

INTRODUCTION:

In Part-5 we covered the breaking of the seventh seal and the seven trumpets. With the breaking of the seventh seal there was silence in heaven, a pause that lasted a brief half hour. But with the sounding of the trumpets we witnessed an escalating punishment which moved from cosmic to supernatural. As God in the beginning had given plants and animals for food and water to drink we saw these things progressively taken away. As many who have persecuted Christians have deprived them of food and water we saw the persecutors deprived of same. And ultimately in the last three trumpets, we witnessed three great “woes” poured out upon the guilty on the earth. The first tormented, the second brought death to a quarter of humankind, and the third marked the beginning of the reign of Christ on earth. Before the last trumpet sounded two witnesses gave testimony for forty-two months before being killed, raised to life, and raised to heaven. And yet the people continued unrepentant. With every seal and every trumpet there was only limited destruction to allow room and opportunity for repentance. It would seem that God was providing witness of both His mercy and justice. Even the guilty are given opportunity to repent and change, but when they do not, they deserve their punishment.

John has provided witness of his visions of “Seven Seals” and “Seven Trumpets.” There was an interlude provided between the sixth and seventh seals where John was shown a vision of the sealing of the martyrs on earth and the glorified martyrs in heaven. Likewise, between the sixth and seventh trumpets, John was shown a vision of the eating of the scroll of doom and the two witnesses. We will now enter what some might see as another interlude but it is more than that. In the eighteenth verse of chapter 11 we were provided a summary of all that will follow in the remainder of Revelation, but compressed and without detail. Part-6 will begin a series of visions that will both decompress the rapid events contained in Revelation 11:18, but will also place them in the larger context of the heavenly struggle between good and evil. We will see a number of personalities revealed that will provide insight into unseen things on earth. This wide screen picture of events seems to begin with Christ’s first coming and then progressing to His second coming. During this time the beast, revealed in many forms, wages war against God and all that belong to God. It is a war already won through the blood of Jesus Christ, yet it is a time of battle over the souls of men.

CHAPTER 12:

In chapter 12 we are introduced to five personalities. The first is a woman, who is described as clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. Some believe she is the Church. Others believe she represents Israel and still others, the Virgin Mary (1-2). The second personality is a great red dragon who is identified as the devil or Satan (3-4). The third personality is the child born of the woman, who we know to be Jesus the Christ because we are told He will rule the nations with a rod of iron (5-6). The fourth personality is Michael, the Archangel who protects God's people (7-9). The fifth personality would appear to be the remnant of the Jewish people, assuming the woman represents Israel and these are her offspring. Chapter 12 begins the final struggle that will last to the end. This war seems to begin with the first coming of Christ and will wage on until He ends it with His return. Chapter 12 is only the beginning of this heavenly view which will continue until the end.

Revelation 12:1-2, states: ***“And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.”*** Some scholars believe the woman clothed with the sun is the Church, but most believe she represents Israel. Jacob was the son of Isaac who was the son of Abraham. God renamed Jacob, giving him the name Israel, which means “he who strives with God.” Israel had twelve sons, who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. The youngest of these sons was Joseph, who we are told his father Israel loved the most. Joseph had dreams and was able to interpret dreams. This gift from God would result in him being sold into slavery into Egypt, where he would rise to be ruler of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh. Through his position and authority in Egypt, he will save his own family and all of Egypt from starvation. So by now you are asking: What does this have to do with the woman clothed with the sun? The dream that resulted in Joseph's brothers enslaving him to Egypt is found in Genesis 37:9, and is described by Joseph as follows: ***“Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”*** As can be seen in his families reaction to his dream, they perceived the “sun, moon and seven stars” to represent Joseph's “father, mother and seven brothers.” They believed that Joseph was exhorting himself as greater than them,

but actually, the dream was an accurate depiction of events to come, when God would give him power and authority that would save the whole family, and set the stage for God to deliver His people. God's "chosen family" will enter Egypt through Joseph, but 430 years later, God's "chosen people" will be delivered out of Egypt through Moses.

Now let us consider the ancient symbolic understanding of the sun and the moon. The sun was considered the supreme father and the moon, even to this day, is associated with birth—a person's "moon sign" derives from which constellation the moon is in at the time of their birth. The magi, who traveled to Judah following a star at the time of Jesus' birth, went there to worship a divine king to be born in Israel. Based on modern computer generated star maps of what was happening in the heavens about the time of Christ's birth, we know that there were extremely rare planetary conjunctions which occurred in the constellations Leo and Virgo. The symbol for the constellation Leo is the "lion" which is also the symbol of Judah (Israel). The symbol for Virgo is the "virgin." Some scholars now believe the magi traveled to Judah because they interpreted the extremely rare events they witnessed in the stars as pointing to the virgin birth of a divine King in Israel. What is most remarkable is that on September 11, 3 B.C., the sun "clothed" (located in the middle of) the constellation Virgo (the Virgin), while the moon was located under the feet of Virgo, and the constellation Leo with its twelve stars (representative of Israel), was located above the head of Virgo. This dramatic "sign" in heaven could have marked the date of the "conception" of Jesus Christ. We relegate this particular sign to the "conception" because of an even more spectacular heavenly sign occurs "nine months" later on June 17, 2 B.C., perhaps reflecting the date of Jesus' birth. And finally, a third sign, when Jupiter, the king planet, enters retrograde and comes to a complete stop directly over Bethlehem on December 25, 2 B.C. This event fits the legend and biblical account of the arrival of the magi in Bethlehem. This extraordinary series of astrological events coincides with the words found in Isaiah 7:10, which state: ***"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."***

