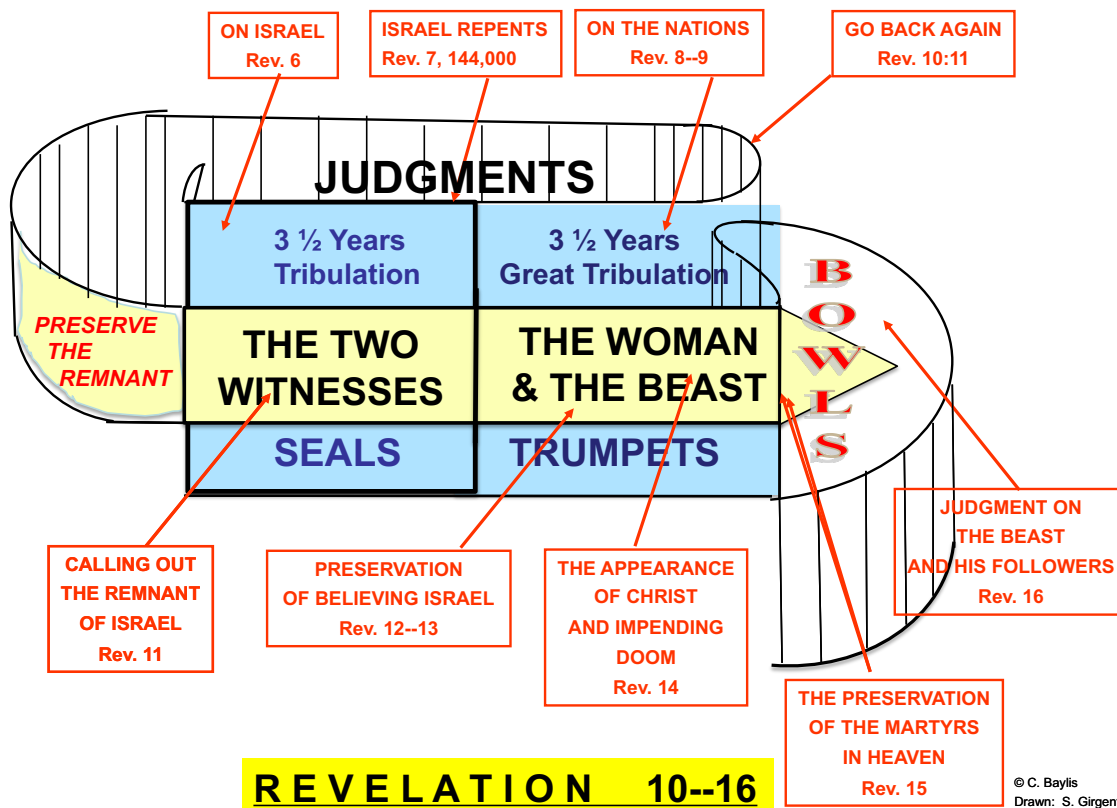


REVELATION 10--16

THE PRESERVATION OF THE BELIEVING REMNANT THROUGH THE JUDGMENTS

Revelation 10 is somewhat similar to the “hold” in Revelation 7 that was placed before proceeding into the Trumpet judgments of Revelation 8—9, in order to pull out the 144,000 believing Jews who would preserve Israel’s presence in the kingdom.

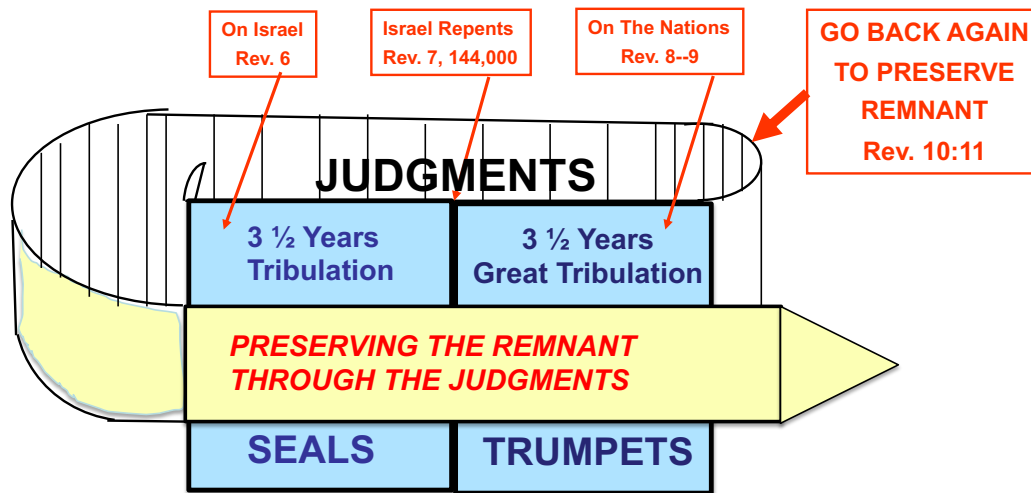
Now John sees the announcement of Israel’s repentance in Chapter 10, which will be sweet and bitter. Then, John will be told in 10:11 to go back again, but this time illuminating the preservation of the remnant through these judgments of Rev. 6--9. He will proceed into Revelation 11 where the Two Witnesses will begin the preaching to Israel to repent. Following their repentance at Jerusalem, the Woman (redeemed Israel) is followed beginning in Chapter 12. She will proceed through the Second half of the Tribulation in 12—13 under the rule of the Beast. Finally, the final judgments are announced in Rev. 14 with the appearance of Christ in the air (14:14). The martyrs of Israel, the preserved remnant, are then seen protected in heaven awaiting their bodies and the return to the earth. This then climaxes in Rev. 16 with the direct attack on the beast culminating in the Battle of Armageddon. All things then are ready for the ultimate victory declaration.



THE LITTLE BOOK (REV. 10)

I. John given instruction regarding Israel's repentance and then told to go back and trace it through the Tribulation period. (10)

John is given instruction announcing Israel's return and repentance. Thus, John is to return to the beginning of the tribulation and detail the preservation of the remnant of Israel through the judgments of the seven-year tribulation period. He will tell John to re-prophesy (start back at beginning of tribulation period) regarding this return of Israel and the process beginning with the Two Witnesses when, after their death, will come the beginning of Israel's repentance at Jerusalem.



REVELATION 10
Return to beginning (of Tribulation)
To Preserve the Remnant 11--15

As the movement had proceeded through the chastisement of Israel (Seal Judgments, Chapter 6: First half of Tribulation) through judgments involving the nations who had now gathered against Jerusalem (Trumpet Judgments, Chapter 8—9: 2nd half of the Tribulation), the process is halted just short of the climax when Christ returns to fight the antichrist. The judgment on these nations at the Second Coming must wait, for now the story returns to the beginning of the seven year tribulation to trace the purging of Israel back to national restoration through the same time period.

The interruption here also delays the announcement of the Seventh Trumpet until 11:14. The point here is that John must return and re-prophecy going back over the same period (1st half of Tribulation) to the end of the first 3 ½ years when Israel is purged (11:13, repents), then he can proceed into the final half of the Tribulation once more, but now with a regenerated national Israel.¹ The climax will be anticipated again as it moves toward Revelation 19, but now with the movement of God to preserve a repentant Israel against the power of the Beast and his followers (all nations) in 12--16.

A. Sweet/Bitter (10:1-10): The purging of Israel (Reference Ezekiel 2) is to take place throughout the judgments of the Tribulation period.

10:1-10 And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; ² and he had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea² and his left on the land; ³ and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. ⁴ And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the

¹ The question of how much of Israel is regenerated is somewhat difficult. A solid representative remnant is saved (Rev. 7:4) at the end of the first half of the tribulation (11:1-13, especially v. 3 and 13). In chapter 12 Israel (the woman) is now referred to as a saved nation (cf. 12:17). Further the parallel to chapter 7 (the 144,000 remnant on earth and the white robed martyrs in heaven during the second half of the tribulation) is chapter 14 and 15 (the 144,000 on Mount Zion on earth and the saved in heaven singing the Song of Moses). This regeneration of Israel fulfills the prophecies of Hosea, etc. where Israel comes back to God. Zechariah 12:10 refers to the repentance of Israel. A difficulty arises as to when does Israel "look on Him whom they have pierced"? It appears that this is in two senses. They will look on Him (spiritually see) before He actually appears physically in the sky (physically see). Thus, they will mourn spiritually prior to their physical mourning, when they actually see Him and begin the formal mourning process. It does not appear that all of Israel is saved at this point since the False Prophet is Jewish ("out of the land") and it appears that his very Jewishness is for the purpose of leading Israel astray from within. There appears also to be a fair number of Jews who turn on these Jewish believers and persecute them, identifying with the beast. Daniel 11:31-34 while referring to the Grecian period of dominion references many Israelites who turn on those who reject the overthrow of their Jewish precepts. By Daniel 11:36 the prophecy has turned to the future antichrist yet to appear. Matthew 24:10 also seems to refer to the last half of the tribulation and the rejection of true believers by many in the nation.

