in the scriptures, is the number of judgment. There are twelve stones in the breastplate of the high priest in the Old Testament order of things and the temple of worship, and there are twelve foundation stones in the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. We see these gems represent the manifestation and the diversity of glory in the character of God.

Then it goes on to say, 'And the gold, the workmanship of your *settings and sockets* was in you...' - or as some translations have, *tambourines and flutes*. In other words, his entire body was a musical instrument; he would resonate probably as a light-body - he would manifest this beautiful color and music together in a vast range of frequencies probably that we're not able to see and experience, but in his very being he radiated the glory of God to the angelic hosts. This is a tremendous position that he was given '... on the day that you were created...' - so we see that this being was created in this glorious manner - '... they were prepared...' - that is his very light-body and all of its functions as a messianic cherub to display the glory of God to the other angelic hosts as *the son of the morning* (Isaiah 14:12) - he would be like the worship leader, and all the angelic realm would worship God, and he as the messianic cherub would manifest the glory of God in such a way that they were all designed to worship God through him like a prophet, priest or king.

Ezekiel 28:14: 'You were the anointed cherub who covers...' - that is, guards or screens. Guards whom? He guards the second Person of the Trinity; he's the *messianic cherub* as we already noted in this verse, 'You were the anointed (*messianic*) cherub who covers...' - or *guards*; or *screens*. The Hebrew word is also used in the temple where the veil was - the screen between the holy place and the most holy place. Satan's very body was like a screen between the visible angels and the invisible God.

'... And I (God) placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire.' I don't know what that is, but it obviously represents something to do with the presence of God. We know in Isaiah 6, when these hot coals were taken and placed on Isaiah's lips, he was purified. It probably represents something of the immense beauty and the glory of God's holiness. '... You were on the holy mountain of God...' - the mountain of God represents in our language His abode - His condescending abode as it relates to earth - and then '... you walked in the midst of the stones of fire.'

Verse 15: 'You were blameless in your ways...' - so we see this is before Satan fell - 'You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created...' - again a second reference to his creation - '... until unrighteousness was found in you.' What unrighteousness was that? Isaiah 14:12-15, it was *pride*; he wanted to exalt himself, not to displace God, but to be like God. He wanted to be like God! '... until unrighteousness was found in you.'

Verse 16: 'By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned...' - this is probably the trafficking and the displaying of his glory among the other angels - '... Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God...' - he fell! 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!' (Isaiah 14:12) - '... And I have destroyed you, O covering (or *guardian*) cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.'

Verse 17: 'Your heart was lifted up (there is the pride) because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you.' - I believe that is a reference ultimately to Antichrist who will be the embodiment of this fallen cherub. We see that this being - this archangel, I believe - had at least two other peers - I think the Books of Enoch say that there may be seven - but we know in the Bible there's at least Michael and Gabriel. Lucifer corresponded to the manifest Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and he is described in this state; and he is removed because of his pride and his rebellion.

What caused him to rebel? - his pride in his beauty? Yes... but what was it that caused him to finally raise up where he said in Isaiah 14:13-14, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God. And I will sit on the mount of assembly ... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' - that is, *I will ascend above all the other angelic hosts - I will be supreme!* What was it that triggered that revolt, that arrogance to rise up against God? I believe the clue is found in Ezekiel 1 where we have a rather amazing statement - we have the description of these living beings and again, if you look at Ezekiel 10, we see these living beings are defined several times as cherubim - so the cherubim are the living beings. As you read on, we see this description of how they bear *the throne-chariot* of God and that God's glory is being removed as a judgment.

Ezekiel 1:22: 'Now over the heads of the living beings (that is the *cherubim*) there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out **over their heads...**' - these exalted beings - there's something *over them*, higher than them.

Verse 23-25: 'Under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also has two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other. I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.' This is quite a vision Ezekiel was seeing. Now notice this language: 'And there came a voice from above the expanse that was **over their heads...**' - so these cherubim see that there's something more exalted and higher than they are, and one of these cherubim originally is Lucifer. He had access to this vision before Ezekiel did; he's one of the original cherubim (Ezekiel 28) – there was an 'expanse that was *over their heads*; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.'

Verse 26: 'Now above the expanse that was **over their heads** there was something resembling *a throne...*' - the throne represents government, dominion, authority. There is a throne which is above that which represents Lucifer's throne, and in this state of exaltation that he represented in his pre-fallen state, there is a throne above him; he's not on this throne. This throne is '... like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled *a throne, high up*, was a figure with the appearance of **a man**.' Just think what that must have meant when the cherub, Lucifer, saw this image of *a man*! It's like the appearance of Jesus, though He had not become man yet; but it doesn't say *the appearance of a cherub* or *appearance of an angel*; it was the *appearance of a man*. This exalted representation of the second Person of the Trinity, like **a man** which is **above the cherubim**. So, Satan put two and two together with his genius intellect and he said something like this: 'That's **my** place - *I* belong there, because of **my** beauty; *I* am the prize in the highest of God's creation; that belongs to **me!**' – and it triggered rebellion. In other words, he saw into the divine counsels that there is something that God has in His heart that has to do with *man* that represents a greater exultation of glory that he had. We look at passages such as Psalm 8 and passages in Hebrews 2:5-9 which cite Psalm 8.

Hebrews 2:5-9: 'For He (God) did not subject to angels the inhabited world (earth) to come, concerning which we are speaking...' - that means that the world was subject to angels *before* man was created; in Genesis 1:26-28, when God created man, He created man in His own image - twice there in Genesis 1:26-28 - He created man - generic - male and female as representing the image of God to rule over His creation - to be God's vice-regent. Man was placed in a very exalted position; but when he was created as man, he was created lower than the angels. Man had not yet attained a place where he would be exalted above angels; he had to be tested. He was created perfect in the sense that he was sinless, but he was not yet perfected; he had not reached his destiny in the purpose of God without being tested. We know he failed the

test, and he followed Lucifer by buying into his lie, 'You shall be like God' (- if you act independent of God and go your own way).

In the inhabited world to come, there's going to be a great shift and a change from *subject to angels* – to - *subject to man*. Then he goes on and cites Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:6-8: 'But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? You have made him for a little while lower than the angels..." – that's in the *Septuagint*, but in the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 8: *You have made him a little lower than Elohim* – "You have crowned him with glory and honor..." - that's the purpose of God. When Adam was created, he was not yet crowned; he never attained the crown; he forfeited his right to that crown when he sinned. The only one that is now crowned as man is Jesus Christ. We see that in Hebrews 2:9-10, He is the last Adam, and as the Son of Man, He is crowned as our representative. He's the head of a new creation; He's not a part of that old Adamic creation.

We see in the purpose of God in creating man, "...You have crowned him with glory and honor..." - that perfect tense just means that that's the purpose of God – "...You have appointed him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under his feet." That's the purpose of God. Satan saw something of this divine purpose. He 'put all things in subjection under his feet.' Notice what it says in verse 8, 'For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him...' - that would include cherubim. And Lucifer says, '*I will not be subject to man!*' This is *before man was created!* He says, '*I will be like the most high God!*' There you have the rebellion - the pride that we saw in Ezekiel 28 and the rebellion that we see in Isaiah 14:12-15 - rebellion and pride. 'For in subjecting all things to him, He left **nothing** that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him....' - that is *man* – '...but we do see Him (*Jesus*)...' - He is our forerunner as Son of Man, who has passed through the heavens and is now there as our representative, and we are now in the process of being conformed to His image.

Going back to Ezekiel 1:26: these cherubim saw a throne, high up, and a figure with the appearance of a man. Verse 27: 'Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance about Him.' This glory exceeded the glory of Lucifer; this is above him!

Ezekiel 1:28: 'As the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of **the likeness of the glory of the Lord**. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.' In this revelation - this ultimate revelation of the glory of God - there is this representation of *man*. As we go back to Genesis 1:26-28, we see *man* was created to rule, and nowhere in the Bible do we see that angels were created in the image of God. By putting this all together we can see the purpose of God and God's purpose for man. Lucifer aspired to displace man and to take that place for himself.

Getting back to the sequencing, we see that prior to Lucifer's fall when he became Satan, this all took place *prior to the creation of man*, so that when we come to Genesis 3, he's already fallen and he's there as *the tempter*. In fact the word *serpent* there, *nāḥāš* (נָחָשׁ) means *shining one*. In the etymology or the root of the term, it also means *one who practices necromancy* - that is, *that has the power to cast a spell*. He has supernatural powers; he's a *shining one*; he's upright in that particular form as we see him in the image of a serpent, but not what we think of today; he was much more than that.

We've already gone over the fact that man was created to be God's vice-regent; he was to have rule and dominion over the earth, but when he disobeyed God, when he followed Satan in the same pattern of revolt - he acted independent of God. 'You shall be like God!' Satan said, 'knowing good and evil.' There's truth in that. They did know good and evil! Satan left out the fact that when they knew good and evil, they would be on the wrong side of the Godhead. He left out part of the truth; he told them a half-truth, and this is very deceptive. An outright lie is real obvious; but if you come to someone with just part of the truth and you're withholding the whole truth, then it's a lot easier to deceive people. That's our media today; we don't get the whole truth - we just get a portion of what's going on in the world today through our main media.

We see God's purpose for man originally in His thought and intention in Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2:5-8; that His purpose for man was to be higher than angels. In fact, we know from scriptures that angels were created to minister to mankind; they are to be *ministers* - they're *ministering servants*. In Hebrews 1 we see Jesus as Son of Man is superior to angels. The author concludes Hebrews 1, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?' They are our servants.

When Daniel prayed in the Old Testament (Daniel 10), Gabriel came as a servant of the Lord to Daniel; he was God's servant, but he was serving Daniel. We see in Psalm 103:20-22 that they are God's servants, and their primary assignment is to serve and to protect man. In Psalm 91:11-12 they are sent to Jesus in his humanity to protect Him, 'lest He should dash His foot against a stone...' - in other words, to provide protection. We see Him after He was tempted in the wilderness, angels came and ministered to Him and strengthened Him. We see in the garden that they did the same thing - they came to strengthen Him. They are servants of man. The elect angels have no problem with that.

Lucifer, who in his pride and rebellion said, 'I will serve no one! I will be like the Most High; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...' - notice, *my throne* - *he has a throne!* In Isaiah - it's important to notice that *he had a throne!* In Isaiah 14:13, he said, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise *my throne* above the stars of God...' - that is, the other angelic hosts - '...And I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.' In the north is Mount Zaphon; he was cast out 'from the mountain of God' (Ezekiel 28:16). Isaiah 14:14, 'I will ascend about the heights of the clouds...' - in the Hebrew, that would be *cloud* (singular); above that which represents the glory of God -

the *cloud* - the *shekhinah* glory, the divine presence – ‘I will ascend above that!’ – ‘...I will make myself like the Most High.’ Isaiah 14:15, ‘Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.’

This pride is a very heinous thing; it is an abomination to the Lord. ‘But the haughty (proud) He knows from afar’ (Psalm 138:6) ‘God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble’ (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Satan’s snare in all of this is to try to have us assert ourselves in a way that God never intended, and go beyond the boundaries of God’s design for our lives. That is some of the background which will lead to *the celestial court*.

Notice again, Satan fell *before* the creation of man; he desired the place God has intended for man; and therefore when he was judged by God, *he was judged and sentenced before man’s creation*, because we already see him in this fallen state and he’s already God’s adversary, *the devil*, when man was created.

Looking at Matthew 25:41, we have a statement that is quite revealing. When we think of *the lake of fire*, people have a hard time with that because they don’t understand God’s justice or God’s holiness; but the lake of fire is just as real as heaven, as we see in Matthew 25:46 where eternal punishment is juxtaposed to eternal life. But verse 41 refers to when Jesus returns at the Second Advent to separate the believers from the unbelievers - the believers as *the sheep* and the unbelievers as *the goats* in this passage. (Matthew 25:41) ‘Then He will also say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been *prepared for the devil and his angels*.”’ - Notice it doesn’t say it was prepared *for man*. God never prepared this for man. Man goes there by his own choice. Satan rebelled against God and then God prepared the eternal lake of fire for the devil and his angels; and it’s important we see that. So, when was this? This was some time before man was created. Satan rebelled; he was judged by God; and he was sentenced to the eternal lake of fire for his rebellion.

Let’s notice a couple of words that are used to define who Satan is; we already noticed him as *the prince of this world* – *the god of this age* - *the devil*, the *one who slanders*. In 1 Peter 5 we have a statement that reveals his function - his activity, if you will. 1 Peter 5:5-7-8: ‘You younger men, likewise be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand (*the providential ruling hand*) of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time...’ - some manuscripts have *in the day of visitation* – ‘... casting all your anxiety (*your cares*) on Him, because He cares for you (*your cares are of concern to Him*). Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, *the devil*, *prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*.’ He’s talking about Christians here; Christians are devoured when they are totally swallowed up in depression, not because it’s necessarily a physical problem - that needs to be addressed if that’s what is going on - but just the oppressing presence of the enemy sometimes is a devouring activity. To be discouraged to the point where one has no hope is a devouring activity. It does not mean the loss of

salvation, but it could mean the loss of God's purpose in one's life if there's not recovery. He says, '... *Your adversary*, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion...' - what does he mean by *adversary*? In 1 Peter 5:8 I'm going to read a note here on this:

The term *adversary* is *antidikos* (ἀντίδικος). It means *an opponent in a law suit*. It means *a legal adversary - opponent in a lawsuit*.²

We find this term used, for example, when the *Sanhedrin* sought to bring a case against Jesus Christ; or we look in the Book of Acts where we see those in the *Sanhedrin* - the Jewish ruling body - are trying to bring charges against Paul. It's a legal term. We see this same activity of Satan against mankind accusing them of their sins; he keeps a catalog of all of our sins and then he presents that to God. He'd say, 'You have no right in judging me! Look at those that You have redeemed; look at what they're doing. They're sinning!'

God has provided for us an Advocate. Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1) is our Advocate before the Father in heaven. He sides with the Father on our behalf against the adversary. So, here we see a legal opponent in a lawsuit. He appealed his case. It may be just speculation, but perhaps he said, 'How can a loving God send one of His creatures to the lake of fire? How could He ever do such a thing?' Maybe he uses that kind of logic which we hear throughout the world today with those who do not understand God's plan for mankind.

We now turn to Revelation 12 where we see here a function of Satan - he is referred to as *the serpent* in verses 9-10; he's called *the great dragon, the serpent*, the one 'who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth...' - this is in the middle of the tribulation, we know from the context - '... and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for *the accuser* (*katēgoros* - κατήγορος) of our brethren has been thrown down...' - *accuser* means *one who brings legal charges* - '... who accuses...' - it's a present participle - '... *who habitually accuses them* before our God day and night.' *Accuser* - *one who brings charges* - that means he keeps a list; he sends out his emissaries to tempt and draw man out into sin, or draw them into transgression, and then once he's drawn them out, then he brings charges against God. He tempts, draws out, and then he brings a legal charge. In other words, these are not trumped-up charges.

We know from Job 1 and 2 that there are times when God allowed for *the sons of God* to appear before Him in heaven, on His throne - the Supreme Court and Judge of heaven. Satan, the adversary, appeared there in Job 1 and again in Job 2 where he's allowed to present his case. In this particular instance with Job, God took the initiative. He was watching; He knew that Satan was watching this man Job who was upright and

² <https://biblehub.com/greek/476.htm>

habitually turning away from evil. He couldn't bring any charge against him. Therefore, if he can't bring charges against this man, he's going to lose a big notch in his appeal against God regarding his original sentencing. He's got to bring some kind of charge. So, he said, 'Well, You put a hedge of protection around him. You remove that hedge of protection and he will deny You to Your face!' So, God allowed him to remove that protection. He lost his family members - all but his wife; he lost his wealth; he lost everything on the temporal level. Job said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21). He didn't bring any charge against the Lord.

The second time Satan goes before the Lord, He said, 'You incited Me against Job unfairly; and he still is maintaining his integrity!' So, what is the adversary's next charge or his next challenge to God on behalf of Job? 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life' (Job 2:4). He's actually speaking for himself. He said, 'However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh...' – *flesh* is his body; *bone* 'eṣem – (עֶשֶׂם) in the Hebrew means, *your innermost psychological and spiritual nature*; there is no word in the Hebrew for man's psychology. *Bones* is 'eṣem and means *the innermost essence* – David said (Psalm 32:3): 'When I kept silent about my sin, my body (literally *bones*) wasted away...' - that means *his innermost essence, his strength*. So, Satan said, '... touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.'

Now the drama is on! The so-called three friends become the legal representatives of Satan against Job. They don't know this; they don't recognize that they are acting out the very drama of Satan against Job. They are the mouthpiece of Satan; they don't even know this because they keep insinuating the reason why this is happening to Job. They pontificate, 'You've fallen out of favor with God... and the reason you have fallen out of favor with God - you have some hidden sin, and all you need to do is just get right with God.' A lot of it may be accurate theology, but it doesn't apply to Job.

This drama plays itself out; they wear down Job, and in Job's final appeal, he presents his case, (Job 13:3-18): 'But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God... Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated.' Then Elihu comes in as a transitional person, and he says, 'I have this against you (three friends) because you accuse Job wrongly; and I have this against you, Job, because you justify or seek to vindicate yourself more than God!' But Job didn't sin. Satan is put out of court.

Six times in the Book of Job, God refers to Job as His servant. How did he serve God? In endurance and perseverance, (James 5:11) 'You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.' God restored him. God used Job to silence Satan's argument that man would not serve God for nothing. All the way through, even though Job complained to God, he still held on to God; he didn't let go; he didn't turn his back on God; he faced God the whole time; he never turned nor did he walk away. That silenced the adversary; we don't even see Satan at the end of the story. In that courtroom scene, Job didn't

know what was taking place behind the scenes; but in the drama that unfolded, God was vindicated and, in the end, God vindicated Job.

I want to go back to see something I think is very important. When man sinned, he forfeited his right to rule this earth as God's vice-regent as originally intended in Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8; he forfeited that. A couple scriptures that really bring this out: there is Luke's version, and Mark's version of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness; but Luke has a very descriptive statement here this helps us understand Jesus as Son of Man in the temptation. Had Adam been faithful, he would have gone on to higher levels of glory so that God's intention for man in Psalm 8 would have eventually been reached. But he never attained that, so Jesus comes as the last Adam and He brings everything to God's ultimate purpose as it relates to man. In the second reference to the temptation in Luke 4:5 and following, we read, 'And he (Satan) led Him (Jesus) up and showed him **all** the kingdoms of the world (*the inhabited earth*) in a moment of time.' This is a real razzle-dazzle affair; this is a powerful unveiling of his kingdom; notice, *all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth at one time*. We're going to see in this passage they're all under his rule.

