

the preceding events in a list format, with only brief descriptions of each item, this passage is informing us about key events that occur *before* the completion of the harvest.

Here is the text of verses 6-13.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 **Saying** with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8 **And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen,** that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9 **And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark** in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 **And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:** Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Notice that this list of events takes the form of four beings making statements. There are three angels who each speak followed in verse 13 by a voice from heaven. Each speaker describes an event. The first angel preaches the Gospel to the people that dwell upon the earth. The second angel prophesies the fall of Babylon the great, which has *Parallel Descriptions* in Revelation 17, 18, and the opening verses of chapter 19. The third angel speaks and warns men not to accept the mark of the beast. And then, in verse 13, a voice from heaven speaks indicating a blessing for those who die in the Lord from the time the mark of the beast is initiated.

The statements made by these three angels and the voice from heaven inform us about the timeframe covered by this passage. In a previous section we discussed how the seven angels, known as the eyes of the Lord, provide the “fuel” for the ministry of the two witnesses. These seven angels are described in Revelation 1:4-5, 3:1, 4:5, and 5:6 as the emissaries of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, as discussed earlier, the Holy Spirit is the primary emissary of Jesus Christ, a fact which is clearly stated by Christ himself in John 14:17-18, 15:26-27, 16:7-15. Thus, rather than thinking the Holy Spirit’s role is usurped by these seven angels, it is more proper to think of these seven as the Holy Spirit’s deputies in his work.

Putting together the idea of the seven angels fueling the ministry of the two witnesses and acting as the Holy Spirit’s deputies, it makes sense to think of the

message of these three angels being *spoken to* and *then by* the two witnesses. Just as Daniel is at times told what to say and to write by angels (Daniel 7:15-27, 8:13-26, 9:21-27, 10:5-12:13), so we might think of these three angels as communicating the main elements of the two witnesses testimony: the preaching of the Gospel, the coming fall of Babylon, and the warning concerning the mark of the beast. As we can see from the precedent in Daniel, it is well within precedent for the prophet's message to be first conveyed to the prophet through angels, even multiple angels working together.

Furthermore, even though this message comes to the people of the earth through the two witnesses, Revelation 14 can denote that *the angels* are preaching the Gospel, or prophesying Babylon's doom, or warning about the mark of the beast, because it is their message that the two witnesses simply repeat. This is very similar to Revelation 2-3 where Jesus dictates the letters to the churches and John receives that dictation through the Holy Spirit functioning as an intermediary, and so Jesus can say, "let him hear what the Spirit saith." Even though the message came to the churches *through John*, Revelation 2-3 repeatedly denotes that the Holy Spirit is speaking to the churches *in the same way* that Revelation 14 can be interpreted to indicate that the angels speak to the people that dwell on earth even though their message comes *through the two witnesses*.

But, getting back to the point, what exactly do these statements from the angels and the voice from heaven tell us about the timeframe covered in this passage and the timing of the harvest depicted in verses 14-20?

Once we understand that the statements of these three angels provide the main three components of the two witnesses' message, we know that the completion of the harvest described starting in verse 14 occurs *after* the ministry of the two witnesses. In particular, verses 6-7 tell us that the completion of the harvest comes *after* the Gospel begins to be preached by the two witnesses. Verse 8 tells us that the completion of the harvest comes *after* the two witnesses' begin their 3 1/2 years of prophecy against Babylon the great, predicting her impending destruction. And verses 9-13 tell us that the completion of the harvest comes *after* the mark of the beast and the martyrdom of the saints, which results from it.

Moreover, the statement in verse 9 warning not to "worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark" coupled with the statement in verse 13 that "Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth" indicates that the timeframe for verses 9-13 is at the start of the mark of the beast and the martyrdom initiated by it. This tells us that the timeframe for verses 6-13 is parallel to the *Long Series* in chapter 13, which provides expanded detail concerning the same mark of the beast and the resulting martyrdom. Additionally, the parallel timeframe between chapter 13 and verses 6-13 of chapter 14 is also indicated by the fact that both chapter 13:10 and chapter 14:12 both contain the phrase, "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," regarding the mark of the beast and the martyrdom of the saints.

As we will see, the harvest described in verses 14-20 occurs at the end of the final 3 1/2 years. Consequently, the transition from verse 13 to verse 14 spans the entire 3 1/2 years of martyrdom to the point in time when the time of testing and tribulation is finished and the harvest is ready for completion. Yet, even with the 3 1/2 year fast-forward between verses 13 and 14, the purpose of the list of statements and events in verses 6-13 is to properly identify the completion of the harvest as occurring *after* these things, just as we stated earlier. With the listing of these events, concluding with the martyrdom of the saints under the mark of the beast, the backdrop for the harvest is set.

The placement of the harvest after the events in verses 6-13 let's us know that the harvest symbolizes the completion of the preaching of the Gospel and the completion of the martyrdom of the mark of the beast. Thus, once these things have occurred and run their course, the bulk of mankind has fallen into one of two camps: the faithful who have kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, and perhaps have been martyred for doing so, and the ungodly, which have worshipped the beast or taken the mark. Thus, once these things have occurred and run their course, the harvest crop is ready to be harvested, the wicked to punishment and the faithful to reward. This is why the description of the harvest in verses 14-20 includes a harvest of the godly in verses 14-16 and a harvest of the ungodly in verses 17-20.

Two paragraphs earlier, we stated that the harvest occurs at the end of the final 3 1/2 years. The first indication of this is that the harvest comes after the mark of the beast is initiated as described in verses 9-13. We know from chapter 13:5, 14-17 that the mark of the beast lasts 3 1/2 years. It would not make sense to think of the earth, both godly and ungodly men being harvested before the 3 1/2 years of the antichrist's reign, mark of the beast, and subsequent martyrdom. Thus, it seems most logical that the harvest is not only listed after the mark of the beast and martyrdom are *initiated*, but also *after* they are *completed*.

