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Jesus Return as King of Kings The First Resurrection The Second Death.

(Revelation 20).

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Christ's Return as King of kings.

The First Resurrection and the Second Death (Rev. 20).

Topics.

- An angel descends with the key to the bottomless pit.
 - The dragon that old serpent, the devil and Satan.
 - The faithful came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
 - The first resurrection and the second death.
 - The devil, beast and false prophet are in the lake of fire.
 - The great white throne.
 - The book of life and other books.
 - The mark of the beast.
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INTRODUCTION

To get an idea of where the awesome and breathtaking events spoken of in Revelation chapter twenty fit in God's prophetic timetable, we will firstly take a brief look at the events that have transpired prior to these prophetic and eternal events unfolding.

1

REVELATION SEVENTEEN

Revelation chapter seventeen tells us Jesus will return as Lord of lords and King of kings and conquer a woman full of abominations and adorned with gold, jewels and pearls (symbolic of global false religion) sitting on a scarlet beast full of blasphemous names (symbolic of the global secular world system) because both the woman and the beast are of one mind to make war on Christ.

REVELATION EIGHTEEN

Revelation chapter eighteen records the fall of Babylon the Great who the kings and the merchants of the earth grew rich from the power of her global banking and financial system of credit, interest, greed and excessive profits and thereby corrupted the earth with self-indulgent luxurious living and immorality.

REVELATION NINETEEN

Revelation chapter nineteen records Jesus descending on a white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords with great power and God by His mighty power destroying the armies of the nations who attempted to destroy Jesus and those gathered to him and the birds of the air feasting on the dead bodies.

AN ANGEL DESCENDS WITH THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

- **Revelation 20:1-3:** Then I (John) saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the *bottomless pit* and a great chain. ²And he seized the *dragon*, that ancient *serpent* who is the *devil* and *Satan* and bound him for a thousand years, ³and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not *deceive* the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

NOTE: this chapter uses very figurative language (i.e., no-one believes an angel of God is going to descend from heaven with a literal chain and wrap it around this enormous powerful evil entity so that it cannot escape). Nor does anyone believe there is a literal key this is a vision of future events that uses very symbolic images, pictures and language. The bottomless pit can be seen as the personification of the extreme depths of evil that the pride, ego and greed of man and the mind of the flesh, is capable of sinking to. The mind of the flesh and the endless depths of the human heart are capable of tremendous evil and horror when it craves for power, wealth and riches or lusts to satisfy its own pleasure and the things it sets its affections and cravings on. It is the human heart of those who are consumed with self, ego, pride and greed etc. that is the bottomless pit that evil ascends from.

THE DRAGON, THE SERPENT, THE DEVIL AND SATAN

From these verses we see that the title, dragon embraces all the evil character of the serpent the devil and Satan which means that all of these names are different aspects of the same entity which is the mind of the flesh and the pride of man manifested outwardly on earth in all its wicked and corrupt forms.

The apostle Paul tells us:

- Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh which is hostile to God because it does not submit to God (Rom. 8:5-7).
- The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit (of God and of Christ), and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh for the Spirit and the flesh are opposed to each other (Galatians 5:17).
- The passions of the flesh carry out the desires of the body and the mind (Eph. 2:3).
- All that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions is from the world and not from God (1 John 2:16).

The titles, dragon the serpent, the devil and Satan are names given to that spirit of man that is hostile to God and to Christ which are titles given to the Spirit or mind of the flesh. Generally, the dragon refers to world rulers, governments and leaders who have influence over the masses. The devil refers that spirit within us that is prone to sin, the title Satan is interchangeable with the word devil but generally refers to religious or secular authority's hostile to God and His ways who have influence over others.