Now move forward in time to an event foretold in Ezekiel, which many scholars view as an unmistakable sign of the end times—the rebirth of Israel as a nation in one day on May 14, 1948. Compare this to Isaiah 66:7-8, which reads: ***"Before she***

travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.” Are the “sons” brought forth the twelve tribes of Israel reborn as the modern nation of Israel, no longer divided as depicted in Ezekiel, but one unified nation? Do we hear interwoven in these first two verses both the “signs” of Christ’s first coming and of His return? Is the Virgin Mary the woman clothed with the sun, or perhaps Son, and through which Christ Jesus was born? It is perhaps no coincidence that the three young children in the village of Fatima, Portugal in 1917 will see the Virgin Mary appear to them, as they describe, “clothed with the sun, with the moon at her feet, and a crown of twelve stars above her head.” These children will be shown visions and given three secrets which are said to be warnings to call for repentance before the “end comes.”

Revelation 12:3, states: ***“And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were diadems.”*** The words we translate as “red” and as “dragon” only appear in the book of Revelation. The color “red” is actually “fiery red” as is the color of fire and is the same color as the second horse of the apocalypse which brought war. The dragon is understood as a form of giant and horrible serpent, and figuratively a representation of the devil or Satan. The seven heads may be symbolic for great wisdom. In Ezekiel 28 we see this serpent as full of wisdom, and the same one who was in the Garden of Eden, and as one who once dwelled in a special place on the holy mountain of God. God says: ***“You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God;... You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire”*** (Ezekiel 28:12b, 13a and 14). The “anointed cherub who covers” may mean that he was a “guardian angel.” Regarding the ten horns, Daniel 7 describes a great beast with ten horns coming up out of the sea (Daniel 7:7). In Daniel 7:24 we gain insight into what the horns may represent, for the “Son of Man” interprets the vision saying: ***“As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.”*** This reference seems to imply a series or group of leaders or nations which will come up perhaps out of

the sea of humanity who oppose God. Because the number “ten” is often seen as representing the world just as the number “three” is representative of God in reference to the Holy Trinity, this beast likely represents “worldly” and not “religious” leaders. The seven diadems or crowns on the horns of the beast probably represent the beast’s dominion, power and/or authority over the world. Some identify the red dragon with Russia and China and the rise of Communism in these blatantly atheistic nations. There is actual Scriptural basis for this identity. Ezekiel speaks of nations from the north who will attempt to destroy Israel. Ezekiel 39:1 states: ***“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.”*** Gog is a word for “ruler,” which literally means “the man on top.” Gog is the “chief prince” of the land of Magog and the “prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:2). “Rosh” in the Hebrew is also an ancient name for Russia. Joseph Stalin said, *“We have deposed the czars of the earth and we shall now dethrone the Lord of heaven.”* There is no doubt that Russia’s atheistic government under Communism opposed God. Concerning “Meshech” and “Tubal” mentioned with Gog and Rosh, Genesis 10:1-2 informs us that of the three sons of Noah, that three of Japheth’s sons would be named: “Magog, Tubal, and Meshech.” Ethnologist—historians who track the migrations of people—tell us that after Noah’s flood, the Japhethites (sons of Japheth and their tribes) migrated from Asia Minor to the north, beyond the Caspian and Black Seas. They settled in the area of “Rosh” that we know today as Russia. The Greek name *Moschi*, derived from the Hebrew name *Meshech*, is the source of the name of city “Moscow” which is the capital of Russia.

Revelation 12:4, states: ***“And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.”*** We cannot know for certain the meaning of the dragon’s tail sweeping away a third of the stars of heaven. Many believe this is a reference to fallen angels who aligned themselves with Satan and were cast to the earth with him to become demons, supported by verse 9 which follows. Others believe this statement depicts a third of Christians being persecuted and/or killed by the dragon. We will address this further in our discussion of verse 9.

Regarding the woman, she is most likely Israel, and perhaps even a personification of the Virgin Mary, for the Messiah comes out of the Jewish people and specifically, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. What is interesting is that the dragon does not attack the woman but waits to attack the Child she will bear. This should remind us of God's declaration in the Garden of Eden to Eve, the mother of mankind, and to the serpent, the deceiver. God declares in Genesis 3:15, saying, ***“And I will put enmity between you [serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He [Christ] shall bruise you [serpent] on the head, and you [serpent] shall bruise him [Christ or His followers] on the heel.”*** I have inserted identifiers as most scholars believe are implied. Truly, Scripture consistently informs us that Christ will crush the head of Satan, but Satan's infliction upon Christ and His followers will not compare to Satan's ultimate destruction and punishment. In either case, what is clear is that the descendants of the “woman” will be in conflict with those who descend or are influenced by Satan. We can clearly see this depiction played out in King Herod's attempt to destroy the Christ child after His birth. As it is recorded in Matthew 2:16, saying, ***“Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi.”*** From the beginning, Satan has used those under his control to wage war with God and all who serve Him.