The second indication that the harvest occurs at the end of the final 3 1/2 years is that verse 14 clearly depicts the harvest accompanying Jesus return on the clouds of heaven.

Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold **a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man**, having on his head a golden crown, **and in his hand a sharp sickle**.

In Matthew 24:30-31, Matthew 26:64, Mark 13:26-27, Mark 14:62, and Luke 21:27, Jesus describes that his return will involve him "coming in the clouds of heaven" and gathering together his faithful followers to him. Likewise, in Acts 1:9-11, the disciples see Jesus ascend into heaven in a cloud and are told by two angels that he will return in the same manner. So, very early on in the New Testament, Jesus' return is connected to the specific imagery of his returning on the clouds of heaven. The use of that imagery in Revelation 14 with regard to the harvest identifies the completion of the harvest with the timing of Jesus return. However, in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, Paul states that at the Lord's return, the

living and the resurrected saints will meet him in the clouds. Clearly, Paul's teaching here is based on the earlier instructions given in Matthew, Mark, and Acts. But even more specifically, Paul states in verse 16 that this return of the Lord on the clouds will be accompanied by a trumpet. Likewise, when speaking of these events in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, Paul identifies that trumpet as the last trumpet. Lastly, in Matthew 13:34-30, 36-43 Jesus says that "the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked" (verse 38) and "Let both grow together until the harvest" (verse 30). Thus, from the comparison of these texts, we know that the harvest will accompany Jesus' return on the clouds of heaven and that Jesus' return on the clouds of heaven will occur at the seventh and last trumpet. Consequently, the harvest occurs at the end of the tribulation at the very end of the age, just as Christ Jesus is returning.

A moment should be taken to discuss when in the chronology Babylon the Great actually falls. It should also be noted that the second angel's proclamation that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," *before* the third angel describes the initiation of the mark of the beast *does not* indicate that Babylon the Great falls before the mark is instituted. If that were the case, given the 3 ½ year length of the antichrist's reign, we would expect Babylon to fall 3 ½ years before the return of the Lord and the harvest of the earth. But instead, the falling of Babylon occurs at the end of the tribulation, just before the return of Christ.

The fact that chapter 14:8's declaration "Babylon is fallen" is a prediction of an impending fall rather than a report of the actual occurrence of the fall is demonstrable in three ways.

First, the phrase "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," in Revelation 14:8 is a clear reference back to the occurrence of the exact same phrase in Isaiah 21:9.

Isaiah 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. **And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen;** and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

Isaiah is writing before the fall of Babylon had actually occurred. Thus, this statement by Isaiah that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," is a prophecy of an event that has not yet occurred but is going to occur in a short time. It is *not* a report of the occurrence of the actual fall as it is taking place. *Smith's Bible Dictionary* corroborates the assessment that this is a prediction of an impending, future fall.

"Isaiah, Book of – Chs. 13-23 contain chiefly a collection of utterances, each of which is styled a "burden," **foretelling the doom of Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Tyre.**" – *Smith's Bible Dictionary*

Since Isaiah's origination of this phrase "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" occurs as a prediction of an event that has not yet occurred, the recurrence of this same phrase in chapter 14:8 supports the notion that the recurrence is also a prediction of an event, rather than the actual occurrence of the event. As hinted earlier, verse 8 is likely to be an indication that the two witnesses have received this information

from one of the seven angels and begun their 3 ½ prophetic testimony, which includes this prophecy of the fall of Babylon the Great.

Second, Revelation 17:6, 18 and Revelation 18:1-2, 24 clearly indicate that this city, Babylon the Great, is held responsible for the martyrdom of the saints and punished on that basis. As a side note, Revelation 18 may also be a prophecy of the future fall of Babylon and in that regard it would function as an elongated form of the abbreviated parallel statement in chapter 14:8. But we will discuss that more when we arrive at chapter 18 in a later section of this study. However, Babylon's responsibility for the martyrdom of the saints is important in determining the timing of its actual fall because of the fifth seal.

In Revelation 6:9-11, the martyred saints ask God how long before he avenges their blood. In particular, their request specifies their desire for vengeance against those "that dwell on earth" who are responsible for their death. Revelation 17 and 18 clearly identify those parties with Babylon, the great city that rules over the kings of the earth. But more importantly, Revelation 6:11 indicates that the vengeance upon those responsible earthly parties *will not occur* until the number of martyrs is completed. Thus, it is impossible for Babylon the great to fall *before* the final 3 1/2 years of martyrdom under the mark of the beast. If it did, it would not be responsible for the death of all the martyrs nor would vengeance upon those who are responsible await the completion of martyrs as chapter 6:11 clearly states that it must.

Furthermore, as we discussed during our examination of chapter 11, the two witnesses do not die until 3 1/2 days before the return of Jesus Christ. Assuming that they are the last martyrs to die (and even if they are not), vengeance upon those deemed responsible, particularly Babylon the Great, cannot come until their deaths are complete just 3 1/2 days before the return of Christ.

Third, Revelation 16:17-21 clearly states that "great Babylon came in remembrance before God" and is there is given "unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" at the seventh bowl.

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, **It is done.** 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. 19 **And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.** 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

The seventh seal, as we have established in more detail earlier before, coincides in timing with the seventh trumpet and the sixth and seventh seals, all of which

include overlapping references to voices, thunders, lightning, a great earthquake, a plague of hail, and every island and mountains being removed from their place, which in turn accompany the return of Christ Jesus. Thus, Revelation 16:17-21, demonstrates that Babylon falls at the very end of the tribulation, at the seventh bowl of wrath, when it is pronounced, "It is done." Consequently, Revelation 14:8's statements that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," just prior to the initiation of the mark of the beast and martyrdom, should be considered a prediction of a future event rather than a report of the actual event taking place, just as was the case in its precursor in Isaiah 21:9.