Luke 4:6: 'And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain (all this legal jurisdiction - all this authority and its power - all its *exousia* (ἐξουσία)) and its glory..." - that is, their glory, the glory of these kingdoms - "'...for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.'" Wow! What a statement! *It has been handed over to me*; it's a perfect tense. The perfect tense looks at a past reality with the emphasis on the abiding results. Where was it handed over? It was handed over in the garden.

Paul acknowledges this fact in Romans 7 as he portrayed the struggle of a person who has not discovered *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus* as liberating them from *the law of sin and death* (Romans 8:2). He describes the struggle: the law says, 'You shall be holy...' - and as we try to be holy, it only proves to us that the law doesn't give us power. In fact, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:56, '*...the strength of sin is the law.*' In this struggle to be holy, if we come under the law, we just come under condemnation.

Romans 7:14: Paul says, 'For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of flesh...' - that is, I'm a part of that old adamic race manifesting the attributes of Adam, which is flesh - '*...sold into bondage to sin*' - again, a perfect tense. When was he sold into bondage to sin? When our parents, our federal head (Romans 5:12) sold us out, when Adam sinned; we all sinned when Adam sinned; and so death spread to all men - spiritual death culminating in physical death. It's an amazing revelation to see these things.

We also note that in Zechariah 3:1 where Satan was standing before Joshua to accuse him; we see him there in his function as an adversary - as *a legal opponent*. Where does that lead us? We look at all of human history coming up to the church age, and Israel as a nation rejecting Jesus Christ as their savior; God gradually and progressively

unfolds His *sacred secret*, which we talked about in [The Blessed Hope](#)³ series. This *mystery* (the word *mystery* means *secret*) is God forming and calling out from both Jews and Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15), to bear His name - to bear His character; He's forming *the body of Christ* - Christ as the head and the body make up *the Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12) - one spiritual organism - *one new man* (Ephesians 2:15). This new man, head and body, make up the replacement of Satan. Jesus is *the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star* (Revelation 22:16). He is Lucifer's replacement as Son of Man, and as head of this new creation entity, *the bride - the church - the temple of God* - these various metaphors - ***the church is the entity that displaces utterly and with finality Lucifer.***

So, you can imagine his animus - his invectiveness. His hatred for God is one thing, but to now see that this Son of Man that was higher than him is now a corporate entity - the head and body – and that when God is finished with His church, the church will share in the glory of Jesus Christ. In 2 Thessalonians 2:14, Paul says we've been called *to gain (obtain) the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Once that is completed - once the church is completed - once the church has *attained the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Ephesians 4:13), it is *caught up to meet the Lord in the air* (1 Thessalonians 4:17) which is Satan's headquarters (Ephesians 2:2). There is a judicial process that takes place right there in the air, and we know right at that point the judgment seat of Christ occurs: *when He is manifest, we will appear with Him in glory* (Colossians 3:4) and *we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In the sequencing of all this, we know that that is going to take some amount of time. In my understanding, for the first three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, the church is 'in the air' being judged. The church being *caught up to meet the Lord in the air* precipitates a *great war in heaven*; and then at the end of that first three-and-a-half years, my understanding is that when the completion of the judgment seat of Christ is over, then the church in union with Christ as the *man child* (Revelation 12:5), is *caught up unto God, and to His throne*. From that point onward, **God, the Judge, through Jesus Christ and His vice-regents, the church, will judge the Antichrist.**

That's where we can pick up the next time because in 1 Corinthians 6:1-6 - and we have to take time to develop this - Christians were taking other Christians to court. Paul asks, 'Why are you doing this? Is there not a wise man in your midst? Don't you understand that the saints are to judge the world? ... that the saints are to judge angels?' As we look at that passage, he uses a term *law court* which is the word for *criterion*; it could also mean a *place of judgment* or a *tribunal*, and it's used in Daniel 7. When we go back and look at that passage the next time, we can develop and see how the church is *God's final answer and criterion for the ultimate justification of carrying out the sentence and judgment of Satan to the lake of fire.*

³ *The Blessed Hope*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61.

There are other issues, such as the millennium – it is also a theodicy⁴ – a period in history where God is vindicated; but that's more on the human level. When it comes to God dealing with Satan and the purpose of the church - and when that purpose is realized - *the church is the instrument and the divine criterion for God judging angels* because the church - and *only the church* - will displace Satan, principalities and powers.

We have a tremendous calling; all this has to do with *character*; this isn't just some event on a calendar with God; this all has to do with the church *coming to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* and being *glorified* (Ephesians 4:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:10); the church actually becoming in reality *the fullness of Him*, Jesus Christ, *who fills all in all* (Ephesians 1:23). And when the church does become *the fullness of Him who fills all in all*; when the church does *arrive at the goal of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*; when Christ is *fully formed in the church* (Galatians 4:19), then the church will be *filled with all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:19). When that is a reality in the heavens, there will be no more place for the adversary (see Psalm 37:9-20). History will then move forward to what is known as *the great and terrible day of the Lord, the great tribulation*.

⁴ *the vindication of divine goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodicy

Session Two

In my work with ritual abuse survivors, I would have to go back to the Word many times to try to understand better what is God up to. Why does He allow some of the most horrific atrocities to occur? - atrocities especially committed against children, the kind of things I have seen - the trauma-based mind control and the high level structuring of a satanic kingdom within an individual with the result that that person doesn't even know that it's there, especially if this was done in early childhood where there will be a strong wall of amnesia. For me it's been a real battle to even want to relate to God who allowed this to happen. It's just been a huge battle for me. So, as I would really dig into the Word and try to seek answers, the Lord has been faithful to open up the bigger picture.

We touched on that yesterday, that before man was created, there was an order of beings known as *cherubim*. Isaiah 6 also refers to an order of angels known as *seraphim, the flaming ones, ministering servants of the Lord*. We know that a third of the angels under the leadership of Lucifer rebelled against God when they began to see something of an outline - probably not all the details - but there was something that regarded *man* in the purpose of God that would represent the most exalted creature in God's universe according to His purpose. We noted in Psalm 8 that it was God's purpose originally to crown man with glory and honor, but Adam defaulted on that and the whole human race was taken down with him when he sinned. I thought today we would pick up and move forward towards that which will represent the divine courtroom event - the closing courtroom scene in Revelation 4 and 5, and then the outcome of that courtroom scene in Revelation 6 through 19. That's the close of this age.

Often people will talk about the end of the world and they take that from Matthew 24 when the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Tell us... what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of *the end of world*?' But that's the old King James Version. The Greek term there is not *world* but *age* - *the end of the age*. We are in the process of moving through that part of history which is a *mystery* - it was hidden. It covers that period of history in the plan of God known as *the church-age*, and that is from Pentecost to the church being *caught up to meet the Lord in the air* (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

There's so much discussion about *conspiracy* and *conspiracy theory*. In order to understand *conspiracy*, we have to understand our definition of terms. Satan is the original conspirator and he conspired against God. As a result, he was thrown out of heaven. The very dictionary term for *conspire* is *to plot; to contrive; to join in a secret agreement; to do an unlawful or wrongful act or use such means to accomplish an unlawful end; a scheme*. Therefore, *conspiracy* means *the act of conspiring together; an agreement among conspirators; a group of conspirators or a plot*. Satan, the chief conspirator, and one-third of the angels who followed him were then, *prior to the creation of man, judged and sentenced to the lake of fire*, as we saw in Matthew 25:41.

We're going to just pick up that particular theme and move forward. We will look at the origins of the conspiracy, and by the way, just a few scriptures for people who would like

to take note of those that document that there is really no such thing as a *conspiracy theory* - there's only *conspiracy fact*. I'll just cite a few scriptures, and people can look them up for themselves: Psalm 2; Psalm 31:13, 20; Psalm 33:10-11; Psalm 37:12; Psalm 41:7; Psalm 64:1-6; Psalm 83; Psalm 140:1-5; Proverbs 19:21; and Proverbs 21:30.

In the New Testament we see the Sanhedrin conspiring to put Jesus to death - that was a conspiracy. It takes more than one for there to be conspiracy. We see a conspiracy in operation against our Lord in the gospels of Matthew 12:14; 26:4; Mark 14:1; and Luke 22:2. We also see a conspiracy against Paul - in fact, there were forty Jews that bound themselves by an oath to kill him in Acts 23:12-13. We see the conclusion of a world conspiracy in Revelation 20:7-10 when Satan will be released at the end of the one-thousand-year reign of Christ for a short period of time to draw out those who didn't believe in Jesus Christ during the millennium for a final confrontation between God and Satan. That concludes the history of conspiracies against God instigated by Satan.

The origin of this conspiracy began some time before the creation of man when Lucifer rebelled against the Most High God and became the archenemy of God. As we noted yesterday in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:11-19, the cherub who had not yet fallen was the one who rebelled and we who are students of God's word know that this resulted in one-third of the angels following Satan in his rebellion and being cast down to the earth according to Luke 10:18 and Revelation 12:4. When man was created, this angel positioned himself to assault and tempt that first man, Adam, through his wife Eve in the garden. We see that in Genesis 3 along with a reference in John 8:44 compared with 2 Corinthians 11:3 and 1 Timothy 2:14. Satan targeted the woman; she was vulnerable.

Man was first formed and then the woman. We don't have time to look at this, but Adam had not adequately expressed God's will in instructing her, so she was left vulnerable, and Satan saw that. He got to Adam through Eve. The first man and woman sided with Satan in their sin and rebellion against God. This brought about the long war and conspiracy against *the seed of the woman* historically orchestrated by Satan through *the seed of the serpent*. This began in the garden, and in that passage where God judges the man and the woman for their sin, we also see a judgment further extended upon not just Satan, but *his seed* - that is, he would have a progeny. As God would have a seed, Jesus Christ, the enemy would also have a seed (or *descendants*).

The judgment against Satan in Genesis 3:15 is known as the *proto-evangel* - that is, the first mention of the gospel in scripture. 'And I will put enmity (or hostility) between you (that is the serpent, Satan) and the woman, and between *your seed* and *her seed*.' Here we see that the serpent will have seed and the woman will have seed. 'He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.' Here we see the beginning of this conflict as it relates to man. That is an important theme.

In fact, if you follow the attack on the seed, the seed of the woman passed on through Adam; we see Abraham being drawn down into Egypt along with his descendants (seed); and then we see that seed passing through David and ultimately in Christ. If we follow the seed (descendants) throughout the Old Testament that would be used to bring in the Messiah, we see constant attack. In fact, that seed was corporately represented in the nation of Israel when they were in Egypt when God said, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn... Let my son go...' (Exodus 4:22-23). The seed was repositied in that particular nation of people.

The assault on man in the garden and his resultant fall initiated in what Paul calls *the mystery or secret of iniquity* (2 Thessalonians 2:7). As to the word *iniquity*, there is *anomia*, *the secret of lawlessness* which is in operation until Jesus Christ returns to establish his one-thousand-year reign on earth (2 Thessalonians 2:7 compared with Revelation 21:2 and 3, and Revelation 20:6). This ongoing Satanic attack upon this seed is at the core of this conspiracy, which is also at the core of what I've been working with, along with others - Russ Dizdar and many others out there – and Tom Hawkins.

Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) and *Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)* has come to a head in our generation, and particularly during the nineties. This is right at the core of this conspiracy from Genesis 3:15. The word of God succinctly documents the historical record of Satan's continuous attack upon *the seed of the woman* from the garden to the first coming of the seed, namely Jesus Christ. The rest is history - and that history is still in the process of being fulfilled. In fact, in Galatians 3, Paul makes reference to Jesus as *the seed*. That is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham that *in his seed* all the descendants of the earth shall be blessed (see Galatians 3:16). Paul says, 'Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to *his seed*; He (God) does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to *your seed*," that is, Christ.' There is a direct reference to Jesus Christ being *the seed of the woman*.

When you compare that with verse 29 of Galatians 3, 'If you (believers in the church-age) belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants (*seed*), heirs according to promise.' We see here that *the seed* is both singular and corporate, and beginning with Pentecost, as a result of the new birth when Christians are born again, they become *the seed of Christ*. He is *the seed of the woman*, and every Christian at new birth becomes *the seed of Christ*, therefore, the target of Satan. Satan cannot touch Jesus Christ because He is exalted; He has passed through the heavens; He's been exalted above the heavens (Hebrews 7:26 cp. Ephesians 4:10) and He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high after all rule authority and principality and power were made subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22 cp. Hebrews 1:3; 10:12), so he can't get to Him - but he can get to Him through the members of His body, which make up His *seed*. And that's very, very important.

We see also in Isaiah 53 where the promise is given where it says, 'He (Jesus Christ) will see His offspring (*seed*)...' - Isaiah didn't know what that meant at the time because

that was a mystery. His *seed* is a corporate (or collective) seed, *the body of Christ*, and that was a mystery (or a *sacred secret*) in Isaiah's time.

Isaiah 53:10 goes on to say, 'He (the Lord Jesus) will prolong His days.' How? Through resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to form His body and to indwell His body. '...He will prolong his days, and the good pleasure of the Lord (that is God the Father) will prosper in His hand.' That's been going on since Pentecost and will continue until the church is caught away by the Lord. There's a process going on with this seed being planted at new birth and forming. Paul says in Galatians 4:19, 'I am again in labor (travail) until Christ is (fully) formed in you (Galatian believers).'

We've noted thus far that the attack of Satan is upon the person of Jesus Christ in terms of *the seed* from Abraham until the birth of Christ through the nation of Israel. Now he's directed his focus toward the church, because the church is collectively *the seed of Christ*. I think that will help us understand the framework of where we are in God's overall plan in history in terms of God's counter action to Satan's rebuttal. We noticed in 1 Peter 5:8 that he is referred to as '*your adversary*,' *an opponent in a lawsuit*. He is *the accuser* of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). We saw in Revelation 12:9-10 that he is the one who brings charges against believers.

We see in Job 1 and 2 where God referred to Job as *blameless*. But Satan brought charges against Job that he served God because God would bless him, and that if God would remove all blessing, that he would curse God and die. God proved through Job and his testimony that he did not curse God. He was very distressed and appealed to God in many ways, and self-righteousness did come out of him, but he didn't sin against God during his trials. God commended Job at the end and rebuked his three friends - in fact he commanded Job's three friends to go to Job for him to offer the appropriate sacrifice so that they could be back in fellowship with God. They had spoken wrongly about Job and they misrepresented God to him. That whole drama in Job is a part of the history of God's action in responding to Satan's rebuttal, contesting his being sentenced to the lake of fire prior to the creation of man.

Today we shall pick up with what Paul refers to in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, *the mystery of lawlessness* – *anomia* (ἀνομία); and the Greek term *energeō* (ἐνεργέω) is where we get our word *energy*; the present tense means *the mystery* or *the secret of lawlessness* is *currently supernaturally at work*, and I add the word *supernaturally* because the word *energeō* in the Bible is never used with *man* as the subject. It is either God or Satan; that is the subject of this kind of energy or supernatural power. Satan has supernatural power - God has supernatural power. Paul is saying, 'The secret of iniquity is currently supernaturally at work...' - this will go on until Antichrist is revealed, and that is the context of 2 Thessalonians 2. He will be revealed as like a savior to the world (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3). People will be saying, 'Peace and safety! We finally have a savior!' He will be revealed *with all signs and wonders*, as Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2. But then in the middle the tribulation, his true colors will be seen, and he will exalt

himself above God and claim himself to be God. That's the turning point; that's when the tribulation becomes *the great tribulation*.

In the current age that we live now, between Pentecost and the rapture, *the mystery of lawlessness is currently working*, and this process will continue '*until...*' The word *until* is a very interesting study. I have on a piece of paper in my Bible the various *until*'s; but I will just mention a few. This process, that is *the mystery of iniquity*, will be supernaturally operational *until...* - this is with reference to the church-age - '*until* Christ is fully formed in you,' His church (Galatians 4:19); '*...until* we all (the church) attain to (or reach the goal of Ephesians 4:13) the unity of the faith, and of the (*full*) knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature (perfect) man, to (and that mature man being defined as) the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.' *Perfect man* is one of the terms describing the body of Christ. The body of Christ is also referred to as *one new man* in Ephesians 2:15, Christ the head, and all the various members of His body through new birth, joined to Christ make up *the Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). This is a tremendous thing! This was not seen in the Old Testament.

This process - *the mystery of iniquity* - will continue to work **until** the church comes to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' We see other references of using this word *until* - by the way. *Until* is an *indefinite temporal clause*; that means *until certain conditions are fulfilled*, the Lord will not return. Here's another *until*: Hebrews 1:13 and Hebrews 10:13: Jesus Christ has 'sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high,' referring to His resurrection, '*... until* I (God the Father) make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet (the feet of Jesus Christ).' (Hebrews 1:3, 13; 10:12-13; 1 Peter 3:22) - *a footstool for the feet of Jesus Christ!* Tremendous! That is cited in other places in the New Testament and is a reference to Psalm 110:1.

From the resurrection of Christ to His coming for the church, He is now in heaven. As a great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:10), He is interceding for us (Romans 8:34), and through the Holy Spirit who indwells us, He is also interceding to bring us 'to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' It's a two-fold operation. The Holy Spirit is seeking and calling out those who are to be saved to bring in 'the fullness of the Gentiles' through evangelism (Romans 11:25). The second part of that *until* is, *until* the church comes 'to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.' When this is complete, when *the Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12) as a corporate entity is complete, then there will be a vessel in whom 'all the fullness of the Godhead' (Colossians 2:9) can be displayed - a vessel, head and body, that will display 'the fullness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13). The church will be the vessel that will represent 'the fullness of Him (Jesus Christ) who fills all in all' (Ephesians 1:23).

When Paul was put in prison, he saw all this and so much more. The problem today is that we have been dumbed down; we have been fed pabulum; we have twenty-minute *sermonettes* for *Christianettes*. How can anybody ever grow up and grasp the revelation that God gave Paul in prison if there's not disciplined study of the word of God?

We're going through this today quite rapidly, and no one is going to be able to get all this in one hearing (or reading), but they should go back and re-listen to (or re-read) it and look up the scriptures - and everyone needs to pray this prayer from Ephesians 1:17-18 (adapted):

'I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the (*epignosis*) full knowledge of Him, that the eyes of our heart would be illumined, that we might know (three things), (1) the hope of His calling (which reaches into eternity past); (2) what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (which reaches into eternity future); and (3) what is the exceeding greatness of His power that (*energeo*) operates in us who are the believing ones, the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand far above all rule authority and principality and power.'

Paul was praying for those people that he was speaking to, and that is my prayer for anyone who listens to (or reads) this message. It is so crucial for us to understand in these last days.