Revelation 12:5, states: ***“And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.”*** There seems to be a strong correlation between this passage and Psalm 2. First, the Psalm portrays a picture of those who “stand” in opposition to God and His Christ, stating, ***“Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed”*** (Psalm 2:1-2). Psalm 2:9 references a “rod of iron” as it speaks of the power God will give to Christ over those who oppose Him, saying, ***“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.”*** This Psalm also reinforces the premise that the red dragon of verse 3 represents worldly kingdoms or nations that oppose God.

Regarding the Child being “caught up” to God and to His throne, the Greek verb translated here means to “take by force” or “take with power.” It is the same verb used in 2 Corinthians 12:4, when Paul is “caught up into Paradise” to hear inexpressible words. It is the same verb root used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, when those who remain alive in Christ are “caught up” in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air at the time of His return. King Herod failed to kill Christ as a baby because God intervened, warning Joseph in a dream to take Jesus and Mary and flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:13). The Roman governor Pontius Pilate, backed by the Jewish Sanhedrin and the King Herod of Jesus’ time, condemned Christ to die on the cross, but He would defeat death, rising from the grave and ascending into heaven to take His place on the throne of God.

Revelation 12:6, states: ***“And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”*** It would be easy to compare this verse to Matthew 2:13, when God warned Joseph to take the holy family and escape from King Herod to Egypt, but this doesn’t explain the 1,260 days. Again, most scholars identify the woman with Israel although some identify her with the Church. What is clear is that God will guide her to a place He has prepared in the wilderness and provide for her there for 1,260 days or 3-1/2 years. Is this the final and most terrible 3-1/2 year period of the Tribulation when Satan overpowers the saints who are martyred for the Word of God? If the woman represents Israel, everything makes perfect sense. In Revelation 7:3-8 we witnessed the “sealing” of 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel, so that they might not be harmed as destruction is released upon the earth. Jeremiah 30:7 speaks of a great and terrible time when God will protect His own, saying, ***“Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s distress, but he will be saved from it.”*** Likewise, in Daniel 12:1 we are told: ***“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”*** Is it during the final 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation that Satan makes his final attempt to destroy the Jews but God steps in to protect and deliver them?

Revelation 12:7-8, states: ***“And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.”*** In Daniel 10:13 and 21 we are shown that there are struggles being waged between angels and heavenly forces that effect our lives here on earth. A heavenly messenger speaks to Daniel about the heavenly forces defending God’s people in Daniel 10:21, saying, ***“However, I tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.”*** As we learned from Daniel 12:1 above, Michael is “the great prince who stands guard over the sons” of Israel. The apostle Paul also speaks of this unseen heavenly struggle in Ephesians 6:12, saying, ***“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*** Perhaps Michael stands guard over both Jews and Christians, but it is clear that we struggle against more than evil men.

Revelation 12:9, states: ***“And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”*** The prophet Isaiah speaks of Satan’s fall from heaven, saying, ***“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!”*** (Isaiah 14:12). Likewise, we hear of this fall in Ezekiel 28, where it is written: ***“By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire... By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more”*** (Ezekiel 28:16, 18-19). While the implication is that Satan was cast from heaven long ago, when the seventy disciples Jesus sent out returned claiming that demons were subject to them in His name, He answered saying, ***“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning”*** (Luke 10:18). We cannot see what is

happening in heaven, and future events are often proclaimed in Scripture long before they actually occur. We have no way of knowing the exact time that Satan is cast from heaven along with His angels. We do know that the serpent deceived Adam and Eve in the very beginning and that Jesus and His disciples cast our demons, so Satan and his rebellious angels have had access to the earth for a long time. Also, we know Satan has also had access to heaven because Satan was allowed to come before God in heaven and accuse Job (Job 1:6; 2:1). Is it possible that Satan has retained at least some access to heaven until the very near end?

Revelation 12:10, states: ***“And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.”*** In this verse we find answer to the previous question. Satan has continued to have access to heaven, accusing our brethren day and night. When the sixth seal was broken John said: ***“and the stars of the sky fell to the earth”*** (Revelation 6:13). And, when the fifth trumpet sounded John declared: ***“I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him”*** (Revelation 9:1). How can Satan have fallen but not fall until the end? Perhaps we can resolve some of the confusion by separating spiritual from physical. Satan has “spiritually” fallen from grace, having been cast down from his position of service and power in the presence of God long ago because of his pride. The old adage is true that “pride comes before a fall.” But now, in the final 3-1/2 years before final judgment and punishment are rendered, Satan is “physically” expelled from heaven and will no longer be allowed to be the “accuser” who accuses those who are faithful to God.