² The "sea" stands for the Gentile nations, while the "land" represents Israel. Thus, this angel is dealing with the nations and Israel.

seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them." ⁵ And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, ⁶ and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer, ⁷ but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets. ⁸ And the voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard* again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." ⁹ And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." ¹⁰ And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

Part of the purifying process is that it is sweet and bitter. That is, Israel must be purified, but it will not be a pretty picture. The prophecy looks into the second half of the tribulation (the time of Jacob's trouble) and sees massive suffering and death as Israelites turn to Jesus Christ and are executed massively.

Thus, the next pass through the seven-year period will detail the purging of Israel and their march to faithfulness to the Lamb.

B. The Prophecy again: Instruction to John to begin the sequence again from the beginning of the tribulation to tell of the preservation of the Jewish remnant by God to make it to the kingdom (10:11).

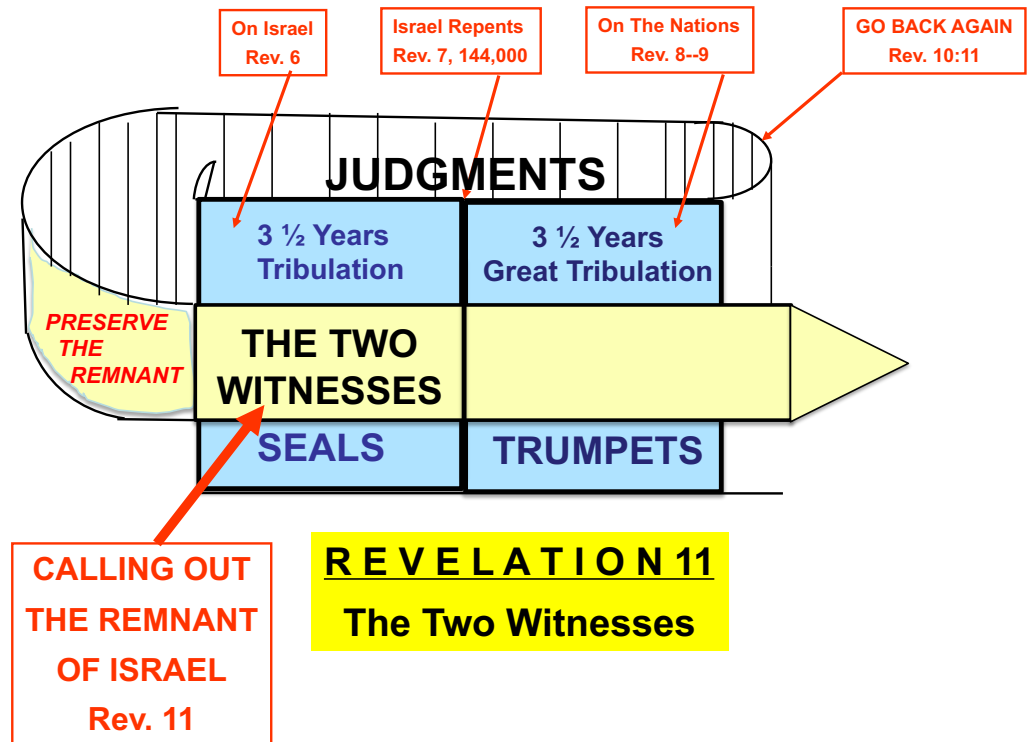
10:11 And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

10:11 is a major literary marker within the Book of Revelation. In major influence of the book's movement it is secondary only to the breaks after chapters 1 and 3. Thus, it indicates the return to the beginning point (6:1) of the seven-year period to proceed again.³ This time though it will

³ The seven peals of thunder which are not to be written seem to be regarding the final judgment in the Second Coming. The "seal up . . ." is very similar to Daniel 12:9 where it is not that the events are not revealed, only that they will not take place until later when they become significant. Thus, it appears here that he is saying that they (the Second Coming) is known, but is not to be experienced until another pass through the time period occurs. It is during this time period that Israel will be regenerated and *then* it will be time for Christ to return and save His people. Note however, that there does not appear to be a direct reference to these seven peals of thunder again in the book.

not focus on the judgments of Israel and the nations but will cover the same period but focus on God preserving Israel out of the judgments by returning them to Himself.⁴ In other words it is God preserving Israel through the judgments to get them to the kingdom.

II. In the first one-half of the tribulation, the Two Witnesses will testify about Jesus to Israel and the nations resulting in the beginning of Israel's repentance. (Rev. 11:1-13)



© C. Baylis
Drawn: S. Girgenti

The prophecy returns to the beginning of the Tribulation where Israel is under the control of the Gentiles (the covenant with the Ten Nation federation)⁵.

⁴ This is the same process as the Book of Daniel (see the notes on Daniel). As the book moves through the four Gentile kingdoms that rule over Israel (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome), it demonstrates God's preservation of the Jewish believing remnant of Israel (the three boys in Daniel 3, Daniel in the lion's den in Daniel 6, etc.)

⁵ It should be noted that it is not by any means conclusive that the Beast makes the covenant with Israel at the beginning of the tribulation, as it may be that the Ten Nation Federation makes it with Israel. Recall that the Beast (the little horn) comes out of the Ten Nation Federation (Daniel 7) and suppresses three of the nations violently.

The two witnesses come in the power of Elijah (curses on Israel) and Moses (plagues against the nations) to prophesy against them based on the testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They have supernatural power like the prophets of old, and are able to shut up the sky (against Israel, Deut. 28, Lev. 26 curses⁶) and to turn the waters into blood (against the nations, like the plagues on Egypt).

The antichrist is able to kill them and they (as representative of Israel during the first ½ of the tribulation, are dead. After 3-1/2 days they stand up and ascend into heaven (like Israel gets life after 3-1/2 years). The City of Jerusalem is devastated and all those who are left repent. This is the first and only repentance in the Book of Revelation and signals the beginning of the nation's return to God.

A. The temple⁷: Jerusalem is under Gentile rule (11:1-2)

The temple is under Gentile control (11:2), yet Israel is participating in its sacrifices (see Daniel 9:24-27).⁸ This places it at the

The first clear appearance of the Beast is at the middle of the Tribulation where he enters the temple and cuts of Israel's covenant and sacrifice (Dan. 9:24-27). His appearance in Revelation 11 and Revelation 13 appears to be somewhat previous to the middle of the Tribulation, but how far prior to that is difficult to establish at this point.

⁶ 'And I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. (Lev. 26:19)

⁷ "The temple of God" is an interesting study in the Book of Revelation. The believer is promised to be a pillar in the temple of God (3:12). This temple of God appears in 7:15 in heaven as the protecting place of the martyrs of the Great Tribulation. The next time the phrase appears is in 11:1 but it is an earthly temple in Jerusalem during the period of the two witnesses. Following their departure to heaven the temple then appears there (11:19). It never appears again on earth but is referred to in 15:8 and 16:1 as "the temple". Finally, in 21:22 the City of Jerusalem in the eternal state is referred to as having no temple, but in its place are the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Thus, it would seem that the temple is removed from earth during the Great Tribulation and continues in some form in heaven as the place of the martyred believers. They then are delivered to earth to dwell with the Lamb and the Almighty God, the new temple. This is not new for the temple housed the Glory of God which was present in the Garden of Eden. Jesus is that Glory (John 1:14) and is the temple as He references in John 2:19.

"Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up . . . But He was speaking of the temple of His body." (Jn. 2:19, 21)

⁸ Note that sacrifice is cut off during the second half of the tribulation (Dan. 9:24-27) making this passage essentially fit into the first half of the tribulation. There are other reasons for putting it here, not the least of which is the events that occur at the end

beginning of the tribulation, the first 3-1/2 years as sacrifices and temple services are halted for the second half. So, this chapter occurs at the first half.⁹

11:1 And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 "And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot¹⁰ the holy city for forty-two months.

B. The two witnesses testify for 1260 days¹¹ (11:3-4).

11:3 "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in

of this period of time do not fit well with the events of the second half which must be end with the return of Christ.

⁹ It is common for many interpreters (Walvoord, Pentecost) to place Revelation 11 in the second half of the tribulation. This would require the operation of the temple during that time when the antichrist has stopped all sacrifice (Dan. 9:27) as well as placing the repentance of Israel (11:13) at the end of the tribulation period which doesn't allow time for their ministry which occurs in Rev. 12—13 where Satan pursues the righteous nation. The way Dr. Pentecost does this is to "go back again" at the same place as this commentary (10:11), but he only retraces back to the middle of the tribulation, thus placing the two witnesses in the last 3-1/2 years of the tribulation. He had done this previously at the beginning of Rev. 7, where he ascertained to go back to the beginning of Chapter 6, the beginning of the first 3-1/2 years, and thus place the 144,000 in the first half of the tribulation. But Rev. 7 is not a trace-back but a hold before entering the second 3-1/2 years. In other words, Revelation 6—9 is in consecutive order, as is Revelation 11-16.

¹⁰ See Psalm 110 or Psalm 8 where "tread under foot" is a figure of speech for dominion. Thus, the temple while operating for the Jews will be allowed to function under Gentile rule.