As we close this segment, we should conclude with a brief summary. As we have seen, the purpose of this *Long Series* in chapter 14:6-20 is to show the completion of the harvest analogy used by Jesus in his parables and found elsewhere in the New Testament as well as to identify when the harvest will occur in relation to other events described in the book of Revelation.

Additional Relevant Comments

It is also important to note that chapter 14's depiction of the harvest at Christ's return on the clouds also provides a direct connection of Christ's return on the clouds and the harvest to the battle of Armageddon. This is seen most plainly when the second portion of the harvest in chapter 14:18-20 is viewed side by side with chapter 19's description of the return of Christ to defeat the armies of the nations.

Revelation 14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, **Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19** And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into **the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20** And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; **and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.** 12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God.** 14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: **and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God...** 19 **And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.** 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had

received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Notice that both chapter 14:20 and chapter 19:15 invoke the imagery of the great winepress of the wrath of God. Chapter 14 denotes this in connection to the harvest at the return of Christ, yet still including a reference to the bloodshed that results from this harvest at Christ's return. Chapter 19 denotes this in connection to Christ, when he returns, making war with the armies of the antichrist. The use of this same phrase "the winepress of the wrath of God," in chapter 19, is clearly intended to refer back chapter 14 and clearly intended to identify the events of chapter 19 with those events described in chapter 14. Thus, the return of Christ on the clouds of heaven, the battle of Armageddon, the antichrist's defeat, and the harvest all occur at the same time. Furthermore, we can see chronological overlap once again, even though chapter 19 occurs more than a few chapters after chapter 14. Yet both are describing the same events while focusing on different details and utilizing somewhat different imagery.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

As is our habit, we will now take a few paragraphs to review the 8 overarching conceptual threads found in the book of Revelation. Those 8 threads were as follows.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

The impact of chapter 14 on these 8 conceptual threads is simple. With Revelation 14:6-20, we finally begin to get detailed descriptions of thread number 7, the return of the Lord and the battle of Armageddon. These items have largely been inferred or perhaps briefly referenced in the previous chapters. As we look forward, the chapters ahead will continue to provide even more details concerning these two events as well as describing conceptual thread number 8, the millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment.

Section 2.10 – Short Series: Chapter 15:1-4 The Seven Bowls, the Martyrs Complete, and the Millennium Begins

Earlier, in Section 2.03, we examined Revelation 8:2-5, a small passage spanning just four verses, which we categorized as a *Short Series*. In fact, chapter 8:2-5 was our first example of a *Short Series* in the book of Revelation. For review, below is the definition of that category.

Short Series – a few verses providing a short summary list of events in chronological order, usually without details, designed to connect elements from different segments together.

To summarize, verses 2-5 of chapter 8 began in verse 2 with a reference to the giving of the seven trumpets and then ended in verse 5 with a reference to the voices, and thunders, and lightning, and earthquake, which all occur at the *seventh* and final trumpet. Thus, verses 2-5 seemed to span the entire sequence of trumpets in just four verses. However, despite the fact that verse 5 lists events that occur *at the seventh trumpet*, verse 6 of chapter 8 specifically informs us that the trumpets had not yet been sounded. Furthermore, starting in verse 6 of chapter 8 and continuing through verse 19 of chapter 11, the Revelation provides an expanded *Parallel Description* of each trumpet concluding once again with voices, thunders, lightning, and an earthquake. Thus, we concluded that verses 2-5 of chapter 8 were simply providing a summary, chronological list of the events described in more detailed in the *Long Series* spanning from chapter 8:6 to chapter 11:19.

As we stated at the time, the purpose of this short summary, which was immediately followed by its longer counterpart, was to connect the imagery of the trumpets to the prayers of the saints during the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9-11. In addition, while the longer descriptions in chapter 8:6-11:19 provided the details surrounding each trumpet, it was this shorter summary in chapter 8:2-5, which provided the connections to the Day of Atonement, the baptism with fire of persecution, and the deaths of Aaron's oldest sons and Korah, which indicates God making a distinction between those he accepts and those he rejects, even among his own people.

And it is precisely the brevity of a summary that makes it so well suited for denoting these kinds of connections. By contrast, a *Long Series* covers so much detail already, that inserting additional connections that employ alternate imagery only adds further complexity and the potential for points to be missed or lost.

Commonalities Establishing Connection

The reason for reviewing that *Short Series* from chapter 8:2-5 here is simple. The first four verses of chapter 15 provide another *Short Series*, which performs largely the same function. Like verse 2-5 of chapter 8 provide a summarized list of events, which are described in expanded detail in the overlapping *Long Series* that follows, verses 1-4 of chapter 15 also provide a summarized list of the overlapping, expanded description that follows in chapter 15:5-16:21. And like chapter 8:2-5, the fact that it is a shorter, overlapping summary is proven by

comparing the events, which occur at the beginning and ending of the proposed summary and the proposed *Expansion* that follows.

Chapter 15:1 begins with a reference to the seven angels who have the seven bowls of the plagues.

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, **seven angels having the seven last plagues**; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

In previous sections of this study we have already established the connection between the seven angels with the bowls of plagues to the two witnesses and the plagues, which they dispense. We denoted in our examination of Revelation 11 that the two witnesses ministry of prophecy during which they dispense these plagues spans the final 3 1/2 years before the return of Christ. And so, we can see that the timeframe denoted in chapter 15:1 is the dispensing of these plagues, which at the most start 3 1/2 years before the return of Christ but at the least begin sometime within that final 3 1/2 years during the prophetic ministry of the two witnesses in those days.

Chapter 15:2 continues with a reference to those who had gotten victory over the beast, his image, and his mark.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and **them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark**, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

So, while the timeframe of verse 1 is the start of the final 3 1/2 years when the two witnesses begin to prophecy and dispense plagues and when the mark of the beast is initiated, the timeframe of verse 2 is the end of those 3 1/2 years after the mark of the beast has run its course and the number of those who were victorious over the beast is completed.