Revelation 12:11, states: ***“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even to death.”*** Here we are told how the “two witnesses” of Revelation 11:1-6 could persevere against the beast and a hostile world for 3-1/2 years. Here we find the reason all who remain faithful to the Lord can persevere the trials and tribulations of this world. It is because of the saving blood of Jesus Christ. It is because of their testimony for Christ. It is because of their willingness to die for their belief in Christ and His Word. Let us not forget Jesus’ declaration found in Mark 8:34-35, saying, ***“If anyone wishes to***

come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Revelation 12:12, states: ***“For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”*** After deceiving Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Lord cursed the serpent, saying, ***“Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life”*** (Genesis 3:14). Satan is now truly confined to the dust of the earth. He will now suffer more than the cattle who are bred for slaughter, or the beast who live a life of burden. His time grows short before he is crushed by Christ. In the short time remaining, he is filled with wrath and the destroyer of lives seeks only to destroy everything created by God. But there is rejoicing in heaven because he has access to heaven no more.

Revelation 12:13, states: ***“And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.”*** We have seen plenty of evidence of his persecution of the woman. If the woman truly represents Israel and the Jewish people, clearly the Jews have suffered great persecution since the death and resurrection of Christ. We have especially seen evidence of this in the past century in the holocaust, witnessing the extermination of millions of Jews. Many nations gather now in the Middle East and supported by Russia, who conspire to eliminate Israel from the face of the earth.

Revelation 12:14, states: ***“And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”*** God declared to His people after delivering them from Egypt and leading them to the wilderness at Mount Sinai, saying, ***“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself”*** (Exodus 19:4). God also nourished them in the wilderness, providing food for His people for 40 years. In Psalm 91 we see the image of God protecting His own under His wings. It is written: ***“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the***

Almighty... He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark” (Psalm 91:1 and 4). It is also interesting to note, that the first nation of the world that recognized modern Israel as a nation when it declared itself such in May of 1948 was the United States of America, whose national symbol is the eagle.

Revelation 12:15-16, states: ***“And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.”*** God used a flood of water that fell from the heavens and flowed up “out of the earth” to destroy the wicked of the world in the time of Noah. It is ironic that the earth swallows the flood poured out by Satan to destroy the woman of the righteous. There is a strong parallel found in “The Song of Moses and Israel” located in Exodus 15. The song depicts Pharaoh’s pursuit of God’s people which ends with Pharaoh and his army being “swallowed” by the “waters” of the “Red Sea” (remember the “red” dragon comes out of the “sea”). In Exodus 15:9-12, Moses sings: ***“The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my desire shall be gratified against them; I will draw out my sword, my hand shall destroy them.’ Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? Thou didst stretch out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.”*** Speaking of God’s deliverance, Isaiah 25:8 states, ***“He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people for all the earth; for the Lord has spoken.”*** It seems that the death that Satan pours forth will be swallowed up by the Lord as the earth swallowed up the Egyptians. And finally, speaking of the evil one to come who brings desolation in the final week, Daniel 9:26b states: ***“And its end will come like a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”*** The 144,000 of Israel sealed in Revelation 7:4-8 are under God’s protection.

Revelation 12:17, states: ***“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”*** Because the dragon is prevented from venting

his wrath on the woman, he instead makes war with the rest of her offspring. Her “offspring” are defined as those who “keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” This is a fairly good description of Christians and/or Messianic-Jews, which are Jews who hold to their Jewish heritage but believe that Jesus was the Messiah. In either case, the implication is that there are still at this point Christians or those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah on the earth to wage war against.

CHAPTER 13:

In chapter 13 we are introduced to two beasts, one that comes up out of the sea and one that comes up out of the earth. These two beasts, combined with the dragon, form an unholy trinity of evil. Satan often mocks God with his own twisted imitations. In this unholy trinity, Satan is the counterpart of God the Father in heaven. The beast from the sea is generally seen as the Antichrist and a worldly leader (13:1-10). We are told three times (13:3, 12 & 14) that he has a fatal wound that has been healed; therefore, it is apparent that he is the intended counterpart of Jesus the Christ, who died and was raised from the dead. The beast from the earth is revealed as the “false prophet” (16:13; 19:20 & 20:10), and is a religious leader because he causes people to “worship” the beast—the Antichrist (13:11-13). Just as Christ’s Church is filled with the “power” of God’s Holy Spirit, the false prophet is given “power” by the beast to create great signs and wonders in order to cause the people of the earth to worship the beast. He then uses his influence to deceive the people of the earth into making an “image” of the beast, thus causing them to break God’s second commandment and commit the sin of idolatry (13:14). The false prophet is then given power to bring the image to life so that it can speak, and cause those who do not worship the image of beast to be killed (13:15). And finally, the false prophet through the power of the beast, requires people to be marked with the “mark of the beast” in order to conduct any commerce (13:16-17). Essentially, we see Satan’s “worldly” influence requiring people to “bear his mark,” and Satan’s “religious” influence requiring people to “worship his image.” The chapter concludes with the revealing of the “number of the beast,” which we are told is “that of a man,” and is six hundred and sixty-six (13:18). Clearly, the beast intends to be “lord” over both the secular and religious world, so that no one can live without being marked by him and worshipping him.