From Pentecost to the rapture, God is gathering the evidence - *the criterion* - to execute His final charges against the adversary and those who followed him, so that Satan will be finally cast into the lake of fire. As we see in Revelation 20, between his fall and the final execution of God's judgment, we have all of human history. Is that not phenomenal to think that all human history lies between the original fall of Lucifer until the final execution of his sentence? We need to see the word of God not only with a microscope, but with a telescope. We need to be able to stand back and see the sweep of God's plan from Genesis to Revelation. The key to understanding *all* scripture is to understand *the mystery* that God revealed through Paul (see Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 1:9-11; Ephesians 3:1-11; Ephesians 6:19; and Colossians 1:25-26). The *mystery of the Christ* is the head and body making up a single organism to display the fullness of God.

From Pentecost to the rapture, God is gathering up the evidence that will eventuate in Satan's sentence finally being carried out, and I think this is an important point that we can see expanded by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6. In the background of this passage, we see Paul confronted them for numerous things. In the first four chapters he is dealing with them as very carnal Christians because they're all caught up and infatuated with the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of man. It actually had tainted them, and their natural man was built up so they couldn't even receive the things of God. In fact, he indicted them for being *carnal babes* in chapter 3; they were in a very low spiritual state. They were even condoning an incestuous relationship right there in the assembly and boasting about it rather than implementing church discipline to remove this person from the assembly (1 Corinthians 5). Paul was dealing with a number of issues at Corinth that were robbing God of his rightful place. In Chapter 6 we have an issue where believers are taking other believers to law court. When we say *law court*, we're not talking about *criminal court* that deals with crimes such as murder and rape and that which is defined as criminal law. This would be more like civil cases that could be

handled in the church, and he said (paraphrased), 'Why do you bring another brother before the law on civil matters? Is there not a wise man among you that is able to decide among the brethren?' That's 1 Corinthians 6:5. What I want to focus on is how Paul frames this issue when he confronts the saints at Corinth for taking one another to law courts to resolve civil matters.

1Corinthians 6:1-4: 'Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?' Matthew 18:10 says if we have an issue, we should take it to the church. And then he says, 'Or do you not know...' - here's the rationale - '...do you not know that *the saints will judge the world*? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?' *Law courts* - there is the word *criterion*. In other words, the Greek term for *law courts* is *criterion*, *the measure of judgment*. 'Do you not know...' - verse 3 - '...that *we will judge angels*?'

When you go to commentaries on this, you don't find much. I think that's where people just blip out because they don't understand the high calling and destiny of the church as being in union with the Son of Man, whom in God's purpose He fulfills as a prototype (Psalm 8). We see that in Hebrews 2:5-11, 'But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him (man)...' (verse 8) in the plan of God (according to Psalm 8), but we do see Jesus who suffered death; and He has been exalted; He is 'crowned with glory and honor...' (Hebrews 2:9-10), so as the prototype, the head of a new species of humanity, He is crowned. Now, in this church-age, God is forming the body by bringing many sons to glory (verse 10). Once that is complete, the church is then caught up to meet the Lord in the air. *Then* God will begin the process of executing His judgment against the angels.

I need to say something about judging angels. The word *judge* is a broad term; where it says the saints will *judge the world*, it means *administration*. It doesn't just mean *a penal action*; it means *an administrative function*. When we say *judge angels*, God is the ultimate Judge; but saints will be used as the administrative arm - the scepter, if you will - of God's ruling action. Once the church has been glorified, throughout the tribulation period the royal scepter - the instrumentality through which God judges the angels and mankind - will come through Jesus Christ through His church. We will look at that in a moment.

We need to establish what Paul is saying here first. He says (1 Corinthians 6:2-4), 'Do you not know that *we will judge angels*?' We shall *administrate justice* with reference to the angels. 'How much more matters of this life? So if you have law courts...' - again, the same word *criterion* - '... dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?'

Paul says, 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan under *your* feet,' speaking to the saints in Rome (Romans 16:20). Once we begin to see the exalted position and destiny that the church has in the plan of God which is far above the nations and Israel, then we

begin to move into that area where we can see that there is an element of God's plan that is now in the process of fulfillment. When it is complete, ***the church will be the criterion of the destruction and removal of Antichrist.***

This word *criterion* occurs in 1 Corinthians 6:2 and 4, and it occurs in one other place in James. This term *criterion* – *a law court, a tribunal* - represents *a lawsuit, a law proceeding* - that is one of the definitions of the term. Also, this term is used in James 2:6 where the unrighteous bring saints (believers) before law courts - that is, human law courts. *Criterion* occurs there for only the third time in the New Testament; *criterion* represents *the place where cases are judged - tribunal law court; court of justice*. We're going to see in a moment that the church is the sphere and the realm of *a court of justice*. When it says, 'Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?' in 1 Corinthians 6:2, some of you have notes in your Bible that refer back to Daniel 7:18:22 and 26. In my Greek Bible where it refers to this passage about saints judging the world, it has in the margin, 'Daniel 7:22.' Why? Because that term *krino, to judge*, in the Lexicon represents *a divine tribunal occupied by God or Christ as the administrator of justice; therefore the judge*. This is also occupied by men who have been divinely commissioned to judge, such as the twelve apostles who will judge the twelve tribes of Israel in the millennial reign of Christ (Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30). When Jesus comes to establish His rule and reign here on earth on His glorious throne, then there will be the twelve apostles of the church-age sitting on their thrones judging and administering over the twelve tribes of Israel. The word *judge* includes a sense of *rule or to administer on behalf of Jesus Christ* who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

I'm reading out of Arndt and Gingrich's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* which is the standard authority on the New Testament Greek language. The word *krino, to judge* in 1 Corinthians 6:2, saints are defined as 'judges of the cosmos... saints as co-rulers with God ... as well as of the angels.'⁵ Angels are subordinate to saints in the purpose of God. However, right now we are lower than the angels as Jesus was lower than the angels when He came here, but now He's been exalted far above the angels. That's the key point in Hebrews 1 referring to the uniqueness of the Son of God. So, *criterion* again is *a law court or tribunal where a lawsuit is taking place; a legal action*; it was even used in the secular world for lawsuits involving capital punishment.

Let's go to the book of Daniel and we're going to notice something quite phenomenal. Because Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:1-4 makes an allusion to Daniel 7, we'll go back there and see this amazing passage. We need to remember that Daniel was in captivity under the providence of God. God judged the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom, for their idolatry through the preaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and some of the other prophets; however, they did not repent, and finally judgment came. God's servant was Nebuchadnezzar, and they were taken into captivity for seventy years. In captivity God gave Daniel two visions. The one in Daniel 2 was a colossus vision of the satanic *one*

⁵ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 452.

new man, portraying the various kingdoms of this world - the head of gold, Babylon; the breasts and arms, Media-Persia; and the torso of brass, Greece; and then the two legs being Rome; and then the toes, the revived Roman Empire. We see the image of those nations from Daniel's time all the way up to the second coming of Christ as Nebuchadnezzar saw them, as a colossal *one new man*, *homonoeticus*, and as Russ Dizdar identifies it, *homo-satanicus*; it is that which embodies the satanic counterpart to *the one new man* that Paul refers to in Ephesians 2:15. So that's how Nebuchadnezzar saw this pageantry of nations being presented.

But when you come to Daniel 7, Daniel sees the same vision - but now he sees it as God shows it to him, not as Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan Gentile, sees it. God shows him what's inside these nations, what they are like in God's site. He gives Daniel a vision of four beasts: 1) a lion, referring to Babylon (verse 4); 2) Media-Persia, the bear; 3) a leopard, which is the empire of Alexander the Great and his successors, the four heads. Then it continues in Daniel 7:7, 'After this I kept looking in the night visions...' - that means this is a supernatural revelation that God is revealing from Daniel's time all the way to the second coming of Christ - those nations that will represent their hostile satanically driven opposition against God and His purpose to bring in His kingdom; and 4) '... I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, and it was different from all the beasts that were before it,' - that is, the lion (Babylon), Media-Persia and Greece, it was different - '... and it had ten horns.' - that is the final extension of the Roman Empire now known as the ten founding nations of the European Union. There are over twenty-five members now, but the original ten founding members are still distinct. Verse 8: 'While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one (referring to Antichrist), came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it,' - in other words, they conquered the preceding kingdoms. '...and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man...' - that means he had supernatural wisdom - '... a mouth uttering great boasts.' We know that through sophistry he would be able to deceive and bring the whole world into the illusion that he was the Christ.

Daniel 7:9: 'I kept looking until thrones were set up.' Isn't that interesting? - *thrones* (plural). We noticed that in the millennium they'll be twelve thrones; but Daniel doesn't know who occupies them. There will be the twelve apostles judging the twelve tribes of Israel; we also see the twenty-four elders in Revelation 4 surrounding the throne of God; these twenty-four elders represent the overcomers of the church-age. They are not angels nor are they Old Testament saints. Here, we just see what Daniel saw - thrones set up. We don't know who's occupying them here, but with the revelation of *the mystery*, we see in Ephesians 2:6 that all saints at new birth have been 'made alive together with Christ' - 'raised up together with Christ' - and then in Ephesians 2:6, 'seated together with Christ in the heavenly places.' The word *seated together* in the Greek is *co-enthroned* - *co-enthroned with Christ in the heavens!* No saint in the Old Testament ever had a position like that. Now we know by *the revelation of the mystery*

that this is for church-age believers. Daniel didn't see this. We have to remember Daniel did not know *the mystery* that was revealed to Paul in prison. All he knew was that there are Gentiles and Jews, and there's a coming kingdom that the Messiah would rule and reign, and the Jews would be the head of the nations; he knew that from the word of God. He didn't know anything about a third group of saints known as church-age believers; this was all hidden from him.

What is the purpose these thrones being set up? It's in the context of the revelation of the Antichrist. 'And the Ancient of Days took his seat;' - referring to God the Father – '... His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head was like pure wool.' - He's the Ancient of Days; He's infinite in holiness – 'His throne...' - that is the administration of His justice – '...was ablaze with flames,' - that means judgment is imminent – '... its wheels were a burning fire' - that means in the execution of God's providence throughout history, *the wheels* - the *merkabah* (מרכבה) - Ezekiel 1 - the angels would bear this *throne chariot* of God in carrying out His judgment throughout history. This is the implementation of His judgment. He's looking into the future and basically what Daniel is seeing is Revelation 6 through 19.

Daniel 7:10: 'A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat,' - *the court sat!* 'Thrones were set up...' (verse 9) that's plural - *court* is in the singular – '...and the books were opened.' *Wow!* This is a *courtroom scene!* '...the books were opened...' - *the scrolls* - this is dilated in Revelation 4 and 5. When we look at that passage, we will see the expansion of this.

'The court sat...' - some of the readers may not know this: the Old Testament was written primarily in the Hebrew language. There are a few texts in Ezra and in Daniel, from 2:4 all the way through Daniel 7, that he is speaking in the language of Babylon, which is Aramaic. It's also the language that Jesus spoke when He was here on earth; it is a sister language to the Hebrew, but it has some differences. It would be considered a Gentile language. In the Aramaic here, the word *court* is *dîyn* (pronounced *deen*); it's very similar to the Hebrew, but in about 150 BC there were a group of Hellenistic Jews who translated the Hebrew Bible into the Greek; it's known as the *Septuagint*. When they translated the Old Testament into Greek, this word *dîyn*, they use the word for *criterion* - the same word in 1 Corinthians 6:1-4. When I saw that, I thought Paul must have known this. He just made an allusion to it, but then he went right on. It's up to us to dig it out.

And then I saw this word *criterion* and compared it to the phrase *the court sat*. This is how I knew that *the church must be in heaven during the tribulation* - it *has* to be there. ***The church is the criterion through which God judges Antichrist!*** It's not a matter of opinion; it's not about being *pre* - *mid* - or *post*-tribulation! It is the purpose of God for the church to be in heaven while He is judging angels and mankind. It's absolutely critical to see it! '... *The court sat...*' - *the church is the criterion!* Daniel doesn't see this. 'The books were opened...' - what books are those? Revelation 5 – those scrolls with

seals that will be broken by Jesus Christ which will launch the judgments of the tribulation. Who are they against? *Antichrist!*

Then we have an interlude here (verse 11): 'Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words...' - notice that the context again is the coming of Antichrist - '... the boastful words which the horn was speaking...' - referring to *the little horn* of Daniel 7, a term defining Antichrist; *horn* means *military strength and power* in the Hebrew. When you have *horn*, you have power. '... I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.' We see that in Revelation 19, both the false prophet and the beast are thrown into the lake of fire prior to the thousand-year reign of Christ.

Verse 12: 'As for the rest of the beasts...' - this is what he saw in the early part of Chapter 7, '...their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.' In other words, in Revelation 13 we see the gathering up of all the various kingdoms culminating in the kingdom of Antichrist. Then Daniel says (verse 13), 'I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming. And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.' Again, that is dilated in Revelation 4 and 5.

Verse 14: 'And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom...' - that will become manifest in the thousand-year reign of Christ, '... that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.'

Returning to verse 10, we see in the opening of the books. What is that? God in this courtroom scene has gathered all the evidence primarily from Pentecost to the church being caught up; including all the persecution of the saints, all that which is unjust and unfair instigated by Satan, it is all accumulated and is gathering in books. And now when Jesus opens those seals, He judges not only mankind, but He judges principalities and powers. This is a tremendous thing!

The verse that Paul refers to when he says, 'Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?' - notice verse 21 of Daniel 7. We can't go through the entire chapter, but Daniel said, 'I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints...' - that is, the saints on earth in the tribulation; that would be Jewish saints and all Gentiles that come to Christ through the ministry of the Jews. They were '...overpowering them.' We know that those are not church-age believers because in 1 John 2:13, John says, '...you have overcome the evil one...' So, this group of saints is allowed to be overpowered by the Antichrist.

Daniel 7:22: '...until *the Ancient of Days came...*' - that's the Second Advent - it's *not the rapture!* '... and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One...' - that's what Paul was referring to when he wrote: '...know ye not that *you will judge...*?' In heaven, through *the criterion (the church)*, judgment is '... passed in favor of *the saints* of the Highest One...' - that is, the saints of the tribulation period and the great

tribulation – ‘...and the time arrived when *the saints...*’ - the Jewish believers and those Gentiles that come to Christ in the tribulation, and all those Old Testament saints who will be resurrected, ‘...the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.’

Daniel 7:23: ‘Thus he said, “The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.’ Again, that will occur in the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation period.

Daniel 7:24-25: ‘As for the ten horns...’ - that is the final extension of the Roman Empire – ‘... out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them...’ - referring to Antichrist. ‘...and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. He will speak out against the Most High...’ – again, we see this in 2 Thessalonians 2 – ‘... and wear down the saints of the Highest One...’ – again, the tribulation saints – ‘... and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law...’ - he will forbid in the middle of the tribulation period the offering of sacrifices and he will set up *the abomination of desolation* (Daniel 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15). ‘...and they will be given into his hands for a time, times and half a time.’ - that is three-and-a-half years.

But notice, during this tribulation period – very important - the second time this word occurs: ‘*The court will sit.*’ In Daniel 7:9, ‘...*thrones were set up...*’ Verse 10: ‘...*The court sat* and the books were opened...’ - and now verse 26, ‘But *the court...*’ – again, *criterion* in the singular – ‘... will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.’ Whose dominion? *Antichrist’s* dominion! Why? Because *the court will sit for judgment!* This is the word *criterion*. The sphere in which this final litigation between God and Satan is resolved.

In your translations, it's very interesting; the word *court* is in the singular. They translate it like *the court will sit for judgment and his dominion will be taken away*; the word *taken away* is in the plural. It should be translated like this - in fact the New American Standard translates it correctly - *the court* (singular - it's a collective singular, even though Daniel doesn't know this, this collective singular refers to *the church glorified with Christ in heaven as the heavenly tribunal, the criterion*; ‘*The court (singular) will sit for judgment...*’ - and literally, ‘...*they...* (the *court* - singular) ‘... will take away his dominion (the Antichrist dominion) to be annihilated and destroyed forever.’ That's phenomenal! Then what happens? At the end of the tribulation, Jesus Christ returns with His bride (Revelation 19:27).

Daniel 7:27-28: ‘Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One...’ - referring to the Jewish believers, the saints of the tribulation – ‘His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him. At this point the Revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.’

Here we see the court - *the criterion* (Daniel 7:10, 26), and *the judgment* (the administration) of the saints (Daniel 7:22). This is the context out from which Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 6:2-4. That is a tremendous thing! When we see that in the word of God, then our whole perspective of spiritual warfare and suffering takes on a whole new context and framework.

Perhaps we could just move in the remaining time that we have to Revelation 4 and 5 and notice the context of Daniel 7 being enlarged and dilated. But before we go to Revelation 4 and 5, we have to recognize that in Revelation 1 we see the revelation of the same thing that Daniel saw in Daniel 7 of *the Ancient of Days*. Here in Revelation 1 the attributes of the Ancient of Days - God the Father in Daniel 7 - are ascribed to Jesus Christ as the Son of Man. It's just a shift. In Daniel 7, the Ancient of Days is presented as God the Father; and in Revelation 1, the Son of Man is presented as the Ancient of Days, and He is described – i.e.: His hair is white as wool.

When you look at Revelation 1, whom did John see when he was on the Isle of Patmos? He 'turned to see the voice' of the one speaking to him, - and he 'saw seven golden lampstands,' that is the seven churches. 'And in the middle of the lampstands...' – Jesus Christ being central to the local churches, '...one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet...' - *son of man* reaches right back to that passage in Daniel 7. All the way through Revelation, but starting right here, we have the focus in Revelation 1. The church needs to come into conformity with the image of this Christ that is being revealed here. Why? Because when the church is brought into conformity with the image of this Christ in Revelation 1 as the Prophet, Priest and King of God, then God can remove the church, by being 'caught up ... to meet the Lord in the air' (Romans 8:29 cp. 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

We have the revelation of Christ to the church (Revelation 1), and we see that God *communicated it* through John to the churches in verse 1. The word *communicated* there is to *communicate by signs using symbols*. We will need to go through Revelation 6 through 19 and see where we find the church in heaven utilizing these symbols. Once we see where the church is in heaven through these symbols, it becomes a tremendous thing to begin to understand the *high calling* to which God has called us as church-age believers. We see Jesus Christ portrayed to us here in all of His fullness as *the Alpha and the Omega*, and then He gives us the key to understanding this book. In Revelation 1:19, 'Therefore write the things which you have seen (Revelation 1), and the things which are (Revelation 2 and 3)...' - that was the condition of the churches in John's day; and then as the history of the church is moved from John's day up until the coming of the Lord for his church, we have the trends and conditions of the church represented in Revelation 2 and 3, and also some prophetic statements with reference to the churches, and then verse 19, He says, '... and the things which will take place after these things...' - three things. 'Write (1) the things *which you have seen* – (2) the things *which are* (Revelation 2 and 3) - and (3) the things (future tense) *which will take place* after these things (after the church-age).'

