



REVELATION 12–22

THE KINGDOM OF GOD VS. THE KINGDOM OF SATAN

Introduction to the Second Half of Revelation

John describes his record as a “revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1). In the second half, we see our Savior in even greater majesty, with wisdom, judgment, and love. His goodness and glory are contrasted with the most sinister and sadistic creatures in the universe. This section closes with His victory over all evil to enjoy His reign in righteousness from a newly created celestial home. A second theme in the second half is the critical role that the saints play in preparing for the Lord’s triumph. He cannot come until His people are ready to receive Him.

The wickedness of the Last Days dominates seventy percent of the second half. By the sheer volume in this section, it appears that this is also a main focus of the book. Furthermore, since the restoration, we have received many clues on how to decipher the riddle of the Apocalypse. These tools reveal that much of the content is unfolding in our day. The messages are directed to us. We will also be held accountable for understanding it and heeding its warnings.

Outline

VISION	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	NUMBER OF VERSES
Throne of God	1, 4–5	36
Seven Churches	2–3	51
BC 4000–1000	6:1–11	11
AD 1000– AD 2000	6:12–7:3	14
AD 2000 Last Days & Second Coming	8:1–19:2	201
Millennium 20XX–30XX	20:1–6	6
Final Scenes	20:7–15	9
Celestialized Earth	21:2–22:6	33

REVELATION 12

Interlude of a Pivotal Flashback

Chapter 12 is a pivotal point. “It is the key to understanding all that went before and all that comes after.”¹ It concludes the vision of the seven seals and introduces the other series of visions. This interlude explains who, how, and why Satan became the source of evil. It includes the premortal war in heaven. We learn of the war between Satan and the Church (represented by a woman) and God’s people. It explains how and why the earth arrived at such a state of hatred, which we see in the last half of the Apocalypse.

In the next two chapters three devilish figures are introduced, which are often referred to as a Satanic Trinity:

1. The dragon who represents Satan
2. The beast on the sand
3. The counterfeit horned lamb

JST IN REVELATION

The JST changed only 21% of the Book of Revelation (81 of 393 verses). As a comparison, the JST changed over 50% of Genesis (771 of 1,532 verses), and added 15% or 225 new verses; and the JST changed 64% of Matthew (682 of 1,071 verses). The JST of Revelation 12 does rearranges the order (which are found in the LDS Bible JST).

THE FIRST OF SEVEN SHORT VISIONS²

The Woman and Her Son

Revelation 12:1–6

Revelation 12:1 “There appeared a great *sign* in heaven in the likeness of things on the earth” (JST *italicized*)

The word, “great” is used five times in this chapter—starting with this first great sign of a woman. Most English translations change the KJV “wonders” to “sign.” This sign is given as a token or validation of what he saw. The sign communicated that the forthcoming vision or information “was authentic and came from God via a true messenger.”³ Similar this sign likening the heavens to the earth, Hebrews 8:4–5, explains that that earthly temples are patterned after God’s heavenly temples.

“**a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet**” The woman represents the church clothed in celestial clothing and wearing God’s power (Revelation 12:7, JST). In the Old Testament, Jerusalem and Zion are a woman, and her son is God’s people or Israel.⁴ We find the same pattern in the Book of Mormon.⁵ The moon or terrestrial existence is subject to her.

“**and upon her head a crown of twelve stars**” There are two different Greek words used for “crown” in the KJV. This one, *stephanos*/“garland, honor, glory,” was a laurel wreath garland worn by victorious soldiers, generals, or athletes at the Olympics. In most occurrences in the Book of Revelation, it is given as a divine reward from God (see Revelations 2:10; 3:11; 4:4, 10; 14:14). The second word, *diadems*/“a royal crown,” was used for political domination (see Revelations 12:3; 13:1; 19:12). In this verse, the woman’s *stephanos*/laurel garland, speaks of her victory in overcoming the world and Satan. The “twelve stars” fit into our understanding of the number twelve as representing God’s power or order, and the stars represent the twelve apostles standing at the head of His church.

Revelation 12:2 “The *woman* being with child cried, **travailing in birth. . .**” (JST *italicized*) The challenge of the Church to bring forth a generation of righteous or even the millennial kingdom is likened to labor pains (i.e. Isaiah 13:8; 21:3; 21:3; etc.). Her labor is not in vain but represents the creative suffering that will bring life and joy. The Old Testament uses the image of suffering in childbirth to bring forth Zion (i.e. Isaiah 13:8; 26:17; 66:7–8; Micah 4:10; etc.) This may refer to the primitive Christian church and the beginning of apostasy.

Revelation 12:5 “**And she brought forth a man child**” The JST moves verse five up to announce the birth of the woman’s son after verse two. Changing the verse order helps the continuity of knowing what is the work of the church/woman. Here the son is the offspring of the church, or of perhaps a Zion society, or the millennial kingdom of God. We learn in the JST modern scripture that the child is “the kingdom of our God and his Christ” (D&C 76:28; Revelation 12:7, JST).

“to shepherd all nations with a rod of iron” (NTC) The word in KJV, “rule” is actually, *poimainó* / “to act as a shepherd, tend, herd; hence: I rule, govern).⁶ The inevitable plan for the offspring of the church is to tend the nations. Three times in the Book of Revelation, John refers to a protecting, kind shepherd who still rules with a stern “rod of iron” (Revelation 2:27; 19:15). In the Book of Mormon, the “iron rod” is “the word of God” (1 Nephi 11:25).

“But her child was taken away to God and to his throne” (NTC) But, God snatched away the baby boy to heaven. This has been interpreted as the early saints leaving the earth preceding the apostasy, or some see it as the Savior. The son may also refer to a Zion society, like Enoch’s and Melchizedek’s people. Whoever it was, God protected the child with a mighty power. The “imagery suggests that the Lord took certain priesthood keys away as a means of preserving both the Kingdom and Church.”⁷

Satanic Forces Gather Pre-mortally and on Earth

Revelation 12:3–6

Revelation 12:3 “Another sign appeared in the sky, a great, fiery-red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns, on his heads were seven diadems” (NTC) This sign is fierce and dangerous. The KJV, “great red dragon,” is actually in Greek, a Leviathan, or sea-monster (Job 40:25; Psalms 73:14; 103:26; etc.). The Greek word did not mean a dragon who breaths fire, but one that personifies “malevolent and seething chaos, often represented as the dark primeval waters, which oppose not only God but all that is holy.”⁸ Verse 9 tells us the dragon is the “old serpent, called the Devil.” The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “There is a mistranslation of the word dragon . . . The original word signifies the devil, and not dragon, as translated.”⁹

The numbers are not necessarily numerical but significant for understanding the meaning. The devil’s seven heads and “crowns”/ *diadems* / “political domination,” represent complete domination or “insatiable cruelty.”¹⁰ He has usurped his power and only carries false sovereignty. His crown contrasts with the woman’s garland of victory. The horns are signs of power. Daniel also wrote of dreadful ruler with ten horns who fought against God (Daniel 7:7, 20, 24).

Revelation 12:4 “His tail dragged off a third of the stars of the sky, and he threw them to the earth” (NTC) The third part refers to a limited part. In this context, the stars represent the spirit children of God who were deceived by Satan pre-mortally and became devils, unable to progress (also see Dan 8:10; D&C 29:36–37).

“and the dragon stood before the woman” Satan stood in a position of confrontation or attacking; the devil is especially interested in the baby boy.

“ready to devour her child after it was born” (JST *italicized*) This does not sound like the birth of Jesus because Satan was not allowed to destroy Him at birth, but some see it as referring to the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–15). If the “son” represents Zion, Satan only has a short opportunity to snatch it because he is not allowed to destroy Zion, which is never destroyed in scripture.

Revelation 12:6 “the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore years” (JST *italicized*) Satan did not destroy the church, though God prepared a place to keep it. The timing can be interpreted as God’s period prior to the Restoration. The Lord’s priesthood power, saving ordinances, and people (represented by the woman, meaning the Church) come out of the wilderness or apostasy (D&C 5:14; 33:5; 109:73). This may refer to those described in D&C 89:9, “lawful heirs according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God.” It may refer to the period of time the people of Enoch and Melchizedek are hid from the earth until the Second Coming (Moses 7:62–64). Others interpret this as “certain bloodlines were preserved.”¹¹ In any case, eventually the Church/woman’s offspring will overcome the Adversary.

The War in Heaven

Revelation 12:7–11

Revelation 12:7 “There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon . . . and his angels fought against Michael” (JST *italicized*) This “interlude” in the story is a flashback giving more details about the premortal war where Michael fought Lucifer or Satan.¹² It is actually the same war now, just a change in battlefields. Elder Bruce R. McConkie discussed this war:

What kind of war? The same kind that prevails on earth; the only kind Satan and spirit beings can wage—a war of words, a tumult of opinions, a conflict of ideologies; a war between truth and error, between light and darkness, between the gospel of Jesus Christ, with all its saving power, and the false religions of the world, which have a form of godliness but are devoid of saving grace. And the battle lines are still drawn. It is now on earth as it was then in heaven; every man must choose which general he will follow.¹³

Michael is the only angel named in this book. We learn in modern revelation that he is Adam (D&C 107:54).

Revelation 12:8 “the dragon prevailed not against Michael, neither the child, nor the woman which was the church of God, who had been delivered of her pains, and brought forth the kingdom of our God and his Christ neither was there place found in heaven for the great dragon” (JST *italicized*) The JST emphasizes Satan’s loss both in the past and the future. God will assist His Church, to bring forth His Kingdom.



The Fall of the Rebel Angels by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1562. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

Revelation 12:9b “the great dragon *who* was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and *also called Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels . . .”* (JST italicized)

This verse lists five of Satan’s names. They describe his sinister motives: Dragon (as one who is out to destroy), old serpent (the deceiver and counterfeit in Eden), “Devil” means “slanderer,” and Satan is a Hebrew word meaning “adversary or accuser.” A decade after he recorded the JST, the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke on this verse in Nauvoo. His scribe recorded with a quill as much of the sermon as he could as Joseph spoke extemporaneously:

[Revelation] ch. 12 v. 9 it there reads ‘that old serpent called the devil, [’] and it ought to be translated devil in this case and not dragon. Every thing that we have not a key word to, we will take it as it reads. The beasts **that** <which> John saw and speaks of as being in heaven were actually living in heaven, and were actually to have power given to them.¹⁴

Even though God allowed the devils to have power on the earth, God also gives His disciples power to avoid satanic temptations and to cast the devil out. Faith-filled Christians the world over have been empowered by God to call on the name of the Lord Jesus the Christ and cast out devils. It is a gift of the Spirit (Matthew 10:8).

A Voice from Heaven

Revelation 12:10–12

Revelation 12:10 “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters . . . has been hurled down’ (NIV) Another loud voice proclaims victory in a two-verse poem of praise. God’s supreme power will conquer. We learn that the devil accuses people day and night (after he sets the traps to tempt us). Through God’s infinite mercy, our desperate need for a redeemer was met in Jesus of Nazareth. Once the devil and his henchmen were cast out, Christ offered salvation to the rest in heaven.

Revelation 12:11 “They *have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word for they loved not their own lives but kept the testimony even unto death*” (JST *italicized*) This infers giving our will to God and living selflessly. Power to overcome Satan and his forces comes through the Atonement of Jesus (2 Nephi 9:25–26). We can tap into that power if we are faithful to our testimony to the end and are willing to sacrifice all that is required to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Revelation 12:12 “rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. And *after these things I heard another voice saying, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth yea, and they who dwell upon the islands of the sea! for the devil . . . knoweth that he hath but a short time*” (JST *italicized*) Satan’s work accelerates because of his limited time. He wants to cause as much damage and misery as possible knowing that there is no ultimate victory for him. His greatest triumph is destroying eternal families and, thus, their exaltation.

The Dragon and the Woman

Revelation 12:13–18

Revelation 12:13–14 “The dragon . . . drove off the woman who . . . was given the two wings of a great eagle, so she could fly into the wilderness . . . where she was sustained for a time, times, and a half time, away from the serpent” (NTC) When Satan was cast to the earth, the Church or people of God were persecuted by devils. So, the woman/Church was given power to fly away and be nourished (D&C 77:4). Exactly what these times mean is unknown, but Daniel 12:7 uses the same phrase.¹⁵ The important part is that God kept the church away from Satan’s powerful pollutions for a season.

Revelation 12:15 “from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent” (NIV). Satan tries to destroy the woman from her protected hiding place. The Serpent’s flood is filled with lies, corrupt counterfeits, and apostate doctrine.

Revelation 12:16 “the earth helped the woman and opened her mouth and swallowed the river” (NTC) Behind the scenes we have an omniscient God protecting the woman/Church. The prophet Joseph Smith taught



Left: Woman of the Apocalypse, 12th century.
Image via Wikimedia Commons.

that the earth also has a spirit and it acts in harmony with God's will to protect the Church. The imagery evokes the waters moving for Moses, Joshua, and the children of Israel. God's creations act together to carry out His directions. In one way or another God will support His people and deliver them.

Revelation 12:17 “The dragon was angry because of the woman and went away to make war with the rest of her offspring who kept the commandments” (NTC) Note with whom Satan wars his fiercest fight—it is against disciples of Christ or those who keep God's commandments. This is why “any compromise with the world is actually a concession to Satan. Such a view should shock modern disciples out of spiritual complacency and move them to full-hearted resistance to the world and its allure.”¹⁶

REVELATION 13

Revelation 13 focuses on two of Satan's henchmen:

1. A beast from the sea in the first half, and
2. A beast of the land in the second half of the chapter.

2nd Short Vision: Beast from the Sea

Revelation 13:1–10

Revelation 13:1 “I saw another sign, in the likeness of the kingdoms of the earth; a beast rise up out of the sea, and he stood upon the sand of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns . . . ten crowns” (JST italicized) As the blaspheming beast stands on the sand, he reflects the “foolish man” from Jesus' counsel when he advised His disciples to build on the rock (Matthew 7:26). The heads, horns, and crowns depict Satan's attempt to counterfeit God's power. The word for “crown”/*diadems* describes the devil's political kingdoms (see Revelation 12:1). It comes from the water, which is often a reference to chaos in scripture.

Biblical scholars see this as referring to the Roman Empire coming out of the Mediterranean Sea and the seven heads as Rome's seven mountains. But, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “where God ever gives a vision of an image, or beast or figure of any kind he always holds himself responsible to give a revelation or interpretation of the meaning thereof, otherwise we are not responsible or accountable for our belief in them.”¹⁷

During the first week of April 1843, he publicly preached on several parts of the Book of Revelation.¹⁸ On Saturday, April 8, he discussed this beast: “the beast that rose up out of the sea should be translated as the image of a beast.”¹⁹ This ten-horned-beast-of-blasphemy may represent organizations or ideologies that are opposed to Christ’s teachings.