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF THE DEVIL, THE SERPENT AND SATAN

A young apprentice starts a new job, on his first day a fellow worker approaches him and says, "All the boys are buying ecstasy pills how many do you want?" The young lad says, "Sorry I don't take drugs it is against what I believe." This man is a serpent to the boy by tempting him to compromise his principals. The man goes and tells the rest of the workers, "Hey guys this new apprentice is a wowser a self-righteous religious nut," now the man is a devil by being an accuser and slander. Then later in the same day one of the stronger men gets the boy by himself and says, "Listen you little runt of a kid, don't pull that religious stuff on us. I'll mess

your face up good,” this man is a Satan to the boy by being an opposer to what the young apprentice believes. The poor kid has confronted the serpent, the devil and Satan all on his first day of work. For further information see the titles:

- The Flesh and the Spirit (at the end of this chapter).
- Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The titles the dragon the serpent, the devil and Satan refer to anything that is contrary or opposed to God's law, God's will and His eternal plans and purposes. It is in this sense the dragon that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan are bound for a thousand years it means the flesh (i.e. selfishness, pride, greed and such like things) will be greatly limited and unable to manifest their evil, wicked and sinful ways.

Matthew wrote:

- Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matt. 15:19).

Luke tells us:

- From within out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery (Mark 7:21).

Matthew and Luke show us that all evil, wickedness and sin on earth flows from the bottomless depths of the human heart that is hostile to God. The phrase, “The bottomless pit” refers to all the evil and wickedness in the human heart that is in rebellion to God and against His will and His ways and against Christ and against those who faithfully follow him and not to a bottomless pit somewhere below the surface of the earth. The dragon the serpent, the devil and Satan can be seen as the personification of the mind of the flesh and the pride of man it is that spirit in the human heart that is against God and his will and against Christ and all who faithfully follow him which is manifested in outward actions that are opposed to the nature and character of God and of Christ.

Remember during the glorious Kingdom age that the dragon the serpent, the devil and Satan are bound Christ is ruling with a rod of iron, (meaning great power and authority) as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth so naturally every form of evil and corruption is going to be extremely limited and immediately be restrained, neither man's desire nor the ambition of any ruler or government that is opposed to God and against the law of love and justice will be tolerated during Christ's glorious millennial reign. It is in this sense the dragon the serpent, the devil and Satan will be bound, they will not be able to do those things the flesh desires and craves to do.

Governments and the rich will not be able to oppress people for their own selfish gain and false religious leaders will not be able to deceive and make merchandise of God's people. All wickedness and everything that harms another human will be restrained, because Christ's is ruling, not as a ruthless dictator, but as a benevolent King who desires to protect his children, the oppressed and the poor from every kind of harm and abuse.

THE FAITHFUL CAME TO LIFE AND REIGN WITH CHRIST FOR A THOUSAND YEARS

- **Revelation 20:4-6:** Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also, I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They *came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* ⁵The rest of the dead did not come

to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the *first resurrection*. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the *first resurrection*! Over such the *second death* has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

THE BEAST

The Beast is a huge topic which we cannot fully cover or do justice to in this study, but it should be mentioned that though both the beast and the harlot religious system (i.e., global false religion) are a gross offence to God they are two different entities. The harlot system is not the beast nevertheless both the beast and the harlot religious system are motivated by the same spirit. Throughout history artists have painted a multitude of drawings that picture the harlot religious system riding upon the back of the beast. This is a perfect picture that brilliantly and simply depicts the two different systems that affect the entire world. Both these systems are in total contrast to the heart of God. So, what is the beast? In the context of these verses the beast can be viewed as the entire world system of banking, trade, usury (interest), mammon (money) greed and excessive profits and to a leader or group of leaders who are in control of this worldly system of finance and opposed to the plans, purposes and will of God, opposed to Christ and opposed to those who follow him.

A MARK IN THE HAND

In this context the mark in the hand is a symbol of service to someone or something that the mark represents. For further detail of the mark on the forehead see the notes at the end of this chapter.

A NAME IN THE FOREHEAD

A name in the forehead is a symbol of who that person's God or idol is in their mind and their thoughts. The book of Revelation presents two groups:

1. Those who receive the mark of the beast.
2. Those who have not received the mark of the beast. Those who receive the mark of the beast refers to those who serve mammon (money) and live for gaining more to indulge self while those who have not received the mark of the beast refers to those who have not made worldly wealth and riches the love and passion of their heart and mind, but rather choose to live to honour God and to be a good testimony to the Lord rather than make the love of money their god and spend their life in indulgent, selfish luxurious living.