The Beast from the Sea:

Revelation 13:1, states: ***“And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.”*** The “he” who stands on the seashore is likely the “dragon” spoken of in the previous verse 12:17, and is enraged and will now make war with the rest of the woman’s offspring through the two beasts he will bring forth. As for the first beast which comes up out of the sea, most scholars see this as a man, a worldly leader, and the personified Antichrist, coming out of the “sea of humanity.” We have discussed the “ten horns” and “seven heads” in our examination of 12:3 above, but there are new insights to consider from the Book of Daniel. Remember that the meaning of the “ten horns” on the beast that Daniel saw were explained by the angel, who said, ***“As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise”*** (Daniel 7:24). The question is: “Out of what kingdom do these ten kings arise?” In his explanation of the vision of the great statue, Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar that God is revealing mysteries of ***“what will take place in the end of days”*** (Daniel 2:28). Daniel describes the head of gold as the kingdom of Babylon (1), the breast and two arms of silver as representing the Medes and the Persians (2), the stomach of brass as the Greeks (3), the two legs of iron as the Roman Empire in its strength (4), and finally the two feet of iron mixed with clay as the Roman Empire in its later corrupted state and weakened condition (5). Some scholars see these depicting five of the heads of the beast. The sixth head is seen as coming at the end time. The sixth head being comprised of ten kings or nations which come out of Rome, or western civilization. These are associated with the ten toes on the feet of iron and clay. The final and seventh head may be perceived as the Antichrist, or the final manifestation of all that stands in opposition to Christ and His followers. Later in Revelation 17:10-12, we will see another depiction of seven heads, which we are told are seven kings, as well as ten horns which are ten kings. There it will be revealed that five of the seven have already fallen, that one is, and another is to come. This could correlate with Daniel’s vision in that the five kingdoms of Babylon through Rome, which we are told have previously fallen. The ten-king, ten horns, ten toes, if equated with western civilization, exists now, and the Antichrist led worldly and religious overthrow of power are coming.

Regarding the “ten diadems,” as previously stated, these depict crowns and are symbolic of authority, power and dominion. Again, the number 10 is also symbolic of the world and depicts this beast and his dominion as worldly, or as a world leader.

Regarding the “blasphemous names” on the seven heads, while we translate the word “names” into English in the plural because of the seven heads, the Greek noun is singular, and should be translated as “name.” This may mean that the name on all seven heads that is considered blasphemous is the same on all seven. Looking back at the kingdoms described by Daniel, their leaders all held one thing in common; they all claimed to be divine. Each demanded to be worshiped by their people. This was just as true for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as it was for the emperors of Rome. I believe this is the key insight to the end times. It is a time when mankind puts himself above God, and the self-made man worships his creator, he worships himself.

Revelation 13:2, states: ***“And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.”*** The description of the beast from the sea resonates with Daniel’s vision of the four beasts found in Daniel 7. Regarding these beast Daniel sees, ***“The first was like a lion”*** (Daniel 7:4), the second one ***“resembling a bear”*** (Daniel 7:5), and the third was ***“like a leopard”*** (Daniel 7:6). While not apparently included in the description of 13:3 above, Daniel’s fourth beast is described as ***“dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth”*** (Daniel 7:7). These four beasts are seen in Daniel to correlate with the first four parts of the great statue, representing the Babylonian (Lion), Medo-Persian (Bear), Greek (Leopard) and Roman (Strong beast with iron teeth) Empires. Again, seemingly to mock God and His Son, Jesus Christ, who is “Incarnate,” God in the flesh of man, the dragon (Satan) gives the beast his power, and throne, and great authority. Jesus declared in Matthew 28:18, saying, ***“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*** And in Luke 22:69, Jesus proclaimed: ***“But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”*** The Antichrist will be the incarnate Satan, doing his evil will in the world as Jesus did the good will of His Father in heaven. While it seems clear that this beast is a particular entity, his manifestation may not be so clear as to be recognized as a particular person, until perhaps the very end.

Revelation 13:3-4, states: ***“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying ‘Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?’”*** Again, seemingly to mock and imitate the death and resurrection of the true Christ, we hear that one of the heads of the beast from the sea will appear to have ***“been slain, and his fatal wound was healed.”*** This will be emphasized three times in all, first here and then in 13:12 and 13:14. Just as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead will result in Christians believing in the Lord and following Him, the ***“whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast.”*** To the world the beast is seen as having power over death, therefore, the world worships the source of the beast’s power, the dragon, and the beast who has apparently conquered death. The world does not believe that anyone can wage war against such power. The truth is that the power is false, a deception and lie, which is Satan’s stock and trade as the great deceiver.

Revelation 13:5, states: ***“And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.”*** Jesus was accused of blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God. At Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin the high priest asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered, saying, ***“I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*** The high priest responded by tearing his clothes and saying, ***“You have heard the blasphemy”*** (Mark 14:60-64). Blasphemy is when one claims to be God who is not God. Jesus is God and His words were not blasphemy. The Antichrist will claim to be what he is not and his mouth will be full of blasphemies. He will be allowed to speak arrogant words for forty-two months.