“and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” In the KJV, this new beast has blasphemy written on each of his seven heads. Another translation emphasizes, “the beast does not carry the name of blasphemy but rather has a blasphemous name.”²⁰ In the ancient world, knowing the name of a god allowed one to control it. Blasphemy can refer to claiming you are God when you are not, or attempting to be worshipped, or acting in God’s place without authority.²¹

Revelation 13:2 “The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority” (NIV) The dragon or Satan works closely with the blaspheming beast and delegates power to it. Each of the attributes are described as wild, ferocious, and flesh eating. Rather than visualize a ten horned beast, look for the meaning of these symbols. It is described as the most heinous of all its predecessors. Daniel 7:1–7 describes a similar beast, but Joseph Smith explained that it represented an apostate tradition:

[There] was a nice distinction between the vision which John saw as spoken of in Revelation, [and] the vision which Daniel saw, the former relating only to things as they actually existed in heaven—the latter being a figure representing things on the earth. God never made use of the figure of a beast to represent the kingdom of heaven—when they were made use of, it was to represent an apostate church.²²

Revelation 13:3 “One of the heads . . . dealt a death wound, and [it] . . . was healed . . . And the whole world marveled at the beast” (NTC) The beast’s head is wounded so severely that he will die from it, but he still functions for a time. Biblical scholars have labeled this as the death of certain political leaders, the protestant reformation, or specific national divisions. John used the same word for the Divine Lamb’s wound (Revelation 5:6). This is consistent with Satan constantly striving to usurp Jesus’ position. It suggests that “the beast is a parody of the Lamb.”²³ Whatever causes the wound, with the help of Satan, it continues to coexist for a period of time. As the beast had power to live, the world “marvels,” or admires it enough to put their trust in the beast.

Revelation 13:4 “They worshipped the dragon, because he had given power to the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? And who can fight against him?” (NTC) Myopic humans worship devilish ideology when they trust or pursue godlessness. They follow out of fear, though, not love.

Illustration of Apocalypse 21 and Revelation chapter 13, a beast with seven heads. Illustration from the Scheits print-Bible, 1710, of the Phillip Medhurst Collection. Image via Wikimedia Commons.



Revelation 13:5–7 “The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months . . . to make war on the saints and to conquer them.”(ESV) This satanic influence slandered God, things heavenly, and the saints for 3 ½ years (again!). The number signifies a *temporary* victory for Satan and his minions, but it is not the complete “whole.”

Revelation 13:8 “All . . . will worship him, whose names have not been written in the scroll of life of the Lamb” (NTC) Those written in “the Book of Life” (NKJV) have been sealed on their foreheads (D&C 77:9). On October 25 and 26, 1831, Joseph taught “when we have a testimony that our names are sealed in the Lamb’s Book of Life we have perfect love and then it is impossible for false Christs to [deceive] us.”²⁴ The Book of Mormon also taught more about this verse and quotes God as saying, “the names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life and unto them will I grant an inheritance at

my right hand” (Alma 5:58). This may be those 144,000 from Revelation 7:4 and 14:1.

“The Lamb who had been slain from the foundation of the world” (NTC) The last phrase of this verse may be paraphrased, “the Lamb who was foreordained to be slain from the foundation of the world” (also see Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:20).²⁵ It describes God’s planning and omniscience before time on the earth began.

Revelation 13:9–10 “Whoever has ears, let them hear . . . This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people” (NIV) We may hear God’s message, but the challenge is in understanding it. This is why we need living prophets to direct us. The timing of our lives and the history of the world is under God’s care. The Calvinistic predestination of the KJV is actually a warning to persecuted Christians that we must submit to death rather than deny our faith.

3rd Short Vision: Counterfeit Lamb or Anti-Christ

Revelation 13:11–18

Revelation 13:11–12 “I saw another beast rising out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a dragon” (NTC) The third member of the devil’s trinity is a double-horned-lamb and they all work together. We learn that it is a cunning counterfeit, or wolf in sheep’s clothing, as it receives its power/horns and words from the dragon. As “the word” of the dragon or Satan, it imitates the “the Word of God” (John 1:1–4). It does not come from heaven, but under the earth. This is a land beast (or the anti-Christ described in 1 John 2:18–22; 2 John 1:7). The counterfeit lamb or beast will influence or “morph” into false prophets and the great whore as the account unfolds (Revelation 16:13; 17:3–5).²⁶ It represents evil in many forms—pride, hate, materialism, philosophy, secular humanism, etc. With selfishness as the core desire, humans want what they want more than what God wants. The worldwide idols of lust, power, status, and self-gratification speak to those under the influence of the land monster.

Revelation 13:13–14 “He performed great wonders such that he even made fire come down out of the sky . . . in behalf of the beast” (NTC) Satan’s henchmen can also counterfeit miracles (as Pharaoh’s magicians did in Egypt, Exodus 7:11; etc.). These “wonders” or magic acts stem from satanic deceptions rather than from God. Jesus warned, “they shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that . . . they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

Revelation 13:15–16 “The beast spoke and he caused anyone who would not worship the image of the beast to be put to death . . . He caused all . . . to put a mark on their right hand or upon their forehead” (NTC) God is still behind the scenes, as we see with an individuals’ agency allowing the false image to function. The counterfeits continue. Rather than disciples receiving the Lamb’s sealing, the poisoned sinners accept Satan’s mark on their foreheads or hands. Similar to the ancient practice of branding slaves with a mark of their owner or tattooing a deity on one’s palm or forehead, this branding speaks of Satan’s ownership.²⁷ Hands represent one’s actions, so these people act for Satan The right hand is significant, too, as it is the clean and covenant hand. The forehead represents their focus, thoughts and desires (Ezekiel 9:4).

Revelation 13:17 “He also made it so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark” (NTC) If there is no commerce without the mark of the beast, then one of the meanings of the mark is money. Hugh Nibley saw the root of Satan’s scam developed from “Satan’s first article of faith . . . you can buy anything in this world for money.”²⁸

Revelation 13:18 “Let he who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is a human number . . . six hundred sixty-six” (NTC) The answer to the riddle requires “wisdom” or God’s inspiration. With seven as the Lord’s number for whole and complete, “666” falls short of wholeness. The full meaning of Satan’s number is

unknown—though theologians and mathematicians have theorized hundreds of ideas. The use of *gematria* and other number games have labeled emperors Titus, Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, the Roman nation, Luther, Saxon, and many more—all the devil. Significantly, the word here for “beast”/*thrion*, transliterated into Hebrew also equals 666.²⁹ The NIV reads, “it is man’s number,” or the number of *mankind*, generally speaking. Who is engraven on our heads and hands?

REVELATION 14

Revelation 14 swings back like a pendulum from the trinity of terrifying satanic beasts, to the hopeful message of the restoration of all things. Just like the former saints, the latter-day saints are called to follow Christ. The chapter is divided by three more visions from the cycle of seven (Revelation 12:1–15:4).

4th Short Vision: The Lamb and 144,000 Sealed Servants

Revelation 14:1–5

Revelation 14:1 “I looked . . .” This phrase, “I looked” or “I saw,” is repeated seven times and opens the next few visions (found in chapter 14: 1, 6, 14, and 15:1, 2, 5, 11). The phrase divides each part of this chapter into three visions. The Book of Revelation repeats this phrase to separate sections thirty-six times. A similar phrase is used twenty-two times in Nephi’s record of the Tree of Life vision (1 Nephi 11:8, 12–13, 19–20, etc.).

“The Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 people who had this name on their foreheads” (NTC) The Lamb of God is Jesus Christ (spelled with a capital L, to distinguish it from the counterfeit). The Lamb of God stands on the firm land of Mount Zion—specifically meaning the place of God’s kingdom. “Zion” is used 150 times in the Old Testament to describe 1) God’s dwelling place on earth, 2) the saints’ community, or 3) the central city where God rules at the end of the world.³⁰ Physically, He stands ready to work either at Mount Moriah (the temple mount in Jerusalem), or the New Jerusalem (in Independence, Missouri). The Lamb’s name on their forehead’s contrasts with the wicked beast’s mark (Revelation 3:12; 7:3–8).

A similar prophecy is recorded in D&C 133:18. Section 133 also refers to the 144,000 and gives a condensed overview from the preparation for the Second Coming through the Millennium. The 144,000 represent a large host of God’s faithful servants who are sealed and protected by Him (see Revelation 7:4). They are “high priests,” who serve with all their intellect, heart, and strength (D&C 77:11). Their important mission is “to bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn” (D&C 77:11).

The number is symbolic on two fronts. Twelve represents God’s order, perfected (12 x 12), and is tied to their largest number, “thousands.”³¹ In Revelation 7:4, we learned the number included 12,000 from each of the twelve

Tribes of Israel, or “every nation” (D&C 77:11). It helps to understand the symbolism by looking at the etymology of the word, “Israel”/ *Yisrael* / “God strives” / “he will rule as God.”³² Jacob first received the title Israel, in Genesis 32:28, because “as a prince” he had “power with God and with men,” and “prevailed” (KJV), or “struggled with God and with humans and have overcome” (NIV).

When the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke on the 144,000, he “indicated that the conferral of the fullness of the priesthood was a ‘sealing...on top of the head,’ of which the phrase ‘sealed on their foreheads’ was symbolic.”³³ Furthermore, Joseph taught that it was through an ordinance conferring the fullness of the priesthood that these high priests could be qualified to be a part of the special missionary force in the last days (D&C 77:11).

Below: Angels Holding the Four Winds / The Sealing of the 144,000, ca. 1530–1532. Painting by Matthias Gerung from the Ottheinrich Bible via Wikimedia Commons.



Elder Bruce R. McConkie went even further to suggest, “At his Second Coming . . . these 144,000 are Gods, as the name on their foreheads specifies; their callings and elections have been made sure; they are exalted personages; they are ‘redeemed from among men’ (Revelation 14:4–5.), they have attained perfection.”³⁴ If this is the case, then it includes the righteous men and women who have received their second anointings.

Revelation 14:2–3 “I heard a sound from heaven . . . lyre players . . . They sang a new song in front of the throne . . . no one was able to learn the new song except the 144,000 people . . . redeemed from the earth” (NTC) Music fills the heavens. The sacred lyrics of the “new song” are possibly tied to the ordination of those redeemed people. They have been bought back from slavery to Satan, sin, and selfishness. A possible text for this “new song” is recorded in the D&C 84:98–102. The song is sung before the throne with the four creatures and twenty-four elders from chapter 1.

Revelation 14:4–5 “These . . . are morally clean . . . follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed . . . in their mouths no lie is found—they are blameless” (NTC) The KJV describes the redeemed as “virgins,” which refers to their purity, lack of idolatry, deceitful words, and sexual sins. As the “firstfruits unto God,” they offer their converted, tried souls.

5th Short Vision: Three Angels Proclaiming the Gospel

Revelation 14:6–7



Revelation 14:6 “I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach . . . to every nation . . .” Like a flashback, this vision takes us back in time to the sixth seal. John’s vision gives the needed background on the Restoration to understand the work of God in the latter days. We often identify the angel flying through the midst of heaven as Moroni. However, many heavenly messengers brought forth the Restoration (D&C 128, 27, 133:36–39). The use of: “everlasting gospel,” is unique to this verse. It is a universal message of repentance available for all who will. This is our work today.

Revelation 14:7 “He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens . . .’” (NIV) The warning voice

Left: Photo of the angel Moroni atop the Reno Nevada Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Photo by gh5046 via Wikimedia Commons.

commands all to give glory to God and prepare for the judgment day. This is the first time the word “judgment” is mentioned in the text (also see Revelation 16:7; 18:10; 19:2). The Day of Judgment is not in the past or future, but the present.

Torment of the Wicked

Revelation 14:8–11

Revelation 14:8 “A second angel followed saying: ‘She has fallen, Babylon . . . that provided all nations drink from the wine of her passionate lust . . .’” (NTC) The fall of wickedness and worldliness is more than just the fall of a city (see D&C 133:14). It will include the fall of false theories, sinful secrets, and wicked selfish motivations. Satan’s kingdom will finally be destroyed.

Revelation 14:9–11 “A third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and its image . . . he will be tortured by fire . . . there will be no rest day or night . . .’” (NTC) We hear again about the third angel (as introduced in Revelation 8:10) who warns that those who follow the beast will receive God’s full punishment (D&C 84:24; Alma 34:34). The punishments are described with the worst things known at the time—burning sulfur, constant smoke, no rest, and endless torment. Satan’s counterfeits will all be made known and God’s condemnation will fall on the wicked.

Blessings for the Saints

Revelation 14:12–13

Revelation 14:12 “This will require the steadfast endurance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and who have faith in Jesus” (NTC) To develop faith rather than lose it, the saints must steadfastly live and internalize God’s commandments as they patiently endure.

Revelation 14:13 “I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them’” (NIV) John’s divine revelation offers another beatitude for the righteous. The Lord taught Joseph Smith that “the Lord’s rest is fullness of his glory” (D&C 84:24). A later section of the D&C also corrected this verse to read: “They shall rest from all their labors here, and shall *continue their works*” (D&C 124:86). Our “rest” is not from serving with our God but resting from the labors of this life. All through the Book of Revelation, God actively participates in the affairs of men. He is not an absentee Lord.

6th Short Vision: Harvesting the Earth

Revelation 14:14–20

Revelation 14:14 “I looked and there was a white cloud and on the cloud sat one like a Son of Man. He had a gold wreath . . . and a sharp sickle” (NTC) When the Savior descends from heaven, His “crown” (KJV) is the

victor's "wreath"/*stephanos*. His sickle represents the need to harvest the wheat from the tares—the righteous from the wicked (Matthew 13:30).

Revelation 14:15–16 "Another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, 'Wield your sickle and begin reaping . . . and it was harvested'" (NTC) The message coming from the heavenly temple represents God the Father directing the timing of the harvest or judgment. Harvesting requires speed; "Once the grain is ripe, the harvest must begin immediately."³⁵

Revelation 14:17–18 "Another angel came out of the temple . . . who also had a sharp sickle. And another angel . . . shouted . . . 'Wield your sharp sickle . . . the grape-clusters from the grapevine of the earth'" (NTC) God's servants come and go with directions and assignments. The image of the grape harvest evokes wine, the symbol of Jesus' sacrificial blood atonement. The angel from the temple's altar had fire, but nothing is burned yet. Instead, the messenger encourages the reapers to harvest and gather the fruits of the vine.

Revelation 14:19–20 "The angel wielded his sickle . . . and harvested . . . the great winepress of the wrath of God. The winepress was trampled outside of the city, the blood came out of the winepress as high as a horse's bridle" (NTC) Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would tread the winepress alone when He suffered in Gethsemane and on the cross. Jesus described it, "I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God" (D&C 76:107).

"A thousand six hundred stadia" (NTC) The amount of destruction is horrific. Blood and killing are rampant. The literal measurement stretches from the northern to the southern border of Old Testament Israel (from Dan to Beersheba was 184 miles). It may also be figurative as the numbers are ten and four squared. Biblically, four often represents the complete earth ("the four corners of the earth," Isaiah 11:12; Ezekiel 7:2; Revelation 7:1). Both numbers represent "some form of completeness" which may mean that it "symbolizes the breadth of the judgment that will encompass the whole world."³⁶ Yet, we learn that Zion will be safe and aloof from the chaos.

REVELATION 15

After the seventh and last short vision in this cycle, John returns to the timeframe from Revelation 11:19, to prepare for the Lord's Second Coming. John saw a vision of the seven last angels who prepared vials or bowls of judgment to be poured out on the earth. Chapters 15 and 16 describe the seven last plagues poured out to cleanse the earth for the Millennium.