In Revelation 2 and 3 we have numerous injunctions (at least seven times): 'Hear what the spirit says to the churches.' We have no reference to the church corporate like we do in Paul's writings. In order to understand the *corporate* designation of the church in the tribulation, we have to move into the Jewish period because once the church is *caught up to meet the Lord in the air*, we're back in the age of Israel; we're back in the time of Daniel's 70th week. If you're going to find a reference to the church *after* the church has been removed, it'll be in Jewish terminology. Two key features are *elders* and *the temple in heaven*; the temple is *the dwelling place of God*. We will see that by comparing Paul's references to the various references to the temple in heaven. This represents the dwelling place in the presence of God in His glorified church. After Revelation 3, it is presented in the context of the Jews. It'll be the time of Daniel's 70th week. When we move from Revelation 2 and 3 to Chapters 4 through 22, there's no more reference to *churches* except for only one, and that is at the very end of Revelation 22. The church is no longer on earth.

When we come to Revelation 4:1-2, 'After these things, I looked...' - that is, after that which pertains to the churches and all the revelation that Jesus Christ gave through His angel to John and to the churches, '...and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of the trumpet speaking with me said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things (that's future tense)." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a *throne* (in the Greek, imperfect tense) was standing (or *being put into place*) in heaven, and One sitting on *the throne*.' So, there's a *throne* that is *being put into place*, and then there's *the very throne* of God where Jesus is now seated with the Father (Revelation 3:21); there's a *throne* being established. This is the criterion for the judgments of God through Jesus Christ through His church, *the criterion* in the tribulation period.

Then we see this revelation of Jesus Christ and His glory there; we see Him as the creator in Revelation 4:4, 'Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.' First of all, thrones are not for angels, so this is not an angelic order; there will be no thrones for angels. The only throne will be the throne of the Son of Man, and we who overcome (Revelation 3:21) will sit with Him in His throne. The reason why there are *twenty-four* is that John uses all his imagery and symbols that he draws upon from the Old Testament. There are over four hundred references and allusions to the Old Testament in the Book of the Revelation.

In 1 Chronicles 24 we would see that there were twenty-four courses for the priesthood in the age of Israel; every two weeks there would be a rotation. We see that in Luke 1 when it came Zacharias' turn to rotate in to function as high priest. *Twenty-four* is the number of a completed priesthood. The church represents a *holy priesthood*, a *royal priesthood* (1 Peter 2:9), or a *priesthood of kings* - a *kingly priesthood* is another way to see that. Here we see in the symbol that he's using: *thrones* (government); *elders* (those in spiritual responsibility - *twenty-four elders* (a completed and perfected

priesthood); clothed in *white garments* (full reward) - we know that the white garments represent the reward of the saints (Revelation 19:8); the *fine linen* represents the righteous acts of the saints; we see them in full reward in a representative way around the throne of God.

Here's *the criterion*: God in Christ on His throne - and all the way through Revelation 4 and 5 - note the number of times *the throne* occurs; *the throne* is represented and is central all the way through Revelation 4 and 5 many times. The church now in juxtaposition or intimately around that and connected to, if you will, the very throne of God. Then in Chapter 5 we see the One on the throne, the Lamb. He opens the scroll - that means that He has the authority; He is the heir of all things, and since He has the right to open this, as we see in Revelation 5, He as the Son of Man can take back planet earth from the dominion of Satan.

Remember when Adam sinned, the title deed of the earth was transferred to Satan. He's 'the god of this world (*age*)' (2 Corinthians 4:4); he's 'the prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2:2). In Revelation 5, Jesus as the glorified Son of Man in union with His church opens up the scroll that has seven seals. What's in there? All the deeds! God has been keeping score! As that scroll is opened up, He has now won back as *man* the title-deed from Satan. We see in Revelation 5:5, 'and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book (scroll) and its seven seals."' That's the same book (scroll) we saw in Daniel 7! What is going to happen when he opens these seals? In Revelation 6 through 18 we see the judgments upon rebellious mankind and the kingdom of Antichrist; and the Antichrist's sentence will be executed from heaven *through the church as the criterion*. It says in Daniel 7:26, 'the court will sit for judgment...' - this is a part of that unfolding drama here in Revelation 4 and 5 - as that court sits, 'his dominion will be taken away...' - *they* (the court) will take away his kingdom. *They will take away his kingdom!* That's quite amazing!

I want to throw in something else here as we're coming to a close. If we go back to the vision that God gave Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, we see an amazing revelation there. In Daniel, it's *the court* that takes away the kingdom of Antichrist. In Daniel 2, it's presented a little bit differently. We see in that revelation in Daniel 2 where Daniel gives the dream - he tells Nebuchadnezzar the dream *and* its interpretation (Daniel 2:36) - it's a parallel to Daniel 7, but this is the vision as Nebuchadnezzar, saw it.

Daniel 2:36-41: 'This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused *you* to rule over them all.' As we see in Daniel 4, it is the Most High who sets over the kingdom of mankind, even the basest of them. He says, 'You are the head of gold (in the vision). After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze (referring to Alexander), which will rule over all the

earth. Then there will be a fourth kingdom (Rome) as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these (other kingdoms) in pieces. In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom (referring to the extension of Rome, or the revived Roman Empire), but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay.'

Daniel 2:42-43: 'As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle...' - in other words, this kingdom will be made up of *hybrids*. They will be (as Tom horn has brought out) the culmination of *transgenics* - that is, the third and final eruption of fallen angels producing the *Nephilim*; Revelation 9, the opening of the Abyss, which is *Tartarus*, and these creatures, the fallen angels - the *bēn 'ēlōhīm* (*sons of God*) - that produced the offspring of the *Nephilim* in Genesis 6 - will be released, plus the disembodied spirits of those who have been imprisoned - they'll be released against mankind. And he says in verse 43, 'And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, **they** will *combine* with one another...' there's a mysterious *they*. Who were the *they*? I believe it's the third eruption of *the watchers*, the *bēn 'ēlōhīm* (*sons of God*) that produced a third and final culmination of rebellion against God, as Russ Dizdar refers to, *Homosatanis* - a hybrid race - '... *they will combine with one another.*' *Combine* in the Aramaic means *through mixed marriage*. This is what I've been dealing with - through mixed marriages with royal bloodlines they bring forth that right combination whereby a fallen angel can cohabit with a woman and produce a *Nephilim* offspring. The word *combine* means *combine with marriage*, '... *they will combine with one another in the seed of men*, but they will not adhere to one another...' - Why? It's out of divine order.

Remember what God said when He created each one *after their own kind*? This is contrary. If you take a horse and a donkey and you breed them, it will produce a mule, but it is sterile; it's because it is contrary to divine order. This is a judgment. In other words, there are boundaries. '...but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.' He's using this imagery of the final days.

Daniel 2:44: 'In the days of those kings...' - that is, the ten kings that will be ruled by Antichrist - '... the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that kingdom* will not be left for another people; it (*that kingdom*) will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but *it* (*that kingdom*) will endure forever.' Wow! A *kingdom* is crushing it! In the vision, it's a stone cut without hands (verse 45) that crushes it. Jesus Christ is *the stone*, but in union with his saints; this makes up *the kingdom*. Revelation 1:6, God the Father said, 'He has made *us to be a kingdom*...' - in this case (Daniel doesn't see this), *kingdom* represents the born-again believers of the church-age in union with *the stone*; 1 Peter 2:5, we are *living stones* coming to Christ, the *living stone* (1 Peter 2:4). This kingdom represents the extension of Christ - *the criterion* - and *it will crush the Antichrist kingdom*.

Daniel 2:45: 'Inasmuch as you saw *a stone* was cut out of a mountain without hands (referring to Jesus Christ) and that *it* (the stone, Jesus Christ) crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future, so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.' Notice the juxtaposition - the setting side-by-side of verse 44 of *kingdom* -to- *stone* in verse 45. In verse 44 we have *a kingdom* that will crush all these other kingdoms; and in verse 45 we have *the stone* that crushes the iron. Christ in union with his church is going to deal with this adversary in a final way in the tribulation period *from heaven*, as we will see as we go through Revelation 16:19 in our next session - how the church is presented in Jewish terminology *from the heavens*. It is a tremendous thing to see!

When we realize it is no longer an issue of, 'Well, I believe in a *pre-* or *mid-* or *post-* tribulation...' – it's seeing things as God sees it. ***In the calling and destiny of the church, we are chosen by God to be the instrument and the criterion of God's judgment for the removal of the Antichrist!*** ... and that is a tremendous thing to see.

All suffering and all that believers are going through from between Pentecost and the rapture is God gathering the evidence so that He can prosecute his original sentence against our mutual adversary.

Session Three

I'm glad to have this opportunity to walk through more of an enlargement and helping our understanding to see why the church must be in heaven during the time of Daniel's 70th week, the judgment phase of *the day of the Lord*, *the day of visitation* which will be coming upon Israel and the nations in the very near future. I would like to mention as a preface, for the rapture to be used by those who are holding to a mid-tribulation or post-tribulation position, those who endorse a pre-tribulation rapture, which I do, to say that this is a form of "escapism" - if people listen to [The Day of Visitation](https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_63),⁶ we'll see from scripture that if judgment does begin with the household of God, as Peter says in 1 Peter 4:17, then the church will experience her tribulation *prior* to Daniel's 70th week. That brings in all that is going on and what looks like is coming upon us, a pre-staged Armageddon scenario, and as that unfolds, I believe in the very near future the church is going to pass through a phase of suffering that is unprecedented in all of history. Many will think we are in *the tribulation*, but it will not be, because the tribulation - the last seven years of Daniel's seventieth week (Daniel 9:24 and following) - is directed specifically towards Israel and the nations, and that will be horrific enough. This is not an "escapism." I believe that the context of which the rapture occurs is clearly described by Paul as a *deliverance*; and I've tried to cover some of that in [The Blessed Hope](https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61)⁷ series.

To pick up where we left off, we need to see where the church is; how is the church defined as in heaven during the judgment phase. That is in Revelation 4 through 19 where we see Jesus Christ returning *with* his bride; the wife of the Lamb returns *with Him* to establish His kingdom here on earth. By way of summary, we noted last time that in Daniel 7:9-10, we see a reference to a vision. In the context of the fourth beast, that is, the Roman Empire and the revived Roman Empire in the end times, we saw thrones that were set up and the court that sat; and then we see books that are opened and these books are the record of the deeds of Antichrist and those that will be opposing Daniel's people, Israel. This is the courtroom scene where the Ancient of Days is there and Jesus Christ is presented, and then in Daniel 7:19 and following, we read from that passage the deeds of Antichrist. In Daniel 7:26, the court will sit and then, in the Aramaic, the language of Daniel 2:4 through Chapter 7, it's in the plural, *the court will sit* and *they* will take away his (Antichrist's) kingdom, to be 'annihilated and destroyed forever...' and then the kingdom of the Most High will be brought in.

It's important to remember that from Pentecost to the rapture, God is gathering the evidence - or *the criterion* - to consummate and to carry out Satan's sentence and those who followed him in rebellion to the lake of fire; and that process is now going on in the great courtroom drama of the church age. Revelation 4 and 5 is a passage that dilates and enlarges the courtroom scene that we see in Daniel 7:9 and following. In Revelation

⁶ *The Day of Visitation*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_63.

⁷ *The Blessed Hope*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61.

4:5 we see *the twenty-four elders* which is a term that is used never of angels, but it is very indicative of those in spiritual responsibility during the church age; and we see these twenty-four elders *around the throne*. They are crowned with victor's wreaths; we see them as representing the overcomers of the church age, and they are in *white robes* which represent, as we noted in Revelation 19, *the righteous acts of the saints*. They are already in a place of *full reward* (2 John 1:8).

Then we see the scroll in Revelation 5 is opened up by Jesus Christ. It contains the judgments that are about to follow in Revelation 6 through 19, and Jesus opening those scrolls. As a result, we see increasing intensification of judgments that culminate in the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We could just pick up with just a little bit of background information to help us understand where the church is in Revelation, because if we look at Revelation 2 and 3, there are only *churches* mentioned - *churches* in the plural, that is, in terms of their locality. In Revelation 1, 2 and 3, all we have referenced to is *churches* on earth, and then there's no reference to churches from Revelation 4 all the way through to the end of Revelation 22, except in verse 16, within the conclusion to the book of Revelation, 'to (*concerning*) the churches.' I think that's quite significant. So, the question is: since *the church* is a corporate entity, where would we find a reference to *the church* anywhere in terms of the language of the Apocalypse in Revelation?

As we left off last time, especially from Revelation 4 and following, you have to see the remaining part of the Book in terms of Jewish imagery and Jewish or Hebrew symbolism. We'll read just a couple quotes referred to in Alva J. McClain's work, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, regarding the book of Revelation (the Apocalypse),

'The revelation of the Kingdom and it's glorious King in the Apocalypse can only be apprehended in close connection with the Old Testament, especially its prophetic literature, and particularly the Book of Daniel. Although the Apocalypse contains no direct citation in the Old Testament, it is saturated with Old Testament phraseology. In the total of 404 verses, Wescott and Hort list about 265 which contain Old Testament language; and also about 550 references to Old Testament passages. "Nothing is more important for the understanding of our author's mental and literary processes than a close study of his use of Old Testament language."⁸

'An exposition which leans heavily upon the Old Testament, and especially its prophetic writing, according to Hengstenberg, "is absolutely indispensable to a proper understanding of the Revelation."⁹

⁸ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom, An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, p. 443, BMH Books, 1959 citing Frank C. Porter, "Book of Revelation," *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1902), Vol. IV, p. 254)

⁹ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom, An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, p. 443, BMH Books, 1959 citing E. W. Hengstenbert, *Revelation of St. John*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1851), Vol. I. preface, p. VII.

'And James Orr says, "Its precursor in the Old Testament is The Book of Daniel, with the symbolic visions and mystical numbers of which it stands in close affinity."¹⁰ It may be laid down as a first principle, therefore, that no interpretation of The Revelation can be accepted which breaks with the thought of the Old Testament prophets.'¹¹

That's a quote from Alva J. McClain; and I would also like to bring in Dr Michael Heiser who is a contemporary Hebrew Semitic scholar. Those that study Hebrew are very well acquainted with Dr. Heiser. I just corresponded with him today and got a couple emails back from Mike, and here's what he said with reference to Professor Beale and his commentary on Revelation.¹² By the way, Beale is not a futurist, but he did write a commentary of 1,245 pages - it's on the Greek Text. This is Dr. Heiser's note:

'It is the best commentary on Revelation in print in my mind for one particular reason, it does more with how Revelation cites the Old Testament and the intertestamental material that is cited and alluded to in Revelation than anything else by far. This is critical for interpreting the book; anyone who doesn't do it will simply end up with the wrong interpretation. I think most scholars would say there's illusions or references.

'Revelation quotes the Old Testament more times than any book except for, I think, Matthew. It is just littered with Old Testament material; and that often gets ignored in contemporary popular interpretation, and there's a lot of non-canonical illuding going on in the book as well; very important for original intended audience and meaning.

'It is very important for the originally intended audience and meaning, that's true, but I would like to add to this, and this is my thought on that: once the church is removed, the Jewish remnant will be directed by God to this Book in a very special way, and when they're directed to this Book, then they will need to understand from their way of thinking what's presented in that Book; what has happened, and how can you interpret that.'

That's what we're going to pick up as we move forward with our consideration today, and it's going to be centered around the temple. We know that when Jesus came, and I have to give some background here because I've found that we can't think biblically unless we lay the proper groundwork. When Jesus came, He would speak often *daily in the temple* as it says in the Book of Luke, and the temple was very important to the Jews. If you read, for example, Jeremiah 7, when Jeremiah was told by God to confront

¹⁰ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom, An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, p. 444, BMH Books, 1959 citing James Orr, "Book of Revelation," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr (Chicago: Howard-Severance, 1915), Vol. IV, p. 2582.

¹¹ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom, An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (BMH Books, 1959).

¹² G. K. Beale, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Book of Revelation*, ed. L. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, The Paternoster Press, 1999.

his Jewish contemporaries and stand right in the core of the temple and warn that judgement was coming if they didn't repent, they just cried out, 'the temple – the temple of the Lord - that's our security... it's proof that God's presence is with us.' Well, we know that in 586 BC the Babylonians completely destroyed the temple. They were resting on the temple as their security. It's pride - spiritual pride.

When Jesus came, one of the charges they made against Him was that He was in conflict with Moses. 'He says He's going to "destroy this temple, and in three days (He) will raise it up"' (John 2:19). They brought these charges against Him. The temple was central to the Jewish people's worship.

I would just like to read from Acts 7 the concluding section of Stephen's address to the *Sanhedrin*, the ruling body of Jews who were responsible for the sentencing of Jesus to death. That sentence was carried out by the Romans, but the complicity is both Jew and Gentile. As Stephen was confronting the Sanhedrin, here's what he said at the very end of his address, Acts 7:46-48: 'David found favor in God's sight, and asked that he might find a *dwelling place* for the God of Jacob... However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands; as the prophet says.'

Acts 6:13-14: 'They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man (referring to Stephen) incessantly speaks against this *holy place* and the Law; for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us.'" Notice, they fixate on that *holy place*. These are some of the charges, so Stephen makes a defense.

Acts 7:46-50: 'David found favor in God's sight, and asked that he might find a *dwelling place* for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him (the very dwelling place of God). However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands, as the prophet says: "Heaven is my throne..." - Steven is quoting Isaiah 66:1-2 – "'Heaven is My throne, and earth is the footstool of My feet. What kind of house will you build for Me?" says the Lord, "Or what kind of place is there for My repose? Was it not My hand which made all these things?" And then he says (Acts 7:51), 'You men...' - speaking to the Jewish leaders, the Supreme Court of the Jewish nation – 'You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears and are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.' He just absolutely lays into them like a prophet. It resulted in his death. So, we see their focus is on *the temple*.

What I want to do – it's somewhat laborious - but I trust it will bring reward to those who are wanting to follow this through in seeing how the church is being formed in this dispensation, and when it will be complete. It will be the instrument of judgment - the instrument through which Jesus Christ judges the principalities and powers, and judges Antichrist and his armies. That's a very significant thing for us to see.