¹¹ There is an interesting use of time here. 11:3 uses the term "twelve hundred and sixty days," while 11:2 utilizes "forty-two months". While these are the same length (both 3-1/2 years) the question must be asked as to why they are different. The term "forty-two months" is used only here and in 13:5 where the beast is given dominion for forty-two months (second half of the tribulation). The term "twelve hundred and sixty days" is found in 12:6 regarding the protection of Israel during the second half of the tribulation. It appears that the "twelve hundred and sixty days" is used with true Israel while the "forty-two months" is used with the beast and his Gentile beast nations.

sackcloth."11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

These days match up with Daniel (9:27). The existence of temple sacrifices¹² and Gentile dominion require this to be in the first half of the tribulation. That coupled with the literary sequence continuing uninterrupted from Chapter 6 through chapter 9, with a return to the beginning to re-prophecy in Chapter 10 indicates the beginning of the tribulation.

C. Ministry: The Two Witnesses Call Israel to Repentance, wrath on the nations to respond properly to Israel (11:5-6)

11:5 And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

Two men (called witnesses¹³) are testifying in Israel regarding the living Messiah whom Israel has executed, and that judgment is imminent, not only on them for their covenant with the 10 nations, but on the nations as well. Obviously these men are hated and are persecuted, yet they are able to defend themselves, for they call judgment on anyone who opposes them with fire from heaven (like Elijah on Israel, 2 Kings 1), shut off the

¹² There is a measuring line in Zechariah 2 where Zechariah sees the picture of the future millennial Jerusalem and is told to measure it as an indication of the future fulfillment. In addition, Ezekiel 40--48 indicates the measuring of the temple in Jerusalem as a vision of the millennial kingdom. While most of the "measuring line" verses in the Old Testament refer to the millennial temple or Jerusalem, Micah 2:4-5 indicates the negative connotation. However, there seems to be no literary interruption from verse 1 until verse 13. Thus, the temple exists and sacrifices, yet it is under Gentile control. This occurs only in the first half of the tribulation (Dan. 9:26-27).

¹³ The difficulty with this word being used here (witnesses = μαρτυρῶς) is that the word is almost always used in the New Testament of one who had seen something physically and then is testifying about that actual experience. There is some possibility that its use in Revelation may be expanded to mean one who testifies about the apostolic witness (which he knows to be true), however that is somewhat difficult at this point. It is clear that they are testifying to the Nation Israel (and the world) regarding the resurrected (living) Jesus, the Messiah. It is also interesting to note that the word for "witness" utilizes the same base word for "martyr". Thus, for the "testimony" or "witness" of Jesus, most in Revelation would die.

rain (e.g., Leviticus 26:19 curse on Israel for disobedience) and turn the waters to blood (like Moses' Exodus 7 curse on Egypt for oppression of Israel).¹⁴ Thus their ministry is centralized in Israel to call them to repentance, but expands beyond those borders to the nations, exhorting the nations to treat Israel well.

**D. Death: The Two Witnesses are martyred at the hand of the Beast¹⁵
(11:7-10)**

¹⁴ Due to the similar miraculous curses that these men accomplish, many have suspected that these men are Moses and Elijah reappearing. However, there is no indication in the text anywhere that Moses is to reappear. Malachi 4:5-6 refers to a reappearance of Elijah to call the nation to repentance. Yet that is indicating an ultimate Elijah (not the same one) who would call the nation to repentance in the fullness of times based on the ultimate appearance of the Messiah. The ultimate O.T. prophet was John the Baptist. While another may appear in the fullness of times, there is no indication that it would be the same Elijah, only one who called out to Israel in his image. Also, some have deleted Moses from this pair (since he died and Elijah did not) and substitute Enoch, since he, like Elijah, never died. Thus, they propose that the two men who never died are able to finish that here. However, as before, there is no basis for this. Neither man escaped death for the purpose of reappearing to die in the last days, and Enoch has no tradition of being one who calls the nation to repentance (although there is the passage in Jude which quotes this same Enoch as prophesying the coming of Christ).

¹⁵ The parallel of the Two Witnesses to the nation Israel is unmistakable. The two witnesses are dead for 3-1/2 days (the first 3-1/2 years of Israel under covenant with Gentiles in apostasy). After that they have the breath of life come into them and they arise again to their feet. This recalls Ezekiel 37 where Israel gets the breath of life in them and becomes a nation on behalf of God once more (the nation is regenerated and becomes saved). Note that the word for "breath" in that passage (37:8,9,10) is the same word for "Spirit" in 37:14.

⁸ And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'"" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. (Ezek. 37:8-10)

¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' ¹² "Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴ "And I will put My Spirit within you,

11:7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Here the Beast (anti-christ) is able to execute the witnesses.¹⁶ Physical death is always the means by which Satan is able to overcome saints. Yet it is clear that God is able to overcome Satan's overcoming by resurrecting them.¹⁷ This is very important. Satan's threat over mankind from the beginning is the fear of death. Now Satan, as proof of his dominion, has shown that he can kill God's anointed ministers who have been able to judge his followers. Now the fear of death is intense, for the antichrist is able to kill, and seemingly even God cannot stop it. Thus, those who have followed him rejoice since these, seemingly unstoppable Two Witnesses have been overcome by Satan's man, the Beast.

E. Resurrection: The Two Witnesses Resurrected by God defeating the antichrist's power. (11:11)

11:11 And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. 12 And they heard a

and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD.'" (Ezek. 37:11-14)

During the second half of the tribulation they are protected by heaven (their life is in heaven, not on earth, though they dwell on earth). This transition is continued in 12:1 where the woman (Israel) is found to be in heaven (saved and protected) but is being persecuted on earth.

¹⁶ The rejoicing over the death of the witnesses is interesting in its parallel to Christ's death in John 16:20.

¹⁷ The overcoming of Satan is always based on the resurrection to new life (Christ), which Satan cannot touch (cf. 1 John 5:18). Satan overcomes by the first death (Adam).

loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

Having fulfilled their mission, God resurrects them and places them in heaven out of reach of the Beast. These two witnesses are a microcosm of Israel as Israel is dead for 3-1/2 years (in their marriage with the Beast) and then comes alive for 3-1/2 years in the second half of the tribulation. However, it is clear that their lives are protected in heaven, not earth.

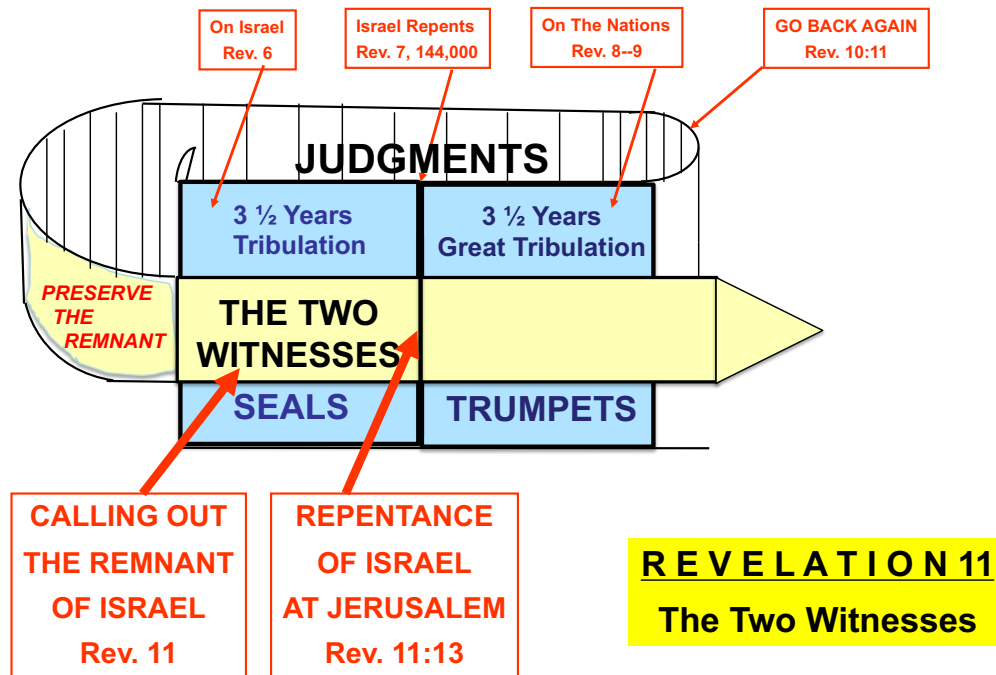
This event is more than simply a miracle, or even a microcosm of the nation Israel's return to God through Jesus. It is a visible demonstration to those who dwell on the earth that Jesus is alive and His resurrection is validated by God's resurrecting the two witnesses since they testified about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, in this intense final day of deception of the Beast, God has also given a visible proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His ability to give life.

The parallel to the death of Israel during the first 3-1/2 years is important. While this parallel to Israel might seem forced, it actually has its basis in the Old Testament. The Two Witnesses are parallel to Israel in Ezekiel 37 (The "Dry Bones" chapter), where Israel is brought forth from the dead and gets "the breath of life" in their resurrected bodies, just like the Two Witnesses.