Revelation 13:6, states: ***“And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.”*** In Daniel 7:8 it says that the beast was given ***“a mouth uttering great boasts.”*** Notice that the Antichrist blasphemies against God, His name, and His tabernacle. Regarding the name of God, speaking of the “name” of Jesus Christ, the apostle Peter in Acts 4:12 proclaims: ***“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”*** Jesus Himself

speaks of the importance of the “name” when He says: **“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”** (John 3:17). The “name” is the name of Jesus, and this is the name that the Antichrist speaks against and profanes. The Antichrist also blasphemes **“His tabernacle,”** which we are told is comprised of **“those who dwell in heaven.”** This may be a reference to the angels who have forced him from heaven and those who have been saved and he can no longer tempt and attack. Scripture proclaims that God **“gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”** (John 1:12). The Antichrist cannot touch those who dwell in heaven so he shifts his focus to those who claim the name of Christ, who still live upon the earth.

Revelation 13:7, states: **“And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.”** Just as the beast was allowed to kill the two witnesses in 11:7, a time will come when he will be allowed to make war and overcome the saints. He will also be given for a short time authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. Yes, God is in control but He will never take away our freedom of choice. Daniel 7:25 says the beast will **“wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”** In the last three and half years of the Tribulation, God may allow the beast to attack the saints, and the beast may overcome them, but he can only kill them as he did the two witnesses. Those who remain true to God will have victory even in death. My late wife, in one of her many visions, saw Satan who proclaimed he had power over her. With a strength that she acknowledged came from God, she answered Satan with defiance declaring to him that he had no power over her except what she gave him. She then commanded him to leave in the name of Jesus Christ and Satan fled screaming. Truly, Satan has no power over us except what we give him, but he strives to deceive us into surrendering power to him. Perhaps he will wear some down, but let it not be you. Remember that Satan has no power over Christ, so remain faithful to Christ even unto death, and know that you already have gained your victory through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 13:8, states: ***“And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”*** We must be careful each time we see the phrase, ***“all who dwell on the earth”*** because I don’t believe it means all that physically live on the earth. Otherwise, why would the distinction be added referencing ***“everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life”***? What is actually being said is that all those who live on the earth, AND are not believers in Jesus Christ, worshiped the beast. Speaking of those who lived by faith in God before the first coming of Jesus Christ, Hebrews 11:13 and 16 states: ***“All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth... But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”*** The words in Hebrews seem to imply that those who died in their faith saw not the earth but heaven as their home. I also believe that the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the earth is no longer our home even though we still live here. At that moment we become both children of God and citizens of heaven, living as strangers in exile on the earth. In another of my late wife’s visions the Lord Jesus Christ stood with her in the clouds facing the earth below. He pointed to the earth and said to her, ***“This is not your home anymore.”*** He then showed her a magnificent golden city in heaven, and pointing to it said to her, ***“This is your home now.”*** He then again pointed toward the earth and said to her, ***“Now go and bring others home with you.”*** As Satan makes war against the saints, the earth may become a living hell, but to Christians, heaven will be our home. Remember, that Christ will never abandon you and that Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28:20, ***“I am with you always, even until the end of the age.”***

Revelation 13:9-10, states: ***“If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.”*** Verse 9 sounds a warning, and a call to pay special attention. This phrase came at the end of each of the seven letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3. A time will come when God’s people will suffer because of the sins of others. In Jeremiah 15:2, speaking of the

judgment which will come on God's people because of the evil deeds of their king, God tells Jeremiah to tell them: ***“And it shall be that when they say to you, ‘Where should we go?’ then you are to tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Those destined for death, to death; and those destined for the sword, to the sword; and those destined for famine, to famine; and those destined for captivity, to captivity.”*** Christians are not to resort to violence in their defense but put their faith in the Lord. When Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus, cutting off the ear of the slave of the high priest, Jesus responded saying, ***“Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword”*** (Matthew 26:52). The final sentence should remind us of the letter to the church at Smyrna. This was the blasphemed and persecuted church. Jesus told them, ***“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”*** (Revelation 2:10). What we are being told is that some Christians will be destined for captivity, persecution and martyrdom. This will be their fate, for they have been chosen, and ***“written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain”*** (13:8). Through their sacrifice they honor the One who sacrificed Himself that they may have life eternal with Him in heaven.

The Beast from the Earth:

Revelation 13:11, states: ***“And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.”*** While the first beast came up out of the sea, the second comes up out of the earth. The first is a worldly leader, but the second seems clearly to be a religious leader. This is supported by the fact that he causes people to worship the first beast, and because in Revelation 16:13, 19:20 and 20:10 he is referred to as the “false prophet.” We are told that he has two horns “like a lamb.” This second beast and third person of the satanic trinity seems to mock the roll of Christ in the Holy Trinity, being “like a lamb” but he is not the Lamb of God. He is definitely of Satan for he speaks “as a dragon,” which we know to be Satan.