When it comes to the word *temple* in the New Testament, when Jesus was here, He never went into *the most holy place*. He only went into the temple precincts. In the original language, *hieron* (ἱερόν), *temple* means when He was preaching in the temple -

it was not *the most holy place*. He never went in to *the holy place* or *the most holy place*. Why? Because He was from the tribe of Judah. As the Book of Hebrews cites (Hebrews 7), only those from the tribe of Levi, the Aaronic priesthood, had a right to go in *the most holy place*. Jesus never went in there. There's a different word that is used that represents *the most holy place*; it's not *hieron*, but it's *naos* (ναός). This word *naos* is used in the New Testament for *the most holy place*.

We're going to follow that word in some of its usages beginning with the Gospel of John where the word *naos*, that is, *the most holy place*, *the holy of holies*, and see how that term is used. Matthew 26:61 is one reference to that. We'll be laying the groundwork for what we're going to be seeing in Revelation. In John 2, Jesus cleanses the temple, and John is the only Book where we have two incidences of this. Here it is at the beginning of His ministry. He cleanses the temple and He drives out the money changers in John 2:13 and following during the Passover, and as a result of this, the disciples make this comment in John 2:17, 'His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for *My house* will consume Me."' Notice, *my house*. The word *temple* in verse 14, by the way, is *hieron*; it is not *the most holy place*, it's the temple precinct.

In John 2:18-21, it goes on to say, 'The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this *temple*..." - He changes the word from *hieron* to *naos*! - "Destroy this *most holy place*, and in three days I will raise it up.'" That's Jesus' own words. Jesus is now referring to Himself as *the most holy place*. 'The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this *temple*, and will You raise it up in three days?" - referring to the refurbishing project under Herod that enlarged the temple that was in existence in our Lord's day. "...will you raise up in three days?"' Verse 21, notice what Jesus had said, 'But He was speaking of the *temple* (*naos*, *the innermost sanctuary and shrine*) of His body.' - that's *His individual body*. Beginning at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit, He began to form His *corporate spiritual body* known as *the church*. And it's the church that we're going to see is also called the very same term and defined by the same term, *naos* (*temple*). He was speaking of the *naos*, *the most holy place* of His body, the *temple*. 'So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken' (John 2:22).

That lays the foundation for us. We already see in Stephen's message where there is the *temple*, or that which is made with hands where the Lord can dwell - when Paul spoke at the Areopagus, when he was there in Athens, and said that, '...God... does not dwell in *temples made with hands*...' (Acts 17:24).

I'm just going to give a few verses so that we can see how this term is used by Paul under divine inspiration to describe that church-age believers are actually defined as *the temple of God*. It's the same word *naos* in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 where Paul makes reference that 'You (Corinthian believers as members of the body of Christ) *are a temple (naos) of God*... If any man destroys *the temple (naos) of God*, God will destroy him, for *the temple (naos) of God* is holy...' - it's the same word - it means *the most holy*

place, the very place of God's dwelling. And then again in 1 Corinthians 6:19, he says that your individual body, the body of a Christian, is '*a temple (the most holy place) of the Holy Spirit.*'

And then in Paul's writing to the Corinthians, exhorting them not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers: 2 Corinthians 6:14, '*...for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness ... light with darkness?...*' – and he goes on to say in verse 16, '*Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we (plural) are the temple of the living God...*' - *the temple (naos) of the living God* - so if you were a Jewish person at that time and heard that, you would say this is heresy; you would say, '*The temple of God is in Jerusalem! What do you mean the temple of God?*' Jesus refers to His own personal body is *the innermost shrine, the most holy place, and the dwelling place of God* - they didn't understand. But now He extends that metaphor to the body of Christ. When we get to the book of Revelation, this will be very, very significant.

Let's turn to Ephesians 2. This takes us back to some of our studies and consideration of the church being *a mystery, a sacred secret*. It had not been revealed until Israel as a nation rejected Messiah and the re-offer of the kingdom was made to them during the book of the Acts. It was then that God progressively and gradually unveiled His *sacred secret, the mystery*. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul wrote to a predominately Gentile church and it was a circular epistle that went to Laodicea and other places. Ephesians 2:19-20 says, '*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the (New Testament) apostles and prophets,*' - apostles also functioned as prophets – '*... Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone...*' - and *the corner stone* simply means that Jesus is also the foundation as we see in 1 Corinthians 3, but as *the corner stone*, the (right-angle) V-shaped stone that was placed right on the foundation to give direction, bearing and symmetry that guided the builders how to finish building the structure; it would give the symmetry in varying directions of the whole structure.

Jesus Christ is not only the foundation, but the entire structure, *the church* that is being built must be according to Christ; it must be according to His nature; it must be according to His name; it has to correspond to who He is, or it is not the church that He is building. That is one of the major reasons why in the soon-coming *visitation* on the church, God '*will shake what can be shaken, that is, of created things...*' (Hebrews 12:27). That means anything the church that is made by man – denominations, for example - is all going to go, because the only thing that's going to remain is the church that Jesus has been building (Matthew 16:18). I think there are going to be a lot of people that will be shocked. 1 Peter 4:17 says, '*judgment (will) begin with the household of God.*' Peter is actually citing Ezekiel 9:6 where God told Ezekiel to begin with His sanctuary - with His elders. *God is going to begin with leaders.*

In this passage, Ephesians 2:21-22, Jesus Christ is *the corner stone*, '*...in whom (Christ) the whole building, (is in the process of) being fitted together...*' - *synarmologeō*

(συναρμολογέω) - it is a very technical term, *being fitted, adapted and shaped to fit together*. This *whole building* (temple) is not a physical temple, because it is growing - it is an organic growing into, notice the phrase: '*...a holy temple in the Lord.*' Again, *naos* - *the most holy sanctuary in the Lord* - '*...in whom (the Lord) you also are being built together into a (permanent) dwelling of God in the spirit...*' - notice, *dwelling of God*; no physical temple could ever be the permanent residence of God.

When we look at the Old Testament, we see especially in Kings that the temple is made for the sake of the name, for the great name of the Lord; it'll be exceedingly wonderful and glorious. Notice in Solomon's dedication of the temple, he says in 1 Kings 8:27, 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built?' God says, 'This is where My name will be...' - My character will be revealed there - 'This is where my eyes are...' - actually in one passage He says, 'This is dear to My heart' (1 Kings 9:3; 2 Chronicles 7:16). This is a tremendous thing! - a type and shadow of what one day (during the church age) would be the building of God's spiritual house (Hebrews 3:6).

We see here in Ephesians 2 that this word *naos*, referring to the church, is a term showing that it is *a holy temple* - notice - *in the Lord*. It is the same term that was used of Jesus with reference to His body. In 1 Peter 2:4-5 we have a very clear revelation, an extension of this important motif or metaphor. Peter says, 'And coming to Him (Jesus) as to *a living stone* which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, *as living stones*, are (in the process of) being built up as *a spiritual house* for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' Verse 9: 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.' We see that we are *a spiritual house, a temple, the dwelling of God*. There are other metaphors - *the bride of Christ; the body of Christ; the one new man*; the fact that the church is so grand and glorious in the scheme of things, it takes many metaphors to describe every facet of greatness. It's also called *the heavenly city; the wife of the lamb, etc.*

Going back to *the temple* theme, this term is used in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 for the tribulation temple, the third temple which will be built, the plans are already being made in Jerusalem. The third temple will be built and we know the Antichrist will sit in that temple and declare himself to be God. That is that same word, *naos*. In fact, Jesus even mentioned that the abomination will be set up in that temple during the tribulation period (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). Going on to Revelation 11:1-2, we also see a reference to *the temple of God* that will be in existence during the tribulation period in conjunction with the ministry of the two witnesses mentioned there; that's the actual temple on earth - but it's the same word, *naos*, *innermost dwelling place* or *sanctuary*.

Now I would like to refer to further usage of this term, *naos*, in the book of Revelation. It's used once in Revelation 3:12 where the promise is made to the overcomer in the church of Philadelphia, that they will be *a pillar in the temple of God*, that is, a place of

support and significance within God's *temple*, His true *dwelling place*. The temple is not made with hands but it is an organic, living, corporate organism. It is the body of Christ; it's the church which is His body (Colossians 1:24), 'the fullness of Him who fills all in all' (Ephesians 1:12) - that's what the scripture says in Ephesians 1:22-23, '... (God) gave Him as head over all things to *the church*, which is *His body*, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.' It's important to see that.

Now let's turn to the book of Revelation and notice all the judgments that are coming to this earth during the time of Daniel's 70th week, the time of Jacob's trouble, when Israel is passing through her woe; we'll see these references to *the temple in heaven*, and we'll notice the context. Revelation 6 through 19 follows the scene in heaven presented in Revelation 4 and 5 where we see the church glorified as represented by the twenty-four elders around the throne; these elders are assessors to the judge, as many have noted. We'll quote some of those references here in a little bit; but we're just staying with the theme of *the temple*.

In Revelation 14:14, John said, 'Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man (Jesus Christ), having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of *the temple*...' - there's that word, *naos*, *the innermost sanctuary and dwelling of God*. If you were a Jewish person reading this, you would already know from reading the book of Revelation, when the church is in heaven and God is dealing with Israel and the nations on earth during the time of Daniel's 70th week, how the Jews will be able to understand the place and role of God's dwelling. He will use language that they will understand. For the Jews, *the temple* was the central place where you met God and where God was represented on earth. So, where is God in heaven during the tribulation? *He's in His temple!* So, what does that mean? *The church is in heaven!* - because *the church is His temple!* God doesn't have two temples - He doesn't have the church, His *katoikētērion* (κατοικητήριον – Ephesians 2:22), that is, *His permanent dwelling place*, and then have another dwelling place. Using the language the Jews would understand, verses 15-16: 'And another angel came out of *the temple (naos)*, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud (Jesus Christ), "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.'

The angels, who are ministering servants to us and serve us, according to Hebrews 1:14, are now (Revelation 6-19) carrying out the judgments on the earth. But whose judgments are they? These are not the judgments of angels; they are only the instruments used. The judgments are coming from Jesus Christ *out from His temple, His dwelling place!* Again, the church is *the court that sits* (Daniel 7:10) and that takes away the Antichrist system of evil and those who follow him, and it is *out of the temple*, Jewish terminology that gives reference to *the church in heaven*.

Revelation 14:17-20: 'And another angel came out of ***the temple*** (*the innermost sanctuary and dwelling of God*) ***which is in heaven***, and he also had a sharp sickle.

Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, *came out from the altar...* - this would be the altar of incense where we see in Revelation 5 in the fifth seal that God is answering the prayers of all the martyrs, including the tribulation martyrs. This is *the altar of incense*. Finally God is going to vindicate their prayers! He '*...came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."*' So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden outside the city (Jerusalem), and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.' That's a tremendous thing to see what is taking place!

In Revelation 15, we see this revelation given to John where they sing the song of Moses (verse 3) and they're glorifying God as His plan is moving forward in preparation for Jesus Christ to return and to establish His reign. In Revelation 15, after the vision that John refers to in verses 1-4, he says in Revelation 15:5-6, '*After these things I looked, and the temple...*' - again, the same term, *naos*, *the very sanctuary and dwelling of God* which, when on earth was a physical temple, but here this is *the dwelling place of God in heaven* - '*... the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven* was open.' All that which represents the history and the experience of every church age believer who suffered, who was martyred, including Steven, all the way forward, it's referred to as ***the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven***. That is being brought forward as the justification for God to send forth his angels to execute His judgments on the earth, to prepare this world for the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords. '***The temple of the tabernacle of testimony...***' - notice: - '*...in heaven* was opened, and the seven angels who had the seven plagues (referring to the judgments of God) ***came out of the temple***, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.' They are actually representing the very Son of Man that we see in Revelation 1; they are representing Him coming out of the church, through the church which is God's criterion (we saw that the last time), to judge His enemies and the armies of the Antichrist.

Revelation 15:7-8: 'Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. And *the temple* was filled with smoke from the glory of God...' There is rest - the church in heaven will be experiencing the glory of God as they are being vindicated, - '*... the temple* was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter *the temple* until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.' The angels are executing God's judgment.

Revelation 16:1, 'Then I heard ***a loud voice from the temple***, saying to the seven angels...' - this is God in Christ speaking through His church, because they are one. Remember John 17:22-23, 'The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may be

perfected in unity.' By this time (Revelation 16), the prayer of the Lord Jesus has been answered. God in Christ through His church speaking **with one voice**: '... I heard a *loud voice from the temple* saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.'" Remember Paul said (referred to in our last session) in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, 'Or do you not know that *the saints will judge the world?* ... Do you not know that *we (saints) will judge angels?*' These angels in Revelation 16 are carrying out the administrative function of Christ *through His church*. 'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls...' (Revelation 16:1). Then we see the first angel went and poured out his bowl onto the earth; and we see the tremendous consequences of these vials (bowls) that are being poured out (verse 2).

Then when you come down to Revelation 16:17: 'Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl (which is the final one) upon the air...' This is Satan's headquarters! - the very place where he's ruled the earth as *the prince of the power of the air* (Ephesians 2:2), the very place with the church is 'caught up to meet the Lord in the air' to clear the ground - to clear the atmosphere of Satan's presence. Notice: there is a judgment on the air (Revelation 16:17), Satan's headquarters - '... and a loud voice came *out of the temple from the throne* saying, "It is done.'" - notice: *out of the temple from the throne*. Revelation 3:21 mentions the believers who overcome as Jesus overcame will 'sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.' We've been called to share in that glory and in that administrative function, not only in the tribulation period, but we see the promises made in Matthew and Luke when Jesus returns to this earth, He said, '... when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, *you* (speaking to the apostles) also *shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging (or administering) the twelve tribes of Israel.*' (Matthew 19:28 cp. Luke 22:30)

The church is called to share the glory of Jesus Christ. Romans 8:16-17 says that we, the church-age believers, *are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ*. We have been called to be the royal heirs and inheritors of God. Why? Because Hebrews 1:2 and following, Christ is the royal heir of God, 'heir of all things.' In Romans 8 he goes on to say that we are joint heirs (co-heirs with Christ), '... **if** indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'

God has '*made us alive together with Christ ... and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.*' (Ephesians 2:5-6); and 2 Timothy 2:12 says, 'If we endure with Him...' - if we endure and persevere in fellowship with Jesus Christ - endurance which brings about proven character - it allows Christ to be formed in us, that as that formation of Christ comes to maturity in terms of *full reward* (2 John 1:8), and those who receive full reward or going to rule and reign with Jesus Christ - '... we will also reign (*symbasileuō* - συμβασιλεύω, *reign as kings*) with Him.'

There are two more places where this word *temple* (*sanctuary* - *naos*) occurs. In Revelation 21 we find a very interesting statement with reference to *the heavenly city* which John saw, and we know from Revelation 21:9, the angel showed John *the wife of the lamb*, which is referred to as *the bride*. That *wife* - or *the bride* - is defined as *the*

holy city, the place of government, the heavenly 'Jerusalem (verse 10), coming down out of heaven from God.' This *city-bride, the wife of the Lamb*, 'having the glory of God, her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper' (Revelation 21:11). Jasper in its normal state is red; but *crystal-clear jasper* would make it a diamond.

The Apostle John sees this tremendous revelation of *the bride* and *the city* which defines *the bride* as the governing instrumentality through which Jesus Christ will rule and reign. Verse 22: 'I saw no temple (no dwelling place of God) in it (the city).' Why? – '...for *the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple*.' So, what happened to the church? In Ephesians 2, we saw that the church is the permanent and eternal habitation of God in the Spirit because they have merged. Here we see the final out-working and culmination of Jesus's prayer in John 17, 'Father ... I pray ... that they may all be one ... *just as We are one...*' There's the fulfillment! '*The Lord God the Almighty and the lamb are its temple (innermost sanctuary)*.' That's the last time the word *naos* (*temple*) is used (Revelation 21:22).

I need to go back to Revelation 13. I made reference to this and it's important we see this if indeed the church is *the criterion*, the sphere of being an instrument of God's judgment for the removal of Antichrist, as we saw in Daniel 7:9-10, 22 and 26. What do you think Satan thinks of the church? What do you think about the church being that instrument that will be used by God for his displacement and ultimate removal from heaven? Satan's antagonism will exceed his antagonism toward Israel; his hatred for the church will exceed his hatred for Israel. The scripture makes it very clear that he hates Israel, and he hates the God of Israel.

In Revelation 13, we see the vision of *the beast that comes out of the sea*, the Gentile beast which we know is Antichrist from verses 1 through 10, and then in Revelation 13:11 and following we have the reference to the false prophet. We see in this context here the reference to the Antichrist in Revelation 13:5-6, 'There was given to him (*Antichrist, the beast out of the sea*) a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him (3 1/2 years). And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name (*His character; His person*)...' – notice: - '*...and His tabernacle (His dwelling place)*, that is, to *those who dwell in heaven*.' *Tabernacle* represents that this residence is not in its final resting place; we haven't reached the final phase of the eternal city yet; history is still in progress. God's *dwelling place* is in heaven – '*... blaspheme His name and His tabernacle...*' – notice the translation ... they're juxtaposed – '*... literally, 'those who are tabernacling in heaven.'*

Who are these tabernacling in heaven? They aren't Old Testament saints; they're not going to be resurrected until Jesus Christ returns. Why would Antichrist be specifically antagonistic to those *tabernacling in heaven*? - the very *temple of God*? Daniel 7:26: '*The court will sit - and **they (the court) will take away Antichrist's kingdom to be annihilated and destroyed forever!***' That's why! The church is the instrument for his

ultimate destruction and *Satan knows it!* That's why he's antagonistic. It's very important we see this. This explains Satan's hatred and his stirring up various instruments, such as Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un, along with the communist governments, to persecute the people of God. The human instruments may not know why they're doing it, but Satan knows what he's doing.

I want to just read a couple quotes here from J. Alva McClain from his book, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*. Here's what he has to say beginning on page 463 under the title, *The Mediatorial Kingdom in the Apocalypse*, that is, the book of Revelation. We read this comment by Professor McClain:

'As stated above... the term *ekklēsia* (the word for *church*) occurs frequently in the first three chapters of Revelation but not at all thereafter, except once in the epilogue (Revelation 22) where the divine Author turns from the area of prediction to speak a final word of comfort and admonition to the "churches" to which the entire prophecy was addressed.'¹³

In other words, the whole prophecy of The Revelation of Jesus Christ and these judgments *was given to the churches!* - but the only corporate reference to the church is what we saw in the word *temple*. In the book of Revelation the word *churches* (which refers to the churches on earth) is not found anywhere from Chapter 4 until the end of Revelation 22.