These Two Witnesses, representing the nation Israel (dead for 3-1/2 years, breath of life comes into them for the remaining time), ascend into heaven. Thus, these Two Witnesses are the remnant of Israel during the first 1/2 of the tribulation, and expand into a saved remnant of the nation in the second half. As such, they ascend into heaven (but still on earth) where they are protected as "saved nation," which continues in Revelation 12 where the woman (saved Israel) is in heaven, but it is quickly seen that she is still on earth.

F. Result: Repentance of Israel at Jerusalem. (11:13)

11:13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.



Note here that all those who have not died in this earthquake give glory to the God of heaven. This glory is the opposite of giving glory to the Beast. This is the only repentance in the Book of Revelation, and it is done by the all those who are left alive in Jerusalem. A core of the nation, at least the 144,000, has repented.¹⁸ So, right here at the end of the first 3-1/2 years, Israel repents at Jerusalem.

III. The Seventh Trumpet (The Third Woe) (11:14-19)

A. The Announcement of the Impending Kingdom. (11:14-15)

14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become

¹⁸ It is clear that a good portion of the Nation Israel has repented here and the 144,000 are part of the repentance nationally. This occurs at the midpoint of the tribulation. They repent due to the supernatural resurrection of the two witnesses and the earthquake. This is therefore near the breaking of the covenant with Israel and the entry into the Temple of the Beast to declare himself God.

the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ,¹⁹ and He will reign forever and ever." (11:14-15)

Having rerun the events of the first half of the tribulation, the author now returns to finish the second half (the last of the trumpets). Yet now the difference is that Israel (a portion at least) is regenerated and will not be deceived by the Serpent. Thus, the final battle is imminent, but this time the Woman Israel will not be deceived by the Serpent.

This is an interesting pause (the “go back again”) since it is simply repeating what happened in Rev. 7. There the winds were held back and the destruction of the earth, which was to occur in the 2nd ½ of the tribulation, until the 144,000 were marked out and preserved. Here, the “go back again” restarted the 3-1/2 years with the two witnesses and continued until the repentance of Israel at Jerusalem had occurred. Now that the remnant has been saved, it returns again to proceed into the second ½ of the tribulation. Now, the remnant is protected (in heaven) while the serpent attacks them on earth. But they are protected by God.

The reference to Psalm 2 is clear (particularly 2:1, “The LORD and His Christ.” as the final move begins.

B. The anticipation of the final victory as the second ½ of the tribulation is anticipated (11:16-19)

16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign. 18 "And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." 19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. (Rev. 11:16-19)

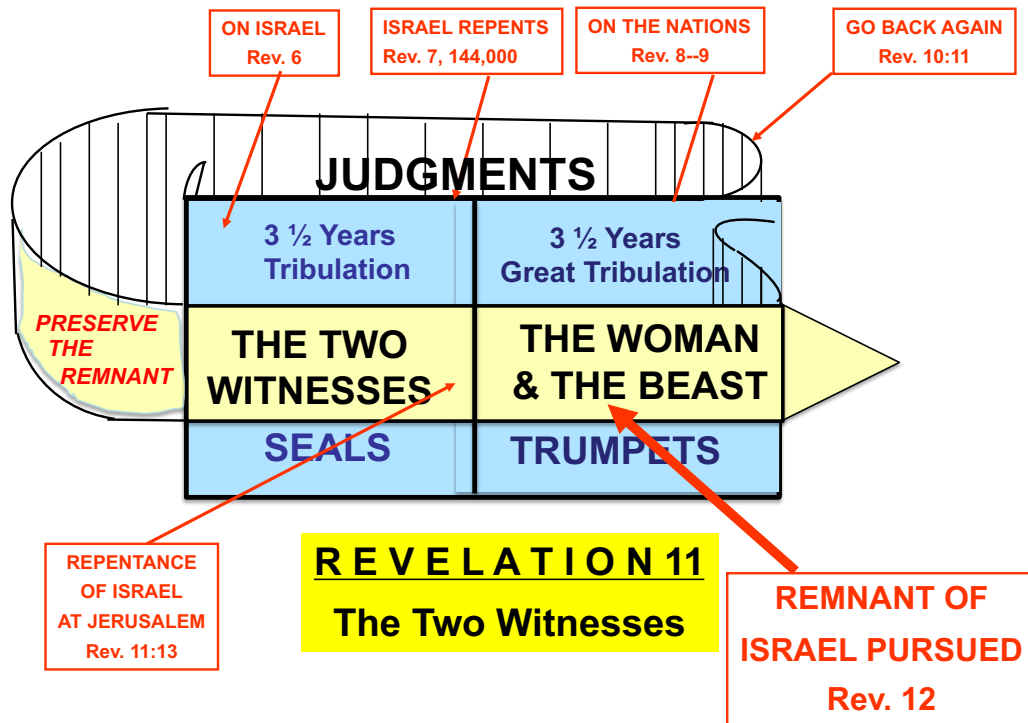
Now the 24 elders (including the redeemed from the church) who are rewarded are ready to return to earth under the soon to come reign of Christ.

¹⁹ This is a reference to Psalm 2:1 where the “kings of the earth” rebel against “the LORD and His Christ.”

The reference to Psalm 2 is clear (11:18) as the Messiah is about to appear in the sky to save Israel.

IV. The Woman Israel, saved and preserved in heaven but exists on earth, to endure through the attacks of The Serpent. (12)

Finally, the announcement of the final battle takes place, the final vengeance and the final kingdom. Israel (at least at a nominal remnant level) is regenerated, and has come back to life to represent God. Satan is cast down to earth, unable now to attack the brethren (particularly here of Israel) since they are now saved and persevering. He thus tries to overcome them by killing them. Satan has two plans. He tries to deceive, and if he fails at that, he tries to kill. Not being able to deceive them as in Genesis 3 with the first woman, he tries to kill them.



© C. Baylis
Drawn: S. Girgenti

A. The Woman²⁰ and her Child²¹: True believing Israel bore the Messiah (12:1-2).

²⁰ Just a note to mention that John uses the term lady (*kuria*) in 2 John 1,5, probably to designate the church. Here, of course, this woman is Israel.

And 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; 2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. (Rev. 12:1-2)

The imagery of the Woman in heaven is an allusion to Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9, where basically it refers to the stars as Joseph's brothers, the nation of Israel. Thus, this Woman is the nation, Israel, redeemed.

9 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." (Gen. 37:9)

This is now the story contained in the Old Testament, the path to Messiah through the Nation, Israel. From Genesis 3:15, the Seed of the Woman was to come and deliver the nation and the world. This Woman, initially was Eve, but ultimately grew into the national Woman, Israel, in Genesis 12. The Child, the Seed, was to come through her.

Genesis 3:16 then prophesied that her (the Woman's) desire would be for her Man (not her "husband" as is normally translated), who is the Messiah who would come and deliver her. Thus, this section demonstrates the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15-16 in Israel and their Messiah (the Child).

B. The Serpent (The Dragon): Satan from Genesis 3 attacks the remnant of Israel. (12:3-4)

3 And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. (Rev. 12:3-4)

Satan, still being discussed from the Old Testament history of Israel, is introduced as a "dragon."²² As can be seen from 12:9, this

²¹ This is a parallel to the woman (Eve) promised to bear the Messiah through her seed. The parallel to his individual seed in Genesis is the national seed, Israel, who bears the Messiah.

²² The title, dragon, for Satan is parallel to this animal imagery of Satan and his fearful attacking imagery present in the "serpent" of Genesis 3:15. This reference is from Isaiah 27:1 where "dragon" is paralleled with the "serpent." This "dragon" as this animal, usually in the deep waters, an imagery of Gentile dominion. In addition, the

“dragon” is the “serpent of old,” Satan. In the Old Testament history, Satan attempted to destroy the Seed by destroying those who were supposed to bear the Seed, the nation, Israel, and even narrower, the actual Seed-bearers (e.g., Noah, Abraham, David). The particular reference here is to Daniel 8:10-11, where the “stars of heaven” are saints (not rebellious angels during a pre-creation Satanic fall, as is so often interpreted)²³ during the intertestamental period, when they are slain by Antiochus Epiphanes, acting for Satan, in an attempt to destroy Israel.

C. The history of the attack by Satan following the Birth of Christ is reviewed as well as His Ascension to the Father to wait until He returns in victory.²⁴ (12:4-5)

And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. 5 And she 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 to His throne. (Rev. 12:4-5)

Satan continued to try to destroy those who would bring forth Messiah as well as being ready to kill the Messiah when He was born and during His life. Thus, the attacks began with Herod’s attempt to kill all the babies in Bethlehem and finish with his successful execution of Jesus by the Jews and Romans. Note here that the crucifixion (death of Jesus) is not recorded in this chapter as it deals only with the positive aspects (i.e., the believing Israel and not the apostate portion of the nation). The

word “dragon” translated from the Greek is also translated as “serpent” (see Job 26:13). Thus, John is using the same theme of Satan as this animal, drawn from two Biblical Old Testament sources to identify this single antagonist, Satan, throughout the Old Testament story on the way to Jesus.

²³ This verse is often the proof text for describing the fall of Satan and the evil angels from heaven during a pre-creation fall. However, this verse is referencing Daniel 8 which is during the intertestamental period. In Daniel, the stars are the faithful saints of Israel who have withstood the attacks of the Gentile powers run by Satan (see also Daniel 12:3).