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST

The image must apply to something that is linked to the beast system and to something that Christians of all ages could worship and not just to something that only appears prior to Christs return. Just as the Gospel started from a tiny seed sown and has grown into a global Kingdom, the beast system started from a tiny coin and has grown into a worldwide system of usury (interest) which has climaxed in a worldwide oppressive banking system of credit, greed and excessive profit which in some manner affects everyone on planet earth. Some may wonder what is so evil about our global banking system of money the easiest way to explain this is to point out that it is written in the American Constitution that governments of the world should pursue justice and the happiness of all

mankind, but happiness and justice (i.e., fairness) is not what our global system of banking or corporate business world seeks after. They in contrast are all about making greater profits and rather than seeking after happiness for those who make these profits for them, they oppress them to make even greater profits. The world's financial system of credit and the oppression of workers (especially the poor in third world countries) for profit are not only totally against the ways of God, but also extremely offensive to him. The following verses will help us discover what this image might be that the people of the world worship.

Paul wrote:

- The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the Image of God (Cor. 4:4)

Here we are told that this world has a god, in this context the god that rules over this world is self, ego, pride and money, these are the things that people of the secular world are driven by and money is what they spend their life chasing after rather than give any thought or time to God. We are also told that Jesus is the image of the God of heaven which means that Jesus reflects God. In this same manner the worldly image must be a reflection of the beast system.

Jesus said:

- No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (Matt. 6:24) (Luke 16:13).

Here we see two masters that rule over the human race, one master is God the other master is money. Since both God and money are identified as being masters over the human mind it would be right and proper to say that in this context money is the god of this world. It is money or the lack of it that consumes the mind and the thoughts of rulers of nations, global and local governments, corporate business and the man and woman on the street.

Paul wrote:

- The love of money is a root of all kinds of evils (1 Tim. 6:10).

Money is the root of many evils because those who deny God and love money are not only driven by self, pride and ego, but also by the craving for more and it is money that enables us to have more, but the luxuries, wealth and pleasures of the world only satisfy for a moment. This temporary satisfaction enables the god of this world to keep those who love money in a constant state of craving one thing after another so that they are not only totally consumed in their pursuit for more that they have no time to even think about God let alone give him their time, but will also use deception, trickery, the oppression of others and even unlawful means to gain it.

Added to these evils the love of money prevents those who have it from using it to help the poor and less fortunate.

NOTE: this does not mean it is wrong for Christians to be rich. There is no-doubt God has gifted some Christian men and women with business skills that do make them wealthy, but rather than indulge themselves in a luxurious lifestyle of selfish indulgence they use their riches to help the less fortunate or to expand God's Kingdom.

These Christian men and women are storing up treasure in heaven and will be rewarded accordingly. What makes money evil is the love of it because when a person loves money it not only consumes their mind and heart, but they selfishly indulge themselves in luxurious living never giving any time to God or a thought to use some of their great wealth to help the poor, the feeble and those who struggle.

Now back to the image: since it is linked to the beast and the worship of it (v4) it can be supposed that the image has to in some way identify with the beast system. I personally (and is only my thoughts at this present time) believe the image refers to the system of money and the love of it and will climax in the latter days in some form of modern technology that the system of mammon (money) (the god of this world) depends on such as bank or I.D. cards used for trading in a cashless society or some other technological banking and trading system that works globally through wireless technology (i.e., mobile phones, I-pads or something similar which will not only be used in the future for all forms of trading and banking, but will also allow the entire world to view an image of the global world leader who is opposed to Christ.

NOTE: since John has in focus those who worship the beast and its image (v4) it is not wrong for us to use credit cards and such like things as a mechanical way of trading, the underlying thought here is upon those whose lives and hearts are driven by the love of money and by the love of this world. It is contrasting the citizens of this world to the citizens of heaven. When we understand that the Bible talks of the God of heaven and the god of this world and states that, "Christ is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4) meaning he perfectly reflects God it seems reasonable to suppose that money (in whatever form it maybe) is the image that will perfectly reflect the beast system and that money is the god of it.

A word of caution: since the book of Revelation is full of very symbolic and figurative language and we are not specifically told what the image maybe and there are many other interpretations of what the image may apply to so it should be kept in mind that what I have written concerning the image is not set in stone, but simply what seems to make the most sense to me personally at this time. I have no-doubt as we move closer to the Lords glorious return many of these veiled verses will suddenly shine in brilliant light.