'From this usage it appears that in the Book of Revelation *ekklēsia* is reserved always to designate churches existing on *earth*. And it therefore becomes significant as during the judgments of chapters 4-19 the term is never once applied to any body of saved persons on earth, although several such bodies appear.'¹⁴

We see reference to the saints that are on earth, like the hundred and forty-four thousand in Revelation 7:1-8, and those saints that come out of the great tribulation, Revelation 7:14. We see the two witnesses and the other saints on earth in Revelation 12:11; 12:17; 13:7; 14:1-5; 18:4, there are references to saints on earth.

'This omission (to *churches*) would be strange if, during the period described (the tribulation and the great tribulation), there were any *ekklēsiai* (churches) remaining on earth.

'The lofty position of the Church in relation to the coming Kingdom would be seriously inconsistent with subjection to the terrible judgments which will prepare for its establishment. For the Church is the very "body" of the Messianic King (Eph. 1:23), a term of intimacy never applied to any other redeemed group of people (either Jew or Gentile). To the members of the church is promised that they shall have a part in *judging* the world (1 Cor. 6:2) and that they are "joint-heirs with Christ"

¹³ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom, An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, p. 463 (BMH Books, 1959, with comments added).

¹⁴ *ibid.*

(Rom. 8:17), destined to “reign” with Him (Luke 22:29-30; II Tim. 2:12). Also to the Church our Lord has assigned the high authority represented by “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19); and against her (the church) “the gates of hell (*the councils of death*) shall not prevail” (vs.18).

Now in sharp contrast to these assurances given to the Church, the book of Revelation declares that “the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit” (11:7) will make war against “the saints” on earth during his awful reign, and “overcome them” (13:7). Furthermore, this power of the beast will extend over “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” We must not overlook, either, that this power of the beast to overcome the saints (those in the tribulation) of that future time will be “given” by God Himself, thus setting it within the category of divine judgment. The verb *given* is used frequently throughout the book with this connotation (that is, it's what is called a divine theological passive – i.e.: God is allowing this to happen). Now great as her sufferings have been at times in the past, nothing comparable to this can be found in the long history of the Church on earth. Such an idea would be excluded in advance by the fact that the present age of the Church is not in any eschatological (or end-time) sense the “great day: of divine wrath, as that future time will be.”¹⁵

‘... Although during the judgments described in chapters 4 - 19 there is no mention of any *ekklēsia* (church) on earth, there are at least three references to *a body of saved people in heaven* during the period, who are designated by terms which are applicable best to the Church of the present age. These references occur (to *the wife of a lamb* - Revelation 19:1-9) in chapters 19, 13, and 4 - 5...’¹⁶

Here I would add more references to *his dwelling place in heaven, the temple* which I've already given - and then he does give reference to *the tabernacle of God* in Revelation 13:6. Also, he has quite an extended discourse to the usage of the term *elders*, how *the elders* are another reference to *the church* in its governing roll around the throne in Revelation 4 and 5. He has quite an excellent discourse on these twenty-four elders in Revelation 4 and 5; in fact, he makes this concluding comment on the twenty-four elders:

‘Why should not a group of these well-known officers, therefore, serve appropriately in heaven as a symbol of the entire body of Christ? Furthermore, the fact that the elders were properly a *ruling* body on earth, would add to their appropriateness as a symbol of the Church enthroned in heaven. The number chosen here (24), while of interest, is not great consequence.’¹⁷

I disagree with that, however, and I'll tell you why. *Twelve* is the number for *government*; and if you double *twelve*, you have *twenty-four*. *The church is the church of the firstborn*. If you go back to the Old Testament, when it came to the inheritance of the

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 464 with comments added.

¹⁶ *ibid*, p. 465-466 with comments added.

¹⁷ *ibid*, p. 471.

father, we'll look at an example: Let's say there were five sons in a family, and the father is going to distribute the inheritance to these five sons. He would take the inheritance and divide it into *six* portions and would then give a double portion to the firstborn. If there were three sons, he would divide his inheritance into *four* portions, and he'd give *two* portions to the firstborn, and the remainder to the other two. That's the law of the firstborn. Hebrews 12:23 says, 'You have come to *the church of the firstborn...*' This means the church shares the preeminence of the firstborn Son, Jesus Christ; we have a double portion. *Twenty-four* not only would indicate to me according to that analogy, that the church will share in a double portion of God's inheritance, because Jesus will be the first born among many brethren (Romans 8:29), but also in 1 Chronicles 24, there were *twenty-four courses* to the priesthood who served in the temple over a year period - *twenty-four*. So, *twenty-four* would indicate a number of *a completed and perfected priesthood* in heaven in union with Jesus Christ as a Great King Priest *after the order of Melchizedek* (Hebrews 5:10). All these symbols and imagery are very important to recognize that this is based on the Old Testament. The Book of Revelation cannot be understood apart from a clear understanding of John's usage of the images and the symbolism of the Old Testament.

This is what J. Alva McClain says regarding the Book of Revelation and Professor Beale:

'Approaching Revelation in terms of its own historical background in literary character, Beale argues convincingly that John's use of the Old Testament allusions - and the way the Jewish exegetical tradition interpreted these same allusions - provides the key for unlocking the meaning of Revelation's many obscure metaphors. In the course of Professor Beale's careful verse-by-verse exegesis, which also untangles the logical flow of John's thought as it develops from chapter to chapter, it becomes clear that Revelation's challenging pictures (that would include all the various symbols) are best understood not by apparent technological and contemporary parallels in the twentieth century but by Old Testament and Jewish parallels from the distant past.'¹⁸

There are four schools of interpretation. Professor Beale embraces the idealists... (or the spiritual). Professor Beale is not really a futurist as we premillennialists, but his book would have great value in terms of just understanding some of these things when it comes to the futuristic or prophetic school; I believe he misses that part, but it's important to see the Jewish background.

Just to sum up what we've looked at, the extension and the dilation of the vision in Daniel 7 as we see in Revelation 4 and 5 where *the court sits* and that which represents the church's close union with the twenty-four thrones around the throne; and then from Revelation 6 through 14, we saw the angels are those agents who carry out the

¹⁸ Overview: G. K. Beale, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (NIGTC), Eerdmans, 1999, 1,309 pp., <https://www.logos.com/product/3467/the-book-of-revelation>

judgments on the earth, coming out of the temple and out of the throne, and that's where the church is in the tribulation. That is part of the high calling (Philippians 3:14) and destiny to which we as church-age believers have been called.

I would say to anyone suffering to just cry out to the Lord and ask for grace to see that our temporary sufferings which Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 as '*momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory (excelling) far beyond all comparison*, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' What we see through the eyes of faith is eternal.

We need to be encouraged to know that what God is doing, especially in these last days through our sufferings. He is bringing to conclusion, gathering all the evidence that will be *the final criterion* for Him to carry out his sentence against Satan, to throw him in the lake of fire; a judgment that was passed before the creation of man, but which sentence has been held in abeyance. It's been on hold until all of human history comes to a conclusion. And then when human history is concluded, the sentence will be carried out. We praise the Lord for this. By the way, if you read the Book of Revelation, Chapters 6 through 19, the judgment phase from heaven's view, there's only praise, glorification and the worship of God for His judgments on earth; there's no mourning in heaven. They are praising God because *finally* the prayers of the saints are being answered; *finally* His judgments have come. Jesus, who is the Royal Heir and the rightful title deed-holder for planet earth, is preparing this world for Him to come to rule and reign for a thousand years. These are tremendous things for us to consider in the time in which we live!

Session Four

Just so the listeners (and readers) know, I'm really no different than them; whatever I am, I would just say with the Apostle Paul, it's by the grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:10). We just stand into that provision that He's made for us, especially for the time in which we live. It's very ominous. I'm very sober today as I think about the issues that are before us, and with consideration of this fourth session of *The Celestial Court*, to just remind the listeners that we've already looked at something of the significance of 1 Corinthians 6, especially verses 2 and 3, where Paul says, 'Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world ... Do you not know that we (saints) will judge angels?' We already noted what he had in his frame of reference, seeing that courtroom scene in Daniel 7, the mystery of the thrones that were set up in verse 9; and then also *the court* that sat in Daniel 7:10; and then in verse 22, the *judgment is rendered in favor of the holy ones* - that is, the tribulation saints. And who is rendering that judgment? The answer is given in **Daniel 7:26, where 'the court (singular) will sit for judgment, and they (plural in the original Aramaic language – the court, singular) will take away his (Antichrist's) dominion (kingdom), to be annihilated and destroyed forever.'**

I want to pick up on that theme today. If we follow Daniel 7 through to a dilation and enlargement of that vision, we come to Revelation 4 and 5 where we see the courtroom scene again, but now we see the occupants of those thrones, and those occupants we have introduced here are *elders*. These elders are a type or reference to those who represent spiritual leadership in the church. They are there in full reward; they are crowned *with golden crowns*; they are *clothed in white garments* which represent *the righteous deeds of the saints* (Revelation 19:8), and they are sitting on twenty-four thrones as adjuncts to God's throne. And then we see the seven sealed documents presented to our Lord in Chapter 5; and then there's the opening of those seals.

I think it is important to recognize, also, that with the very first seal that is opened we have the Antichrist; he's not Christ. In this first seal, we see peace that is brought - he comes bringing peace. In Revelation 6 we see this counterfeit to Christ coming on a white horse, and he has a bow and no arrows. So, we ask the question: What happened to those arrows? I believe those arrows are about to be released in a way that is final, that a hostility will be released against the church so that when Jesus comes for His church, it will be *a rescue*, according to 1 Thessalonians 1:10; it will be *a deliverance*. The consequence of this false Christ releasing these arrows - his war against the church - the result will be those who are the living ones, *the surviving remnant* shall be *caught up to meet the Lord in the air* (1 Thessalonians 4:17). In this passage, his arrows are already shot; the church has been removed; and he comes bringing a false peace. The first seal will most likely begin the tribulation period with that false peace. We know according to Daniel 9 that the Antichrist will make a covenant with the people of Israel for seven years. In the middle of that seven-year period he breaks the covenant, and the *abomination of desolation* will be set up. That will begin the last phase of the tribulation period known as *the great tribulation*.

We also know from 1 Thessalonians 5:3 that during this period of time, 'While they are saying, "*Peace and safety!*" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.' The destruction that will come upon them is in the middle of the tribulation; we see prior to that, there will be a period of peace.

We will pick up this particular theme, but just backing up - this whole conflict began when man sinned and handed his position as God's vice-regent on the earth over to Satan; and we've looked at those passages, including Genesis 3:15 where we have what's known as the *proto-evangel* where God judges the serpent, and in that judgment there is also a promise that there would be a coming seed. I'll read that passage again - after he pronounced his judgment upon the serpent, the Lord said, "And I will put enmity between you (Satan, the serpent) and the woman, and between *your seed* and *her seed*; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." Notice that there are two seeds; it's between *your seed*, the seed of the serpent - which represents all hostility and that which is opposed to God throughout the centuries - and that which represents *God's seed*.

We see that *seed* theme being brought into clear focus especially with Abraham and his descendants (*seed*) and *the seed* being in captivity in Egypt. When the seed was in captivity in Egypt, God raised up Moses and sent him to lead the people out of their bondage and into the land of Canaan. They spent a long time in the wilderness learning the discipline which revealed that Egypt was still in their heart. Even though they were redeemed and under the blood of Jesus Christ (by type), they were not fit nor ready to go in and possess their inheritance. This seed of the woman was under attack all throughout history. By the time of the coming of our Lord, Herod had ordered the killing of all infants in Bethlehem from birth to two years old. There was a massive slaughter and was Satan's energizing of Herod to go after or to destroy *the seed* which was prophesied to be the means of his overthrow and destruction.

Jesus Christ is the full extension of that seed. When we look at Galatians 3:16, we see a reference to Christ as that seed. When we look at Galatians 3:29, we see that the church-age believers are a part of that seed; it is a corporate seed; all those who are born again are a part of that seed. We read in Isaiah 53:10 that He, Jesus Christ, 'will see his seed...' - which was a mystery in Isaiah's time - and through resurrection, 'he will prolong his days,' and in the light of the New Testament, those days refer to the time from Pentecost to the rapture; 'And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.' So, we see this conspiracy has been directed against that seed, and particularly the Jewish people who are the carriers of that seed, especially from the time of Abraham forward. And now with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have that seed in its full development as the Son of Man glorified at the right hand of God the Father.

By way of summary, this *mystery of iniquity*, or *lawlessness* as Paul refers to it in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, has been supernaturally at work from Pentecost to the rapture; and

this process will continue until the church attains *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Ephesians 4:13); until Christ the Messiah is *fully formed* in His body (Galatians 4:19). The church therefore is the instrument of God's judgment and the execution of that judgment against our adversary. From Pentecost to the rapture, we noted that God is gathering the evidence, *the criterion*, for His final charges against the Adversary to be carried out, sentencing him to the lake of fire.

Today, we'll look at a very interesting part of John's vision in Revelation 12. When we read Revelation, we see that there are the seven seal judgments, and with the breaking of the seventh seal, that begins the seven trumpet judgments. The blowing of the seventh trumpet inaugurates the seven bowl judgments which concludes the judgments. Interfaced with these three sevens of judgments we have three woes; and we have several interludes during the seals and the trumpets and the vials – there are different interludes - different snapshots. It is difficult to tell the sequencing of this; it may be that as things are unfolding in the time of Jacob's trouble (or Daniel's seventieth week) that John is taken into a corridor, and he is seeing various facets from a heavenly view. In Chapter 12 we have one of those interludes.

The seventh angel sounded the seventh trumpet and then after that sounding in Revelation 11:15, we have this section in Revelation 12 where John sees a great sign in heaven. I was going to read from that because we're going to look specifically at this passage and its significance as it relates to *the seed of the woman* coming to the place where it is used by God for the displacement of Satan from the heavens - starting with Revelation 12:1: 'A great sign appeared in heaven...' - just a comment on this; John in Chapter 4 was actually taken to heaven through the spirit, but here it appears a shift in the Book of Revelation. He appears to be more identified with the people of Israel on earth at this time; he sees a sign in heaven whereas in Revelation 4 and 5, it's as he is there in heaven. In Revelation 12 the viewpoint, or the vantage point, changes.

Revelation 12:1-2: 'A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.'

Revelation 12:3-4: 'Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth, he might devour her child.'

Revelation 12:5-6: 'And she gave birth to a son, a male child (*man child*), who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught (snatched) up to God and to His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.'

Revelation 12:7-12: 'And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell (*tabernacle*) in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.'"

I think it's important to notice three features of this particular passage I want to focus on today. If we're going to understand this, these three symbols that are presented to us are: 1) the woman; 2) the dragon; and 3) the sun - and when I say *the sun*, the *man child* is a part of that symbol. We have the woman, the dragon, and the sun. The woman according to Genesis 37:9-11 is a clear reference to Israel in that particular passage, a symbol of a woman for the nation of Israel. This is found throughout the Old Testament's prophetic and apocalyptic literature, and this is substantiated by the description of the woman. The reference there to her, the sun and the moon and eleven stars that are mentioned in passage, and in Genesis 37:9, the sun, the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to Joseph. The very symbol that is used there in Revelation 12 points back to Joseph's second dream where we see the sun, the moon, and the stars corresponding to the symbols in Joseph's dream of Genesis 37:9 where they represented the patriarch Jacob and the mother, and the sons of Jacob; the Father, mother, and twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. It's important we recognize that in the Book of Revelation that the interpretation is found in the Old Testament. This is not the church. There are those that believe in a partial rapture and believe the woman is the church, the church in general, and the church gives birth to an overcoming company called *the man child*; and that *the man child* is taken to heaven and then the rest of the church goes through the tribulation. As we noted in [The Blessed Hope¹⁹](https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61) series, the church cannot be divided. The church is one organism and when the church is resurrected, it will be resurrected together and collectively – those 'who are alive and remain will be caught up *together...*' - that is '*together at the same time* with them (the dead in Christ) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord' (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

In this passage (Revelation 12) we have a great sign that appears. A woman is clothed with the sun; the woman also is a person (Mary) who gives birth to Jesus Christ. The image of the woman is both *corporate* and *personal*; and it's the same way with the

¹⁹ *The Blessed Hope*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61.

dragon. The dragon is mentioned in Chapter 12:3, and we see his corporate features just like the woman who represents Israel and her corporate features; likewise in verse 3 we see a representation of the dragon having seven heads. That's not looking at Satan in his personal identity; it's looking at him in terms of his end-time kingdom. If we look at the seven heads with reference to Israel, which nation was the first nation under the rule of Satan to persecute the people of Israel? It was Egypt! So, the first head would be Egypt. Who followed? The next nation to succeed Egypt was Assyria; then after Assyria came Babylon; and after Babylon came Media-Persia; after Media-Persia came Greece; and after Greece came Rome; and after Rome we have the final extension and representation of Rome in terms of the Revived Roman Empire, the seventh head – Rome again. So, there are seven heads: Egypt; Assyria; Babylon; Media-Persia; Greece; Rome; and Revived Rome. Revived Rome has ten horns on its head with seven diadems. The dragon is seen in his corporate features, his corporate characteristics as a kingdom there in verse 3.

And then in verse 4 we see a reference to him personally; it oscillates between the corporate and the personal representation. 'And his (the dragon's) tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.' That occurred *before the creation of man*. When man was created, this had already occurred. That's why in Genesis 1:2 it says, 'The earth was *formless and void*.' When we look at the same language as it is used in Jeremiah 4 and also in Isaiah, this is the result of judgment. In fact, in Jeremiah 4:23, the earth was '*formless and void*' (i.e.: a waste and a desolation). In that context there, it is the result of judgment. When they were 'thrown to the earth,' this is a judgment that has occurred. I do not believe that this took place any time after the creation of man. The earth was in the state of *waste* and *desolation* and had to be restored for man's habitation. These *stars* were 'thrown to the earth' - the third of the angelic beings known as *stars*. We see that reference also in Job 37. 'And the *dragon* (the person, Satan himself) stood before the woman.' This is both corporate and personal; in other words, if we look at Israel's history in all its suffering and persecution, its enemies were inspired by Satan. That represents the history of *the seven heads*; it represents *seven empires or kingdoms*. *The woman*, again, is both corporate and individual - corporate in terms of the history of Satan's persecution of Israel and as the people of Israel came close to the time of the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies, a *woman*, a person from the nation Israel we know as Mary, gave birth to Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12:4: 'And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.' We know he didn't stand before Mary personally, but he stood before the nation, the Jewish people, and the evidence of that is that he had (through Herod) all male children two years old and younger killed, slaughtered, by the sword in Bethlehem. We know that Jesus was supernaturally protected and spared through the dream that Joseph had; He escaped to Egypt. Satan's purpose was *to devour her child*. The attack was on *the seed*.