And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. ¹¹ It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. (Dan. 8:10-11)

²⁴ This is the time of delay until His coming prophesied in Psalm 110. This story is repeated from John 16:20.

crucifixion is referenced in the previous chapter with the antichrist and the apostate nation. (11:8 references Jerusalem where the Lord was crucified).

Jesus is born of Mary (the individual Woman) and the nation, Israel (the national Woman). She bears a male, a Man, the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15-16 (see also Eve's reference to her "Man" in Genesis 4:1). This Male Child was the fulfillment of Psalm 2, the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to crush the rebellious nations with a "rod of iron."

However, Jesus is delivered from Satan's attacks by the ascension into heaven where He waits to return to conquer His enemies. This is a reference to Psalm 110 where Jesus sits waiting to return and conquer His enemies.

Note: It is important to note what is left out of this description of Jesus life, death and ascension . . . the cross. In other words, Satan stands ready to kill Messiah, yet that attack and subsequent death are not mentioned, skipping to the ascension. The point here is that this is speaking of redeemed Israel and the deliverance of their Messiah as He moves to deliver them. Thus, the cross is a record of evil Israel and that is thus left out. It occurs in Rev. 11:8 where evil Israel and the Gentiles kill Him. The rest of the chapter will record the last half of the tribulation, not the first half since Israel is mostly unredeemed in that portion. It will skip to the last half where Israel is (becoming) saved. Again, these chapters are speaking of the redemption of Israel and the deliverance of Jesus to rescue them, not the evil Israel and their acts of crucifixion and their attachment to the Beast in the first half of the tribulation. Thus, this chapter will skip from the ascension to the second half of the tribulation where Israel's believing remnant is active.

D. The dispersion and protection of the Woman (Israel) into the Gentile nations (12:6).

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. (Rev. 12:6)

This story of this saved nation, Israel, now is picked up following their return to Christ at the middle of the tribulation. God now protects them by sending them into the Gentile nations as they flee for protection at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This is similar to Israel going into Egypt for protection from the famine. The Gentiles are, at least at first, going to help the Jews.

The 1260 days are the period of time in the second half of the tribulation which is equivalent to 3-1/2 years (30-day months).

E. Satan thrown down to the earth to pursue and kill believing Israel (12:7-10).

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 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. 10 And 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, who accuses them before our God day and night. (Rev. 12:7-10)

This section is important to see what is doctrinally going on with Satan as the accuser of the brethren. While this gets various interpretations, the point is that Satan is accessing God and is presently in an operation to deceive believers to get them to depart the faith (refer to Job 1—2). His function is to first, deceive, and then failing that, to kill. Obviously, he is already successful and continues to be successful at deceiving unbelievers, but his function with believers is vastly not dealt with by commentaries.

In order to understand what is going on here, it is good to reference 1 John (also written by John to the church). In 1 John, the point is that the unbelieving false teachers are telling the believers that they don’t need the Christ to access the Father. They are Jewish and believe that He is accessed through the keeping of the Law, apart from Jesus. In 1 John 1—3, John reviews Genesis 1—4 to show that from the beginning Satan has been opposing the coming Messiah (now Jesus) and those who believe in Him for access to the Father. Thus, he exhorts the believers to not be deceived like Eve (1 John 2:15-16) by the “seeds of the serpent,” the antichrists (2:18), who deny that Jesus is the Christ (2:22) and thus are, like Eve, deceived (2:26).

His function in the heavenlies is that he is permitted to access the throne to accuse these believers of being deceived with the hope of turning them away from Christ. However, when he is thrown down, he no longer has access to that ability to deceive them any longer. This coordinates with the “perseverance of the saints”²⁵ which is this period of

²⁵ This “perseverance of the saints” is often misinterpreted to be effective during the present (and past) age. However, it is only for the unique time which occurs in the

time when the believers will remain faithful and will not be deceived. So, when he is thrown down, his only ability is to kill the believers who will remain faithful to death.

Michael, the angel who stands guard over Israel (see Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1) against the demonically influenced Satanic Gentile kings and nations (see Daniel 10 for the discussion of the war in the heavens to keep these Gentiles from destroying Israel). Note that this war is then over, that is, that no longer will these Gentile powers be able to deceive (See the books of Ephesians, 1, 2 Thessalonians, for Paul's discussion of Gentile deceit over believers).

F. Satan will pursue the death of Jewish believers who will be faithful to death.

11 “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 to death. 12 “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell 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.” 13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. (Rev. 12:11-13)

The verse in 12:11 is monumental. These believers (the focus is on Jewish believers here) are faithful to Christ even to death. Notice that it is their testimony of their salvation (“the blood of the Lamb”) that is important here. No one ever knows who is a believer unless they verbally confess Jesus. And thus, they went to death at the hands of Satan and did not deny Christ.

last half of the tribulation where saints will remain faithful and will not be deceived. During this period of time it is possible for true believers to commit apostasy as well as any other sin available to the believer. While no one can truly see their heart (as to whether they are a believer or not), assuming they have had a salvation experience, they can depart, yet are still eternally secure since it is God who keeps them, not themselves. While this issue deserves more space than can be given here, for this point it is important to note that it is only during this particular period of time that believers will not depart since it is during this time that Satan no longer has the access to heaven. As a side note, it is important to note that many of the epistles of the New Testament were written specifically to believers warning them of the dangers of apostasy (as well as immorality). Among those are Hebrews, 1 John, and 2 Timothy. If it were not possible for a believer to commit apostasy, one has to wonder why the book was written.

Note also that it says they “overcame” Satan. The “Overcomer” is Jesus who overcame Satan (and “the world”) from Genesis 3:15. The believer then partakes of that “overcoming” by believing in Jesus.

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

Having lost the ability to deceive believing Israel, Satan moves to try to eliminate these believers. Even though he knows his destiny, his totally depraved nature cannot do anything else but oppose God, His Messiah, and His followers. So now he will pursue believing Israel to kill them.

G. Satan chases believing Israel to kill her, yet she is protected in Gentile lands, but then Israel returns to the land called there by a descending Christ. (12:14-16)

¹⁴ And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. ¹⁶ And the earth helped the woman, and the earth²⁶ opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. (Rev. 12:14-16)

The wilderness here picks up the Exodus imagery (see Exodus 19:4, Deuteronomy 32:11-12) as Israel is delivered from the hand of the beast by God on her return to the land. However, Satan is frustrated as God protects Israel as they return to the land when the Gentile nations release them (similar to Egypt releasing Israel under Moses). This is the reference in Matthew 24 where Jesus tells Israel that when they see the city surrounded to leave quickly. And they do as they flee the oppressing Gentile army of the Beast and head to the nations for protection.

While the “flood” is interesting, it does come from the mouth of the serpent, which indicates that this opposition and killing of Israelites is a deception coming from Satan. This would be a deception to the nations to persecute and kill Israelites.

²⁶ It is interesting that this term “earth” here may equally be translated “land,” and Israel will return to the land under the pursuit of the Beast, it may be that this is indicating that the Beast turns on the nations so that they turn on Israel (like Egypt did), yet they flee to the land which embraces them (under a present, descending Jesus).

H. Frustrated, Satan intensifies his resolve to kill off believing Israel (“Seed of the woman”; τῇ γυναικί καὶ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς, literally, “the Woman . . . and her Seed,” which references Gen. 3:15 and the woman, Israel, in Rev. 12:1.

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. 12:17)

καὶ ὠργίσθη ὁ δράκων ἐπὶ τῇ γυναικί καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ. (Rev. 12:17)

Here is probably the closest allusion to Genesis 3:15 that there is in the New Testament. While there are other passages that allude to it, this one actually uses the exact terms, “Seed of the Woman.” Here the “seed” of the “woman” is well defined. It is speaking of the redeemed of Israel. They are called the “seed” since they have bonded with “The Seed,” Christ and are identified with Him as “overcomers.” The Woman is Israel (see 12:1). That they are saved is clear by the fact that they “keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

“Keep the commandments of God” is an interesting statement revealing the identity of these Jews as believers. God’s commands were the desires of His character. His character was revealed in the Old Testament in the Law (the Pentateuch). Yet, this “keeping” cannot be through one’s self-effort since no one can “keep the commandments.” What is referenced here is the 100% keeping of the commandments through the imputed righteousness of Christ, where He imputes to believers His keeping of the commandments (see Romans 8:4, and the commentary on that verse.)

The Epistle of 1 John also references the “keeping of the commandments” as that of believing in the Son for imputed righteousness and “love one another” which is the mark of recognition of the family of God through belief in the Son.

23 This is His (God, the Father’s) commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He (God, the Father) commanded us. (3:23)

In the Book of Romans, the commandments²⁷ were kept by the obedience of faith²⁸ toward God, that is, by accepting imputed life through the Son, represented by the sacrifices of the Old Testament. 1 John 3:23 talks about the “commands of God” and how they would be kept by belief in the Son. In other words, the Law showed the commands of God would be kept by only One, the Messiah. The rest of the people would come to keep the commands through imputation by belief in the Son and in His perfect propitiatory sacrifice. Thus, “keeping the commandments” was always 100% and was only kept by Messiah, and the rest kept them through imputation and this is the case here. To define this as some exemplary lifestyle of works would be to embrace the Pharisee position of “keeping the commandments.” (Reference the notes at www.BiblicalStory.org for 1 John 2:3-6).