Those who John sees in this angelic and heavenly vision are:

6

1. Those who were given authority to judge
2. Those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus
3. Those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark

Beheaded from Strong's Concordance means to chop off; to axe meaning to hew or cut with an axe. To behead a person with an axe was a common mode of execution among the Romans and it is certain many of the Christian martyrs suffered in this manner; but beheaded also carries the idea of flattening by pounding and figuratively to inflict with smiting or by calamity which means it can refer to any Christian who has suffered persecution of any kind because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason, it should not be supposed that it was the intention of the writer to confine the rewards of Christ only to those who had been beheaded, but should be seen as a symbol of any and every kind of martyrdom, persecution and suffering for Christ's name. Those in the above three groups includes all the faithful in Christ and all those who have suffered any form of persecution because of their faith in Christ. It also includes all those who never made money and profit the king of their heart or their god and have not made the spiritual teachings or the things of this world the passion of their heart, their mind and their life. John in this heavenly vision is seeing those who will be employed in judging the world. The apostle Paul said to the Corinthian brothers and sisters in Christ, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2). This verse shows that Paul expects faithful Christians to be exalted to a place of honour with Christ in the judgment of the world.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters wrote:

- I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:51-53).
- Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:14-17).

These two verses refer to the first resurrection and clearly show that both those who have died in faith and the faithful who are alive when the Lord returns will be gathered together to be with Christ in eternal glory.

THE BLESSING OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION

The blessing of those who attain to the first resurrection is that they will not only be priests of God and of Christ during the Lord's millennial reign and that the second death will have no power over them, but they will also be given authority to judge over the nations. The first resurrection is when Christ returns while the second death takes place at the end of Christ's glorious millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindred's of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

7

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

John is seeing a heavenly vision of the first resurrection which will take place when Christ returns. Remember John at this moment is seeing into the future, he is seeing events yet to take place. Now in this heavenly vision John sees all believers who will be resurrected and the faithful who were alive when Christ returns gathered together to reign with the Lord for a thousand years (symbolising a long duration of time) this majestic glorious and royal event is called the first resurrection.

A brief reflection: John's vision in the previous two chapters showed us that when Jesus returns to earth, he gathers the redeemed to himself and defeats the armies of the world who come against him after which the remaining civilian populations of the world's nations submit to his Kingship authority and rule. Now in this chapter John is seeing in his heavenly vision that every evil power is bound and those who God has given authority to are seen seated on thrones ready to judge those who persecuted God's people because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and because they had not given the throne of their heart and mind over to the world's system of:

- Excessive profits, greed, materialism, avariciousness and covetousness.
- Abundant prosperity, extreme wealth and riches.
- Lavish extravagance and selfish indulgence in opulent and luxurious living.

Neither had they given the throne of their heart and mind over to false religions of the world or worshipped in their mind and heart any religious leader no matter how holy, gifted or talented they may be or how great their religious worldwide empire might appear.

AT THE END OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN SATAN IS RELEASED

- **Revelation 20:7-9:** and when the thousand years are ended, *satan* will be released from his *prison* ⁸and will come out to *deceive* the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, *Gog* and *Magog*, to gather them for *battle* their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the *beloved city*, but *fire* came down from *heaven* and consumed them,

8

Satan: in this context refers to every government, power and ruler that is against God and His will and against Christ and his people. The word Satan embraces, self (i.e., demanding its own way) ego, pride, greed and such like things.

SATAN SHALL BE LOOSED OUT OF HIS PRISON

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison means that the dragon the serpent the devil and Satan which are all the same entity, the pride of man and the mind of the flesh (self, ego, pride, greed and such like things that are opposed to God and all the wickedness of the human heart of those who do not wish to submit to the rule of Christ and his government will at the end of the Lord's millennial reign rebel against him.

Even though the Lord rules as a benevolent King with a father's heart toward the people he rules over there is still a great portion of the global population that does not want to submit to his authority. This group will form an alliance and once again rise up against God's beloved city Jerusalem with the intention of destroying Christ and those with him, but God by His mighty power destroys them.