Revelation 13:12, states: ***“And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.”*** As Jesus received His authority from His

heavenly Father, this second beast “exercises all the authority of the first beast.” He makes people worship the first beast. Essentially, this beast functions as priest, or the evil counterpart of the Christian Church. The Christian Church follows, worships, and witnesses for Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead. This “false prophet” makes people “in the earth” worship the “worldly” beast out of the sea. Perhaps we see his presence in the secularization of religion and the Church. Perhaps he is the force that moves the Church from being centered in Christ to embracing the relativism of the world.

Revelation 13:13, states: ***“And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.”*** Jesus warned His disciples of these two beasts in Matthew 24:24, saying, ***“For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”*** At the end of time, before final judgment comes, Satan will be allowed to impart his supernatural power upon the false prophet, or the false church, which will perform miraculous signs and wonders in an effort to make people worship the true beast—Satan. Satan still wants what he has always wanted, to be worshiped like God, and to elevate himself to a place above God. We hear in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 that these signs and wonders are the activity of Satan and are “false,” as it is written: ***“the one whose coming in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.”*** Just as Pharaoh’s magicians attempted to duplicate the plagues God sent upon Egypt in an effort to discredit God, so will the false prophet duplicate signs and wonders identified with God, such as bringing fire down from the sky.

Revelation 13:14, states: ***“And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.”*** The entire intent of the signs and wonders is to deceive those who dwell on the earth. The power to deceive comes from the beast—Satan. The false prophet performs the signs and wonders “in the presence of the beast,” or through the power of the beast. And again to mock God and His commandments, the false prophet instructs the people of the earth to make an image to the first beast. This is a direct violation of the second commandment found in Exodus 20:4: ***“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath***

or in the water under the earth.” The signs and wonders have prepared the people to commit idolatry—to worship what is false, what is not God or of God. Perhaps in this we see reflected the materialism of our time, where things and the possession of things rule our lives. Jesus said, **“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”** (Matthew 6:24). The literal translation of “mammon” is riches and/or material possessions.

Revelation 13:15, states: **“And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”** To give something breath is to give it life (Genesis 2:7). The reason for the image of the beast to be given life is so it can speak and cause those who do not worship it to be killed. Essentially, an image made by the people of the earth, and not by God, is given life to cause the people of the earth, who do not believe it is alive, to be killed. The image is man-made. The image is of the Antichrist. The image is to be worshiped by the people of the earth. The image will cause those who refuse to worship to be killed. Do you see the image and understand what it is? The image is that of mankind elevating himself above God. That’s what Satan did, and thus the image reflects Satan. In the beginning, Genesis 1:27 says, **“And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”** And in Genesis 2:7 we are told: **“Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”** Satan seeks to recreate man into his own image. Satan mocks God by having man create an image of himself, which Satan breathes life into, and demands that all of mankind worship or die. Satan longs for our destruction. As he did in the Garden of Eden, he attempts to deceive us into thinking that we are more than dust... that we can be “like God.” The serpent deceived Eve regarding the forbid fruit of the tree that God had instructed them not eat or touch or they would die. That ancient serpent (Satan) told Eve: **“You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”** (Genesis 3:4-5). We now “know evil” and the sin it causes leads to death.

Revelation 13:16, states: ***“And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead.”*** We mark ourselves by our choices, by what we do and what we believe. In John’s time, people were forced to make a choice. They could either bow to worship the Roman Emperor as a god or face death. Some biblical scholars believe that this is what this passage is about. But it is not a Roman Emperor that people have always been forced to choose to worship or not, but a false god—idolatry. That choice remains today. We show who is Lord over our lives by who we worship, who we serve, who we put first in our life. We worship what we what we are focused on, what dominates our thoughts and minds. This is the mark on the head. We show who we worship by our actions, what we do, where we spend our time, and how we spend our money. This is the mark on the hand, for our hands are symbolic of our actions. We use our hands for work, and our work produces fruit. We are recognized and “marked” by our fruit. In Matthew 7:17-19 Jesus states: ***“Every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*** In Luke 6:44 Jesus also says: ***“Each tree is known by its own fruit.”*** We mark ourselves by the kind of fruit we bear. The fruit we bear indicates who our Lord truly is, Jesus the Christ, or our self. These marks transcend all social, economic and political boundaries. It doesn’t matter who you are, how great or small. Each of us declares who is Lord of our life through our worship, reflected in our beliefs and actions. Ultimately, we have two choices. You will either put the Lord Jesus Christ first in your life or you will put yourself first. If you put yourself first, you worship the image of the beast, you worship yourself.