The “testimony of Jesus” is what Jesus has said about Himself, that is, that He is the Son of God, sent from the Father, a testimony contained in the Book of John.

V. **The First Beast: The Gentile Ruler arrives out of the Gentile nations (13:1-10)**

Now Satan, in order to establish his own kingdom and destroy Israel, establishes his king in the Beast. The Beast is both a nation and an individual. The nation is Rome and the ruler is a new Caesar. The Beast is killed and is resurrected²⁹ both nationally (13:3, Rome) and individually (13:12). The parallel here is the resurrection (new life and body) of Israel (Ezekiel 37) and of Christ their King (Isaiah 53).

²⁷ The commandment of the Father is mentioned throughout the gospel, and is stated in John 12:50 "And I know that His **commandment** is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

²⁸ “Obedience” here is often thought of as “good works.” This is not the case. It is the obedience of faith. No one ever got righteousness by keeping the Law, only condemnation. Thus, obedience in the Old Testament was obtained by receiving mercy through the sacrifices (which pointed to Christ) and then due to His mercy one would act mercifully toward the brother who is in the same family of God through Christ. In Romans, Paul is contrasting the obedience to the Law (works) versus the obedience that is faith in Christ.

²⁹ There is some difference between commentators on whether this is a pseudo-resurrection or a real resurrection. Whichever view one takes it is necessary to note that the world believes it is real and thus follows the Beast. Whichever it is it is clear that there is supernatural involvement.

- The Beast: The Ultimate Seed of the Serpent (Daniel 7, Genesis 3)
- The Fatal Wound³⁰: Resurrection
- The Beast: The Image – Representative of Satan (13:4)
- Span of Rule: 42 months – 2nd ½ of the tribulation (13:5)
- Purpose of Rule: To make war with the saints (13:7)
- The False Prophet: The John the Baptist (Elijah) of the Beast, parallels the two witnesses with “fire from heaven.” An Israelite.³¹
- The Image which speaks: imitation of breath³² (Gen. 2). Speech is present to reveal one’s character. Thus, this one somehow has an evil character representing the actual character of the Beast. He has breath indicating physical life presence, but not the “breath of life” which is eternal life only given by God.
- The number 666 and the mark is to identify Israelites who believe since they will not take the mark.
- The Purpose of the Beast: To find believing Israel, hidden among the nations, and kill them.

A. The individual and national beast (“seed of the serpent” both individual and national) comes out of the Gentile nations to represent Satan to rule the world and act against God and Israel. (13:1-2)

And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. (Rev. 13:1-2)

Satan, the dragon, is now in control of Israel’s land beginning the last half of the tribulation. This is signified by the “sand of the seashore” reference to the Abrahamic Covenant and the multiplication of Abraham’s seed.

17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the

³⁰ This is the same word “wound” (LXX) as used in Genesis 3:15.

³¹ He appears to be an Israelite since he is out of the “land” (13:11). It is he who will bring Israel into submission. His authority is like a lamb, yet he rejects the revelation of Jesus Christ as a follower of Satan (13:11).

³² This is also a parallel to Rev. 11 where the two witnesses are given the breath of life. These witnesses are able to call fire down from heaven (like Elijah) and so also the false prophet duplicates this.

seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.
(Gen. 22:17)

The beast coming out of the sea is a reference to Daniel 7:1-2 where four Gentile nations emerge out of the Gentile nation chaos (the “sea”). This beast (Rome) is the last of the four nations (the second half of the earlier form that was present during Christ’s life on earth) who rule over Israel. He takes over 10 kingdoms (10 horns with crowns) and he is the last of seven sequential nations that ruled over Israel (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome 1 and Rome 2). These nations were all against the God of Israel and thus against His nation.

John then sees this beast with components from the previous three, a leopard (Greece), feet of a bear (Medo-Persia), face of a lion (Babylon).³³ This beast (national Rome, and individual ruler/antichrist) operates on behalf of Satan to rule the world from his Gentile kingdom

A. The Roman ruler who is empowered by Satan is slain but recovers (resurrection?) indicating his ability to overcome physical death, and thus the world follows after him and Satan (13:3-4)

3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”
(Rev. 13:3-4)

One of the sequential heads is the final one which is the antichrist, the ruler of Rome. He is struck and killed,³⁴ but the wound is healed and

³³ Note that John sees them in the reverse of Daniel, apparently looking at them from the future to the past, while Daniel views them from Daniel’s present to the future.

³⁴ The question of whether he is truly slain or just appears to be slain is held by different commentators. Many hold that it only appeared that he was slain (ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον) due to the use of the comparative “ὡς” (“as,” “like”). However, the next line states literally, “the wound of death was healed,” seemingly indicating a “wound of death.” However, that wound could be dictated by the previous phrase governed by “like.” The premise that it is not a death wound is that only God holds the power of actual resurrection from death to life. However, it would be argued that God could allow Satan to do a physical recovery. It would seem in this commentator’s opinion that it is a true, but physical, death wound. This is based on the allusion to Genesis 3:15, where the serpent (beast) is to receive a “wound” on the head. And that is a death wound. Of course, one must realize that the actual final wound on the head of the beast is on the serpent and occurs in Revelation 20. Thus, while it is an allusion to Genesis 3:15, it does not prove it was fatal.

he lives. This miracle is seen by the masses and assume this one has power over death and he is followed by all. Since it appears he cannot be killed, people will wonder how he could lose at war.

B. The beast blasphemes God and his nation, Israel, as well as any followers, and has rule for the Great Tribulation so he moves against all believers, including those who are martyred and in heaven (13:5-7)

5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. (Rev. 13:5-7)

During the last ½ of the tribulation (“forty-two months”) the Beast is given control over the world. He is able to kill saints (particularly Israel believers) and rejects those who have died in Christ and any proposal that they will return and rule (“those who dwell in heaven”). So in his ability to make war and eliminate believers, he is able to dominate the Gentile nations and gather them against Israel.

D. The world will worship the Beast (13:8a)

8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him,

This indicates that the world will follow this anti-christ and worship him as God (recall that he has entered the temple and proclaimed himself God and removed worship of any other). Since he appears to be able to conquer death, the world feels that the option to live for him is better than the option to die for Christ (with the hope of future resurrection).

E. No one who is saved will worship the beast (13:5-10)

everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. (Rev. 13:5-10)

This section emphasizes the control God has over the whole scenario. Those who are destined to go to the pit will head there, while those who are saved will persevere since God has had them ready from the foundation of the earth.

This “perseverance of the saints” is a doctrine usually associated with the five points of Calvinism. It basically states that if one is truly saved they will persevere in their faith without denying or apostatizing. However, what they miss is that, while this guaranteed perseverance is true, it is only true for this period of time, that is the Great Tribulation period when Satan has been thrown down to earth and is not able to deceive believing Israel any longer. It is because Satan could not accuse the brethren any longer so he could not deceive. His only ability left is to kill. The brethren then will persevere onto death.

However, previous to this, believers can deny the faith or apostatize. This is why most of the epistles³⁵ were written (e.g., Hebrews). These books are written to believers urging them to endure and stay faithful. Of course, one never encourages a non-believer to endure or stay faithful because they have nothing to be faithful to. In addition, Hebrews tells them to encourage one another, which is another imperative never used for an unbeliever. Thus, prior to the Great Tribulation, believers can be deceived and become unbelievers. However,

³⁵ “Perseverance of the saints” is different than “eternal security.” Eternal security indicates that once one is truly saved (has a valid salvation experience), that God will keep them and deliver them to the kingdom regardless of any action on their part or anyone else’s. Perseverance of the saints indicates that if one apostatizes (and frequently some other continuance in sin or lifestyle) after a profession of faith, then they are not (or not likely) saved, nor have ever been. These are called “false professions” of faith. It is common in the “Lordship salvation” doctrine. Yet, while faithful trust in Christ is always exhorted, and one is also exhorted to persevere in good deeds of mercy, there is no verse in the Bible that links one’s post-salvation works to an affirmation of true saving faith. (See the James commentary on this website for a total examination of James 2:14-26 where “works” are claimed to prove one’s true faith.)

Many of the epistles were written to preserve the faith of true saints from apostasy. All epistles were written to believers (with one possible exception verse in 2 Corinthians 12:5). The books were written for prevention of that problem in 2 Corinthians (warning against following false teachers), Galatians (“fallen from grace” if they get circumcised), Philippians (warning against the false teachers who oppose Paul and are “enemies of the cross of Christ”), 1 and 2 Timothy where Timothy is warned to “guard what has been entrusted to you” to prevent him from going astray (6:20-21) and “do not be ashamed of the Lord, or me, his prisoner, 2 Tim. 1:8). Hebrews is probably the most intense as it warns them to hold fast to their confession (4:14, 10:23), something never used with unbelievers, even professing unbelievers. 2 Peter continues the warnings (see commentary on 2:18-22), while 1 John emphasizes the dangerous false teachers who would lead them away from Christ (see commentary on 1 John). Jude warns the believers against the false teachers who would lure them with sensuality. And Revelation is written to seven churches to tell them to be “overcomers,” believers who are faithful to the end.

they are eternally secure since Christ keeps them. Unfortunately, they will be denied reward in the kingdom as well as being apart from Christ (sanctificationally) during the present age.