NOTE: here we see that even under a perfect King and perfect government a vast number of the human population still want to do their own thing. The spirit of Satan (i.e., self, ego, pride) want to rule, self wants its own way. This clearly shows that if it were possible for the human race to select a perfect king and a perfect government, it could still not bring peace and harmony to the earth. This is because without a deep transformation of love toward God and love toward our neighbour in the heart there can never be any peace or harmony on earth because without this deep change of heart, self, ego and pride rule. Transformation

of the human heart to love God and love others is evidence of true faith and is what biblical righteousness is all about. Genuine Christian salvation not only leads to eternal life, but also to a transformation of the mind and of the heart which is outwardly manifested by the fruits of the Spirit.

THE DEVIL, BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET ARE IN THE LAKE OF FIRE

- **Revelation 20:10:** and the *devil* who had deceived them was thrown into the *lake of fire* and sulfur where the *beast* and the *false prophet* were, and they will be tormented day and night forever.

Here we are told a beast is cast into the lake of fire, everyone knows that the word beast is not talking about a literal wild animal and that there will not be a literal lake full of sulfur. The beast in this context is symbolic of a very powerful and influential human ruler that was opposed to God. The word devil which simply means an accuser, slander or one who opposes is used in the same way as the word beast. The devil it is a word that symbolizes every godless thought in the mind and every evil desire or attitude in the human heart especially those that are against God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful church and those who belong to the Lord. The devil (diabolos) is called the father of lies, it is humans that lie, (mostly for their own gain), lying stems from self, ego, pride and greed etc., and is manifested outwardly in speech therefore the word devil is a name that embraces in its meaning everything humans do that is opposed to what is good and right and offensive to God.

Judas and Elymas the sorcerer, are both spoken of as a devil, Jesus tells us the devil sows false seed and takes the word out of the heart, false teachers and prophets do this. Believers are told to stand and resist the ways of the devil, not to fall into the snare of the devil and not to give place to the condemnation of the devil. These verses show that the ways of the devil refer to anything that is offensive to God and the snares of the devil refer to anything that will lead a person away from God i.e. deception, false teaching and such like things. The condemnation of the devil refers to those who would judge and condemn those in Christ (i.e. religious legalistic teachers who know nothing of the Lord's grace). Jesus tells his disciples that the devil will cast some of them into prison (the religious leaders, chief priests, scribes and Romans did this) and we are told that the Lord healed all that were oppressed by the devil it was the Pharisees and scribes who oppressed the people, thus the devil is that entity (self, ego and pride etc.,) within the human heart that is against God and against what is right and good.

THE DEVIL AND SIN ARE THE SAME ENTITY

God said to Cain:

- Sin is crouching at the door, its desire is for you, but you must rule over it (Gen. 4:6).

This is the same as saying:

- Sin is seeking to devour you Cain.

In the New Testament the apostle Peter says:

- Your adversary the devil (diabolos) prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Peter is saying the same thing to the Lord's disciples as God said to Cain (i.e. the devil's desire is for you), thus sin and the devil are the same entity therefore resisting the devil and resisting sin are also the same thing. The Old Testament picture of sin is the same as the New Testament picture of the devil (diabolos). sin and the devil are personified as an entity that is

always looking and waiting for its opportunity and chance to pounce on its victim. God says we can master it, meaning control its behaviour or bring it into submission. From these verses we learn that the devil (diabolos) is the personification of sin. The following is the meanings of the devil, the serpent and Satan in their simplest terms:

The serpent: is anyone that comes as a tempter or entices to sin.

The devil (diabolos): is anyone that comes as an accuser or slander.

Satan: is anyone that comes as an opposer to God.

Throughout the New Testament the evil desires, thoughts and attitudes of the human mind and the heart are often personified as a single entity called the devil especially when they are against Christ, his teachings and those who belong to him. The word devil can be seen as a single word that embraces every thought that is in the human mind, every attitude that is in the heart and every action that physically, financially, emotionally or spiritually slanders and opposes Christ's Kingdom or harms those who belong to him. The works of the devil are manifested in some form of mental or physical harm to self or another human. All evil power (self, ego, pride and greed, etc.), is thrown into the Lake of Fire which is a symbol of total and utter extinction (i.e., non-existence, gone forever never to return).