Revelation 13:17, states: ***“and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.”*** In early Christianity and in times of persecution, Christians were excluded from access to many public places, and often lost their jobs and homes because they refused to worship the Emperor and identified themselves as Christians. The implication here is that at the end of time, Christians again will be excluded from participating in public commerce unless they deny their Christianity and conform to the world. The

apostle Paul warns against this, saying, ***“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”*** (Romans 12:2). Did you hear him say the ***“renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is”***? This again reinforces the understanding that the “mark” on the “head” and “hand” pertain to our thoughts or focus, and our works or actions. There has been great speculation and debate about the “mark of the beast” and the “number of his name.” In John’s time it was seen as the emperor’s seal. In our time it has been speculated to be everything from credit cards to implanted microchips. I do not believe it will be something tangible or physical such as a device or visible mark. I believe the mark of God and the mark of the beast are seen only in how we live our lives, and in the fruit our lives bear. The closer we get to the end, the harder it will be to live as a Christian without being in conflict with the world. It will become harder and harder to choose God over self and survive in the world. As times get tougher, we will see greater and greater pressure to turn inward and preserve ourselves rather than reach outward and help others. This is the devil’s plan, to make it increasingly more difficult to be and live as a Christian—to live one’s life for others rather than for oneself.

Revelation 13:18, states: ***“Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.”*** First of all it should be noted, that while the vast majority and the most reliable ancient manuscripts of the Book of Revelation depict the number as “666,” a few manuscripts depict it as “616.” We are told that the number is that of a man. Many interpret this to mean that the number depicts a man’s name. Because both the Greek and Hebrew alphabets used letters to depict numbers, many believe that the name could be derived from the numerical equivalents of the letters of the beast’s name. Many names throughout the centuries have been claimed to represent that of the beast, ranging from Roman emperors to Catholic Popes. The most famous of these names is the “Emperor Nero,” whose title was either “Nero Caesar” or “Neron Caesar.” The name portion in some ancient manuscripts is sometimes spelled with or without the final “n.” What is so interesting is that when you add the numerical values of the letters in the Hebrew spelling of the name, “Neron Caesar” add up to 666, and “Nero Caesar” add up

to 616. No other human name or title has ever been found that fits both the 666 and 616 numbers so exactly. Does this mean that “Nero Caesar” is the Antichrist. Those who believe that Revelation is all about Rome in John’s time probably do, but Revelation clearly points to a future time for Christ’s return and the judgment of the world. Certainly, this has not yet occurred and therefore Nero Caesar could not be the final Antichrist.

Some view the number 666 in different ways. For example, some view the number to represent a symbol of the greatest imperfection, for it is the sacred number seven less one, repeated three times. What is certain is that the number six is significant in Scripture. God created the world in six days. The world was destroyed by flood with Noah was six hundred years old. Six hundred thousand men, along with women and children fled Egypt led by Moses. Pharaoh came after them with six hundred chariots. God provided manna from heaven for six days of each week, and the people were instructed to labor for six days, but rest on the seventh. The seventh commandment given by God through Moses, states: ***“Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy”*** (Exodus 20:8-11). From all of this we might derive that “six” is associated with our labor in the world, and seven, which is also symbolic for completeness, is set aside for rest and holiness, for staying both dependent upon and connected with God. This sounds an alarm as we reflect on how we have seen a steady deterioration of the Sabbath or one day in seven being set apart for rest and worship. The world placed more and more pressure on the faithful to consider Sunday just one more day, and makes it more and more difficult to attend worship. Is this a manifestation of the word of the beast?

I even found an interesting coincidence with the chapter and verse numbers, and the content of Proverbs 6:16, which begins a passage of four verses, saying: ***“There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked***

plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.” It should be clear by now that the number “666” or “616” could be interpreted in a multitude of ways. People might find whatever they are looking for, and this has been the case as people throughout the ages have manipulated the numbers to label those they oppose as the Antichrist. The bottom line is that we will not know his identity until God chooses to reveal him. I have already shared my own personal insight to his identity. I believe the spirit of the antichrist lives nested in idolatry, in the worship of that which is false and not God. I believe that Satan has and continues to manipulate mankind to worship himself, to turn inward and be selfish and self-serving, rather than reflect the image of Christ, which is selfless and servant to others. I believe the truth is revealed in the last portion of verse 13:18, where it states, ***“for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.”*** What I hear is that the beast is “a man” who is focused on the “creation” rather than the “Creator.” Man was created on the sixth day. The three-fold six may represent the six days in which everything we know as the world was created, excluding the seventh, the day set aside by God to keep holy. It may also represent man elevating himself above the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The question we must ask ourselves is what do we do with this information? We cannot be certain about the exact identity of the beast and the code of his name, but we do know how we are to live through the example and words of Christ. We are not to put ourselves first or turn inward either in self-preservation or self-glorification. We are not to be self-seeking or self-serving. We are too concerned today about our own self-image, self-esteem, and self-reliance. We are not the center of our world, and while the world might continue to proclaim that we can make ourselves into anything we want, we were made in the image of God, and that image has been revealed to be the image of Christ. Jesus has taught us that we must empty ourselves to be filled with Him. We must follow Him, willing to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others, as He sacrificed Himself for us. Only through putting Christ in the center of our lives will we gain eternal life. Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and upon Him and Him alone will we find salvation. Jesus said, ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me”*** (John 14:6). And the apostle Peter proclaimed: ***“There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:12). May our thoughts and actions be in Christ!

(End of Part-6)