Here we see the pattern of a *Short Series*. For, as we stated, the purpose of a *Short Series* is to briefly list events without much description in order to simply place events described elsewhere in their proper chronological order. In this instance, this *Short Series* in Revelation 15:1-4 serves primarily to denote the chronological relationship between the bowls of wrath, which are about to be described in chapter 15:5-16:21, and the completion of the martyrs, promised in the fifth seal, and finished just days before the return of Christ, as we established at length already in this study.

In short, verses 1-2 tell us that the plagues dispensed by the angels occur before the completion of the martyrs. Having established the order of those two events, verses 3-4 go on to place those events in their chronological relationship to the arrival of Jesus Christ's millennial reign.

Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; **just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.** 4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: **for all nations shall come and worship before thee;** for thy judgments are made manifest.

Notice in particular what the saints say in verses 3-4. In verse 3, they refer to Jesus' kingly status. And in verse 4, they refer to the fact that all nations shall come and worship him. These are references to Zechariah 14, which describes the kingdom of God after the day of the Lord.

Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 **For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;** and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; **and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.** 3 **Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.** 4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. 5 And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: **and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.** 6 **And it shall come to pass in that day, that** the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark: 7 **But it shall be one day** which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, *that* at evening time it shall be light. 8 **And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem;** half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. 9 **And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one...** 16 **And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.** 17 **And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.** 18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that *have* no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, **and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.**

Zechariah 14:1 begins by referring to the day of the Lord, the day when the Messiah would come in triumph over the nations. The rest of the chapter expounds this concept explicitly. In verse 2, the city of Jerusalem is overrun by the Gentile nations causing a half of the Jews to escape but remain cut off from the city. This is a reference to the protection in the wilderness, which we have discussed already. But, in verses 3-11 describe how after the Jews escape from the city, the Lord will eventually come and fight for them, arriving on the Mount of

Olives and establishing his kingdom from Jerusalem. Verses 12-15 (not included in the excerpt above) describe the plague that the Lord will unleash against his opponents on that day. And then verses 16-19 go on to further describe his reign. All of this is consistent with the chronology that we have seen so far in our study of Revelation.

However, the relevant comparison to Revelation 15:3-4 occurs specifically in verse 9 and in verses 16-19. We recall that in Revelation 15:3-4, the saints who overcame the beast refer to the kingship of the Lord and they refer to the nations coming and worshipping him. These two items correspond directly to Zechariah 14. Zechariah 14:9 states that after the battle on the day of the Lord, “the LORD shall be king over all the earth” and verse 16 goes on to state that, “all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts.” It is clear that the victorious saints in Revelation 15:3-4, who have no doubt just overcome the antichrist at the battle of Armageddon, are now looking forward to the Lord acting as king over all the earth and the nations coming up to worship him, just as Zechariah 14 describes in greater detail.

So, once again, this *Short Series* is pulling together brief references to major events that are described in much more detail elsewhere, and placing them in a simple, chronological list. Specifically, chapter 15:1-4 is placing the dispensing of the plagues through the seven angels and the two witnesses before the completion of the martyrs under the kingdom of the antichrist and placing both of those events prior to the millennial reign of Christ in which the nations will come up and worship him at Jerusalem.

And because we know that these four verses end with a description of the millennial reign of Christ, we know that this *Short Series* overlaps other passages and summarizes the much larger, overall chronology. Specifically, we know that these 4 verses span from the onset of the plagues under the prophetic ministry of the two witnesses 3 1/2 years before Jesus Christ’ return all the way through the timeframes of the bowls and trumpets, which are also completed at Jesus Christ’s return.

On this note, we have already established in Section 2.06 during our examination of chapter 11:14-19, the seventh trumpet sounds at the return of Christ Jesus, which is accompanied by an earthquake, voices, thunders, lightning, and great hail. Moreover, as we cover see in our next section, the seventh bowl of wrath is described in chapter 16:17-20, also includes an earthquake, voices, thunders, lightning, and great hail, just like the seventh trumpet in chapter 11:15-19.

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 **And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake**, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great...21 **And there fell upon men a great hail** out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Thus, the seventh trumpet and the seventh bowl both include the earthquake, voices, thunders, lightning, and great hail, the seventh trumpet and the seventh bowl of wrath must overlap and occur at the same point in time. Furthermore, we have also previously mentioned Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and 2 Thessalonians 4:13-18 that Christ Jesus will return on the clouds of heaven at the last trumpet, which is the seventh trumpet. Consequently, the seventh bowl and the seventh trumpet both occur at the return of the Lord. However, Revelation 11:15 also tells us that "the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Therefore, we know that the return of the Lord marks the beginning of his reign over the earth. And, since this *Short Series* in Revelation 15:1-4 also ends with the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, we know that these four verses overlap the chronology of the bowls of wrath and the trumpets, which end at the same point – namely, the return of Jesus Christ to being his kingdom.

To be more specific, since verses 1-4 of chapter 15 both begin and end at the same point in time as the longer description of the bowls, which follows in chapter 15:5-16:21, we know that chapter 15:1-4 is a *Short Series* that overlaps a longer *Parallel Description* of the same timeframe in chapter 15:5-16:21. As such, we can see a pattern emerging within the structure of the book of Revelation concerning *Short Series*. Both the trumpets and the bowls of wrath receive longer descriptions, which span from chapter 8:6-11:19 and chapter 15:5-16:21 respectively. But, immediately before these *Long Series*, both the trumpets and the bowls of wrath also each receive briefer summaries, or *Short Series*, which span from chapter 8:2-6 and chapter 15:1-4 respectively. In both cases, these *Short Series* provide additional connections to other imagery and events and delineate a simpler chronological list than would efficiently be seen amidst the greater detail of the *Long Series*.