7th Short Vision: Saints' Victory of Land and Sea Beasts

Revelation 15:1-4

Revelation 15:1 “I saw another great and marvelous sign in the sky, even angels who had the seven final plagues, for with them the wrath of God was completed” (NTC) The number seven is again significant, as it represents the whole heavens that are going to complete the last and final plagues. A perfect group will finalize God’s work. As the numbers are highly symbolic, there may be more or less than seven plagues. Before these angels open their plagues on the earth, we have a celebration of victory.

Revelation 15:2 “I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, also those who had overcome the beast . . . were standing on the sea of glass holding lyres of God” (NTC) Right before we learn what happens to the wicked, John’s seventh of seven short visions tells of the celestial state of the righteous, or all who “overcome the beast.” The musicians include vocalists and instrumentalists who praise God. The “sea of glass” is mentioned twice in the Bible and twice in the D&C (Revelation 4:2; 15:2; D&C 77:1; 139:7). The Prophet Joseph Smith described a similar celestial sphere where angels “reside in the presence of God, on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord. The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim” (D&C 130:7-8).

When Joseph asked the Lord what “the sea of glass” meant, he learned: “It is the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state” (D&C 77:1). Joseph also taught that “the Urim & Thummim is a small representation of this globe.”³⁷ When the celestialized earth is as a “sea of glass,” it does not mean it is a flat surface, but rather that it will have the capacity to see the past, present and future. Those who are valiant in their testimonies of Christ will inherit the celestialized sphere.

Revelation 15:3-4 “They were singing . . . the song of the Moses . . . and the song of Lamb, saying, ‘Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations’” (NTC) As the words are not found in our Old Testament, the text may cite a newly revealed “song of the Lamb.” Moses sings a victory song after the plagues and destruction of the Egyptian army is complete, and at the end of his leadership (Exodus 15:1-19; Deuteronomy 32:1-43). As in many things, this experience in Egypt is a type or shadow of future events as well, including the great destruction of the end of the terrestrial earth.

The opening stanza: “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty” may have been lost from an earlier text, though, because Lehi’s begins his preaching in Jerusalem with it (1 Nephi 1:14), and a similar version is found in Jacob 4:8. The opening phrase became popular as, “great and marvelous,” is found twenty-four times in the Book of Mormon with various meanings. Different variations of “a great and marvelous work” are also used in five sections of the D&C—all referring to the Book of Mormon and restoration.³⁸

Seven Angels with Seven Plagues

Revelation 15:5–8

Revelation 15:5–6 “I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened. The seven angels . . . came out of the temple dressed in pure, bright linen with gold sashes around their chests” (NTC) John describes the heavenly temple open clear through to the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant served as God’s throne. The focus is on the law or covenant that light up the upcoming judgments. The angelic dress speaks of their purity through receiving the Savior’s atoning gifts.

Revelation 15:7 “One of the four animals gave the seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the wrath of God” (NTC) The “vials” (KJV) or *phial* “shallow bowl,” held liquids. The similar dish was used to catch the blood of the sacrificial animal in the temple (Exodus 37:16; Numbers 4:7). Priest’s sprinkled blood at the altar when making sacrifices (Leviticus 1:5; 3:8). Here the content of the bowls is not blood, but a plague that will shed blood. It represents the wrath of God poured out in its fullness against the wicked. In the following chapters the angels pour out the great plagues from the bowls.

Revelation 15:8 “The temple was filled with the smoke of God’s glory and power so that no one could enter until the seven plagues . . . were finished” (NTC) The Old Testament also describes times when the glory of the Lord as manifested as a cloud of smoke filled the tabernacle and thus prohibited the priests from entering (Exodus 40:34–38). It again demonstrates the Father’s active presence in the history of the world.

REVELATION 16

Seven Plagues of God’s Wrath

Taking a broad view of this chapter in context with the preceding chapters, we return to the scene right before the Lord’s Second Coming, but from a different perspective. Like a sculpture in a museum that is placed in the middle of the room, we return to look at these events from different angles four times. God’s punishments have already been discussed in chapters 8, 9, and 14. Different symbols are used each time. Here, in chapter 16, God’s recompense is delivered through the content of the vials or bowls, similar to the plagues from Moses (Exodus 7–12). Furthermore, we can find even more consistent patterns of the numbers: “The first seals are linked together into a unified group of four (four seals, four horses, four horsemen, four statements from four beasts), while the final three seals belong to a second group. This pattern of one group of four and one group of three parallels that pattern set forth for the seven trumpets (Revelation 8–9) and the seven vials (Revelation 16).”³⁹ This view of the last days emphasizes the final nature and severity of these seven plagues before Christ’s return.

The First Six Plagues

Revelation 16:1-16

Revelation 16:1 “I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels . . .” (NTC) A call to action comes again from the heavenly temple which assures us that God is in His temple carefully directing His plan. The imagery echoes Isaiah, “a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies” (Isaiah 66:6).

“Go and pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth” (NTC) God’s wrath is mentioned at least twenty-five times in the New Testament, but we see it enacted best in the Book of Revelation. He is not only a just God who issues punishments, but also a passionate God who weeps, denounces, loves, and empathizes. His wrath will be especially keen on those who have harmed children and persecuted the righteous.⁴⁰ Also, God chastens those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6; Proverbs 3:12). We can find comfort in knowing that even though God refers to Himself as a “jealous God,” His pure motives are for our good (Exodus 34:14; Moses 1:39).

Revelation 16:2 “The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast” (NIV) The first angel’s plague is grievous sores, which are also described in other scriptures. Zechariah 14:12 describes similar epidemics of the flesh: “Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth” (also D&C 29:19). We live in a world that causes painful sores from atomic fallout, pollutions, addictions, diseases, cancers, and drugs. Those that do not have the mark of the beast will escape, in part because they “have faith in the Lord and who exercise the power of the priesthood to rebuke the evils that otherwise would afflict them.”⁴¹ Yet, the saints will not be spared from all the plagues of the last days.

Revelation 16:3 “The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it turned into blood . . . and every living thing that was in the sea died” (NTC) Like Moses and the Egyptian waters, blood will fill the seas, or perhaps the sea life will die in the last days (also Ezekiel 32:6; Revelation 17:1). The Lord also taught the Prophet

PLAGUES IN REVELATION PARALLEL OLD TESTAMENT

1. Grievous Sores—Exodus 9:9 Boils
2. Sea to Blood—Exodus 7:19 Water to blood
3. Rivers to Blood—Exodus 7:20 Nile to blood
4. Scorching Heat—Deuteronomy 28:22
5. Darkness and Pain—Exodus 10:21
6. Waters dried up, drought—1 Kings 8:35
Froglie spirits—Exodus 8:11-12 Frogs
7. Earthquake and Hail—Exodus 9:23-25 Hail



Above: The Giving of the Seven Bowls of Wrath / The First Six Plagues, Revelation 16:1-16, ca. 1530–1532. Painting by Matthias Gerung from the Ottheinrich Bible via Wikimedia Commons.

Joseph Smith, “There are many dangers upon the waters, and more especially hereafter; for I, the Lord have decreed in mine anger many destructions upon the waters . . . by the mouth of my servant John, I cursed the waters. Wherefore, the days will come that no flesh shall be safe upon the waters” (D&C 61:4–5, 15). The ancients identified matter in the four elements of air, fire, water, and earth. A different angel controlled each different element starting in Revelation 7:1—air, Revelation 14:18—fire, and here, water.⁴²

Revelation 16:4 “The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers . . . and they became blood” (NTC) We see many pollutants affecting our waters. In the twentieth century, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wondered,

perhaps we are seeing even now a little trickling prelude of what John foretold as we struggle to maintain the natural purity of our rivers and seas into which great floods of contaminating chemicals and stinking refuse are poured as men seek to rid themselves of the rubbish and garbage of our so-called civilization.⁴³

In contrast to this deadly water, Jesus taught the woman at the well, “the water I give . . . will become . . . a spring of water welling up to eternal life;” and later in Jerusalem, “Whoever believes in me . . . has . . . rivers of living water . . . from within them” (John 4:14; 7:38).

Revelation 16:5–7 “I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus . . . I heard another *angel who came out from the altar saying: Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments*” (JST) The JST clarified that it was an angel not an altar who spoke. The third angel expressed appreciation for God’s eternal omniscience and righteous judgment. We all will get what we deserve. The angel’s witness also communicates evidence of God’s active and continual involvement.

Revelation 16:8 “Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire . . . and [they] would not repent” (NTC) The scorching heat severely burned the wicked, but they do not humble themselves to acknowledge God’s hand. It seems to be a matter of pride, as they do not want to give God glory. Earlier when John described the angels around the throne of God, he said they were protected from “any scorching heat” (Revelation 7:16, NIV).

Revelation 16:10–11 “The fifth angel poured out his bowl onto the throne of the beast, and its kingdom tuned dark, and they were gnawing their tongues in agony. They cursed God . . . yet they did not repent” (NTC) The plague will attack the devil’s throne or “power base of Satan.”⁴⁴ The darkness will impede Lucifer’s ability to reign. An opposite of the last plague of a scorching sun, this plague brings darkness. The excruciating pain was described earlier in Revelation 9, when out of the darkness came something that stung like a scorpion. The plague of darkness in Egypt represented the sun god, Ra, losing power. This darkness may refer to the lack of spiritual light that leaves one lost and in pain or may refer to the pollutants and natural disasters that block the sun’s light. Whatever its cause, John emphasized that the wicked will refuse to repent and “curse God,” which includes becoming atheists.

Revelation 16:12 “The sixth angel poured out his bowl into the great river Euphrates. And its water dried up to prepare the way of the kings of the east” (NTC) The plague of drought prepares for “the way of the kings.” This phrase is repeated four times in the Old Testament—always referring to wicked Israel (2 Kings 8:18; 16:3; 2 Chronicles 21:6, 13). We also find two references in Numbers 20:17 and 21:22 to a “king’s highway.” In the New Testament, the magi from the east are later referred to as kings.⁴⁵ In the past, the Euphrates River had been a barrier, but now any invasion may occur in that part of the middle east.

Revelation 16:13–14 “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon . . . beast, and . . . false prophet . . . demonic spirits who perform signs, who go forth to . . . gather them together for battle” (NTC) Three unclean spirits came from Satan’s trinity: the devilish dragon, his servants the beasts of the sea, and beast of the land (the latter was also a counterfeit horned lamb, now called a false prophet). The three spirits were “like frogs,” which were unclean animals in the Law of Moses, but gods to the Egyptians (Leviticus 11). Were the spirits froglike because they will come in three different phases—egg, tadpole, frog—or just an unclean animal?

John pointed out that the frogs come from the mouth of the dragon. As a counterfeit of “the Word,” these spirits spread evil. These demonic spirits spread unholiness and deception. They provide false signs that delude the rulers of the whole world. They spread lies and other forms of counterfeit truth. In contrast, the Savior had a sword coming from His mouth (Revelation 1:16). A contemporary of John, the Jewish priest, general and historian, Josephus, associated evil spirits with the mouth.⁴⁶

Revelation 16:15 “I come as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and takes care of his clothing so that he does not have to walk around naked and the people see his shame” (NTC) The Lord is the “I” in this verse. He gives another beatitude or blessing for those who watch or are on guard in preparation for His Coming. They are to keep and care for their “clothing”/*himation* /“a long flowing outer garment, tunic, or robe,”⁴⁷ or possibly a sacred covering. John uses this word, *himation* /“garment” (KJV), seven times in Revelation. All of the other usages in the book are for either God’s sacred clothing or represent the saints’ purity through clothing (Revelation 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 19:13, 16). In the restored Church, the saints also have sacred clothing that they are to keep and wear night and day.

The Lord’s blessing is that they will not be “be shamefully exposed” (NIV) or indecent. In the Jewish world, being naked was horrendously humiliating. The clothing may also denote the Hebrew roots for “atone”/*kaphar* /“to cover.”⁴⁸ God will bless those who keep the covering of the Atonement and not be ashamed at His Coming.

Revelation 16:16 “The spirits gathered the kings together at . . . Armageddon” (NTC) The froglike spirits work for Satan, but it all fits into God’s plan for the great last battle to be held at Armageddon. Traditionally, the location

is 60 miles north of Jerusalem, at the base of Mount Carmel, between Galilee and Samaria. The valley that surrounds it has the most fertile plains in Israel also known as the Jezreel Valley. It was the location of many ancient battles from the Old Testament (i.e. Zechariah 12:10–11).⁴⁹ Yet, this may not be what John meant, as it can also be translated, “his fruitful mountain,” which may refer to other places, including Jerusalem.⁵⁰ We will have to wait to know. The Book of Mormon also refers to the great battle to come (1 Nephi 22:16–19; 2 Nephi 27:1–3).

Revelation 16:17–18 “The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’ And there were lightning bolts . . . and also a great earthquake” (NTC) This is the fifth time an earthquake is mentioned in the Book of Revelation, but this one is the most destructive. The seventh plague includes the worst natural disasters the world has ever known. Yet, they are all carried out under the miraculous timing of God’s direction from His throne. We learn in modern revelation that this earthquake is so large that it will split the Mount of Olives and the glorified Jesus will convert the Jews there (D&C 45:48–53).

Revelation 16:19–20 “The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell . . . Every island disappeared and no mountains were found” (NTC) The great city is probably Jerusalem, but it sounds as though all nations will be affected by the earthquake, as well as by horrific geographic destructions (also mentioned in D&C 133:21–24). The islands and mountains change. The Greek can be interpreted as they “ceased to exist as continents shifted and consumed them.”⁵¹ Across scripture Babylon symbolizes worldliness, pride, and self-gratification. Finally, this division destroys her.

Revelation 16:21 “Large hail stones weighing about ninety pounds fell from the sky on people, and they cursed God . . .” (NTC) Unlike the hail that plagued Egypt under Moses, these stones of ice will weigh “a talent” or between 75 and 90 pounds each. We also read of similar violent natural disasters in Daniel 12:1, D&C 84:118, and 133:21–25. It may not be hail as we know it. John’s point is that the wicked people will receive a harsher judgment than ever imagined. It will bring all to their knees—but they will still curse God. They will not repent because they love the things of this world.

Brigham Young explained: “God has given us the things of this world to see what we will do with them.”⁵² Hugh Nibley added,

The test will be whether we will set our hearts on the four things that lead to destruction. Whoever seeks for (1) wealth, (2) power, (3) popularity and (4) the pleasures of the flesh, anyone who seeks those will be destroyed says the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 22:23, 3 Nephi 6:15). Need we point out that those four things compose the whole substance of success in the present-day world? They are the things that money will get you.⁵³

To avoid this satanic trap, we must live the principles taught in the Doctrine and Covenants on the Law of Consecration (D&C 42:30–36, 55; 104:13–15). As saints, we are asked to give of our time, energy, and substance to those in need. The underlying principle is that the earth is the Lord’s and we need to act as stewards of His property for everything He gives us. We are accountable to Him. We can either choose to serve Him and share His gifts, or we can pretend they are ours.⁵⁴

REVEALTION 17–19

John’s greatest emphasis falls on the years right before the Second Coming of the Lord. The Lord gives him more symbols of selfish satanic decadence in the character of the whore. John described her in chapter 17 and her destruction at Jesus’ triumphal Second Coming in chapter 19. The satanic images of the beasts, whore, and Babylon are a composite or all ungodly forces that work under the direction of Lucifer. They work together at times to attack God’s truth, and then they destroy each other. In this section, John offers his interpretation as he narrates his visions.