Revelation 12:5-6: This is quite an enigma for many people. They don't really understand why the cross is not mentioned here in verse 5. 'And she (this would be the personal representation of Israel, Mary) gave birth to a son, *a male child* who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman (the remnant of Israel) fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God.' Notice: it says, 'she gave birth to a son.' That is Jesus Christ; that is the person of Jesus Christ - but in most translations there is a comma there, *a son, a male*. The male is *a man child* as some translations have it, 'who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne' That word for *caught up* is the same word used for what is known as *the rapture* of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

If we look at all the references in the New Testament (including Acts), Jesus was never *caught up*; He was *received up*; He was *taken up*; He *ascended up* to heaven, but there was no *violent seizure* of Jesus taken into heaven. There's no reference anywhere in the gospels or in Acts. This *caught up* is not a reference to the ascension but is a representation of Christ in His corporate extension. In order to understand this, if you're reading this in the original language, and this is quite obvious to some, and I'm referring to a paper that I read by Michael Svigel, who is a Dallas Theological Seminary graduate, and he makes some very interesting comments that I had never seen before.

Regarding Revelation 12:5, Michael says:

'The use of the neuter adjective *arsen* (male) modifying the masculine noun *huios* (son) and the image of Israel giving birth points careful readers back to Isaiah 66:7–8.'²⁰

In other words, if we look at Revelation 12:5, we see the word *son* which is masculine in the Greek. So, if you're going to modify the word *son* by *male child*, to be grammatically correct, you should use a neuter adjective to modify a masculine noun. That's just proper grammar. Some people say, "Well, John didn't use good grammar." That's incorrect, because if you look at verse 13, John demonstrates that he knows the grammar, because there he says, 'And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to *the male child*.' That's masculine; it's the same word, *arsen* (male). The question is, why would John use a neuter, the word *male* or *man child* to modify *son*? That is a very good question.

As I read in another Svigel article, he said this:

'In Revelation 12:5 the neuter adjective *ἄρσεν* modifies the masculine *υἱόν*. This lack of concord, though strange for Greek, is not atypical in Revelation. Often, the harsh clash of grammar is used to point out to the reader that a particular passage from the Old Testament is being alluded to. Such is the case in Revelation 12:5. G. K.

²⁰ *Pre-Tribulational Rapture: An Interview with Michael Svigel*, December 9, 2013, <http://mydigitalseminary.com/pre-tribulational-rapture-interview-michael-svigel/>

Beale argues that the passage being alluded to by ἄρσεν in Revelation 12:5 is Isaiah 66:7.²¹

G. K. Beale wrote a twelve-hundred forty-five page commentary, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary - The Book of Revelation*. Though he's an idealist and not a futurist, here's what he says:

‘John may intentionally have the neuter pronominal adjective ἄρσεν (instead of the masculine) irregularly modify the masculine υἱὸν. As observed above in the textual comparisons of Revelation 12 and Isaiah 66, the unusual grammar reflects the actual wording of the Isaiah text, where both the mention of 'male' and the corporate plural of 'son' (or 'child') occur in synonymous phrases expressing Jerusalem bearing in travail. That John has not made a careless grammatical blunder is clear from 12.13, where the masculine τὸν ἄρσενά is correctly used.’²²

This may be a bit pedantic or tedious for some to follow, but in order to understand the word of God, we have to be careful of how we are handling it. Most commentaries on Revelation 12:5 don't make any distinction between *son* and *male child*. They just say that *male child* is Christ personal. We're going to see that just like *the woman* is both corporate and personal, and *the dragon* is both corporate and personal, so it is with *the son*; *the son* is both corporate and personal. Here we read (Revelation 12:5), *a son* (personal), *a male child* (corporate for the church being caught up to rule the nations). As Beale mentioned, this modifier - this *male child* - is put in the neuter because it's the exact phraseology that is used in Isaiah 66.

I'm going to ask those who have bibles to turn with me to Isaiah 66 and we're going to notice something quite astonishing. Isaiah is in two primary parts, Isaiah Part 1 are Chapters 1 through 39; and Isaiah Part 2 are Chapters 40 through 66. In the middle of Part 2 is Isaiah 53, which is the background. All the way through, Zion is pictured as *a woman*; we see Israel, Jerusalem, Zion are all in the feminine representation. And we see Zion's future hope all the way through Chapters 40 through 66.

Isaiah 66:7-10: “Before she (Zion or Israel corporately considered) travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to *a boy* (or *a man child*). Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in a day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons. Shall I bring to the point of birth and not give delivery,” says the Lord, “Or shall I who gives delivery shut the womb?” says your God? “Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her.’

²¹ *The Apocalypse of John and the Rapture of the Church: A Reevaluation*, <https://bible.org/article/apocalypse-john-and-rapture-church-reevaluation>

²² *The Apocalypse of John and the Rapture of the Church: A Reevaluation*, <https://bible.org/article/apocalypse-john-and-rapture-church-reevaluation>

Here, again, would be a representation of *the woman* that John saw. Now let's go back to verse 7 and notice: 'Before she *travailed*...' What is the *travail* of Israel. We know from Jeremiah 30:7, the time of the tribulation is known as *the time of Jacob's distress* when Israel will be brought into great travail. Jeremiah 37 compared with Matthew 24 and many other passages describe the last week of Daniel's *seventy weeks* in Daniel 9, known as the tribulation period, punctuated with two periods, three-and-a-half years followed by the last three-and-a-half years, known as *the great tribulation*. 'Before she...' - we would say – '*entered the great tribulation*' – '*before the period of the tribulation she travailed*...' So, we have a travailing of the woman Israel *prior to the tribulation*. If you look at Israel from the beginning of the church-age from the rejection of Jesus Christ, she is been travailing. And notice what happened just prior to the birth of the nation in 1948 – Israel entered its greatest travail since the time they were in Egypt. What happened? The Nazis tried to wipe them out; they wiped out over one-third of the Jewish population. The dragon was there to devour the Jewish people. Why? Because he could see prophecy beginning to be fulfilled, like Ezekiel 36 and 37. In order to thwart those prophecies, he attempted to wipe out the people of Israel – the Nazi pogrom to destroy the Jewish people was a travailing period, but it is not *the tribulation* period.

The final travail will be during Daniel's seventieth week. 'Before she travailed...' - that is, had her final travailing period where it says in Zachariah 12 through 14 (especially Chapter 13), over two-thirds of the Jewish people are going to be killed. 'Before she travailed, she brought forth...' - that's 1948. What does she bring forth? By looking at this passage, I believe that this *man child* company of God's people is synchronized with the birth of the nation of Israel. The last generation of the church is the generation in which this overcoming *man child* is birthed, historically speaking, at the same time Israel becomes a nation – it is then this *man child* company is born.

It's interesting that the people that we are working with, survivors of Satanic Ritual Abuse, correlates to the history of the dragon seeking to devour that which would potentially represent the *man child* beginning in 1948 through 1952 during which time tremendous things took place. When I look at this passage, I see that before Israel goes to her final period of tribulation, that it is this *man child* she brings forth – notice, *before her pain came*, 'she gave birth to a boy' - here's the same term that's used in Revelation 12:5, '... a *man child*...', and it's *in the neuter*! John knew this passage- he knew the Septuagint. When he records Revelation 12:5 under divine inspiration, and puts the modifier to *the son* in the neuter instead of the masculine like normal grammar, it's an indicator, a pointer back to Isaiah 66:7. You won't know this in reading a translation, but all the hearers heard that at that time - and I believe during the tribulation they will see this - and now, I believe, the Lord is bringing these things to light.

Before her pain, '*she gave birth to a boy*...' - in other words, with the birth of the nation Israel is the birth of *the man child*. Let's read on (Isaiah 66:8), 'Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day?' – Yes! Israel was

born in 1948! – ‘Can a nation be brought forth all at once?’ Yes! The United Nations decreed that they should have a right to their homeland. Do you know who the United Nation’s representative was leading that whole initiative? He was Russian! Notice: ‘As soon Zion travailed...’ - that is, as Israel passes through her tribulation period, ‘... she also brought forth...’ - not *son* singular – ‘... she brought forth *her sons*.’ Who were these *sons*? These refer to the remnant who will be raised up by God to defeat Antichrist in Jerusalem. We see that in Zachariah 9 and 10. There will be a Jewish remnant, specifically in Jerusalem, that will defeat the armies of Antichrist; in Armageddon, it is God who is the sole subject of that victory. ‘... As soon as Zion travailed, *she* brought forth her son.’ We see the subject here is *she, the woman, Zion*.

Isaiah 66:9: “Shall I bring to the point of birth and not give delivery,” says the Lord.’ When Israel is in the land and they are born as a nation, will God not bring this process through to its consummation, referring to Jesus Christ (Isaiah 59) coming to deliver His people to establish His kingdom? Of course not; He’s going to finish the work. In this passage we see that there is an expansion or an explanation of why in Revelation 12:5 John uses this neuter term for *man* or *man child*. What are we to have? ‘... *a male child*, who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and *her child* was caught up to God and to His throne.’ The *man child* is the corporate extension of Christ; it is Christ corporate; *son* is singular.

Go back to Revelation 12:4: ‘And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth...’ – referring to the first advent – the birth of Christ. Prior to 1948 – ‘And the dragon stood before *the woman* who was about to *give birth*... - referring to Israel - it was about to give birth to what? Again, *the man child*. – ‘... so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.’ So, he *stood before the woman* - and I believe that is an indirect reference to the Holocaust in Germany – ‘... he stood before *the woman*...’ - the *woman*, corporate (Israel as a nation) - who’s about to give birth... to what? A *man child*. Often we see this oscillation between dual references throughout the prophetic scriptures.

Revelation 12:5: ‘And *she* (the person, Mary) gave birth to *a son* (Jesus Christ), *a male child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron...’ One of the second indicators that this reference to *a male child* is corporate is this very terminology, ‘*who will rule the nations with a rod of iron*.’ What is John referring to? He’s referring to Psalm 2 where we have a promise of the Father given to the Son, Jesus Christ, as His rightful King. We’ll go back and just look at that together, Psalm 2, because that’s what he’s referring to, and then we’re going to see how John first uses this particular passage in the Book of Revelation.

Psalm 2:1-2: ‘Why are the (Gentile) nations in an uproar and the peoples (that would include the Jewish people) devising a vain thing?’ The Hebrew is very graphic; it means they’re working together under one mind and one spirit. ‘The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and against His Anointed...’ - or as

the Septuagint says, 'against the Lord and *the Christ*' – 1 Corinthians 12:12, head and body called *the Christ*. When the prophet David wrote this, he had in mind only the individual; but the Holy Spirit certainly knew of *the mystery*, and that this would ultimately point to the corporate representation of *the Christ, head and body*.

Psalm 2:3-7: 'Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us! He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, "But as for Me, *I have installed My King upon Zion*, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are *my son...*" - this is God the Father speaking to Jesus Christ – '... today I have begotten You.' - That is, I've installed you as my Son; this is the *ceremony of adoption*. We know from the usage of this in Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5, and Hebrews 5:5, this is a reference to the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus Christ. This post-resurrection ministry of Jesus Christ begins His high priesthood ministry. 'Today I have begotten You.' - that is all associated with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His high priesthood ministry.

Psalm 2:8-10: 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.' We see He's in heaven; He's installed in heaven (verse 6) as King; and then when Jesus returns to this earth to rule and reign for a thousand years, this passage continues, 'You shall break them (the nations) with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware. Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth.' When He says *break them with a rod of iron*, this is not the eternal state; but when He's here as King of kings and Lord of lords, He will rule with *a rod of iron*, and there will be peace. He's the Prince of peace and He's going to maintain peace. We know from Isaiah 65:20, if a person dies before the age one-hundred, they'll be considered accursed. That means there will be those who are accursed and judged during the millennium who are not saved, those born during the millennium and remaining unbelievers. Notice the passage: 'You (Messiah) shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.' This is God the Father speaking to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to pick up with the terminology that John used in Revelation 12 where it says *the man child* who is to *rule the nations*. Obviously that refers to Jesus Christ. Right? Yes! We just saw that in Psalm 2. Now let's go to Revelation 2:24-27 and notice the promise to the overcomer in the church of Thyatira, 'But I say to you, *the rest* who are in Thyatira ...' - *the rest* is a remnant in Thyatira who are not a part of the apostasy, that Jezebel system that is mentioned in the previous verses. '... I say to you, *the rest* (a remnant) who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them - I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.' - watch this: this is Jesus Christ speaking! – 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end...' - look at the promise – '... to him I will give authority over the nations; and *he shall rule them with a rod of iron*, as the vessels of a potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from my

Father.' Jesus Christ takes the very promise of God the Father which He gives to Jesus in Psalm 2, and now bequeaths that and presents that to members of His body. What does that tell you? *We are the extension of Him!* Ephesians 1:22-23, '... the church, which is His body, *the fullness of Him...*' - *the fullness of Him!*

However, the church has not yet come to *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* according to God's *criterion* in Ephesians 4:13. On a corporate basis and a historical basis, Christ (singular), the Messiah, has not been *fully formed* in his church; that process is still going on (Galatians 4:19). Therefore because it is still going on, the church has yet to attain the ultimate goal of being *filled into all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:19). That is yet to occur - that is, that goal has not yet been reached. The very promise that God the Father offers the Messiah in resurrection is the resurrected glory He now offers to the overcomer. This is the very first reference in the Book of Revelation where we see a citation from Psalm 2.

Revelation 2:26-28: '... to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter are broken to pieces, *as I also have received authority* from my Father. and I will give him *the morning star*.' What does it mean to receive *the morning star*? That is the highest reward that a believer can receive; it is that which crowns that believer in terms of allowing the Holy Spirit to fully form Christ in him in this life; that all the virtues of Christ are fully formed in the believer in time. The crowning of those virtues manifest who He is as a King, because Jesus is *King of kings* (plural), and *Lord of lords*. When a person overcomes and they receive full reward, he will be given *morning star* status. We have to understand what that means; it just means ruling and reigning with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:6; Revelation 2:27; 12:5), but that is earned. Ruling and reigning with Christ is not a gift; it's for those who overcome.

Salvation is a gift; heaven is a gift; forgiveness of sins is a gift; being pronounced and declared righteous is a gift of grace; but overcoming is *by conquest*. This all has to do with *the inheritance*, but that's a whole other matter. In the future, perhaps as a follow-up to this *Celestial Court* series we will look at who Jesus Christ is in Revelation 22:16, as 'the root and the descendant (offspring; seed) of David, the bright morning star',²³ and then the next verse, 'The spirit and the bride say, "Come." The *bridegroom* is *the morning star* and the church is *the bride of the morning star*. What does that mean? In the final generation of the church-age there will be the corporate formation and manifestation of *the man child*, a *morning star* company. The *man child* represents in a collective sense those who obtain *morning star* status.

When is the very next time Psalm 2 is quoted in the book of Revelation? We just read Revelation 12:5, '... and *she* (the personal Mary) gave birth to a son (Jesus Christ);' – and *she* (corporate Israel in 1948) gave birth to '*a male child*' - as we saw that in terms of a historical context (i.e.: 1948). In other words, the birth of the nation of Israel is the

²³ *Jesus Christ – The Bright Morning Star*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_95.

birth of *the man child* who is to *rule all the nations with a rod of iron*. That's not just Jesus Christ. We just saw from Revelation 2 that by the law of first reference it refers to the overcoming company of God's people. Again, this is another indicator that the Son is the corporate extension, a representation, of the person of Christ who is to '*rule the nations with a rod of iron*' and '*her child was caught up to God and His throne.*' That means that this *catching up* of this *man child company* is going to precipitate something; it's going to precipitate *war in heaven* (verse 7). In verse 6 we see the special provision for *the woman* that God makes during the tribulation.

Notice Revelation 12:7: '*And there was war in heaven.*' Right now, our warfare as Christians according to Ephesians 6:12 is '*not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (spheres).*' That word *heavenly* there means that these are *dimensions, in the heavenlies*.

In Revelation 12 we have a *war in heaven*. Who's doing the fighting? The church? No! Michael and his angels under the direction of God precipitate a war with the dragon. Notice that the initiative comes from God. We know from Daniel 12 that Michael is the guardian prince of the nation of Israel. We see a shift - the dispensations have changed with the sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation 7; Michael is now on the scene. It says he will arise as the guardian prince of God's people (Daniel 12:1).

Revelation 12:7-8: '*Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.*' Why was *there no longer a place found for them in heaven*? Because the church is *caught up to meet the Lord in the air*. What other event could precipitate this war? It is the church's very presence in the lower heavens that precipitates the war; and this is *prior* to the releasing of the seals. So, the church is *caught up to meet the Lord in the air*, and we know that Satan is *the prince of the power of the air* (Ephesians 2:2); that's his headquarters. The church is *caught up to meet the Lord in the air*, and that word *to meet* is *the meeting of dignitaries*; this takes place *in the air*.

Prior to the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week, we don't know how long the period will be, but *the judgment seat of Christ* occurs; there's a great war precipitated in the heavens; and as a result, as this process occurs, we see that these angels (Revelation 12:8) '*were not strong enough*' and '*there was no longer a place found for them in heaven,*' - that is, Satan's angels in heaven - '*no longer a place.*' Why? Because that place is for *us* - it is for *the church-age believers*; only the church has *been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3). Israel and the nations haven't been '*blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.*' That's for the church! '*There was no longer any place...*' Why? Because it's now *our place*, and that place is won through conquest.

As the church stands before Jesus at the *Bema seat* of Christ, and all that process continues on, when that is ultimately completed, and we see the effects of that rewarding of the church-age believers in this passage, *Satan will be thrown out of heaven*. Why? Because the church will finally be in that place where it has *possessed it's right to be there*. Satan must be dispossessed. What will be the fruit of all the suffering that has gone on throughout the church-age? All the saints, when they are rewarded, will constitute the divine criterion of the church in heaven for God's judgment of Satan. A part of that divine criterion will be that *God will throw Satan out of heaven*. That's what we saw last time in Revelation 13:6, 'And he (the Antichrist) opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and *His tabernacle*, that is, *those who dwell (are tabernacling) in heaven*.' This is why they're no longer in heaven; Satan is thrown down!