The Reason for the Segment

The purpose for this *Short Series* in chapter 15:1-4 is simple. It establishes a basic skeletal chronology, properly arranging the order of the plagues, the completion of the martyrs, the return of Christ and the onset of his millennial kingdom on earth.

The completion of the martyrs is the second item listed in this *Short Series*. It can be found in verses 2-4.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: **and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name**, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints. 4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord,

and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

The fact that these are the martyrs from the final 3 1/2 years before the return of Christ, in which the antichrist persecutes the saints, is demonstrated by the fact that verse 2 refers to them specifically as those who have overcome the beast, including the mark of the beast. This the same group that the *Long Series* in chapter 14:9-13 anticipates, when it proclaims, “9...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.” Thus, this *Short Series* in chapter 15:1-4 informs us of the conclusion concerning that statement in chapter 14. There were indeed martyrs killed because of the mark of the beast, and they are indeed given rest from their labors, entering into the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ, just as chapter 14:13 promised.

In addition, chapter 14:10’s warning about the “wrath of God,” which is “poured out” on those who take the mark of the beast further corroborates that this *Short Series* in chapter 15:1-4 is a brief summary, which spans the entire length of the plagues described in chapter 15:5-16:21. This cup of wrath from which the ungodly drink is dispensed through the bowls of wrath described in detail in chapters 15:5-16:21, as chapter 16 directly states.

Revelation 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image...17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done...19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

First, in contrast to chapter 14:9-10’s declaration that those who take the mark of the beast will “drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation,” the first angel does indeed pour out his bowl specifically on the men who have received the mark of the beast. Second, when the seventh angel pours out his bowl, Babylon the great is said to receive the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God’s wrath, which is the very same imagery employed in chapter 14:9-10. Thus, the cup of wrath corresponds conceptually to the bowls of wrath and their plagues. Moreover, the presence in heaven of the martyrs who have not received the mark of the beast in chapter 15:2-4 is intended to demonstrate the completion of this process that is anticipated but not yet begun in chapter 14:9-13. The martyrs have received their reward, being comforted in God’s presence with the kingdom about to begin, and the plagues have been poured out on those who’ve received the mark of the beast.

In addition, we know that these persons described in chapter 15 are martyrs, because of the phrase “gotten the victory over the beast.” Chapter 12:7-17, which

we've already covered, states that when the chief adversarial angel is cast out of heaven, he will make war against the remnant of the woman's seed, which we have already discussed in Section 2.07. This is in contrast to the largely Jewish group that will be protected in the wilderness, safe from Satan's persecutions, which is why he turns instead to those who are not in the place of safety. Chapter 13:1-18 goes on to describe that the means by which Satan makes war is by raising up the empire of the antichrist, who persecutes and puts to death the saints aided largely by the institution of the mark of the beast.

Thus, Satan is behind the martyrdom that occurs at the mark of the beast, mentioned in both chapter 14:9-13 and chapter 15:2-4. When chapter 15:2 describes the multitude on the sea of glass as "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark," we know that this refers to those saints who were persecuted and martyred under the system of the antichrist.

Furthermore, the fact that they are persecuted and martyred informs us that they are predominantly Gentiles, especially since the place of protection in the wilderness (as indicated in Revelation 12 and in Matthew 24) is for those in Israel who flee at the time of the abomination. And by describing the status of the believers who have endured the persecution of the mark of the beast and who are now about to enter God's rest in Christ's millennial kingdom, this *Short Series* in chapter 15:1-4 corresponds to the end of the *Long Series* in chapter 13:1-14:5, which ends by describing the final status of the 144,000 Jews who, despite the mark of the beast described in chapter 13, make it to Mount Zion to be with the recently returned Jesus Christ.

One passage, chapter 14:1-5, describes the final status of the 144,000 Jews after the mark of the beast is instituted and the passage, chapter 15:1-4, describes the final status of believers from all nations after the mark of the beast as well. The two passages demonstrate the faithfulness of God. God has been faithful and preserved (protected) a remnant and God has received into his kingdom those who have endured the trial and persecution rather than compromising their faith in Jesus Christ.

And since chapter 15:1-4 describes the final status of the faithful believers from all nations, it also perfectly parallels chapter 7:9-17, which similarly describes "a great multitude...of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" which are "they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 9 as well as Revelation 12-13 informs us that the chief adversary is ultimately the one enacting the campaign against the saints by releasing the beast and working to establish the beast's empire. Chapter 12:9-11 specifically declares that those who are persecuted by these efforts enacted by the chief adversary will overcome "by the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the

earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Consequently, since the group in Revelation 15:1-4 is described as having triumphed over the beast, we know that it is the same group as described in Revelation 12. Specifically, this tells us that the group in chapter 15:1-4 has triumphed over the beast who we know has made war against them (Revelation 12:17, 13:7). And knowing that the group of saints in chapter 15:1-4 has overcome the beast, also tells us that they are the same group as described in chapter 7:9-11. For, the saints in chapter 7 are likewise described as facing this tribulation of the enemy and as being made ready by the blood of the Lamb. Furthermore, verses 15-17 of chapter 7 conclude with the Lamb dwelling among the persecuted saints who reside before his “throne,” just as chapter 15:1-4 concludes with the victorious saints praising Jesus as “king” and describing how the nations will now come and worship him, which Zechariah tells occurs when his kingdom is established over the earth. Both chapter 7 and chapter 15 conclude with the same event, the persecuted saints entering into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The chronologies of two passages overlap, with each one providing a different focus as well as different details and different connections.

In addition, this description of the final status of believers from all nations, which is the group who has undergone persecution while a predominately Jewish group was in safety, connects to the completion of the martyrs anticipated under the fifth seal in chapter 6:9-11. Here in chapter 15:1-4, the presence of these saints who’ve come through the persecution under the mark of the beast and are declaring that God’s “judgments are made manifest,” indicates that the number of martyrs has been completed and the judgment requested by the saints in chapter 6 has now been “manifest.” Thus, the process anticipated in chapter 6:9-11 has been finished.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

Once again, at the close of this section, we will now take a few paragraphs to review the 8 overarching conceptual threads found in the book of Revelation. Those 8 threads were as follows.