The Whore Rides on the Devil-Beast

Revelation 17:1–5

Revelation 17:1–2 “One of the seven angels . . . spoke . . . ‘Come, let me show you the condemnation of and punishment of the great whore that sits on many waters . . .’” (NTC) Early we learned that the “woman” represented the Church (Revelation 12:1), and now we are introduced to her opposite or counterfeit: “the Great Whore.” The woman had a son, while the whore is barren. The whore represents satanic forces and the mother of harlots and abominations as the symbol of Babylon (which is the opposite of Zion). She rides on another beast. All of these beasts seem to overlap as satanic forces on the earth. We are not told if this beast is the fiery dragon who was described earlier as the devil with seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 12:3; 13:1).⁵⁵

When Nephi’s vision of the tree of life developed into the history of the world, he, too, saw “the whore.” Nephi does not describe the beast but focusses on the whore as the “church of the devil.”

Whosoever belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth . . . and she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters (1 Nephi 14:10–12; also see 22:22–23; 2 Nephi 10:16).

Both Nephi and John are consistent in describing the whore as personified wickedness, not as an institution. Revelation 17:15 explains that the “waters” here represent the peoples of the earth. She inebriates them with the vices of the devil and by abusing the Lord’s Church.



Above: The Whore Babylon, Revelation 17:1-18, ca. 1530–1532. Painting by Matthias Gerung from the Ottheinrich Bible via Wikimedia Commons.

In Revelation there are only two ways: following God or following Satan. In the Book of Revelation, it is always black or white.

Revelation 17:3–4 “He carried me in the spirit to a deserted place, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet-colored beast that was filled with blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns . . . dressed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls, with a gold cup in her hand . . .” (NTC). A deserted place is barren and has no life. John described the whore’s clothes and the beast with the colors of scarlet and purple. Isaiah described sin with the color “scarlet” (Isaiah 1:18). At the time of John, red and purple were expensive dyes, and thus were the colors worn by royalty, the elite or the wealthy (Matthew 27:26–28; Hebrews 9:19).⁵⁶

We see the whore's forgery as she mimics temple attire. The stones may also counterfeit the high priest's breastplate filled with twelve stones (Exodus 28:15–20). The gold cup “filled with abominations” and sexual obscenities, mimics the gold cups used for wine offerings before God (Exodus 25:29). The great counterfeit is trying to appear like the great priest or king, but it is all a sham. The whore wears signs of wealth and worldliness but she is barren and can only go where the devil takes her. Sadly, nearly the entire world follows the whore “committing economic, political, and religious immoralities for both pleasure and gain.”⁵⁷ She is alive and well in our society.

Revelation 17:5 “On her forehead was written, ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Whores and of the Abominations of the Earth’ (NTC) Six hundred years before John's time, the nation Babylon conquered Jerusalem and most of the Mesopotamian world. After that it became a figurative word for all wickedness and worldliness. The whore represents a secular secret society and that which nurtures it. In our day she represents pornography, human trafficking, drug cartels, and other deceitful and dishonest peoples and practices.

Revelation 17:6 “I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints . . . martyrs of Jesus . . . and I was greatly amazed” (NTC) John had to observe the filth and insanity of it all, including the devil's attacks on the righteous. The Whore is drunk, representing the inebriation of sin. Sin, like alcohol and drugs, has the ability to alter peoples' minds to keep them from seeing its foolishness.

Angel's Explanation

Revelation 17:7–13

Revelation 17:7–8 “The angel said to me, ‘Why are you amazed? I will tell you the mystery . . . the beast . . . is going . . . to destruction . . . because he was, and [now] is not, and will come’” (NTC) While John is trying to understand all this, his angelic guide offers an explanation to the symbolism of the vision. The angel works backward starting with the beast in verse 8 and ending with the whore in verse 18.

John learns of another henchmen for Satan who will go to Perdition. It shares characteristics with the seven-headed, ten-horned beast from the abyss in chapter 13. The beast again opposes Christ, as an anti-Christ. John highlighted the differences between the beast and Christ by using similar phrases to contrast them:

- “The beast . . . was, and is not, and yet is” (Revelation 17:8)
- “Him which is, and which was, and which is to come” (Revelation 1:4).

We learn that even though the beast will be gone for a period, he will come back, “yet is.” While Jesus will return in glory for His Second Coming, so, too, the diabolical work of Lucifer will return after the Millennium. But that beastly force is only a brief reality; God has him under His control. Jesus, on the other hand, will eternally reign as “King of Kings” (Revelation 17:14).

“Whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world” (NTC) The Book of life has two meanings in scripture:

1. Figuratively, the Book of Life “is the complete record of one’s life, the sum total of thoughts, words, and deeds written in the soul, of which the Lord will take account in the day of judgment.”⁵⁸
2. Ultimately, it records only those names who qualify for exaltation through the Lord’s sealing.

Christ will record the names of those who have been sealed by this great gift of God.⁵⁹ Completing one’s saving ordinances is not enough, as “the Holy Spirit of Promise” will not ratify those who break their covenants (Ephesians 1:13; D&C 132:7, 18–19, 26; etc.). Those sealed learned to avoid the “beast’s allures,” with practice and developing spiritual sensitivity from valiant efforts in both the first and second estates.⁶⁰

Revelation 17:9–10 “This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come” (NIV) The angel gives John a clue on how to understand the beast, but not an answer. We still must ponder, pray, and study to understand. Since Rome is built on seven hills, many have interpreted this as Rome. It may also be symbolic of complete corruption of the world centers or high places.

Revelation 17:11 “the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (KJV) Many identify this beast as Domitian, the eighth Roman Emperor. But, by using the broader timing of seven thousand years of history as D&C 77 outlines, there are many other options. It may refer to a group or ideology rather than a specific person.

Revelation 17:12–13 “the ten horns . . . are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast” (KJV) Horns represent “power.” These powerful things are unified together, all receiving their strength from the beast. As these they have no kingdom, I assume they are philosophies or theories that Satan empowers, not leaders of nations. Their day of glory is short lived, or it is at least a limited time, as their unity includes a hatred of Christ.

ANGEL’S EXPLANATION

17:8 —The beast . . . shall . . .

17:9 —The seven heads are . . .

17:12—The ten horns . . . are

17:15—The waters . . . are . . .

17:16—The ten horns . . . shall

17:18—The woman . . . is . . .

The Victory of the Lamb

Revelation 17:14–18

Revelation 17:14 “They will make war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will triumph over them . . . and He will be accompanied by His called and chosen and faithful ones” (NTC) The victorious forces include all those who have been faithful. The prophet Joseph Smith learned who are the called and chosen ones:

There are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . . only upon the principles of righteousness. . . . It is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen (D&C 121:35–40).

This definition fits exactly into the message of the vision— aspiring for things of the world is working for the anti-Christ, not the Savior.

Revelation 17:15 “The waters you saw . . . are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages” (NTC) The angel gives an all-encompassing interpretation of the waters as all the inhabitants of the earth. In the OT, waters often represent chaos (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 18:16; 29:3; 32:6; 77:19; etc.).

Revelation 17:16–17 “The ten horns and the beast that you saw will hate the prostitute. . . . For God has put it into their hearts . . . to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled” (BSB) The wicked fight the wicked—an interesting paradox. As mentioned previously, power is represented by the horns that grow from this devilish thing, yet the horns shall turn on the whore and help to destroy her. An old proverb says that there is no honor among thieves, meaning that though thieves may be allies for a time, in the end they will steal from each other. In the same way, those who do the work of the devil often turn on each other.

John explained that God allows and even directs this destruction. He will “put it into their heart,” to foster them to become “united in their purpose” to “give their kingdom to the beast” (NTC). This way the saints do not need to fight because they will be safe in Zion (D&C 45:68–70; 115:6; 124:36). God directs the boundaries and direction of the destruction. However, God does not cause wickedness. The Book of Mormon teaches that by the wicked, the wicked are punished (Mormon 4:5). Also, Satan will abandon his followers at the last day, but God will open another way for them to repent (Alma 30:60).

Revelation 17:18 “The woman . . . is the great city which holds royal authority over the kings of the earth” (NTC) This refers to the whore, the “mother of harlots,” who sat on the scarlet beast wearing all the riches of the

world (note that cities are always female in Hebrew). She represents many forms of wickedness and ideologies more than a person or place. Whatever she is, avoid her.

REVELATION 18

Two Angels Direct the Destruction of Babylon, after the Saints are Warned to Leave

Revelation 18:1 “I saw another angel descending from the sky having great authority. And the earth was illuminated by his glory” (NTC) A glorious and powerful “celestial messenger” opens the next vision or section. John Taylor described it: “A light bursts forth from the heavens; a celestial messenger is deputed to convey to men tidings of salvation.”⁶¹ This angel acts under the authority of God’s priesthood or shared power. God’s power will bless his angelic messengers and all who receive His light. God blesses all His mortal and immortal messengers and servants with the gifts and fruits of His Spirit—faith, hope, charity, visions, healings, miracles, and the like—male and female, young and old (D&C 46:8–30; 88:7–13; Galatians 5:22–23; etc.).

Revelation 18:2–3 “He shouted with a loud voice saying . . . ‘Babylon the Great has fallen, and has become the dwelling place of demons . . . the merchants of the earth have grown rich through her excessive luxury’” (NTC) The first angel loudly proclaims that Babylon is fallen. It no longer refers just to a city, but all that is the opposite of Zion. Babylon represents all the contamination through worldliness. It is where the unclean live—where millions of people starve while others spend millions of dollars on luxurious excess.

Revelation 18:4–5 “I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, O my people so that you will not take part in her sins, so that you will not share in her plagues . . . God has remembered her crimes.’” (NTC) All are given the opportunity to leave the wickedness of the world (a place of pride, money, insatiable appetites, and corruption), in favor of living God’s laws in the city of Zion. For the time being, we are to build up Zion in our stakes scattered across the world. This call may refer to the final gathering of the righteous geographically. In the last days we will be called to leave the cities of the world before their destruction and form a city of Zion. The same call is referred to in D&C 133:5, 7, 14. “Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord . . . Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon.”

Revelation 18:6–7 “Render unto her as she herself has rendered . . . a double portion . . . of suffering and grief. Because she says in her heart, I sit enthroned as a queen” (NTC) When God determines that Babylon is ready or ripe for destruction, her punishment will parallel how she lived. In April 1899, Elder Brigham Young, Jr. warned:

Hear it Latter-day Saints—you are cultivating the spirit for the whole world. Not for you and your posterity, but for all of the children of men whom God has placed here. You have come out of the world, not to bring Babylon with you. But people have come here from Babylon and are among the Latter-day Saints with their sins and filth, and we gather it up by the handfuls, sometimes to the extinction of that power that God has placed in every man.⁶²

It is far worse today. The saints must be careful not to bring Babylon into our lives through our Sabbath practices, media, time, etc.

Revelation 18:8 “In a single day plagues will come upon her—death and sorrow and famine—and she will be consumed by fire, because mighty is the Lord God who judges her” (NTC) Babylon that lived in luxury will suddenly receive God’s vengeance. Her collapse will be in “a single day”— meaning quickly. D&C 64:24 adds, “For after today cometh the burning . . . and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.”

Three Lament Babylon’s Fall: Kings, Merchants, and Maritime

Revelation 18:9–19

Revelation 18:9–10 “The kings of the earth who committed fornication with her and lived with her in luxury will weep and mourn” (NTC) Figuratively speaking, we commit fornication when we break covenants, live in sin, or live with pride, greed, and opulence. The kings will look at its speedy fall and burning in fear. We will see a similar pattern of destruction that we find in the Book of Mormon, where the wicked work through “secret combinations,” or societies of corruption (Ether 8:14–26). Wickedness never was happiness (Alma 41:10).

Revelation 18:11–16 “The merchants of the earth weep . . . because no one buys their cargo . . . gold and silver . . . pearls, fine linen, purple, silks . . . wine, olive oil, fine flour . . . human lives . . . fruit . . . laid waste” (NTC) In opposition to the heavenly city of eternal rewards, the counterfeit Babylon is where one tries to gain wealth through selfish desires (Revelation 17:4; and Nephi refers to Babylon as the “the great and abominable church,” 1 Nephi 13:7–8). The problem with seeking for wealth is that it easily erupts beyond the desire to meet one’s needs, to levels of insatiable craving to flaunt itself and to seek for power.

John included “slaves” in his list of abominable luxuries. One third of the Roman Empire, and one half of its large cities were populated with servants and slaves. Draper and Rhodes observed: “It is of note that with the exception of Rome, Asia Minor—the area in which the seven churches were located—had the heaviest slave triad in the Roman Empire”⁶³ Our generation continues to battle with human trafficking and societies that degrade humanity to the level of livestock. John’s use of “fruits” is figurative for the “good things of life.”⁶⁴ John listed nearly every imaginable luxury from his day. Our list would be much longer.

If the Lord's people selfishly seek riches or worldly possessions, they break His law. The Lord instructed ancient Israel, "Neither shall [you] greatly multiply to [your]self silver and gold" (Deuteronomy 17:17). God commanded Israel to seek Him rather than the riches and carnality of this world, including every wicked practice.

Revelation 18:17–19 Every ship's captain and every sea traveler . . . cried out . . . weeping and mourning . . . for in a single moment she has been laid waste" (NTC) John first described those who sought wealth by land, and now by sea. Most trade occurred in the ancient world via the seas and rivers. But, in a short time, God will burn all the great wealth and wickedness of the earth. The ancients of John's day expressed their remorse or mourning by throwing "dust on their heads."

The Great Rejoicing

Revelation 18:20–24

Revelation 18:20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven and you saints, apostles, and prophets for God has given judgment against her for you" (NTC) In contrast to the mourning of the money makers, the saints on earth and in heaven rejoice at the destruction of Babylon. Unlike the wicked, the righteous can rejoice when God's judgments are manifest. The meaninglessness of materialism will end. Babylon is the great counterfeit of God's plan: "Men mistook lust for joy, sought happiness through possessions, and pursued security through materialism."⁶⁵ Babylon is the kingdom of the devil, so it cannot be converted, but her prideful lusts and tempting falsehoods must be destroyed.

This section opens and closes in harmony with Jeremiah's prophetic rejoicing over Babylon's destruction (that occurred under Cyrus the Persian King in 539 B.C.).

JEREMIAH 51:48

"Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD."

JEREMIAH 51:49

"As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth."

REVELATION 21:20

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her"

REVELATION 21:21

"Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all"

Revelation 18:21 “A mighty angel picked up a stone, like a large millstone and threw it into the sea saying, **‘Thus Babylon, the great city, will be violently thrown down, and will no longer be found’**” (NTC) The figurative millstone, repenting a half ton or more of weight, not only speaks of the strength of the angel, but also the destructive power and immediacy of God’s action against Babylon. The book of Revelation has led up to this point—the fall of Babylon in the last days—at least six times (see Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). The D&C also discusses Babylon’s fall (see D&C 1:16; 35:11; 64:24; 86:3; 133:14). Old Testament prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah also included similar denunciations against Babylon (Isaiah 13:1, and Jeremiah 51). In the Book of Mormon, Nephi’s vision was similar, except that Babylon is referred to as “the great and abominable church” (1 Nephi 14:15–16; 22:14). God promised “the covenant people . . . who were scattered upon all the face of the earth” redemption even if it required heavenly power and fire (1 Nephi 14:14; 22:17).