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

- **Revelation 20:11:** Then I saw a Great White Throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God Himself descends to earth on a great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the second death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- The Second Resurrection or the Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE BOOK OF LIFE AND OTHER BOOKS

- **Revelation 20:12-14:** I (John) saw the dead great and small, standing before the throne and *books* were opened. Then *another book* was opened, which is the *Book of Life*. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, *according to what they had done*.
¹³And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, death and hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, *according to what they had done*.
¹⁴Then death and hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

John foresees in his vision what is to take place at the end of Christ's millennial reign. John sees the dead are standing before the Great White Throne a book called the Book of Life is opened and various other books are opened, the dead are judged by what is written in these other books because these other books have kept a record of what these people had done. John says, those standing before the Great White Throne are judged according to what is written in these other books according to what they had done. Following are some verses that may relate to the Great White Throne Judgement. Jesus said:

- The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward (Matt. 10:41).
- Whoever gives one of these little ones a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward (Matt. 10:42).
- We will all stand before the judgment seat of God for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Rom. 14:10-12).

Jesus said, all six Commandments concerning mankind can be summed up in the words, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31). In the New Testament it is called the royal law (Jas 2:8) this commandment shows that the second most important thing to loving God is that humans live in harmony and treat each other with kindness and respect it shows that God loves those who do-good to others. Primarily those that will be judged in this Great White Throne Judgment to the Lake of Fire are those who plot and plan to do harm to others, physically, emotionally, verbally, financially or spiritually or oppress others for their own personal gain.

NOTE: when the words, "The wicked" are used in the Bible in reference to God it refers to those who deny God and rebel and against his will and ways and when used in reference to mankind it refers to those who deliberately do harm of any sort to others.

At the second resurrection the following events occur:

The sea: gives up all the dead.

The grave: gives up all the dead.

Death: gives up all the dead.

11

Death and hades and all who are judged worthy of death are thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. The Lake of Fire is a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction). The following verse shows that not every secular human is a wicked person. Jesus said:

- Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a *prophet's reward* and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a *righteous person's reward* and whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by *no means lose his reward* (Matt. 10:40-42).

These verses reveal that at the Great White Throne Judgment there will be people who are judged by the good they have done to other humans (especially to those who have done good to those who belong to God and the Lord Jesus Christ). The Great White Throne Judgment is not about Christ, he is not even mentioned, this judgment is about God and the way humans have treated other humans.

The following are the four different groups of people in these verses receiving rewards from the Lord:

- Whoever receives the apostles receives Christ, and whoever receives Christ receives God.
- Whoever receives a prophet will receive a prophet's reward.
- Whoever receives a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.
- Whoever gives a person who belongs to God a cup of cold water will by no means lose his reward.

The reward of the first group is being raised in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), but these last three groups that Jesus says will receive a reward are not saved, yet Jesus says because they are doing-good to the needy and to those who belong to God and the Lord Jesus Christ they will receive a reward of some kind. According to these verses those who have done-good to other humans will be counted worthy to have some part in ETERNITY, while those who have deliberately done harm to other humans (the wicked) will be cast into the Lake of Fire. It seems that God is separating those with totally selfish hearts who care nothing for others from those whose heart is full of compassion and actually show kindness toward other human beings. Obviously, the people doing kind deeds toward others are not only fulfilling the six commandments concerning mankind, but also fulfilling Jesus words, "Love your neighbour as yourself" which is also called the royal Law in the New Testament and for this they get from God some kind of reward.

THE BLESSING OF THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

In this present New Testament age God is calling out a Bride for His Son and by His Spirit establishing a faithful government of kings and priests to rule the world with the Lord establishing God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace over the earth during his glorious millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords on earth. The blessing of all who are raised in the first resurrection is that they will be gathered together with Christ to be part of his government and will live eternally in fellowship with Christ and with God Himself.