1. The angel’s appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God’s servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple’s building) and plagues
4. God’s covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church

6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

Of these 8 threads, the *Short Series* in chapter 15:1-4 only provided brief references to events surrounding numbers 3, 6, 7, and 8, namely the empire of the antichrist, the return of Christ, and the millennial reign. In the paragraphs above we spoke at length about the connections to numbers 6, 7, and 8. Number 3, however, is referenced in this passage due to its mention of the plagues of wrath, which are dispensed through the two witnesses. Although spanning only 4 verses, this *Short Series* provides a basic skeletal chronology, arranging the order and relationship between the bowls of wrath, which are poured out on the kingdom of the antichrist, the completion of the bowls of wrath, the completion of the martyrs and their exemption from the plagues and eternal, fiery torment of those received the mark, and beginning of the nations serving God, which occur at the return of Christ Jesus. A larger description of the plagues is given in the *Long Series* in chapter 15:5-16:21, which we will examine in our next section.

Section 2.11 – Long Series: Chapter 15:5-16:21 **The Seven Bowls of Plagues Dispensed by the Two Witnesses**

In Section 2.09, we stated that one of the benefits of having covered so much of Revelation already at this point is that previously discussed elements will require less commentary when they reoccur in the chapters ahead. The *Long Series* in chapter 15:5-16:21 is perhaps the best example of this trend.

Commonalities Establishing Connection

In both Section 2.04 and 2.05, we spent considerable time explaining and establishing that the imagery of the “two olive trees” and the “bowls of wrath” are linked.

Specifically, we took note of Revelation 15:6’s description of the “bowls of wrath” employed the Greek word “phiale” (Strong’s No. 5357), which simply means, “a broad shallow bowl, deep saucer.” We also noticed that the description stated that these bowls of wrath were gold. We then went on to state that this imagery directly relates to the book of Exodus 25:31-37 and 37:17-22 where we find the creation of a seven-branched candlestick, whose ornaments, including its bowls, are all made of gold. The purpose of the bowls was to hold the oil so that the seven lamps of the candlestick could burn and give their light. In Leviticus 4:1-4 and Numbers 8:2-4, God commands that oil is to be put into the seven lamps of candlesticks continually as a sign for Israel.

We also noted how Revelation 11:3 and Zechariah 4:1-13 both describe the two witnesses as “two olive trees.” In particular, we saw how in Zechariah, the oil

comes down from the olive trees and then passes into the seven lamps on the candlestick, each of which had its own bowl of oil according to Exodus 25:31-37, 37:17-22 and *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. And additionally, Revelation 4:5 denotes that these seven lamps are a representation of the seven angels of God.

In addition, we also took note of Revelation 5:6, which refers to these seven angels as "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." And we continued to show from 2 Chronicles 16:9 and Zechariah 3:8-4:14 how those seven angels go back and forth throughout the earth looking for those whose hearts are perfect toward God, so that God can show himself strong on their behalf.

Lastly, we noted that this imagery in which plagues are dispensed by two men is similar to how the plagues performed by Moses functioned as signs demonstrating that Moses' and Aaron's testimony is from God (Exodus 4:1-9). In both the case of Moses and Aaron, who opposed Pharaoh, as well as the case of the two witnesses, who oppose the antichrist, the plagues are the means by which testimony is confirmed. Thus, in this way, the bowls of plagues dispense the oil from the two olive trees, or two witnesses, which then causes the seven lamps to produce light and show God strong on their behalf.

As a result of these connections, we concluded that the seven angels disperse bowls of oil in the form of plagues, which are dispensed by the two witnesses in order to light their testimony and oppose the antichrist, just as the plagues performed by Moses confirmed his message in Exodus and opposed Pharaoh.

Thus, it makes sense that the seven angels pour out bowls filled with the plagues of God's wrath.

Revelation 15:7 And one of the four beasts **gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God**, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. **16:1** **And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God** upon the earth.

And consequently, like Moses and Aaron before them, the two witnesses, as the two candlesticks, dispense those plagues during their 3 ½ year ministry, which ends with their deaths, just 3 ½ days before the return of Christ.

Revelation 11:3 **And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth. 4 **These are the two olive trees**, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: **and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues**, as often as they will.

Moreover, notice from chapter 11:6, that one of the plagues dispensed by the two witnesses is the turning of the waters to blood. This is a specific reference to the plagues unleashed by the second and third bowls of wrath.

Revelation 16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea. 4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5 And 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. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and **thou hast given them blood to drink**; for they are worthy.

Thus, once again, we can see that, as the two olive trees, the two witnesses are given authority to dispense the plagues poured out by the seven angels with the golden bowls of wrath.

The Reason for the Segment

In light of the connections described above, the purpose of this *Long Series* in chapter 15:5-16:21 is to describe the plagues dispensed by the two witnesses, which are poured out by the seven angels with the seven bowls of wrath.

These plagues specifically include the following. With the first bowl of wrath, a noisome and grievous sore falls upon the men which had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. With the second bowl, the sea becomes blood and every living soul in the sea dies. With the third bowl, the rivers and fountains of waters become blood. With the fourth bowl, the sun scorches men with fire. With the fifth bowl, the kingdom of the antichrist is filled with darkness and men gnaw their tongues from the pain of the sores. Depending on the timeframe, these sores and the resulting pain, most likely refer to the sores inflicted by the locusts during the series of trumpets in Revelation 9:2-6.

With the sixth bowl, the River Euphrates dries up, preparing the way for the kings of the East accompanied by three unclean spirits going forth from the chief adversarial angel, the antichrist, and the false prophet to work miracles and bring the kings of the earth to the battle of Armageddon. Incidentally, the drying up of the River Euphrates most likely also connects to the draught dispensed by the two witnesses, as denoted in chapter 11:6.