Before the Savior institutes His millennial reign, He must first cleanse the wickedness, for every knee will bow and every tongue confess, with thankfulness, that Jesus is the Christ (Isaiah 45:23; Mosiah 27:31). He will claim His own and reject those who have opposed Him (Malachi 4:1–3; 2 Thessalonians 2:6–10; 1 Nephi 22:23–26; see Jesus Christ: Second Coming of Jesus Christ).

Revelation 18:24 “. . . trumpeters will never be heard . . . lamplight will no longer shine . . . In her the blood of prophets and saints was found and all of those who have been slaughtered on the earth” (NTC) This is the third time John used the phrase, “blood of saints,” as though the martyrs’ blood cries to the Lord for vengeance against their murderers (Revelation 16:6; 17:6; also see Mormon 8:27; Ether 8:22; and D&C 87:7). It indicates that a murder that takes one’s life requires God’s justice. Killing the saints and prophets may also refer to killing spiritual sensitivities. Those who promote ideas that deaden people’s sensitivity to truth will also be met by God’s justice.

REVELATION 19

A Hymn of Praise: Fourfold Hallelujah Over Babylon’s Fall

Revelation 19:1–8

Revelation 19:1–2 “I heard a loud sound like a large crowd in heaven saying, **‘Hallelujah! Salvation, glory and power belong to our God. For his judgments are true and just . . .’**” (NTC) The great rejoicings from chapter 18 continue on as a beautiful hymn of adoration for eight more verses. John included “Hallelujah” four times in this hymn (Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6), which represents the whole earth praising Him.⁶⁶ This the only place in the New Testament that this is found. The word is borrowed from Hebrew, meaning, an “adoring exclamation” or “praise God”⁶⁷ It is made up of two roots: “praise”/halal, and a suffix of God’s name abbreviated: Yah[weh] or Jah[ovah]! The word is used by the heavenly hosts to praise God for His gift of salvation, and then for His “true and just” judgments.

Revelation 19:3–4 “A second time they said, ‘Hallelujah! The smoke goes up from her for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders and the four animals fell down and worshipped . . . Amen. Hallelujah!’” (NTC) The smoke may come from the burning of Babylon’s fires, as the Old Testament and New Testament use fire to represent God’s judgment (Isaiah 34:10, 66:24; Jeremiah 4:4; 17:27; Matthew 18:8; 25:41; Mark 9:43, 48; etc.) or it may reference the smoke/prayers from the temple incense (Psalm 141:2; Leviticus 16:12–13). Those around God’s throne (Revelation 4–5) fall down and add their praise and approval and witness, with a choral or chanted, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

Revelation 19:5 “A voice came out of the throne . . . ‘Praise our God all ye his *saints* . . . both small and great” (JST *italicized*) The voice of the Lord came from His throne, commanding His servants all to praise God. The JST change “servants” to “saints,” speaks of what it means to be a “saint.” During Jesus’ ministry He set the example as one who served. He was born to serve His Father, and He asked His disciples to likewise and become the servants of God. It is through our service to Him that we become saints. The least shall become the greatest (Matthew 19:39; Mark 10:31; Luke 9:48). The heavenly hosts respond to His call to offer praise.

Revelation 19:6–7a “I heard a sound . . . of loud thunder saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord God Almighty has begun to reign. Let us rejoice . . . give glory to him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come” (NTC) All rejoice that the Marriage Feast is approaching. Christ is the groom and the Church is His bride. Jesus taught two parables that seem to teach of this event (Luke 14:16–24; Matthew 22:1–14).

Revelation 19:7b “His bride has prepared herself” (CSB) The point that John made is that the wife/bride/church is finally ready. Jesus reigned in heaven before and after His mortal life. But, the timing of His reign on earth depends on when the bride or His people are ready to receive Him. This is why the timing of Lord’s Second Coming could be cut short in righteousness. At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph plead with the Lord to help with “the gathering of thy people” so that Zion “may roll on in great power and majesty, that thy work may be cut short in righteousness” (D&C 109:59; also 52:11). The prophetic call to keep the Sabbath holy, to learn how to receive personal inspiration from the Spirit, to study the Book of Mormon, and increase our temple worship is all part of this preparation, to cut short the work through righteousness. The earth is plenty wicked, but Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught what is “crucial for the Lord’s return, is the presence on the earth of a people prepared to receive Him at His coming.”⁶⁸ The saints are not ready to receive Him now.” President Nelson similarly implored: “Do the spiritual work to find out for yourselves, and please do it now. Time is running out.”⁶⁹ Once the saints are worthy of their King, He can come again to the marriage supper.

Revelation 19:8 “To her it has been granted to be clothed in splendid, pure linen. For the linen is the righteous deeds of the saints” (NTC) The bride is “granted”/*edothel* “bestowed,” or “given” (BSB) or “permitted” (WNT) to wear special clothes. She is “clothed”/*periballól* “invest” (as in initiation investiture)⁷⁰ in “utterly clean

and brilliantly white” clothing of fine white linen—made from the righteousness of the saints (as in Revelation 6:9–11).⁷¹ In Israelite temples, the priests wore white linen robes, and the High Priest was dressed in a similar garment for the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 17:4). The two probably represent those who have been cleansed by the Savior so that their sins are also “white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). The bride’s white linen contrasts symbolically with the whore’s red and purple robes.

The Marriage Supper of The Lamb

Revelation 19:9–10

Revelation 19:9 “He said to me, ‘Write. “Blessed are those who have been invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb” and he told me “these words are true and of God”” (NTC) The angel who acted as John’s guide (Revelation 17:1), instructs him to record the vision and testifies of its truthfulness. The angel’s message includes another beatitude or blessing for all those who have received a wedding invitation. It signifies that they are worthy to come. Covenants were often tied to feasts in the ancient world.

We learn in modern revelation that the marriage of the Lamb is to take place in the New Jerusalem on Mount Zion. The feast is for the House of Israel. The rich and learned, wise and noble will be invited, then the poor, lame, blind, and deaf will come (D&C 58:6–12). At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed that we would be prepared to rise and meet Christ. In preparation, our garments are to be pure, with palms in hand and crowns (D&C 109:72–26).

Revelation 19:10 “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, ‘Look, do not do that! I am your fellow servant and one of the brethren who have a testimony of Jesus. Worship God” (NTC) John was so overwhelmed that he fell to worship the angel who was showing him the vision. The angel immediately redirects John’s worship to God and Jesus, the Anointed One. Being less familiar with angelic beings, Nephi also made this mistake.

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (NTC) This is the only time in the Bible that the phrase, “spirit of prophecy” is used. The phrase became a favorite of the Prophet Joseph Smith and he used this verse to teach that all who testify with the Spirit, that of Jesus as the Christ have the spirit of prophecy. It is used seventeen times in his translation of The Book of Mormon,⁷² twice in the Doctrine and Covenants, and ten times in Joseph’s History of the Church⁷³ (with four more occurrences of a slight variation, “spirit of prophecy and revelation”).⁷⁴ Four of those references occurred on January 1, 1843, in response to the Illinois State Legislature’s request for Smith to define a prophet:

If any person should ask me if I were a prophet, I should not deny it, as that would give me the lie; for, according to John, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; therefore if I profess to be a witness or

teacher, and have not the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, I must be a false witness; but if I be a true teacher and witness, I must possess the spirit of prophecy, and that constitutes a prophet; and any man who says he is a teacher or preacher of righteousness, and denies the spirit of prophecy, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and by this key false teachers and imposters may be detected.⁷⁵

A witness of Jesus Christ is one of the most important roles of the Holy Spirit. The Restoration emphasized that this divine revelation was available to all seekers.

Another Vision: The Divine Rider on the White Horse

Revelation 19:11–16

Revelation 19:11 “I saw the heavens opened, and there was a white horse, and he who rode on it is called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and makes war” (NTC) This is a new vision that depicts the Savior riding on a conquering animal of war. When Jesus first came to the world, He came as a baby in the pastoral town of Bethlehem and arrived in Jerusalem on a peaceful domestic donkey. He died as the “suffering servant” described by Isaiah.⁷⁶ But, at His Second Coming, He will ride a horse. The horse was the animal of warfare in the ancient world, and He then comes as the conquering Messiah. His horse is appropriately white (just like Adam/Enoch’s in Revelation 6:2). The two names for the rider are capitalized in most English versions as “Faithful and True,” assuring us that the rider is Christ the Lord.

Revelation 19:12 “His eyes were a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems, and he had a name written which no one but he himself knows” (NTC) The conquering Redeemer is wearing so many crowns that the Greek suggests “John could not count them.”⁷⁷ His crown or diadem, now focuses on His political power and authority. In the Prophet Joseph Smith’s vision after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, he described Jesus’ eyes similarly: “His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters” (D&C 110:2–3).

These symbolic statements teach us important truths about Christ: He is the source of light—even controlling such great powers as the sun. He is omniscient and will come forth with great judgments on the earth. Eyes can represent knowledge (D&C 77:4). “Flame of fire” also describes brilliant glory. The “new name” (Revelation 3:12) may be referred to again here as a name that no one knows.

Revelation 19:13 “And he was dressed in a robe dyed with blood, and his name is called ‘The Word of God’” (NTC) In restored scripture, we have even more on the Savior’s Second Coming where “the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat” (D&C 133:48, see verses 46–51). The Greek word that John used for dyed or “dipped” (KJV) is “*baptó* . . . a primary verb; to overwhelm, i.e. cover wholly with a

fluid.”⁷⁸ Interestingly, it is related to the verb, “baptize.” During His mortal ministry John and his older brother James asked Jesus if they could sit by Him in heaven, and Jesus responded: “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Mark 10:38). Perhaps this vision gave John a better feel for what the baptism of Jesus entailed.

Five times in Revelation, John used the phrase, “word of God”/*logos* (Revelation 1:2, 9; 6:9; 19:13; 20:4). Only here is it a proper name as it is at the opening of his Gospel (John 1:1).

Revelation 19:14 “**The armies of heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in pure, white linen**” (NTC) Those servants and disciples who will come with Christ at the time of His Second Coming will also be on white horses clothed in their covenant clothing symbolizing their righteousness or “righteous deeds” (Revelation 9:8). They are soldiers on the “front line” as it were. Yet, this war will not be fought with arms, but with the power of God’s priesthood.

Revelation 19:15 “**Out of his mouth *proceedeth the word of God, and with it he will smite the nations: and he will rule them with the word of his mouth; and he treadeth the winepress in the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God***” (JST *italicized*) John described the “word of God” with the strongest weapon known at the time, the two edged Gladius. God’s word is even stronger and can cut all nations (also see Hebrews 4:12; D&C 64:23–25; etc.).

Isaiah prophesied Messianically with similar images, and emphasized the humble nature of the Son of God’s servitude: “He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword . . . and said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isaiah 49:2–3). His righteous power and strength enabled Him to be the best servant ever to live. We, as His disciples, seek the same divine profession, “servants of God” (1 Peter 2:16).

The JST changed that Jesus will rule the nations “with the word of his mouth,” rather than with a “rod of iron.” In the NTC, Draper and Rhodes translated this: “he himself will shepherd them with a rod of iron,” or the Good Shepherd ruling with “a strong shepherd’s crook” (John 10:11–18).⁷⁹ With His words, the Word treads the winepress with God’s “fury and wrath” (NTC). The JST changed the preposition from “of” to “in,” which highlights God’s fury as the motivation to Jesus’ action. We have a powerful and passionate God, who directs the world for humanity’s “immortality and eternal life” (Moses 1:39).

Revelation 19:16 “**On his cloak and on his thigh he has a name written, ‘King of kings and Lord of lords’**” (NTC) The double title is found in Daniel 4:37, also to describe the Son of God’s power to destroy and rule. It meant “the most powerful king.”⁸⁰ Two locations of the two titles may be symbolic as well. His cloak, like a Roman citizen’s toga or a priest’s robes, were worn to identify their position and identified the nature of their

position. In addition to the angel touching Jacob's thigh during his celestial vision, during John's era, the thigh "was where the battle sword hung . . . and the place where the hand was placed in swearing an oath.... Combined, the two images suggest that judgment comes with force as a result of God's promise to His people."⁸¹

Defeat of the Beast and False Prophet by the Great God

Revelation 19:17–21

Revelation 19:17–18 "I saw an angel standing in the sun . . . saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings . . . and the flesh of all *who fight against the Lamb . . .*" (JST *italicized*) John's record continues to compare events and images—now he contrasts two feasts where the Lord will attend: the fowl devouring the wicked in contrast to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb just described (Revelation 19:9). The feast of fowls was described by Ezekiel too, "I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds" (Ezekiel 39:4; also see D&C 29:18–21). The antithesis to that vulgar scene is the "well refined" Marriage Supper of the Lamb as described in modern revelation (D&C 58:8).⁸² John's account seems to beg readers to realize that we can choose which feast to attend.

Revelation 19:19 "Then I saw the beast and the kings . . . gather together to make war against the rider on the horse and against his army" (NTC) The destruction of the wicked is a theme of much of Revelation. Satan is assisted with at least ten kings and the wicked (Revelation 17:14). The devil prepared for this battle with three froglike spirits who tempted the kings (Revelation 16:13–16). This is all part of the judgments against the wicked and God's cleansing the earth from the whore and the beast. The destruction will also allow the wicked or misguided humans to go to a different place to try again to learn and change without the false teachings of Satan influencing them.

Revelation 19:20 "The beast was captured, and the false prophet with it . . . by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image" (NTC) The Anti-Christ and their followers will be "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (KJV), which we refer to as "spirit prison" (D&C 76:73; 138:7–8, 28). The prophet Daniel also saw this: "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11). The beast and the false prophet conspire together against God, and thus will receive God's punishment. They will not be slain either, because their spirits are immortal. In the Book of Mormon, we learn that all can repent, but the unrepentant will:

- "Stand with shame and awful guilt before the bar of God" (Jacob 6:9)
- "[Have] an awful view of their own guilt and abominations" (Mosiah 3:25)
- "[Endure a] state of misery and endless torment" (Mosiah 3:25)
- "A lively sense of . . . guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever" (Mosiah 2:38)

This is why Alma taught his son, that this life is “a probationary time . . . a time to repent and serve God” (Alma 42:4).

Revelation 19:21 “The remnant were slain with the word of him that sat upon the horse, which *word proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh*” (JST *italicized*) The JST clarified that the weapon will not be a sword, but the word of Christ in judgment. No unclean thing can stand against the power of God’s word. John returned again to the image of rotting carcasses being devoured by animals. This had even more revulsion to ancient people because it “show[ed] the greatest disrespect and the utter contempt for one’s enemies and to inflict the deepest humiliation, victors refused the dead burial.”⁸³

REVELATION 20

John finally described the Millennium. He moved chronologically from the Lord’s Second Coming through His millennial righteous reign in six verses. John’s purpose was not to dwell on the era of peace, but on the preparatory era when we live. The last half of the chapter discusses the loosing of Satan; the ultimate battle of Gog and Magog and the great judgement receive nine verses.