John in his vision of great White Throne Judgment sees people being judged by what they had done which implies some would be judged worthy while others would be judge unworthy otherwise there is no need for a judgment. It appears that those who are counted worthy at this judgment will be given some kind of eternal reward because of their kind and compassionate heart toward other humans which have been manifested by their good deeds and acts of charity toward others. These acts are recorded in the heavenly books that are opened at the great White Throne Judgment

NOTE: many secular people live a better life of doing-good and showing kindness and compassion to others than do some who confess to know Christ, but Christians are not saved because they manage to reach some standard of doing-good, they are solely saved by the grace and mercy of God that comes to them through their faith in Christ.

In a certain sense, sinners who honestly repent and accept Christ receive a free pass card that says, go straight to home and that exempts them from being judged at the great White Throne Judgment by what they have done. This is not to say Christians can live however they want, but those who belong to Christ and know the love of God do not keep the law to be saved, but because they understand that the spirit behind the law is love because each law protects a human being from harm and it is from this love that they are called to live.

Paul said:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

Christians endeavour to keep the law, because the spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, verbal, financial, sexual, emotional and spiritual harm and because of this those who have the love and grace of God dwelling in their heart aim to keep the law because it is the right and loving thing to do. It fulfils the Ten Commandments regarding man, and the royal law "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31) (Jas 2:8). It pleases God and brings a good testimony to His name and the

name of, Jesus and the global church. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved. They understand that righteousness is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort. Though the law is splendid as a guide to understanding God's will, as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the good news of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (author unknown). (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22).

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

JESUS FAMOUS SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). A wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NOTE: we must always keep in mind when we are speaking of Christ's return, the millennial age and the thing concerning ETERNITY that it is with a fallen and finite mind that is limited to time (as we understand it) that we are attempting to understand things not yet happened and that are radically different to anything any generation of every age of history has experienced on earth and because of this we should never be dogmatic and absolute in our understandings and explanations concerning Christ's glorious return, the millennial age and the things concerning ETERNITY, but always allow for certain amount of mystery.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

The Book of Revelations states:

- He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Rev.13:16-17).

- I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4).

The Jews wrap copies of the law around their arms or place containers on their foreheads because they take God's word in a literal fashion when He told them to bind His commandments on their hands and between their eyes (Deut.6:8) (Deut.11:18), but God was not telling the people of Israel to actually wear bits of paper on their hands and forehead. Rather God is shining a spotlight on the fact that Israel should engrain God's commandments in their mind (the forehead) and do them (the hand). It is a way of advising by figure of speech Israel to do (the hand) and to think (the forehead) the right thing in their day to day lives by the way of God's commandments.

TWO COMMON INTERPRETATIONS

The following are two most common interpretations of these verses:

1. The mark of the beast is a literal mark implanted in the right hand or forehead which will be used for banking and trading. Those who believe this interpretation expect it will be voluntary to begin with, but at a later date no-one will be able to buy or sell without it. It is true visa; MasterCard and the global banks do believe the best security for trading in the future would be to use a part of the human body rather than a password. Those who work in the worldwide field of searching out new was of security for global banking at this present moment, consider that a finger print or the iris of the eye would be the most suitable for security in a cashless society. But it should always be kept in mind that there is only one verse in the entire Bible that links the mark in the hand and in the forehead to buying and selling and that it is a very dangerous thing to build entire doctrines on a single verse. Added to this the book of Revelation is a very highly figurative book (i.e., no-one would think Scripture means a literal animal beast when referring to the mark of the beast) so though a system such as this may come in the future we should not be so dogmatic or closed minded that we are not open to think that the mark could refer to something other than a literal mark of some kind on the hand or forehead used for buying and selling.
2. The mark of the beast simply refers to those who think (the forehead) and behave (the hand) in a way that is offensive to God and usually motivated by money or greed. This behaviour is evident in many religious and political systems today, and rampart in the corporate world. In short, most of the world today could be said to already have the mark and name of the beast because they exhibit behaviour that is motivated by human greed and selfishness and not God's way. An early example of an enforced mark of the beast was during the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne. Whoever refused to accept traditional Catholicism, meaning they had to believe it and keep its religious practices were banned from buying or selling and hence many starved. Believing something is an action of the mind and the thoughts (i.e. the forehead) while keeping religious customs and traditions is an action of works (i.e., the hands). These people with the name of the beast are to be contrasted with God's people who have victory over the beast (Rev.15:2), meaning they have overcome evil-doing and evil thinking and are therefore said to have Christ's Father's name written on their foreheads (Rev.14:1). This does not mean that they overcome every sinful thought, the idea is that God is the best and highest thought of their mind and their heart is totally devoted to Him in love and their life is totally committed to Him in every way.