And lastly, with the seventh bowl, we find the familiar occurrence of voices, thunder, lightning, a great earthquake, hail, every mountain and islands being removed from its place, and the final destruction of Babylon the Great. As we discussed in the earlier section covering chapter 14:6-20, the destruction of Babylon the Great has most likely been prophesied by the two witnesses since the beginning of their 3 ½ year prophetic ministry. Here in Revelation 16, its occurrence is complete, an event which is also referenced in Revelation 17:12-18,

where the ten kings who give their power to the antichrist are said to burn her with fire and make her desolate.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

Even though this section has been relatively short, we will still check the status of our 8 conceptual threads, which are listed as follows.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

In addition to providing detailed descriptions concerning the seven plagues, this *Long Series* describes connections between the battle of Armageddon, the ten kings, the seven angels, the bowls of wrath, the two witnesses as olive trees, the waters turning to blood under the two witnesses, the draught initiated by the two witnesses, the drying up of the River Euphrates, the gathering of the kings of the earth to Armageddon, the final destruction of Babylon the Great, and potentially the sores produced by the locusts of chapter 9 as well as the earthquake, voices, thunder, lightning, and hail, which occur at the seventh trumpet and the return of Christ. Thus, chapter 15:5-16:21 provides a great deal of details and connections pertaining to numbers 3, 6, and 7. Yet, despite this amount of information, there still remains room for further descriptions of thread number 8. And furthermore, in the chapters ahead we will continue to find additional information concerning thread number 7, including the rise of the last empire and the antichrist, the battle of Armageddon, and the return of Christ.

Section 2.12 – Long Series: Chapter 17:1-18 **The History of “Babylon,” the Antichrist’s Empire, and the Spirit Possessing Him**

As we arrive at Revelation 17, we begin by noting that our commentaries on this chapter will be comprised of abridged, or summary, examinations. This is similar to our examination of chapter 13. During our commentary concerning chapter 13, we stated that the reason for these summary discussions was that chapters 13, 17, and 18 are the subject of a much more in-depth analysis within our “Prophetic Symbols” series. Consequently, due to the attention and analysis provided in that

series, it is only necessary to list, rather than assess, the elements and connections found in the *Parallel Descriptions*, which comprise these three chapters.

Commonalities Establishing Connection and the Reason for the Segment

Because the details of chapter 17 are intricate and the examination of them is lengthy, we recommend reading Parts 1-6 of our "Prophetic Symbols: Revelation 17" before reading further in this study. The details are fascinating and supported by a range of scriptural passages from both Old and New Testaments. However, the analysis presented in those articles will only be summarized here. In particular, we will simply borrow the closing six points listed in the conclusion of Part 6 of those articles.

- 1.** Angelic princes rule over the kingdoms of men, and specifically over the empires described in Daniel 2, 7, and 8.
- 2.** The "prince of the people" who "destroyed the city and the sanctuary" is NOT the Antichrist, but the angelic prince who ruled over the Roman Empire.
- 3.** The Roman angelic prince, whose people destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary just as Daniel 9:26 predicted, is known by the name or title Destroyer (Abaddon/Apollyon). He is the beast that is let out of the bottomless pit by the last of the seven angelic princes, who is depicted as being cast out of heaven to earth in Revelation 9 and 12 at the start of the final three and a half years prior to the Millennial reign of Christ.
- 4.** The last angelic prince is not cast out of heaven and does not come down to earth until this final three and a half years, however, the casting out of the Roman prince and his coming to earth are depicted as occurring in the final days before Jesus' crucifixion in John 12 and 14. But by the final three and a half years, this Roman angelic prince has been put down in the pit.
- 5.** This Roman prince (who is the spirit behind the human antichrist) "yet is" in the first century when John wrote his epistles (see 1 John 4), but is described as "was, is not, and shall ascend out of the pit" in terms of his overall history in Revelation 17:8 and 11 because he reigns on earth for a time, then disappears from the earth when he is put down in the pit, and then reemerges again when he is released in the last days.
- 6.** Putting all of this together we can see that Daniel's writings recorded and anticipated a succession of the following empires: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, another yet unknown represented by the clay and the second beast of Revelation 13, and finally a Jewish empire or kingdom ruled over by Jesus Christ the Jewish Messiah, the Prince of princes.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

For reference, here again are our 8 conceptual threads.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

The details of chapter 17 affect the status report for the 8 conceptual threads of Revelation in the following way. First, they connect the empire of the antichrist to the destruction of Babylon the Great. Second, they connect the antichrist and the spirit, which possesses him, to the series of angelic princes who have ruled over past empires, including the sequence of empires described in the book of Daniel. Third, they connect the spirit behind the antichrist to the same angelic ruler who ruled over the Roman empire, who possessed Judas, and who sometime after the end of the first century was imprisoned down in the bottomless pit until he is released by the last of his group, the chief adversary, whose fall is described figuratively in the trumpets of Revelation 8 and plainly in Revelation 12.

All of these connections relate to numbers 5 and 6 above. Consequently, there remains plenty of room for additional details concerning thread number 8, as well as concerning the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ, for which we have not yet seen any lengthy descriptions.

Section 2.13 – Long Series: Chapter 18:1-19:4 A Declaration of the Fall of Babylon

Like chapter 13 and 17, Revelation 18:1-19:4 is the subject of a much more in-depth analysis within our "Prophetic Symbols" series and, therefore, will involve only an abridged summary examination in this current study. In particular, this *Long Series*, which spans from chapter 18:1-19:4, describes the final destruction of the city known as Babylon the Great and also provides details about her, which aid in identifying who this city is. We recommend reading Parts 1-7 of the articles titled, "Prophetic Symbols: The Great Prostitute," before moving forward in this study. Listed below are the last two points from the conclusion of Part 7 of those articles.