Outline of John’s Apocalypse

VISION	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	NUMBER OF VERSES
Throne of God	1, 4–5	36
Seven Churches	2–3	51
BC 4000–1000	6:1–11	11
AD 1000– AD 2000	6:12–7:3	14
AD 2000 Last Days & Second Coming	8:1–19:2	201
Millennium 20XX–30XX	20:1–6	6
Final Scenes	20:7–15	9
Celestialized Earth	21:2–22:6	33

Satan is Bound

Revelation 20:1–3

Revelation 20:1–2 “I saw an angel come down *out of heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand . . . he laid hold on the dragon . . . the devil . . . and bound him a thousand years*” (JST *italicized*) The next angel arrives, which according to Jewish tradition was Michael.⁸⁴ If it is Angel Michael, then

we know he was Adam our forefather (D&C 88:110–112). This would be a wonderful assignment for him as he fought with Satan premortally, tangled with him again in the Garden of Eden, and then returns to bind him for the Millennium.

“Key” and “chain” are symbolic terms. Satan is only a spirit, so he will not be chained but the Book of Mormon teaches us that he becomes powerless because of the righteousness of the saints (1 Nephi 22:26). To appreciate the symbolism of “the key,” the ancients’ hand-carved their locks out of wood, or hand-forged them out of metal. They were large, bulky, and expensive. They were used only to protect valuable treasures or stores of the wealthy. Highly trusted people wore these large keys around their necks. If one saw someone with a key around his neck, one knew they had authority. This symbolism helps us understand Michael.

Revelation 20:3 “He threw him into the abyss, and he locked and sealed it over him so that he would no longer deceive the nations until a thousand years had passed. Afterwards he must be released for a short time” (NTC) Satan will be securely locked away. The “seals” in scriptures are varied and interesting. Here, I think it refers to the priesthood power of God. It is also a legal term from the ancient world. The reason that Satan will be loosed at the end of the Millennium is to give a “trial” to those who have never been tempted by Satan. Or, perhaps because the people will begin to sin again thus releasing the devil. After one thousand years, the devil will only be loosed for a “little season” (KJV).

A Millennium of Peace for those of the First Resurrection

Revelation 20:4–6

Revelation 20:4–5 “I saw some thrones, and they sat upon them and were given the authority to pass judgment . . .” (NTC) The vision changes to some sort of a throne room. Those who become judges were martyrs on earth (like John the Baptist, “beheaded for the testimony of Jesus”), and prophets of dispensations. D&C 29:12 tells us that the Twelve Apostles will come and judge “the whole house of Israel, even as many as have loved me and kept my commandments.” Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni also tell us that they will meet us at the judgement bar of God (2 Nephi 33:11; Moroni 10:34).

“and those who had not worshipped the beast nor . . . received the mark upon their foreheads and their hands” (NTC) Those who did not receive the wicked mark on their “foreheads” and “hands” in life may represent those who kept their thoughts and actions pure. The forehead may also refer to what we see, smell, and hear, or those who kept their senses pure. These pure disciples will also be resurrected and join Christ’s Millennial reign. This second group will receive one of God’s thrones at some era, as the Lord promised that all those “who overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne” (Revelation 3:21; similarly, 2:26–27; 1 Corinthians 15:23).



Cloisters Apocalypse, First Resurrection of the Dead, ca. 1330. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

“They came to life again and ruled with Christ a thousand years” (NTC) The morning of the First Resurrection will begin with Jesus and will continue for all faithful until His Second Coming. John described the Millennium in three verses (after 211 on the preparatory destruction). He is the only New Testament author to speak of this, which is why many Christians vacillate between theologies of pre- and post-millennialists.⁸⁵ Fortunately, we have more in modern revelation that speaks of this glorious day:

The graves of the saints shall be opened; and they shall come forth and stand on the right hand of the Lamb, when he shall stand upon Mount Zion, and upon the holy city, the New Jerusalem; and they shall sing the song of the Lamb, day and night forever and ever (D&C 133:56; also D&C 88:96–101).

Those who did not receive the fullness of the gospel on earth but were honorable will be included (D&C 76:71-80).

Revelation 20:6 “Blessed and holy *are they who have part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years*” (JST *italicized*) The JST changes this to the plural, which includes men and women of God. I feel it will be those members who worthily live their temple covenants, or who will when they are vicariously made for them. They will receive the attributes of the Lamb—“Blessed and holy.” It is our goal as disciples to come forth in the first resurrection (or else be “twinkled” as described in 3 Nephi 28:8; D&C 43:32; 63:51, etc.). The priests and priestess of God and Christ will reign during the Millennium. Elder Heber C. Kimball recorded a vision that Joseph Smith had, “when he saw Adam open the gate of the Celestial City and admit the people one by one. He then saw Father Adam conduct them to the throne one by one, when they were crowned Kings and Priests of God.” Elder Kimball, then summarized, “I merely bring this up to impress upon your mind the principles of order, but it will nevertheless apply to every member of the Church.”⁸⁶

The Final Battle: Gog and Magog

Revelation 20:7-10

Revelation 20:7-8 “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released . . . to deceive the nations... Gog and Magog to gather them for war, whose numbers are as the sand of the sea” (NTC) God ends the millennial era by freeing Satan to deceive again. This is one reason why the Lord taught us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation” (Matthew 6:13). The result is worldwide horror and one last battle. We saw the same pattern in the Book of Mormon (4 Nephi). The great battle before the Millennium is referred to as Armageddon, and afterwards as Gog and Magog. This will be the decisive battle from the war that began in the premortal life. Michael will command the heavenly forces and Lucifer, the devils (D&C 88:111–115). In the Old Testament, Ezekiel also described this final battle as “Gog of the land of Magog” (Ezekiel 38:2; also 39:17–22).

Revelation 20:9–10 “They went up upon the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, And fire came down . . . and devoured them. The devil . . . was thrown into the lake of fire” (NTC) God will fight our battles now and in the future. We learn that Michael/Adam will lead that last battle in D&C 88:112–115. He will fight under God’s direction. It will be God who ends the battle by a cleansing. The Adversary will be cast into the “lake of fire and brimstone” forever. This is John’s imagery for torture (seven of the eight times it is mentioned in the New Testament are in Revelation).

Brimstone is sulfur, a yellowy green, highly combustible element commonly found along the shores of the Dead Sea. The same substance is used to make matches, gun powder, paper, etc. When ignited with fire, sulfur liquefies and produces a sharp and suffocating burning odor that can desolate and kill. Apparently in those days, no harsher picture of the hellish fate of the wicked could be portrayed than that of being thrown into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.

The Book of Mormon teaches that this is just a symbol for God’s torment for those who are unfit to inherit His kingdoms of glory (2 Nephi 9:12; 28:23; Alma 12:17; Helaman 14:19; also see D&C 63:17; etc.).

The Final Judgment

Revelation 20:11–15

Revelation 20:11 “I saw a great, white throne, and one sitting . . . from whose presence the earth and heaven fled . . .” (NTC) After Satan is cast out, the scene returns to God’s white throne—probably even brighter than before as God’s glory is strengthened with His children’s Eternal life. It sounds as if heaven and earth will find a new place in space, too—either figuratively or literally.

Revelation 20:12 “I saw the dead . . . standing before the throne. And all the books were opened, and . . . the book of life . . . then the dead were judged on the basis of what was written . . . [and] their works” (NTC) All will have to stand before our Redeemer and Judge (John 5:22). The judgment will occur from the records that are kept in heaven and earth that record God’s words and our works. In addition to the record “kept in heaven” known as the Book of Life (D&C 128:17), the earthly books may include the scriptures, church records, temple recommends, tithing receipts, mission papers, journals, and histories. The Lord also explained, “whether they themselves have attended to the ordinances on their own . . . or by the means of their own agents, according to the ordinances which God has prepared for their salvation” (D&C 128:7). Obviously, there are many who were illiterate or without records, but John’s message is that all will have to be accountable (which includes our words and thoughts).

Revelation 20:13 “. . . hell gave up the dead . . . and each one was judged according to his works” (NTC) Finally, the wicked will be judged and resurrected in the Second Resurrection. The Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith that even these wicked will receive a kingdom of glory (D&C 76:81–119; also see D&C 29:26–28; 132:17).

Revelation 20:14–15 “This is the second death . . . if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire” (NTC) Perdition or the Second Death is something only those who knowingly fought against Christ will receive. It is only a problem for those who had a testimony and denied it, and those who do these things to get money will be punished, “like unto the son of perdition” (3 Nephi 29:5–8). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught it is only a condition for whom those who had the full truth are susceptible.⁸⁷ (Perdition is also discussed in Revelation 21:8; D&C 76:33; 88:35.)

REVELATION 21

Outline of John's Apocalypse

VISION	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	NUMBER OF VERSES
Throne of God	1, 4-5	36
Seven Churches	2-3	51
BC 4000-1000	6:1-11	11
AD 1000- AD 2000	6:12-7:3	14
AD 2000 Last Days & Second Coming	8:1-19:2	201
Millennium 20XX-30XX	20:1-6	6
Final Scenes	20:7-15	9
Celestialized Earth	21:2-22:6	33

The eternal drama continues to unfold chronologically as we are shown the celestial city of the New Jerusalem. God promises to bless His people in this celestial city. Another contrast unfolds as we earlier saw the mortal and flawed seven churches of Asia; we now see the eternal and perfect Church of the Firstborn in its celestial glory.

The first five verses form a chiasm with the holy city at the center (the Greek words repeat in a pattern).⁸⁸

A 21:1 New heaven and earth

B 21:1 First heaven, earth, and sea pass away

C 21:1 The sea exists no longer

D 21:2 The Holy City descends from heaven

D' 21:3-4 God dwells with His people

C' 21:4 Death exists no longer

B' 21:4 First things have passed away

A' 21:5 God creates everything new

Earth Receives Celestial Glory

Revelation 21:1 “I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and . . . earth have passed away, and the sea is no more” (NTC) John’s vision skips through galactic time to see a new celestialized heaven and earth. Although this globe is to be purified by fire and the “elements to melt with fervent heat,” it will not be

annihilated. The Lord showed other prophets this same event, “the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me” (Isaiah 66:22; also 2 Peter 3:10–13; Luke 17:39, JST). As “the flood,” cleansed the earth, symbolically baptizing it with water, so, too, a baptism of fire will make it ready for a celestialized state of righteousness. God may dwell among men to commune with them as He did before sin entered the world.

The lack of sea may be symbolic of a lack of chaos or division of unrest. The seas will be changed because “the islands shall become one land . . . and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided” (D&C 133:23–24).

Revelation 21:2 “I saw the holy city of New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride . . . adorned for her husband” (NTC) Again we see that symbolically, the bride is the righteous city, the groom is Christ, and their union is described as a wedding feast. If the timing has not reversed again, the Heavenly New Jerusalem will come after the Millennium. The Prophet Ether also wrote of this, and Moroni translated it in Ether. Restored scriptures speak of three Jerusalems: one in Israel, Missouri, and Heaven. Moses 7:62–64 describes the city of Enoch, including Melchizedek’s people, returning from heaven at the beginning of the Millennium. So, this heavenly New Jerusalem may be different.

Revelation 21:3–4 “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See the dwelling place of God with men . . . and God himself will be with them. And he will wipe away every tear’ (NTC) When this happens, we will experience the fulfilment of Christ’s name, Emmanuel, “God is with us” to the degree that God is with women and men. We assume “God” includes both Christ and Heavenly Father by D&C 76:92, “the celestial . . . where God, even the Father, reigns.” We know God created worlds without number and that He lives near Kolob, so we do know how often He will dwell on the celestialized earth (Abraham 3:3–4, 9, 16).

Revelation 21:5–8 “He who sat on the throne said . . .” (NTC) Throughout the Book of Revelation, it appears that the silent person on the throne is God the Father. If that is the case, this is the first time that He speaks. A case can be made for both the Father and Son, as He uses the same title that His Son used in Revelation 1:8 (also in 3 Nephi 9:18; and John 4). He offers seven statements (a substantial number meaning whole or complete).

1. “See, I am making all things new”
2. “Write for these words are trustworthy and true”
3. “They are done!”
4. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”
5. “I will give to those who are thirsty freely from the fountain of living water”
6. “He who overcomes will inherit these things and I will be his God, and he will be my son”
7. “But as for the cowardly . . . liars, their portion will be . . . the second death”

I appreciate the universality of the NIV translation of Revelation 21:7 “Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children” (NIV). In modern revelation both genders are referenced as well: “Sons and daughters of God” and “all that my Father hath shall be given unto him” (D&C 84:38). They “overcome” (KJV), or “conquer” (ESV) the natural man, sin, and satanic temptations.

Revelation 21:8 “. . . the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur . . .” (NIV) In contrast to the inheritors who have sought the will of the Father in all things, the damned include those who become fearful and unbelieving, murderers and liars, and all who are spiritually dead. They will not continue in their eternal progression but will be stopped (also see 2 Nephi 9:10–14; Helaman 14:15–16; D&C 76:106). Once they complete their probation, repent, and accept their Savior, they will also receive a merciful judgment and inherit a kingdom of glory, the Telestial Kingdom (D&C 76:98–113).

The Bride of the Lamb: Celestial City of Jerusalem and Church of God

Revelation 21:9–14

Revelation 21:9 “One of the even angels which had the seven bowls . . . spoke with me . . . ‘Come, I will show you the bride, and wife of the Lamb” (NTC) In the past the bride was the Church, and the bride takes on the Old Testament symbol of the city of Zion. John used an interesting literary parallel as emphasis here. In this verse, the entire opening phrase, up until, “the bride,” is identical to Revelation 17:1. The changed two verses separate their two women—chapter 17 is the whore, and here the woman is the Lamb’s bride. John’s constant contrasts help to emphasize their total opposite nature. Everything in this section is of the symbol of God’s celestialized city or Church of the Firstborn.

Revelation 21:10 “He carried me away in the Spirit onto a great and high mountain . . . the holy city of Jerusalem descending out of the heaven from God” (NTC) The Spirit transported John to a high mountain to see this portion of the vision, which also represents a spiritually high perspective. Here the *Holy Jerusalem* will come from heaven.

Revelation 21:11 “It had the glory of God. Its radiance was like a very precious stone . . .” (NTC) John describes the city in three sentences. It is filled with light—it even sounds like a Urim and Thummim type of explanation of precious stones. It symbolizes the celestialized earth in a state of constant revelation. The green color represents life, but here it is a clear crystal-like green, which represents its purity and value. Earlier, John associated jasper with God the Father (Revelation 4:2–3). In Greek “jasper” referred to a broad category of precious gems.⁸⁹ The stones represent the value of the city as a place of eternal ordinances—life giving power.



Cloisters Apocalypse, New Jerusalem, ca. 1330. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

Revelation 21:12–13 “It had a massive high wall with twelve gates . . . twelve angels . . . named of the twelve tribes of Israel. On the east . . . north . . . south . . . west three gates” (NTC) In the ancient world, walls represented the safety of a city. Here the walls receive a lot of attention, including their openings, or the city gates. Brigham Young also taught that angels guard the entrance(s) to heaven and require those who want to enter to provide “signs and tokens” before entering.⁹⁰ Each gate had the name of an angel written there with three gates on each side. John uses his numbers symbolically again—God’s order or priesthood organization (twelve), geographic wholeness (four), and the Godhead (three).