VI. The Second Beast: The False Prophet (The Beast out of the land)

Now a second beast emerges. This one is “out of the land (or earth).” This designates Israel as the land, as the Gentile empires are the sea (see 13:1, Daniel 7). Thus, this false prophet is a Jew who will attempt to deceive the Jewish people and guide them to the Beast.

A. He appears to be peaceful like a lamb but speaks blasphemy against God like Satan (the dragon) (13:11)

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.

B. Like John the Baptist or the Two Witnesses, he uses miraculous acts to validate so people will worship the Beast (13:12-13).

¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. ¹³ And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

John the Baptist’s function was to take the Old Testament and show that it pointed to Jesus. The Two Witnesses did a similar thing but they included the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (that is the fulness of the Old Testament). That is, the Two Witnesses did miracles so as to point to Jesus as the living Messiah. This False Prophet does miracles similar to the Two Witnesses in that he calls fire down from heaven. This draws people to worship the Beast.

However, note that Deuteronomy 13:1-6 pointed out that signs and wonders do not validate one as having a message from God, but only the Scriptures. Other revelations are “other gods” and not only must be rejected, but it is a death sentence as it did not come from God. Yet the people follow this false teacher since he does (only) miracles and does not affirm the Old Testament, particularly the Pentateuch.

C. He causes the people to make a statue to the Beast and worship it and then he gives breath and speech to the statue (life?) (12:14-15)

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth (or “land”) because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth (or

“land”) to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

This false prophet incites people to construct an image (statue that “represents” the Beast) of the Beast and worship it. If one does not worship it then he is killed. Thus, on one hand one gets the choice of worshipping the beast or being killed. This goes back to the perseverance of the saints. No believer will worship the Beast, thus the believers will die for the cause of Christ. Everyone else will worship. The sides will be immensely clear, clearer than they have ever been. If one dies for Christ they are clearly believers. If they worships the Beast then they belong to him.

The issue of giving breath and speech to the beast is more interesting than most give it. Breath, from the beginning at the creation of Adam in Genesis 2 has been the life-giving quantity that makes one alive (See James 2:26). However, animals have breath but do not speak. Speech, from the beginning was needed to reveal one’s character. (Had the serpent not spoken he could not have revealed his evil deceitful character to Eve. God “speaks” and a “good” creation is the result as it reveals His desires or character). While animals operate on instinct, it takes humans (or supernatural beings) to speak and reveal their character. Satan became a serpent and spoke in order to deceive the woman to take his character. God spoke in the beginning and brought forth all that was good, that is consistent with His character.

Therefore, Biblically, it appears that this false prophet is able, in some sense to create physical life in this statue. Combine this with the resurrection of the Beast and it appears that the ability to control life, death, disease, etc., is given in some sense to Satan and his representative Beast and False Prophet. To oppose these representatives would incur death. Thus, the choice will be clear, have an extended life if one worships the Beast, or have a short life if one worships Christ. Of course, a Christian will believe in the future bodily resurrection and so will not value his or her life unto death (Rev. 12:11), while his opponents will have a bodily resurrection into the Lake of Fire. So, as has always been the case, unbelievers view this life as the only hope, and the Beast and the False Prophet will offer to preserve this life in decadent living.

D. The worship of the Beast is sealed by a mark on the forehead or right hand, while rejecting that mark results in death (13:16-18).

16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their

right hand, or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six. (Rev. 13:16-18)

This worship is sealed by taking a mark on one's forehead or right hand. This seal is a mark of ownership by the Beast. It is contrasted with the marking of the 144,000 who belong to God from Revelation 7. Thus, if one takes the mark, they are not a believer, and will never become one. If one does not take the mark then they belong to Christ, and will be killed. This mark is the guarantee of physical life by the Beast as opposed to the guarantee of eternal life (bodily resurrection into the Kingdom) for those who follow Christ, do not take the mark and are martyred at the hands of the Beast and False Prophet.

The mark is either the name of the Beast or the number of (corresponding to) his name. It appears that this will become evident when his time comes and then his name will be known as well as his number, 666.

VI. The Failure of the Beast to stop Israel and God's success at preserving them to the Kingdom is seen as they successfully return to Jerusalem (14:1-5)

14:1 And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. 4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women³⁶, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

³⁶ Lev. 15:18 is a passage that refers to uncleanness if there is intercourse. It would, however, only last one day into the evening.

The scene is the 144,000 standing on Mt. Zion which is literal Jerusalem.³⁷ As John looks down toward the end of the Great Tribulation, he sees the 144,000 who were sealed in Revelation 7 to go through the Great Tribulation, having success in that they made it successfully, led by the Lamb, that is, Christ at His return.

The 144,000 are said to be able to learn the song. They have been faithful to the Lamb, which indicates that they have not denied Him, nor been unfaithful with the Great Harlot (cf. see Ch. 17). Zeph. 3:13 refers literally to this group as the remnant of Israel.

13 "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; for they shall feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble." (Zeph. 3:13)

John is seeing the return of Christ and the guarantee of the deliverance of the remnant 144,000 to Jerusalem. In the verses to follow it introduces this coming of Christ into the last part of the Great Tribulation and the descent of Christ to judge.

VII. The Six³⁸ Angels and “a Son of Man:” The appearance of Christ in the air in preparation for the Bowl Judgments which will obliterate the Beast and his throne (see Ch. 16) (14:6--15:8)

The Bowl Judgments in Ch. 16 are the final judgments and these are focused on the enemies of God, the seed (particularly national) of the Serpent, the

³⁷ Many are tempted to say that this is in heaven based on Hebrews 12:22. However, in Hebrews the author is not saying that Mt. Zion is in heaven any more than Jerusalem is there (same verse). Jerusalem is an earthly city. In Hebrews, “heavenly” indicates the true infusion of God’s presence. Thus Mt. Zion is the true Mt. Zion which God builds and heavenly Jerusalem is the Jerusalem which God builds. He builds it unseen with saints through His power, not through men’s earthly power. Thus, these cities are earthly cities, but they are not yet seen. They are symbolically (and even literally) in heaven awaiting their fulfillment on the literal earth. The problem is, of course, that using Hebrews to explain Revelation is not a literal link. Note that in 14:2, John hears a voice from *heaven* giving the impression that Mt. Zion of 14:1 is on earth and hears the voice. If the scene was totally taking place in heaven the reference would not be a voice “from heaven”.

³⁸ There is some difficulty here with whether there are seven angels or not. There are clearly six angels listed; the first in 14:6, the second in 14:8, the third in 14:9. The fourth is the question. This is referenced as “a Son of man” which would indicate that this is Christ from 1:13. He is not referred to as an angel in sequence. Thus, technically there are only six angels. However, note that the fifth angel gives Christ (the fourth Appearer) instructions in a similar way that the seventh angel gives the sixth.

throne of the Beast and his followers. Here in Chapter 14, seven angels proceed to review the situation and anticipate the judgments on the enemies of God and Israel and the emergence of Christ from heaven to deliver these judgments. Finally, in 15:1-8, the scene is revealed in heaven of those who escaped the Beast through martyrdom (like Israel escaped Egypt and the Song of Moses) and are safe in heaven awaiting the return with Christ.

The fourth angel is a “Son of Man on a cloud” which is the reference to Daniel 7:13 and the coming of Messiah to rule the earth and particularly conquer these Gentile enemies and set up His kingdom. Thus, the coming has been anticipated by the first three angels and they review His judgments in the last three.

A. The First Angel: The announcement of the imminent appearance of Christ and the impending judgment on the earth. (14:6-7)

14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth (or “the land”), and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;³⁹ 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."
(Rev. 14:6-7)

The announcement of the eternal Gospel is the appearance of the Gospel (“good news”) in the sky, that is the return of the One who is the Gospel, Jesus Christ.

This “eternal gospel” is the actual presence of Christ as He is the Gospel message. This is similar to Matthew 24:14, where Christ appears in the sky and He is the eternal gospel of imputed righteousness for believers, and judgment for unbelievers.

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. (Matt. 24:14)

³⁹ This appears to be the reference to Dan. 12:4: 12:4 "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase." This verse in Daniel refers to the remnant of Jews (many) taking forth the full revelation of YHWH (Jesus Christ) throughout the earth (“go about”).

B. The Second Angel: The recognition of Babylon's doom.

⁸ And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality." (Rev. 14:8)

Again, these angels announce what is about to happen in the Great Tribulation. Babylon will fall, which is described in Revelation 17—18. (14:8)

C. The Third Angel: The announcement of final eternal judgment on the followers of the Beast and blessing on the martyrs (14:9-13)

⁹ And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." ¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them." (Rev. 14:9-13)

Again, the perseverance of the saints is reaffirmed through this overwhelming judgment and rebellion by the Beast. During this time when the wrath of God is poured out on those who worship the Beast, the believers will remain faithful unto death and will rest in heaven awaiting the return with Christ.

