

## ***Explanatory Rendering And Text Comparison***

In the following pages I have provided a parallel between the paraphrase of The Revelation and a translation of the text. The textual matter is based upon my variant of the Bible In Basic English<sup>154</sup> (a translation in the public domain) with additional corrections from the Majority Text Greek.<sup>155</sup> The translation is italicized with the explanatory rendering directly beneath. I have provided limited footnotes with Bible references and other information to help the reader understand the thought process behind the explanatory rendering.

### ***Jesus' Authority Established***

#### ***Chapter One***

*1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him so that his servants might have knowledge of the things which will quickly take place: and he sent it by way of symbols by his angel to his servant John;*

1. This is the message making it known that Jesus Christ is the goal and fulfillment of God's purpose in creation. Jesus fulfills all of God's promises to Israel<sup>156</sup> and is the reigning king of the universe. This is the message God the Father gave to Jesus, the mediator, so his ser-

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154 Samuel Henry Hooke, trans., *The Bible In Basic English*, (London: Cambridge Press, 1965)

155 Zane C. Hodges, Arthur L. Farstad, eds.

156 2 Corinthians 1:20, Galatians 3:15-29, Acts 13:32-33 etc.

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vants would understand he is the victorious one. It is given to prepare them for the events surrounding the realization of Jesus' lordship; for the end of the old covenant age and the events associated with the transition from the old to the new will take place very soon.<sup>157</sup> The status of Jesus was presented in symbolic language by an angel<sup>158</sup> to Christ's servant, John.

*2. Who gave witness of the word of God, and of the witness of Jesus Christ, even of all the things which he saw - both the things that are and those that must happen after these.*

2. John testified about the word of God and of the witness of Jesus Christ. He made sure to disclose everything he saw, both the events that are currently taking place and the events that will soon happen.

*3. A blessing be on the one who reads this, and on those who pay attention to this prophecy, and keep the things written here from the prophecy: for the time is near.*

3. May God's blessing rest upon the ones who read this prophecy to

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157 The Greek here is δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, literally, "must come into existence quickly." This is the first of several instances where the reader of The Revelation is told without equivocation that what is contained in the book will happen very soon. This is in keeping with the expectation of the new testament as a whole. Jesus said that the end of the old covenant age would be experienced by the generation alive at the time of his ministry (Matthew 24:34). Paul reminded the Church in Corinth that the things recorded in the old testament "happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus' ministry took place in the last days of the old covenant age (Hebrews 1:2) and that "once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

158 The fact that an Angel delivers this message identifies The Revelation as an old covenant communication (in the new covenant era there is no mediator between God and Man except Jesus Christ: Acts 7:38, 53, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 2:2-5, 8:6, 9:15, 12:24). Although the new covenant era began with the work of Jesus Christ the old covenant did not come to a final conclusion until the gospel had been taken first to the Jews. The old covenant concluded with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Thus The Revelation was written well before A.D. 70.

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others. And may God's blessing rest upon those who take heed to the prophecy and obey the things written in this letter, for the time of their fulfillment is near.<sup>159</sup>

*4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from God the Father who is and was and is to come; and from the omnipresent Holy Spirit present also at the throne of God,*

4. I am John and I am delivering this written prophecy to the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from God the Father, the eternal one and from the all seeing, all knowing, everywhere present Holy Spirit - present even at the throne of God.

*5. And from Jesus Christ, the true witness, the first to come back from the dead in the new covenant age, the one who rules the kings of the land. To him who had love for us and has made us clean from our sins by his blood;*

5. Also, grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ who works to enforce God's law and its execution. He is the first one of the new age of Man, the age of the Son of Man; the first to rise from the dead in the new covenant age. He rules over the religious leaders, those who claim to be in charge.<sup>160</sup> He is the one who loves us and has washed

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159 The Greek is *ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγυ* and literally reads word for word "the for time near" or as a proper English rendering should read, "for the time is near." So, in the first three verses of the revelation the reader is told the prophecy is about events that would take place very soon. In other words, The Revelation was written for a first century audience and that audience was going to live through the things that The Revelation talked about. "The alarming dangers it foretells were even then at hand, and so shortly to come to pass, that every one who heard these words would need its warnings and consolations." James Ramsey, *Revelation: An Exposition of the First Eleven Chapters*, (1873: Edinburgh: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1984), 32.