Revelation 21:14 “The walls of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (NTC) God’s bride or city has an apostolic foundation, which included John’s name on one of the twelve stones. (Mathias, Barnabas, or Paul perhaps took the place of Judas Iscariot.) Ephesians 2:20; 4:11 also speaks of apostles and prophets as the foundation of God’s church organization.

Measuring God’s City, Walls, and Gates

Revelation 21:15–21

Revelation 21:15–17 “The angel . . . held a golden ruler to measure the city and its gates and its walls. And the city was laid out as a square . . . twelve thousand stadia” (NTC) Previously, John was asked to measure the temple (Revelation 11:1). Now the angel uses a golden “reed to measure” (KJV) to symbolically show the perfect nature of the celestial New Jerusalem. The numbers represent perfection, as a perfect cube. The Holy of Holies was also a perfect cube as the math literally works out to 12,000 *stadia*, or 14,000 miles in each direction.⁹¹ That covers most of the USA, plus extends about a million stories high. That approaches three-billion cubic miles of living space in the New Jerusalem. Symbolically, it is the perfect center of a temple with space for all who choose to enter God’s presence (Mormon 9:3–5). The entire city is the temple sanctuary, because God dwells there.⁹²

Revelation 21:17–18 “Its wall . . . was one hundred forty-four cubits by human measurement . . . made of jasper, and the city of pure gold as clear as glass” (NTC) The city is secured by the symbol of twelve-squared—meaning God’s full authority and organization. The angels speak and measure in a way that can relate to people’s understanding. This would have represented the most beautiful, valuable, and amazing thing imaginable to John. It speaks of the complete security and beauty that God has provided for the inhabitants. It also speaks of purification through great heat and pressure that is required to make pure gold, polished gems, or glass.

Revelation 12:19–20 “The foundations of the walls . . . were decorated with . . . precious stone . . .” (NTC) The description of the protective wall is a foundation of fabulous colors, longevity, and value. They reflect the twelve tribes of Israel, and the high priest’s stones worn in his breastplate (Exodus 28:17–20). Another list of twelve colorful stones is in Ezekiel 28:13. Although, the three lists differ in order and a few names, they share the symbolism of a brilliant means of reflecting the Light of the World:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Jasper | 7. Crystallite |
| 2. Sapphire (lapis lazuli) | 8. Beryl |
| 3. Chalcedony | 9. Topaz (citrine quartz) |
| 4. Emerald | 10. Chrysoprasus |
| 5. Sardonyx (onyx) | 11. Jacinth |
| 6. Sardius (carnelian) | 12. Amethyst |

Revelation 21:21 “The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate being made of a single pearl. The main street . . . was pure gold” (NTC) Pearls were the most valuable gem of all at that time. To find a pearl the size of a gate is the most beautiful and valuable (see discussion from Matthew 13:46). Pearls are also the product of long suffering and polishing. Just as in the Holy of Holies, the city street is pure gold, at the same time being like “transparent glass.”

Divine Light for the City

Revelation 21:22–27

Revelation 21:22 “I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, as is the Lamb” (NTC) The city is a living Temple. All is holy. Earthly temples were patterned after the Heavenly Temple (Hebrews 8:4–5; 9:1). In God’s presence, there is no need for a special place of sacred worship.

Revelation 21:23 “The city had no need for the sun or the moon . . . for the glory of the God illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb” (NTC) God is the source of Light because He is “the power thereof by which it was made” (D&C 88:7).

Revelation 21:24–27 “The nations will walk in its light . . . the gates of the city will never close . . . and nothing unclean will come into it . . . only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (NTC) The gates will always be open and others will receive its light. John mentioned previously that only the most righteous whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life are allowed in (Revelation 13:9). Parley P. Pratt recorded his thoughts on the saints who will live in the celestial city:

A Saint, who is one in deed and in truth, does not look for an immaterial heaven, but he expects a heaven with lands, houses, cities, vegetation, rivers, and animals; with thrones, temples, palaces, kings, princes, priests, and angel; with food, raiment, musical instruments, &c.; all of which are material. Indeed, the Saints’ heaven is a redeemed, glorified, celestial, material creation, inhabited by glorified material beings, male and female, organized into families, embracing all the relationships of husbands and wives, parents and children where sorrow, crying, pain, and death will be no more. Or to speak still more definitely, this earth, when glorified, is the Saints’ eternal heaven. On it they expect to live, with body, parts, and holy passions; on it they expect to move, have their being; to eat, drink, converse, worship, sing, play on musical instruments, engage in joyful, innocent, social amusements, visit neighboring towns and neighboring worlds.⁹³

Whether or not Parley envisioned celestial life correctly, the details about life after death restored through the Prophets Joseph Smith and his nephew, Joseph F. Smith have multiplied what we learn from the Bible many times over.

REVELATION 22

John moves inside the celestial city to describe more of its paradisiacal beauty. The Apocalypse closes and Jesus speaks personally to John promising to return and offering a formal conclusion. It closes with a warning to any who alter his record.

The Waters and Tree of Life

Revelation 22:1–5

Revelation 22:1–2a “He showed me a river of living water, shining like crystal that flowed out from the throne of God and the Lamb down the center of the main street of the city” (NTC) The chapter continues with an angelic tour of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2). A crystal-clear river of water, the symbolic source of life, runs continually from the throne shared by the Father and Son. The river of living water can refer to potable water, as well as “living”/“zól”/“life”, both of physical (present) and of spiritual (particularly future) existence.”⁹⁴ In John’s Gospel, he recorded Jesus’ description of His own “living water” as a “spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:10, 13). These waters of life are also described in 1 Nephi 11:25 as God’s love:

I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.

In the Holy City, God’s love refreshes, nourishes, and gives life.

Revelation 22:2b “A tree of life extended over the river on both sides producing twelve kinds of fruit, each month . . . and the leaves of the tree are for healing the nations” (NTC) This huge tree of life, spanning both banks of the river grew twelve different crops symbolizing nourishment and abundance. The “tree of life” is mentioned thirty-six times in the scriptures and even more in legends from extra-canonical writings.⁹⁵ Nibley says,



Many hundreds of books and articles have been written on the Tree of Life as a symbol and a cult-object, but in no land on earth is the sight of a real tree, and especially a fruit-bearing one, greeted with more joy and reverence than in treeless Arabia, where certain trees are regarded as holy because of their life-giving propensities.”⁹⁶



“The Tree of Life”... A print from the Phillip Medhurst Collection of Bible illustrations in the possession of Revd. Philip De Vere at St. George’s Court, Kidderminster, England. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

It is a favorite theme from Eden. In Moses’ Tabernacle the Menorah represented a “tree of life.” In Lehi’s dream, we learn we can reach it and eat of its fruit if we hold to the “word of God” or iron rod. Jesus himself represents the Tree of life, as the presenter of Eternal Life. His cross is sometimes drawn as a tree of life. The fruit has been likened to Eternal Life. An independent biblical scholar, Margaret Barker, described an old version of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden:

The tree that had been intended in Eden for human food, was the Tree of Life, and the perfumed oil of that tree anointed humans and made them like angels—Sons of God. That was the tradition of the ancient priests in the temple, who thought of *themselves* as angels—messengers from heaven. The Tree of Life gave wisdom and eternal life, but the human pair disobeyed and chose knowledge that could be used for good *or* evil. Only then did they discover that they were barred from the Tree of Life. . . .

Satan’s deception in Eden was to imply that *both* trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, had the same benefit—that both made humans like angels. It was the disobedience that was the problem, not the state they aspired to; and, they had to be barred from eternal life because they

had disobeyed. In the Book of Revelation, this is reversed, the faithful Christian is promised access again to the Tree of Life, and this meant access to the angel-state.⁹⁷

Revelation 22:3 “No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him” (NIV) The curse may be referring to the one from Eden, or possibly a general reference: “any accursed thing” (NTC). God the Father and the Lamb will be there. Their servants will follow Jesus’ example serve God (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26; John 12:26; 13:1–17). God is often translated as a singular “him,” but in the Greek it can also be used for third person, *autos* / “them.”⁹⁸

Revelation 22:4 “They will see his face, and his name will be upon their foreheads” (NTC) Early John recorded that the servants of God were “sealed . . . on their foreheads” (Revelation 7:3, ESV; also, in 2:17; 3:12). Now we learn that the name of God is on their foreheads (which is the opposite of the counterfeit mark of the beast).

Those who served God on earth will continue to serve Him in heaven, but in the celestial city, face to face. Just as Jesus taught, it is those who serve who will be exalted (Matthew 23:12; etc.).

Revelation 22:5 “There will no longer be night . . . because the Lord God will illuminate them” (NTC) God is the source of light (see Revelation 21:23 and D&C 84:46; 88:6–13; 93:28, 36–37). This refers to multiple levels of illuminations. Those who share Christ’s light will also share in His power. When we want to receive more light and power, we must adopt His nature. His nature is filled with love; “In God, we meet love in its purest form.”⁹⁹

John and His Angelic Guide

Revelation 22:6 “The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord . . . sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place” (NIV) The “angel” / *aggelos* / “messenger” for God has also visited other servants (or prophets) to tell them of the future (also Amos 3:7).¹⁰⁰

Revelation 22:7 “I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of prophecy in this book” (BSB) The angel says “I” in reference to the Savior. This happens often in scripture as prophets speak for God. We refer to it as God’s divine investiture of authority (i.e. “Whether by mine own voice or the voice of my servants the prophets it is the same” D&C 1:38). This is the seventh beatitude that John has recorded. The whole message is finished, and the blessing promised for those who guard this sacred message.

The word “quickly” or “soon” (NIV) is not giving a time-table of the eternities from our perspective. The word also means “without any delay” or “properly.”¹⁰¹ God’s judgments and work with humanity are around us all the time or “quickly.” As mortals, it is certainly more motivating to have a deadline, even for God’s judgment. The phrase “I come quickly” is found three times in these last few verses of the Book of Revelation, and ten times in the D&C.

Revelation 22:8–9 “When I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel . . . And he said . . . ‘See here, do not do that! I am a fellow servant . . . of your brethren the prophets . . . keep the works of this book. Worship God” (NTC) John reacts as if not just the message, but also the messenger was the Lord. This is the second time he makes that mistake (Revelation 19:10). He may not have recognized the “I” was not God. But the angel immediately corrects him and identifies himself as a fellow servant. Messengers of God on either side of the veil are empowered by the same source. They carry God’s message to obey and to prepare to meet the Lord whenever His coming happens.

Revelation 22:10 “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (NTC) Unlike Nephi, Daniel, Ether, and other prophets who had this vision, John was told that he had the assignment of writing the Apocalypse for all to study. His time was nearer to the Second Coming than the other prophets who saw the vision (1 Nephi 14:24–26; Daniel 12:4, 9; Ether 3:25–27). “Time” could be translated, “the era is near,” as the Greek word for “time”/*Kairos*”fitting season, opportunity, occasion, time” has a broader definition.¹⁰²

Below: Final Judgment by Jesus, St. Isaac’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia. Photo by Espino Family via Flickr.



Revelation 22:11–12 “Let those who do evil continue . . . I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to pay to each according to his deeds” (NTC) When the time comes for the judgment, it will not be the time for repentance. However, repentance is the message of our dispensation, “Say nothing but repentance unto this generation; keep my commandments” (D&C 6:9; 11:9). When the judgement does come, Jesus will individually judge each person “according to what they have done” (NIV). The reward for the righteous will be the visitation with God.

Revelation 22:13 “I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (NTC) Even the names chosen to describe God communicate opposites. The first and last letter in the Greek alphabet express an unchanging God—a sense of eternity. Whether the Lord has come to speak, or John’s angelic guide is still relaying God’s message, the promises are the same.

Revelation 22:14 “Blessed are they who wash their robes so they will have the right to the tree of life and will enter into the city through the gates” (NTC) Significantly, this is the seventh time, “blessed are,” has been included in Revelation (Revelation 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7). The blessing associated with this beatitude is to eat from the tree of life. We wash our robes by applying the Atonement in our lives through repentance. There was an Old Testament tradition of washing one’s clothes before the Lord appeared (Exodus 19:10–11, 14; Numbers 8:7). Also, the priests washed and clothed before serving the Lord in the temple (Leviticus 8:13). The word “atonement” shares the roots of the word “cover,” which adds meaning to washing one’s clothing “in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). The Atonement allows the Lord to cover repentant saints in “robes of righteousness” (2 Nephi 9:14; 4:33).

Revelation 22:15 “Outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie” (NKJV) Outside the holy city are the unrighteous. As mentioned earlier, to the Jews, a dog was an “unclean” animal, and in most of the ancient world a despised predator or scavenger. Also, “dog” in Greek can mean, “a man of impure mind.”¹⁰³ A sorcerer is often described as a person using witchcraft, but it is also one who worked with drugs. The drug cartels are a major source of evil in our generation. These immoral liars are not welcomed into the city of God.

Witnesses, Warnings, and Exhortation

Revelation 22:16–21

Revelation 22:16 “I am Jesus who sent my angel to testify to you all concerning these things . . . I am . . . the bright morning star” (NTC) It appears that this is not the voice of the angel, but Christ Himself. When the change between angel and Lord occurred, we do not know. Jesus testified that the apocalyptic visions were given to John under His direction. John was told of his next mission, which was to testify to the early Church and share this vision with them. Whether he is to do it after his incarceration on the Isle of Patmos or perhaps from there via a letter, we are not told.

The titles that Jesus used to describe Himself are first filled with Messianic promises—the “Seed of David,” and, “the Morning Star.” He is the “star that shall come out of Jacob” (Numbers 24:17). As discussed earlier, Jesus is also the power of the sun. Yet, it is also an ironic contrast to Satan’s premortal name, “son of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12; D&C 76:26; 2 Nephi 24:12).

Revelation 22:17 “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who is thirsty come” (NTC) The Holy Spirit and the Bride (referring to God’s covenant children or the city of Zion) join as two more witnesses to invite John’s audience to come unto Christ and be cleansed by Him, to enter into the heavenly city. John’s and Moroni’s last words share this theme (Moroni 10:32). The living waters are available for free to all who want to drink enough to come unto Him! It is our true and earnest desires that led us where we go in life.

Revelation 22:18–19 “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of the book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues . . . and if anyone takes away . . . God will take away his share of the tree of life” (NTC) I do not know if this is Jesus’ or John’s warning. The severe penalties sound as if it were the Lord’s words. This verse may also speak to people within the Church who know of the Apocalypse and try to intentionally pervert it. It specifically refers to John’s scroll of the Book of Revelation. Similar warnings are also found in Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32 and 2 Nephi 29:3–14, for Moses’ and Nephi’s records. The curse for altering scripture is great because so much is at stake. Millions may be led astray, so the punishments are eternal.

This verse is often quoted as an attack against accepting the Book of Mormon as scripture. It is a misunderstanding of how the books of the New Testament were collected and canonized. Those who claim this assume John’s warning refers to adding anything to the entire Bible. Yet, none of the Epistles and Gospels were gathered into a scriptural cannon at that time. In fact, the Old Testament and New Testament were an open cannon for three centuries after John’s writing. The Bible canon was not closed until 393 AD.