If we look at Chapter 12 verse 5 again, it says that '*her child was caught up...*' - that's not Jesus Christ. Look at John 20:17; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; and Acts 2:2 – Jesus was '*received up*,' *analambanō* (ἀναλαμβάνω) – not *caught up* - *harpazō* (ἁρπάζω). The word for *caught up* is a violent term; it mean *to snatch; to take by force* - it's like being snatched out of the jaws of the dragon. When Jesus ascended into heaven, He wasn't in danger of being snatched from the jaws of the dragon; there was no threat to Him. So why would the Holy Spirit use the terminology of this *man child* being *snatched* and *caught up* to God in His throne. You wouldn't use that with reference to Christ because this here is *an intervention* - the same word is used for *rapture* in 1 Thessalonians 4:17: 'Then we who are alive and remain will be *caught up (snatched up)* ... to meet the Lord in the air.' This is the exact same word, *harpazō* (ἁρπάζω). Christ was not *harpazō*-ed to heaven.

What does this imply? Just as the dragon stood before the nation of Israel to wipe out the seed prior to the birth of Christ in His first coming, *Satan is going to be uniquely positioned to wipe out the corporate extension of that seed just prior to the rapture*. The church will have her own tribulation prior to Daniel's seventieth week. That's one of the reasons why we looked at judgment *to begin with the household of God* (1 Peter 4:17), 'It is time for judgment to begin with (literally, *at and out from*) the household of God...' - first *at*, the preposition, *apo* (ἀπό) - *out from* - we saw that last time in our third segment, how *out from heaven* and *out from the throne* the angels are administering judgment *out from* the temple of God in heaven. Why? Because the church is the criterion for judgment, that's why. That's what the word of God says.

We see here *the devourer* is going to seek to devour this final overcoming company. Therefore, the rapture is *a deliverance - a rescue* (1 Thessalonians 1:10). In 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 'For God has not destined us for wrath, but for *obtaining* salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.' What does it mean, *obtaining*? That means it is something that must be *possessed*. Hebrews 9:28 makes it very clear that when Jesus comes back for His church, it's for those who are *eagerly awaiting Him* – that is *final salvation – the rapture*. Paul talks about that in Romans 13:11-14, '... now *salvation is*

nearer to us than when we believed.' What salvation is that? Not *initial salvation* - not *born-again salvation*. It's *final salvation* - *final deliverance* - salvation in terms of the rapture is *final deliverance*, and it is going to come to those who are *eagerly awaiting* Him. So, what's going to happen to those who are *Laodicean* (*Revelation 3:14-28*)? Jesus is going to *vomit them out of His mouth* - that vomiting may be contiguous with *the adversary devouring*, and I do not believe that means loss of salvation. It just means that only those who *are alive (the living ones)* (1 Thessalonians 4:17), namely, *the surviving remnant*, *perileipomai* (περιλείπομαι), a term used for a *remnant* in the Old Testament, *šā'ar* (שָׂאָר) - '... *shall be caught up* ... to meet the Lord in the air.'

We are facing some very serious issues coming in the very near future; so between now and the rapture, it will be the darkest time in the church's history, and it will be during this time that *the morning star will arise* in the heart of this *man child* company – that's 2 Peter 1:19. This is *the seed of the woman* now seen as *the seed of Christ* (Isaiah 53:10; Galatians 6:19; compared with Galatians 3:29 and 1 John 3:9). We have this seed in us. We are called *the seed of Christ*. Israel is not called the seed of Christ. The Jewish remnant - there's *the seed* (Isaiah 54:3; Isaiah 61:6-9); we see Jewish believers referred to as *the seed* (Obadiah 1:15-21; Zachariah 9:11-17) - they're part of that offspring. In fact, in Revelation 12:17, "the dragon was enraged with the woman (Israel), and went off to make war with the rest of *her children (seed)*" - *the woman's seed!* That's the Jewish remnant in the tribulation. But church-age believers are not called *her seed*; we are *Christ's seed* (Galatians 3:16). *The seed* refers to *Christ* – and in Galatians 3:29, 'And if you belong to Christ, then you are *Abraham's descendants (seed)*...' This is a tremendous thing!

In John 17 we see that God is in the process of bringing church-age believers into that very intimacy and oneness that exists between the members of the Godhead; and in Revelation 12:5, '*her child* was caught up to God and to His throne.' As a result, this precipitates a great battle and this battle will be initiated in heaven. At some point we know that the Antichrist will come forth and create a false peace. Then in the middle of the tribulation period he will break that peace. We know that from the word of God.

That's a lot to consider. What I'd like to do is to read a couple things to you. I have a paper here - I think it was written by Watchman Nee, or another Chinese brother, I can't remember. It relates to some of the grammatical considerations of this whole matter:

'Who is the man child? Some fundamental Christians say that the man child is the Lord Jesus Christ. Although I agree with this in a sense, I do not agree with it in every sense. There are two main reasons why I do not believe that. In every respect, the man child of Revelation 12 refers to Christ. But in what sense? - Corporate. First, I've already mentioned that the mother of the man child is not a local individual woman, but a universal corporate woman, Israel. Since the mother is corporate, her child must be corporate, as we noted that the dragon is both personal and corporate, so is the woman and so is the child of the woman. Secondly, if we read Revelation 12 carefully, we see that the man child is raptured in verse 5. He is not raptured in

the air, but to the throne of God. (And that's different than what we see in Thessalonians.) Some people say that this describes the ascension of our Lord Jesus into the heavens. However, in the following verse it says that after the rapture of the man child, there will be a period of one-thousand two-hundred and sixty days.'

In other words, there has to be something that takes place between the church being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and then the final issue of being raptured to God in His throne. These are not the same. To be raptured – *caught up* into the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17) is not the same as being raptured *to God and to His throne*; so, there has to be some interval of time between the two. It's like the rapture has a phase one and a phase two; first phase, from earth to the air; and then, phase two, from the air to God and His throne - *to God, pros* (πρός) - *facing God*, and not *on the throne*, but *to His throne, pros* (πρός) – *facing His throne*. That's what we see in Revelation 4 and 5.

The *man child* in Revelation 12 is the complete fulfillment of the prophecy regarding *the seed of the woman* (Genesis 3:15). That's why the cross is not mentioned there in Revelation 12:5. We just see the birth of the personal Son, Jesus Christ, as the fulfillment of *the seed of the woman*, and then you bypass the cross – although the cross is certainly inclusive - and you move from the birth of *the Son* to the birth of *the man child*, which is the extension of *the seed*. And with the first coming of Christ, He is the one designated to crush Satan's head; and then the corporate extension of Christ, *the man child*, will be the final instrument that God uses to crush Satan under the feet of the church (Romans 16:20). And what will be the result? He's cast out of heaven. What does Roman 16:20 say? 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan *under your feet*.' - *The God of peace*, He's the source, He's the judge through Jesus Christ. *He* 'will soon crush Satan.' Where? '... *under your feet*.' What? I thought Jesus Christ is going to be the one that crushes the serpent's head. But here it says, 'The God of peace will soon crush Satan *under your feet*.' Why? Because the church is one body. Remember 1 Corinthians 12:12 shows this as a part of *the mystery*: 'For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is ____' – Paul doesn't say, 'the church;' he says, 'so also is the Christ' in the Greek; the *head and body* (Colossians 1:18) are referred to as *the Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12).

In Acts 8:3, Paul was *ravaging the church*. In Acts 9:1 we see him persecuting *the disciples of the Lord* - *ravaging the church* - persecuting *the disciples of the Lord*. And what happens when Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus? What does Jesus say from heaven? "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting *My church* ... Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting *My disciples*?" He didn't say that! He asks, 'Why you persecuting *Me*?' (Acts 9:4). The church is *Me* with a capital M. These disciples are not Israelites; they don't make up the body of Christ. In fact, the body of Christ is not made up of Jews or Gentiles. When you are born again, you're neither Jew nor Gentile (Galatians 3:28); you become a part of *a new creation* (Galatians 6:15). This is completely new; this is *a secret* (Romans 16:25). That's why the key to understanding

all scripture is to know *the mystery - the sacred secret* that Jesus Christ revealed to Paul especially when he was in prison.

The *man child* in Revelation 12 certainly is the complete fulfillment of the prophecy regarding *the seed of the woman* in Genesis 3:15. Genesis 3:15 and Revelation 12 are two portions of the divine word which correspond to each other. That's why the cross is left out. In Genesis 3:15, we see three main figures: *the serpent*; *the woman*; and *the seed of the woman*. In Revelation 12, we see the same three crucial figures: *the serpent* (both personal and corporate); *the woman* (personal and corporate); and *the man child* (*the seed of the woman*). The seed of the woman is mentioned in Genesis 3:15, referring to Christ; but by way of extension, we (the church) are the seed of Christ (Isaiah 53:10; Galatians 3:29). However, once the seed reaches the development of *the man child* - once the church finally attains *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Ephesians 4:13), and Christ the Messiah is *fully formed* in His people (Galatians 4:19), then the church will be *the fullness of Him who fills all in all* (Ephesians 1:22-23). Once the seed reaches the development of *the man child* unveiled in Revelation 12, it is no longer only the Lord Jesus Himself, but the Lord and the overcoming part of His body. What was once an individual seed has become corporate by the time of Revelation 12 in terms of what John is viewing in relation to Israel.

Remember, this is viewing things from the standpoint of the earth, Israel, and the nations in Chapter 12. When the Lord Jesus was born in a manger, He was the individual seed of the woman. When He was crucified on the cross to be a redeemer, He was still the individual seed; when He was raised from the dead - He was still that individual seed. The seed became corporate beginning at Pentecost when the church-age began and the body of Christ came into existence.

When Jesus was raised and then ascended - He wasn't *caught up* to meet the Lord in the air - he wasn't in danger of being devoured - but the corporate extension of this seed, as it says in 1 Peter 5:8, 'The devil goes around is a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.' As we approach the end, he is going to concentrate all of his efforts to devour every born-again believer. It's going to be ramped up, folks! It means that we are going to need to know the Lord and need to be walking in fellowship with Him in such a way so that we can be among those who are *the living ones - the surviving remnant*, those whom God preserves unto the coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

What was once the individual seed has become corporate by the time of Revelation 12. Jesus was still the individual seed when He was crucified on the cross and when He was raised from the dead. However, after His resurrection, He was reproduced and multiplied; the one grain of wheat became many grains. John 12:24, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit.' It becomes many grains. Once He was the unique one, *the only begotten Son* (John 1:14), but 'through death and resurrection, He became the firstborn among (in the sphere of) many brothers...' - the first Son among many sons (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:10).

The firstborn Son is the head of the body, and all those in union with the head as members of His body, His brothers, are the many sons, members of His body. The seed of the woman is no longer an individual person but a corporate person, head and body called *the Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12); it's a corporate person with the individual Christ as the head with all His members of the body. Therefore, Christ is the head of this *man child*; He is also the center - the ultimate reality, the life and the nature of *the man child*. It represents the church having *attained*, finally, *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Ephesians 4:13); and therefore, a body of people filled in varying degrees and measures according to their faithfulness on earth in time, *filled with all the fullness of God* – the *plērōma* (πλήρωμα) of the Godhead - in a body of people (Ephesians 3:19). The head has gone to the heavens, but His body remains on the earth. As far as the head is concerned, He ascended to the heavens more than two-thousand years ago; but as far as His body is concerned, we are still here awaiting the coming rapture. After the rapture of *the man child*, there will be a period of great suffering on the earth as we see in the prophecies.

I trust this is something that will help people to consider more of the meaning of what it means to be in Christ, for Christ to be in us, *the hope of glory*; 'Christ (the Messiah) in you, the (only) hope of glory' (Colossians 1:27); it's *Christ* (personal) *in you* (plural), *the only hope of glory*.

I want to just reemphasize what we noted in [The Blessed Hope²⁴](https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61) series, that 1st Thessalonians is really talking about the church's translation to be with the Lord; it presents what we call *the rapture of the church*, or the church being *called away*. But that has been challenged by false teachers. As we noted in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 and following, there were those that were being shaken and disturbed by someone who claimed to be speaking a prophetic message, or someone sending an epistle around because the Thessalonians were suffering. They believed that they were in *the day of the Lord*, that they're going to have to pass through *the time of Jacob's trouble*. Paul writes to them that it is under no such circumstances. When he writes 2nd Thessalonians, he interprets the meaning of their suffering and he makes it very clear in Chapter 2 that they're not going to be a part of *the day of the Lord*.

In fact, the Bible refers to the coming of Christ for His church *the day of Christ* several times (1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:2). That's different; *the day of Christ* is not *the day of the Lord*. In 2nd Thessalonians he explains why they are suffering; he acknowledges the persecutions and afflictions they are enduring (2 Thessalonians 1:4). Then in 2 Thessalonians 1:5 he says this suffering that they're going through does not mean (as he later says in Chapter 2) that they're in *the day of the Lord*; but 'it's a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you indeed are suffering.' This is all going to lead to tremendous things. God is going to be using the church to judge

²⁴ *The Blessed Hope*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_61.

angels and to judge the world, and this suffering is related to His future kingdom and glory.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7: 'For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and *to give relief to you who are afflicted* and to us as well when the Lord Jesus (literally: *in the revelation of Jesus who*) will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.' Notice, He *shall be revealed from heaven*. Where are we? - *on earth* when He is revealed from heaven? *No! We're with Him when He is revealed from heaven!*

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10: Jesus is going to be *from heaven* 'dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These (who are persecuting Christians) will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, *when He comes* to be glorified in His saints...' When He returns, *He comes to be glorified in His saints – from heaven*. And those on earth are going to marvel at Christ in His saints, verse 10, He will 'be marveled at among all who have believed - for our testimony to you was believed.'

Notice verse 7: He's going to *give relief to you who are afflicted*. The relief takes place because we're with Him in heaven. 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 says, 'Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ... that we will judge angels?' The relief is coming, and that relief includes vindication for all the suffering and everything that believers have gone through unfairly under the cruel hand of the tyrant, Satan, working through those that are persecuting believers. And not only that; there are many believers suffering that are not directly being affected by human agents. We suffer because we live in the bottom of the cosmic cesspool where principalities and powers are all around us. We suffer for just being here and because the principalities and powers are opposing us. Why? Because they know that we are destined to be the instrument through which *the God of peace will soon crush Satan under the feet of the church*; notice: *under the feet* (Romans 16:20). That means something had to take place prior to God crushing him. In other words, the church has to come to the place of *the measure the stature of the fulness of Christ* where Satan is under *our feet*; that's the final goal of the church, God in Christ through the Holy Spirit bringing Satan under our feet; and then, from heaven, God crushing Satan under our feet and casting him down to the earth as we see in Revelation 12. And what's his response? He's enraged! – at whom? The woman who gave birth to this *man child*.

Hopefully, that is something we can prayerfully consider. I realize there are others who have different views, and that's fine; they're still my friends. This is what I understand thus far, and I think it's important we consider this. The *seed of the woman, the Christ*, which is the corporate extension of that seed, will be the instrument used for the ultimate overthrow of Satan and his hosts to be cast from heaven. The church is destined in the purpose and plan of God to displace Satan and the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. That's where our battle is. Our fight is 'not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this

darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness *in the heavenly places (heavenlies)*' (Ephesians 6:12). We have been blessed 'with every spiritual blessing *in the heavenly places (heavenlies)* in Christ' (Ephesians 1:3); we have been seated '*in the heavenly places (heavenlies)* in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 2:6). It is God's purpose 'that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities *in the heavenly places (heavenlies)*' (Ephesians 3:10).

These are tremendous matters for us to prayerfully consider and to trust the Lord to bring us to a place where we can *together*, in fellowship with the Lord and with one another in these closing days of darkness, become that instrument through which He will bring this age to a close.

Regarding *the day of visitation*, in terms of the history of God's various visitations, we noted that in Genesis 22:1 when He visited Sarah, He fulfilled His promise, and she gave birth to the promised child, Isaac. That visitation changed her destiny forever; He delivered her from that reproach; she was never the same again. When God visited the people of Israel who were in bondage in Egypt (Exodus 3:16; 4:31; 13:19, etc.), what was the result? They were corporately delivered from the bondage and slavery of Egypt. They were delivered from the tyrannical rule of Pharaoh, which in type would be Satan; and in that deliverance they were extracted out of that realm. Simultaneously, God judged Pharaoh and his armies; that was *a visitation*.

The day of the Lord on this earth is described as *a day of visitation* throughout the prophets, usually translated *time of punishment*. Peter talks about the coming *day of visitation* (1 Peter 2:12). It hasn't happened in church history on a corporate level; but as we enter this time of history, with the birth of the nation of Israel (1948) to the coming of the Lord, Jesus said, '*This generation will not pass away until all these things take place*' (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:32). What generation? The generation during which Israel became a nation (Matthew 24 compared with Isaiah 66:7; Ezekiel 36 and 37). We live in the context of this final closing phase of Israel's history. Satan is going to focus all of his remaining efforts on Israel (during the tribulation), but his primary target now is the church, because the church is the instrument for his overthrow.

On an individual basis, in *the day of visitation*, where do you fit when you read 1st Peter? Is your heart aligned with what Peter is saying throughout that epistle? It's designed to prepare believers for the day of visitation. That day of visitation when God intervenes, those who have been waiting on the Lord and trusting Him, that's the day when Jesus Christ as *the morning star* will arise in their hearts. It will be a time of infusion of grace; it will be God's answer to the darkness. In the physical analogy, it refers to Venus as a physical representation of the morning star. The morning star does not arise until the end of a long night; it rises just before sun-break, the dawn. The rising of the sun is a picture of Christ returning to deliver Israel (Malachi 4:1-3), He comes as the sun 'with healing in its wings.' Prior to the rising of the sun to Israel, He appears in the church at the very end as *the morning star*.

For those that really need to have a hope regarding God's final move in the church that will culminate in the rapture, I would encourage you to follow our study of [Jesus Christ - The Bright Morning Star²⁵](#) arising in the hearts of a people, a remnant, in the closing days of the church-age. That is God's final hope; it is the person of Jesus Christ coming to fullness in His people.

The morning star only arises at the end of a long night at the darkest period. That has not happened yet; that will be God's answer in terms of the significance of that which defines Christ arising in the heart of a prepared people at the end; that will be far greater than all of Satan's movements to devour. But we need to be prepared. If you are *Laodicean* – you are a Christian, but you're not prepared – you are asleep - 'you say, "I am rich; I have need of nothing.' – Jesus says, I'm about to *vomit you out of my mouth*. (Revelation 3:16).

Serious things are on the horizon and we need to be right with God. If there has not been repentance for hidden sin, or whatever you're doing that is not pleasing God, it's time to get right because time is running short. We have to be right with God and walking in fellowship with Him and His people to the best of our ability, and knowing what this means, we need to be more and more strengthened and empowered in His grace. This comes through union with Jesus Christ:

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. (Romans 6:4-7)

²⁵ *Jesus Christ – The Bright Morning Star*, https://www.dougriggs.org/Videos.html#anchor_95.