D. The Fourth (?) 'a Son of Man': The final judgment on the earth. Christ appears in the sky for judgment. (14:14)

¹⁴ And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. (Rev. 14:14)

During this review of the end of the Great Tribulation, the appearance of Christ in the sky comes to pass. This is in the midst of the 3-1/2 year period and introduces an ongoing battle between a visible Christ descending and putting plagues on the earth and a visible antichrist

who can only taunt the descending Christ and gather armies to meet Him at His arrival on the earth.

This reference of the "Son of Man" to Daniel 7:13 is unmistakable. He is coming to destroy the Gentile kingdoms and set up God's Kingdom.

E. The Fifth Angel: Appearance of the angel with another sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped. (Rev. 14:15-16)

Following the appearance of Christ in the sky (14:14), the angels now turn to the immediate anticipation to proceed the ferocious Bowl judgments. This angel calls out a Son of Man sitting on a cloud to reap, and the judgments directly from the hand of Messiah begin.

F. The Sixth Angel: Instruction to the fifth to reap as the armies gather to come against the City of Jerusalem (14:17)

¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

This angel also carries a sickle to judge.

G. The Seventh Angel: The judgment is anticipated on the nations who are coming against Israel at Jerusalem (14:17-20)

18 And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." 19 And 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. 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.⁴⁰ (Rev. 14:17-20)

⁴⁰ Many have tried to reconcile this amount of blood with the amount of blood that would be in an army and it does not seem to be within a realistic range. This is a lot of blood. Some have suggested that the blood *splashed* up to the horses' bridles. However, it seems best to simply place this with the other extreme miracles that take place. This one is a miracle of image, that is, that God makes a huge amount of blood apparent in this large slaughter.

This judgment occurs outside the City of Jerusalem on those who have come against Jerusalem in the Battle of Armageddon. The bloodbath is massive as the armies try fight against the wrath of the Lamb.

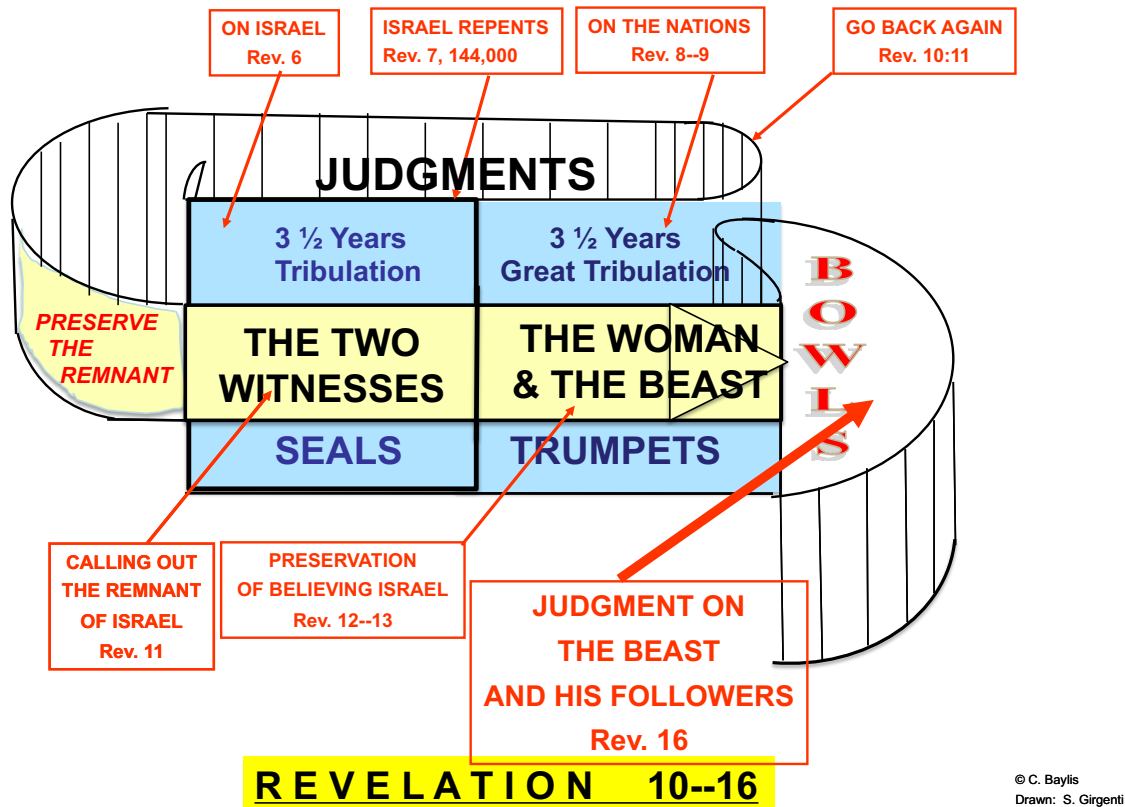
VI. Preservation of the martyrs of Israel in heaven occurs recalling the deliverance of Israel from Egypt in the Song of Moses (15)

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. ² And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. ³ And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. ⁴ "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For all the nations will come and worship before Thee, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed." ⁵ After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, ⁶ and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their breasts with golden girdles. ⁷ And 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. ⁸ And 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. (Rev. 15:1-8)

The announcement of the final plagues on the throne of the Beast are imminent. Yet, as back in 7:9-17, prior to the Trumpet Judgments, God notes the preservation of the martyrs who will die so they can return and enter the Kingdom on earth in their bodies. They are in heaven. And they sing the Song of Moses, referencing Exodus 24:10 where Israel was delivered. These are delivered into heaven and will reign through resurrection of their bodies to enter the Kingdom.

This, of course, recalls the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, following the Red Sea deliverance. Israel is believing and has been martyred (except for a living remnant including the 144,000) and will be preserved to enter the kingdom following their resurrection. Thus, 7:9-17 has been fulfilled here in the New Exodus.

VII. The Seven Bowls (Plagues = wounds) are on the throne of the Beast and his followers (16).



Now that the 144,000 are on Mt. Zion alive in physical bodies and the martyrs for Israel are in heaven safe waiting for the resurrection of their bodies, the judgments turn to the throne of the Beast and his followers. The judgments once more will be similar to the judgments (the plagues) on the Nation Egypt for their oppression of Israel.

A. The Seven Plagues (Wounds⁴¹) come on the Beast and his followers (seed of Serpent) (16:1)

And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth." (Rev. 16:1)

B. The Wrath of God (cf. 16:6) is completed on the Beast and his followers (16:2)

BOWL #1 - Sores on those who worship the Beast (Ex. 9:8-12)

⁴¹ Note here that the word for wound is the same word found in Genesis 3:15 (LXX variant), "He will wound you on the head . . ."

2 And the first angel went and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. (Rev. 16:2)

Emphasizing that this is the New Exodus (the fulfillment of the initial and partial exodus under Moses), these sores are similar to the plague on Egypt that brought forth sores (Ex. 9:8-12)

BOWL #2 - Sea turns to blood: everything dies (Ex. 7:14-25)

3 And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died. (Rev. 16:3)

Continuing the New Exodus, the sea is turned to blood just like the waters of Egypt were turned to blood (Ex. 7:14-25).

BOWL #3 - Rivers and springs become blood (Ex. 7:14-25)

⁴ And the third *angel* poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; ⁶ for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it." ⁷ And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments." (Rev. 16:4-7)

BOWL #4 - Sun scorches men

▪ **They blasphemed God and did not repent**

8 And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory. (Rev. 16:8-9)

BOWL #5 - Throne of the Beast darkened (Ex. 10:21-29)

▪ **They blasphemed God and did not repent**

Again, this mimics the plagues on Egypt affirming a new Exodus as referencing (Exodus 10:21-29).

10 And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds. (Rev. 16:10-11)

BOWL #6- Euphrates dried up. Kings from east of the Euphrates gather together for Har-Magiddon. (see Ex. 9:22-35)

▪ **They blasphemed God**

12 And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.⁴² 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.") 16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magiddon.

The gathering of the kings is to the valley that moves east to west across northern Israel called the Jezreel Valley. The name "HarMageddon" from which the "Battle of Armageddon" comes, literally means the "Hill of Megiddo," or "Mount of Megiddo." This mount (or hill) is on the southern part of the Jezreel Valley and overlooks it. Thus, it is not likely that the battle takes place on that hill since it is relatively small, but in the large valley crossing from east to west.

⁴² Here in the national section, the nations are now allowed to pour into Israel. The reference to the Euphrates which is the boundary of the promise of the land to Israel, as well as one of the rivers that fed the Garden of Eden. This may be parallel to 9:14 where the four angels are let loose who are chained at the river. While this normally is given as a reference to the people of Asia, it is more likely a reference to the area of Babylon and Assyria, enemies of Israel from the beginning, and occupiers of the land promise to Israel that extended to the River Euphrates.



**STEPS ASCENDING TO THE TOP OF “HAR-MIGEDDON:”
THE MOUNT OF MEGIDDO”**



THE JEZREEL VALLEY FROM “HAR (MOUNTAIN) – MEGIDDO”