Revelation 22:20a “He who is a witness of these things says, ‘Yes! I come soon.’ Amen” (NTC) This may be John or Jesus speaking, but the message is that He will come. The futuristic tense leaves the timing open for any time; and we have record of many visitations that our Savior continues to make to seeking disciples. (D&C 93:1). This message motivates disciples to prepare to for that visit whether in this life or beyond. The best way to prepare for this reunion was given by Mormon:

My beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure (Moroni 7:48).

Revelation 22:20b–21 “Come, Lord Jesus: The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all of you” John closes with his witness that the Lord is Coming. It is a phrase found in other Christian writings that expresses “the urgency of the speaker.”¹⁰⁴ In addition to praying for the Second Coming, it may also call on the Spirit, the Second Comforter, and a call for the Lord to help John or the saints. John’s epilogue voices his desire that the saints will seek to understand the Lord’s message. The best way to end all admonitions, includes a call to remember our Redeemer.

CONCLUSION

These are the last canonized words in our New Testament, but John’s voice is heard again in restored scripture. In April 1829, during the early translation of the Book of Mormon, the Spirit revealed more of John the Beloved’s conversation with the Lord while the two were still on the earth together, “he has undertaken a greater work; therefore I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth” (D&C 7:6).¹⁰⁵ The revelation notified the young Prophet Joseph that Peter, James, and John held the “power and the keys of this ministry until I come” (D&C 7:7). That message prepared Joseph to receive John the Beloved sometime between May 1829 and April 6, 1830, when the three Apostles restored the keys to the Melchizedek Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 128:20).¹⁰⁶ Three years later the Prophet Joseph also received a revelation that announced “the fulness of John’s record” would be given in the future (D&C 93:6, 18). I pray it comes soon! But even more that we will prepare as a Bride for the wedding Supper of the Lamb. Come Lord Jesus, Come!

Header Image: The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism by Gustave Dore. Modified by Jasmin Rappleye.

ENDNOTES

1. Draper, Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 429.
2. *Ibid.*, 533; “John’s second cycle of visions . . . is composed of seven distinct visions, each noted with the formula . . . ‘and I saw,’ or . . . ‘and behold.’” Ironically, in Draper and Rhodes translation, they did not include “and behold” from 12:3 that connects this first vision with the other six.
3. *Ibid.*, 83.
4. John Schmitt, “Israel and Zion, —Two Gender Images: Biblical Speech Traditions and their Current Neglect,” *Horizons*, 18 (1991), 20. In Hebrew the noun Israel is always masculine, however the translation of the Hebrew Bible into English has not always maintained the gender imagery of the manuscripts. With only one exception, Israel is always the son or people of God (Hosea 2:2, 3). The word, “Israel,” appears 2507 times in the Hebrew Bible and 2505 times the noun Israel is connected to masculine verbs and adverbs. John Schmitt, “Gender Correctness and Biblical Metaphors: The Case of God’s Revelation to Israel,” *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 26, 1996, 98-99. Usually it is the cities of Jerusalem, Samaria, and Zion—not Israel—that are described as woman, wife, or mother.
5. “Israel” is referenced in 188 verses in the Book of Mormon. Each time the gender is correct. Most of the verses that use the word “Israel” are written by the first two authors, Nephi and Jacob who were members the original family who left Jerusalem. The second most frequent usages are found in 3 Nephi where the story tells of Jesus’ visit to the inhabitants of the American continent after His resurrection. It is interesting to note that the vocabulary or usage patterns of “Israel” separates between authors, which adds credence to the claim that the Book of Mormon was written by multiple authors.
6. Strong’s #4165, <https://biblehub.com/greek/4165.htm> (accessed 12-3-19).
7. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 441.
8. *Ibid.*, 436; *TDNT* 2:281.
9. Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, 293.
10. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 437-438.
11. *Ibid.*, 444. “The wilderness church represents the righteous descendants of the ancient Saints . . . and they were hid from the world and the dragon by God. Thus, certain bloodlines were reserved.”
12. D&C 27:11; 76:25-26; 128:21; Moses 4:1-4; Abraham 3:27-28; Bible Dictionary “War in Heaven”
13. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament*, 3:518.
14. Joseph Smith, “Discourse, 8 April 1843, as Reported by William Clayton–B,” p. 6, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-8-april-1843-as-reported-by-william-clayton-b/10>.
15. There have been suggestions that time means: 360, times: 720, and half time:180, which totals1260 or 42 months or 3 ½ years. This number is used commonly in the Book of Revelation.
16. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 480.
17. “Discourse, 8 April 1843, as Reported by William Clayton–A,” p. [2], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December

- 4, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-8-april-1843-as-reported-by-william-clayton-a/2>.
18. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 186-187.
 19. “History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” p. 1523, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 4, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/166>.
 20. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 486.
 21. Gaskill, *Revelation*, 152.
 22. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 170-171 (also see 188).
 23. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 487.
 24. “Minutes, 25–26 October 1831,” p. 13, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 4, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-25-26-october-1831/4>.
 25. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 493. “This still leaves us with a problem. Christ was not slain . . . [until]the meridian of time. This is clearly a case of the *perfectum propheticum* in which the writer, by inspiration, uses the past tense to signify the assurance of the fulfillment of a future event.”
 26. *Ibid.*, 507.
 27. Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Press, 2014), 345-346, 349, 351.
 28. Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 255.
 29. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 524-53; Gaskill, *Revelation*, 163.
 30. *Ibid.*, 535.
 31. The highest number used in the KJV Bible is “thousand” times another number of lower value. For example, Psalm 68:17, “thousands of thousands.” Also we find “twice ten thousand ten thousands” (Revelation 9:16) that is the same as “two hundred million,” but the literal translations remain true to using “thousand” as their highest number. Only in modern translations do we find the numbers translated into English as million.
 32. Strong’s #3478; <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3478.htm> (accessed 12-5-19).
 33. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:196. On February 4, 1844, the Prophet indicated that “the selection of the persons to form that number had already commenced.’ By that time, Joseph had already conferred these blessings on at least 17 men” (Wilford Woodruff Diary).
 34. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1985), 640.
 35. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 566.
 36. *Ibid.*, 569.
 37. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph*, 169.
 38. D&C 6:1; 11:1; 12:1; 14:1; 76:114.
 39. Donald W. Parry and Jay A. Parry, *Understanding the Book of Revelation* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1998), 476.
 40. Genesis 15:16; Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 29:20; Matthew 10:34-36; 18:6-7; John 2:13-17; Revelation 6:16; Alma 16:9-

- 11; Mormon 4:5; 8:21; D&C 1:6-13; 59:21; 76:33; etc.
41. Bruce R. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, 394.
 42. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 604.
 43. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, 354.
 44. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 612.
 45. The “way of the kings,” may possibly refer to the future kings who come in at the Lord’s Second Coming—perhaps the people of Enoch and Melchizedek, or Jesus and His priests and kings, priestesses and queens.
 46. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii.46-49.
 47. Strong’s #2440, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2440.htm> (accessed 12/6/19).
 48. Strong’s #3722, <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3722.htm> (accessed 12/6/19).
 49. Smith’s Bible Dictionary, “Armageddon.” “The scene of the struggle of good and evil is suggested by that battle-field, the plain of Esdraelon, which was famous for two great victories, of Barak over the Canaanites and of Gideon over the Midianites; and for two great disasters, the deaths of Saul and Josiah.”
 50. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 628.
 51. *Ibid.*, 631.
 52. Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 434-35.
 53. *Ibid.*, 435. Hugh Nibley continued: “By offering ‘anything in this world for money’ and so making men competitive—competitive in a big way. He would, with the natural wealth of the earth (precious metals, coal, oil, timber, real estate), as exploited by financiers (manipulation of the money market), buy up armies and navies (they cost the most—the military-industrial complex), and leaders of nations and churches (who embody power), and rule the earth with terror (a world at war is Satan’s own dominion).”
 54. Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill, ed., *The Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context* (Provo and Salt Lake City, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book, 2008), 212–28. Steven Harpers article, “All Things Are the Lord’s: The Law of Consecration in the Doctrine and Covenants,” is an excellent resource on the subject.
 55. The number of heads and horns are similar to divine numbers but used as a deception—now seven is complete in wickedness.
 56. Ogden, 339. The purple is made from a shell fish in Phoenicia. The scarlet dye is made from eggs of an insect (*coccus ilicis*) that live in oak trees in the Holy Land.
 57. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 644.
 58. Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, “Book of Life.” 1.138-139.
 59. From 1831 to 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith received instructions about the “Holy Spirit of Promise” in seven revelations. Six of the seven describe the “Holy Spirit of promise” as a permanent sealing of saving ordinances (D&C 76:53; 88:3-5; 124:124; 131:5, 132:7, 18-19, 26). Joseph also added the phrase in his translation of 1 John 3:9. On February 16, 1832, in a powerful vision of the afterlife, Joseph learned the step-by-step requirements for receiving the Holy Spirit of Promise as recorded in D&C 76:51-56. After this revelation, Joseph became deeply interested with the idea and elabo-

- rated on its meaning in at least six sermons (see Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph*, 4, 15, 190, 209, 284, 335).
60. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 669. For more on the “Book of Life” see Revelation 3:4-5.
 61. John Taylor, *The Government of God*, 95–98. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/44941/44941-h/44941-h.htm> (accessed 12-13-19) The citation continues: “the everlasting gospel is again to be proclaimed to the children of men; The proclamation is to be made to ‘every nation, kindred, people, and tongue.’ Associated with this, was another declaration, ‘Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.’”
 62. Brigham Young, Jr., General Conference April 1899.
 63. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 703.
 64. *Ibid.*, 704.
 65. *Ibid.*, 715.
 66. The four hallelujahs can be added to the list of four seals, four horses, four horsemen, four statements from four beasts, and four accounts of the destruction before the Second Coming.
 67. Strong’s #239, <https://biblehub.com/greek/239.htm> (accessed 12-10-19).
 68. Elder D. Todd Christofferson, “Preparing for the Lord’s Return,” General Conference April 2019.
 69. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better” General Conference April 2019. “It is time to put on the full armor of God so we can engage in the most important work on earth. It is time to ‘thrust in [our] sickles, and reap with all [our] might, mind, and strength.’”
 70. Strong’s #4016, <https://biblehub.com/greek/4016.htm>; “to throw all around, i.e. Invest” (accessed 12-10-19).
 71. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 730.
 72. We find three more if you add phrases like “the spirit of much prophecy” (Jacob 1:6), or “the spirit of revelation and prophecy” (Alma 8:24; 23:6), and the variation on the theme, “the spirit of revelation and also prophecy” (3 Nephi 3:19).
 73. Smith, *History*, 1.42; 1.46; 1.64; 1.71; 2.382; 2.428; 2.489; 3.28; 3.379; 3.389; 5.140; 5.215; 5.231; 5.392; 5.400; 5.427; 5.516; 6.77; 6.194. Joseph also approved the inclusion into his *History of the Church* of eleven other references to the “spirit of prophecy” by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Sidney Rigdon, and an editorial from the *Boston Bee*.
 74. The “spirit of prophecy and revelation” is found in Smith, *History*, 1.64; 2.382; 2.489; 3.379; Alma 43:2.
 75. Smith, *History*, 5.215-216.
 76. Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-7; 52:13-52:12.
 77. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 738.
 78. Strong’s #911, <https://biblehub.com/greek/911.htm> (accessed 12-10-19)
 79. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 742.
 80. *Ibid.*, 637. In apocryphal literature and other writings from the time of the New Testament, the “title also appears in 2 Macc. 13:4; 3 Macc. 5:35; 1 En. 9:4; 63:4; 84:2; Philo, *Spec. 1.18, Decal 41; T. Mos. 8:1.*”
 81. *Ibid.*, 743.
 82. Parry, *Understanding Revelation*, 263.
 83. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 751.

84. Ibid., 754.
85. Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 312-319.
86. Hebrew C, Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, vol 9.9; <http://ldslastdays.com/celestial-city/> (accessed 12-12-19).
87. Joseph Smith, *History, 1838–1856*, volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844], 1976: “What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? he must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against him: after a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost there is no repentance for him; he has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it— he has got to deny Jesus christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints.” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed December 13, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-e-1-1-july-1843-30-april-1844/348>.
88. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 792.
89. Ibid., 806.
90. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1855), 2:31. When President Brigham Young dedicated the cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple on April 6, 1853, he taught the saints about the role of angels in connection with their endowment. “Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.”
91. A Greek *stadion* is 607 feet (used as a 600 foot sprint), or 202.3 yards. The KJV translation used “furlong” which is 660 feet, or 220 yards.
92. We also learn from Abraham 3:9 that God also lives in Kolob. We do not understand now, but perhaps without time, like the Spirit’s witness, God can be experienced as many people do simultaneously.
93. Orson Pratt, “The Saint’s Heaven,” *Millennial Star*, vol. 28, Nov 17, 1866, 722.
94. Strong’s #2222 <https://biblehub.com/greek/2222.htm> (accessed 12-10-19)
95. In a third century AD synagogue in Dura-Europos, Syria, a painting of the tree of life was found right over the main shrine. It is filled with birds and animals, bearing all sorts of fruit. The patriarch Jacob and his posterity of twelve tribes sit underneath it. They portray a father blessing two sons—probably Joseph blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, or Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau. For other examples of legends of the tree of life outside of scripture see Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 128-129.
96. Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon* (Provo and SLC, UT: Deseret and FARMS, 1988), 255.
97. Margaret Barker, “Joseph Smith and Preexilic Israelite Religion,” *The Worlds of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2006). <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/joseph-smith-and-preexilic-israelite-religion> (accessed 12-12-19)
98. Strong’s #846, “he, she, it, they, them, same;” <https://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm> (accessed 12-9-19).
99. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 837.

100. Strong's #32; "Usage: a messenger, generally a (supernatural) messenger from God, an angel, conveying news or behests from God to men." <https://biblehub.com/greek/32.htm> (accessed 12-10-19).
101. Strong's #3035; "*tachu* (an adjective, used adverbially, and derived from 5036 /*taxýs*, "promptly") – properly, *swift* (quick), without *unnecessary delay*; used of God's *promptness* characterizing how He has ordered all physical scenes of life to happen on *His perfect timetable without unnecessary "delay"* (Revelation 1:1, 22:6)." <https://biblehub.com/greek/5035.htm> (accessed 12-9-19).
102. Strong's #2540 <https://biblehub.com/greek/2540.htm> (accessed 12-9-19).
103. Strong's #2965 <https://biblehub.com/greek/2965.htm> (accessed 12-9-19).
104. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 861.
105. Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, 488-489. "Heirs of salvation are those who have been called and elected, but who still dwell in the telestial world (D&C 7:6-7; 76:88; 77:11)." Moses, Enoch's people, and other translated beings, minister to those who are now "heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).
106. My dates are broad enough to include every possibility after May 13, 1829 when Joseph received the Aaronic priesthood, and before the power of the Melchizedek priesthood was first used April 6, 1830 (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 1.74). The higher priesthood had to be restored before the gift of the Holy Ghost was first confirmed, which occurred at the organization of the church in Fayette, NY. Richard Bushman and others have found historical information that fits into the category of "The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river" (D&C 128:20). Yet I disregard with their options that fall after the first use of the Melchizedek priesthood, April 6, 1830.