For further information see the titles:

- Dragon.
- Serpent.

In, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

Flesh: firstly, refers to the fallen corrupted nature we all inherited from our earthly father Adam it is that part within that has no interest in God or the things of God. Secondly it refers to self, ego, pride, lust and greed etc. The flesh is carnally minded, meaning it is always minded to satisfy the demands of self. The expression, "Walking according to the flesh," refers to living a lifestyle to satisfy-self and self-gratification. It embraces; adultery, orgies, unlawful sex, drunkenness, taking drugs, and following false religions, throwing fits of anger and finding reasons to argue and quarrel. It refers to gossiping, backbiting, coveting and being envious and jealous of others. It is deliberately causing strife, trouble, conflict, contention, rivalry and such like. Today the word flesh is replaced by terms such as, the lower nature which is controlled by self, ego and pride, it is that part of us that says, "me first" and denies God. In contrast to the flesh is the Spirit which refers to the higher nature within us, that godly nature that is not only God focused but also others focused and desires to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Walking in the Spirit means showing mercy, grace, kindness, patience, forgiveness compassion and love toward others. It is that part of us that considers God and cares about the well-being of others.

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

The following two columns give a brief overview highlighting the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit.

15

The Flesh (the old nature).

Attracted to sin

Not with Christ

Is condemned already

Sinful always

Fed by the power of the Flesh

Will die forever

The Spirit (the new nature).

Attracted to righteousness.

With Christ always.

Justified already.

Righteous always (by faith).

Fed by the power of Christ.

Will live forever.

CHARACTER OF THE FLESH

The character of the flesh is carnally minded meaning, it is always minded and motivated to satisfy the demands of self, ego and pride and fulfill their desires, it is sensuous with cravings inciting to sin and never satisfied. It is opposed to God and the higher divine nature within and will therefore never subject itself to God's law.

FRUIT AND WORKS OF THE FLESH

The fruit or works of the flesh refer to unlawful sex, adulteries, rape, incest, rivalries quarrels, contentions, strife division, uprising, controversies, arguments, quarrels, discord, strife, contention, rebellion and riots.

LIVING IN THE FLESH

Living in the flesh, means living a lifestyle that involves sexual immorality, orgies, idolatry, envy, jealousy, anger, rivalries, quarrelling, rebellion, taking drugs, drunkenness, and causing arguments, quarrels and strife.

SETTING THE MIND ON THE FLESH

To set the mind on the flesh is to be solely focused on the things self, ego and pride crave and yearn for. It not only embraces the idea of being mentally consumed by the things of the world and all it has to offer (i.e., riches, wealth, material possessions, its many extravagant luxuries and inventions, parting, drinking and sexual freedom), but also includes such things as craving the applause and praises of people, the lust to have power and control over others and the longing to be elevated and exalted as someone important or famous etc.

NOTE: this does not mean that it is wrong to enjoy the non-sinful wonders and enjoyment of the world that God has given to us. Setting the mind on the flesh is about placing self, ego and pride etc., on the throne of our hearts and minds and making the good things of the world the number one priority in our lives it is about fulfilling the cravings of self, ego and pride etc., and desiring the enjoyments of the world over and above God and the Lord Jesus Christ and his teachings.

BEING IN THE FLESH AND BEING IN CHRIST

The expression, "Being in the flesh" carries two ideas, firstly, being separated from God and being mortal and therefore destined to eternal death and secondly the thought of belonging to this world, meaning that those who are referred to as being in the flesh are led and influenced by self, ego and pride and their only focus is on the things this world has to offer (i.e., riches, wealth, material possessions and such like things) in contrast to the expression, "Being in Christ" which refers to those who belong to the family of Christ and of God and who are not only destined for eternal life, but live to honour God and the name of Christ.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