1. While the harlot of Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18 refers to an actual city, and may indeed be Rome, Italy, it does not necessarily have to be Rome,

Italy but could very well be another modern city.

2. While the harlot of Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18 refers to an actual city, as a symbol it most certainly also includes the mystery cult society, which has been present and politically prominent in all 7 of the major Biblical Gentile empires, which has migrated from empire to empire particularly in the capital or most prominent city, which has used its political influence to persecute the people of God, entrap them legally, and to institute idolatry and empire worship through the legal institutions of those empires.

In addition, we should also include an excerpt from Part 5 of that article series, which describes the relationship that the False Prophet has to Babylon the Great.

“As we have demonstrated earlier the False Prophet is the king over the seventh kingdom of the seven-headed succession of empires. Revelation 13:11-18 gives the most complete description of this man, his kingdom, and his work.

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. **12** And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and **causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast**, whose deadly wound was healed. **13** **And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,** **14** **And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles** which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; **saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast**, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. **15** **And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.** **16** And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: **17** **And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.** **18** Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Since we have already studied the False Prophet and his empire in depth earlier we will not spend a great deal of time reviewing it now. We will, however, take note of some significant characteristics of his empire and his actions for comparison to the harlot city of Revelation 17 and 18.

From our analysis of the descriptions of Mystery Babylon given in Revelation 17 and 18 and our examination of the mystery cult throughout the scripture and from other sources we can see that the False Prophet (and by extension his kingdom) and the mystery cult, which comprises Mystery Babylon are described in the same terms doing the same things.

Both the mystery cult that is Mystery Babylon and the False Prophet:

1. Have authority over many ethnic groups, nations, and peoples - all who dwell on the earth (Revelation 13:12, 17:1, 2, 15, 18 and Revelation 18:3, 9).
2. Wield great financial and commercial control (Revelation 13:140-18, Revelation 18:3, 11-15, 17, 19, 23).
3. Are responsible for the martyrdom of the saints according to the following pattern: (Daniel 3 and 6, Revelation 13:12, 14-18, Revelation 17:6, Revelation 18:20, 24, and perhaps Esther as well)
 - a. A law is enacted to trap God's people into either disobeying the law or disobeying God.
 - b. The law requires people to worship the king, an idol, an image of the king, or an image of a man.
 - c. Those who disobey the law are condemned to death.
4. Deceive all the nations through sorcery, false religion, and lying signs and wonders. (Revelation 13:13-15, Revelation 18:23)

These same activities are accredited to both the False Prophet and to the mystery cult, which is Mystery Babylon. And we have seen the pages of the Bible that the predecessors of Mystery Babylon, did these same activities and played these same roles in the empires of their day, the previous heads of the seven-headed beast. From all of this there can be little doubt that there is a strong connection between the empire of the False Prophet, the mystery cult, and their great city. In fact there is strong reason to believe that Mystery Babylon, the great city, is the leading city in the empire of the False Prophet.”

(END OF EXCERPT)

For further analysis of the relationship between the false prophet, Babylon the Great, and the 10 kings who destroy her, we recommend reading our three-part article entitled, “Prophetic Symbols: Several Possible Scenarios.”

Additional Relevant Comments

In an earlier section, we brought up the question of whether or not this *Long Series* in chapter 18:1-19:4 is a report of the actual fall of Babylon the Great as it occurs, or if it is simply a prediction that is given long before the actual event? Revelation 14:8-13 included a very brief reference to the fall of this city, but because of its surrounding context and a comparison to the seventh seal in Revelation 18, we concluded that it was simply a prediction of the fall rather than the report of the actual occurrence of that fall. In contrast, this *Long Series* in chapter 18:1-19:4 ends in chapter 19:1-4 with the saints in heaven praising God for destroying this city while her smoke rises forever and ever.

Revelation 19:1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto

the Lord our God: 2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments: **for he hath judged the great whore**, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, **and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.** **3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.** **4** And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

Given their praise to God based upon his accomplishment of this task, it is likely that this *Long Series* accompanies the actual occurrence of the fall, rather than simply being a prediction of it. In verse 3, her smoke seems to rise up side-by-side with their praise. In verse 2, the saints declare that God “has avenged” his servants concerning her. These things denote that her destruction has indeed already past at the time when this praise occurs.

And in this praise from the saints, we find the completion of the prayers described in the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9-11. In that passage, the martyrs from times past asked God for this vengeance but were told to wait until the number of martyrs was completed after a short season, which later chapters identify as the 3 1/2 years of the antichrist’s reign. Here, the fact that these same saints are praising God for having avenged them demonstrates that this the setting for this *Long Series* in chapter 18:1-19:4 is *after* this city is actually destroyed, near the end of the tribulation, just before the return of Christ, and *after* the seventh bowl of wrath, which denotes God actually pouring out his wrath on this city (Revelation 16:17-21).

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

For reference, here again are our 8 conceptual threads.

1. The angel’s appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God’s servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple’s building) and plagues
4. God’s covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

To be brief, Revelation 18:1-19:4 is almost singularly focused on details surrounding this great city that is so closely tied to the rise of the last empire. In this respect, it is a clear flashback in the same genre as similar lengthy pronouncements concerning other leading imperial cities, which can be found in both the major and the minor Old Testament prophets. And this is appropriate, given that this is the last of such series in the long succession of ungodly empires

that have preceded the coming earthly reign of Jesus Christ, such as detailed in Daniel 2, 7, and 8.

Given its singular focus, Revelation 18:1-19:4 provides a great amount of detail concerning the city known as Babylon the great, which is essential for identifying this city. However, it still leaves room for additional descriptions and connections concerning these 8 conceptual threads, particularly numbers 7-8, which include the battle of Armageddon, the return of Christ, the millennial reign of Christ, and the final judgment.