160 John uses the Greek word *γῆ* (pronounced *ghay*) to refer to different things. The word can be used to describe "arable land, the ground, the earth as a standing place, the main land as opposed to the sea or water, the earth as a whole, the earth as opposed to the heavens, the inhabited earth, the abode of men and animals, a country, land enclosed within fixed boundaries, a tract of land, territory, region." There are times (in context and after the destruction of the Harlot) when John is referring to the earth in general but most of the time when

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us clean from our sins by his own blood.

*6. And has made us to be a kingdom and priests to his God and Father; to him let glory and power be given for ever and ever. So be it.*

6. The rule and authority of Jesus Christ is primarily revealed in the lives of his followers, those who accept him as the Christ,<sup>161</sup> who are commissioned to lead others into the knowledge of who Jesus is and thus toward a relationship with God the Father. To Jesus Christ we ascribe glory and power for all eternity. Amen!

*7. See, he comes with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those by whom he was wounded; and all the tribes of the land will be sorrowing because of him. Yes, so be it.*

7. See! Jesus has fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel by ascending in the clouds to receive a kingdom there at God's throne!<sup>162</sup> When those who are responsible for Jesus' crucifixion understand that he is the Son of Man in Daniel's prophecy, they will be grief stricken just as Jesus said they would be.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, all the tribes of Israel will suffer the judgment of Jesus Christ.<sup>164</sup> Yes, amen!

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John uses γῆ he means the land of Israel. John will use other words, when the difference is important, to refer to the Roman empire or the whole of creation. Thus, kings of the land (γῆ) refers to the religious leaders of Judaism (cf. Exodus 19:6).

161 This is the first announcement in The Revelation that the covenant promises have been given to the followers of Jesus (Exodus 19:4-6). And be clear, the kingdom of God is nothing more profound than the realized authority of Jesus Christ. This is not to minimize the importance of the kingdom of God. I am simply pointing out that we should not make a mystery of the kingdom.

162 If we think like a first century Jew we understand that coming in the clouds is a reference to the vision of Daniel recorded in chapter 7 verses 13 and 14 of his book. Modern Christians have it backwards. "coming in the clouds" is to ascend to heaven. And that is exactly what Jesus Christ did. He fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel as the representative of Israel and ascended into heaven to receive the kingdom.

163 Matthew 24:30

164 It was not required for the first century Jews to physically see Jesus in order for them to "see" that he was everything he claimed to be. The events soon to take

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8. *I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God who is and was and is to come, the Almighty, ruler of all*

8. "I am the first and the last, eternal and infinite, abounding with life,"<sup>165</sup> says the Lord God. "Nothing is outside my jurisdiction. I am the eternal origin and consummation of all things, ruling everything everywhere."<sup>166</sup>

9. *I, John, your brother, who have a part with you in the tribulation and the kingdom and the quiet strength of Jesus, was in the island which is named Patmos, because I preached the word of God and bore witness of Jesus.*

9. I, John, am brother to every follower of Jesus Christ. I have a part with you in the tribulation we are about to suffer. I also have a part in the rule of God in Christ over all aspects of creation and a part in the endurance supplied by Jesus. When this disclosure of Jesus' status came to me I was on the island of Patmos.<sup>167</sup> I was there because I preached the word of God about Jesus.

10. *I was worshiping on the Lord's day, when I heard a great voice like a trumpet behind me.*

10. I was worshiping on the eighth day - that is to say, the first day of the week, which is the Lord's day because it is the day of the week he rose and so signifies a new creation and new covenant.<sup>168</sup> Suddenly, I

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place for the apostle John's contemporaries would unfold as a vindication of Jesus' claim to be the Christ.

165 Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse Of St. John: The Greek Text With Introduction Notes & Indices* (1907; London: MacMillian & Co. Ltd, ND), 11.

166 "That by this expression, 'Who is, and who was and who is to come,' the apostle expresses that name of God ...which as the rabbins say, is of all seasons and expressive of all times, is evident. To which add that other name of God, 'Almighty', and it cannot at all be questioned but that he who is intended in these words is 'the only true God.'" John Owen, *Works*, 12.260.

167 Keep in mind as The Revelation unfolds that the land of Israel was to the east of John.

168 Creation and covenant go together. Isaiah 51:15-16 well illustrates this in saying, "But I am Yahweh your God who divided the sea whose waves roared, Yahweh of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, lay the

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heard a roaring trumpet-like voice behind me.

*11. Saying, what you see, put in a book, and send it to the seven churches; to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.*

**11.** The voice said, "Write down what you see and publish a book. Send that book to the seven churches that are representative of the entire Church. Send the book to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

*12. And turning to see the voice which said these words to me, I saw seven golden lamp-stands;*

**12.** Naturally, I turned around to see who was speaking to me in the roaring trumpet-like voice and in so doing I saw seven lamp-stands made of pure gold.

*13. And in the middle of them one like a son of man, clothed with a robe down to his feet, and with a band of gold round his chest.*

**13.** Standing in the middle of them was one like the Son of Man in Daniel's prophecy yet looking something like the Ancient of Days in Daniel's prophecy as well.<sup>169</sup> He was wearing a long robe with a golden sash across his chest.

*14. And his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;*

**14.** His hair, indeed his entire head was like bright clean wool, bright as fresh snow. His eyes burned like flames of fire.

*15. And his feet like polished brass, as if it had been refined in a fire; and his voice was as the sound of great waters.*

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foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, 'You are my people.'" Moreover, the eighth day is associated with new beginnings throughout the Scriptures (Leviticus 14:10, 15:14 and many more).

<sup>169</sup> Daniel 7:9-14



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**15.** His feet had the radiance of molten metal and his voice was like the sea when it roars.

*16. In his right hand he held seven stars: and out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword: and his face was like the sun shining in its strength.*

**16.** He held seven stars in his right hand and a sharp double edged sword came out of his mouth. And his face - it shone like the sun at high noon on a bright, clear day!

*17. And when I saw him, I went down on my face at his feet as one dead. But he put his right hand on me, saying, Have no fear; I am the first and the last;*

**17.** It takes a while to describe this, but when I saw him I took it in all at once and fainted dead away! However, he put his right hand on my shoulder in a friendly way and said, "There is nothing for you to be afraid of. Every eventuality is under my control.

*18. And I was dead, and see, I am living for ever (amen) and I have the keys of death and of hades.*

**18.** "Death could not hold me - see, I'm alive and will live eternally. Amen! Moreover, I have complete control over death and the old covenant place of the dead, called hades.

*19. Put in writing, then, the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will be after these;*

**19.** "Now then, write down the things you have seen so far, along with the things you are about to see.

*20. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and of the seven golden lamp-stands The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven lights are the seven churches.*

**20.** "Also, the Gospel significance<sup>170</sup> of the seven stars you saw in my

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170 The things of God are not mysterious in the sense that they are unknowable; it is more that the ways of God seem "illogical" to the human mind - especially the

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right hand and of the seven golden lamp-stands is this: the seven stars represent the leaders of the seven churches (and thereby all the leaders in the entire Church) and the seven lights in the lamp-stand represent the seven churches (and thereby the entire Church)."

### ***Jesus' Mediation Confirmed***

#### ***Chapter Two***

*1. To the angel of the church in Ephesus say: These things says he who has the seven stars in his right hand, who is walking in the middle of the seven gold lights:*

1. "Here is what I want you to say to the leadership at the Ephesus church: 'This is what the one who is favorably disposed toward Church leaders says; this is what the one who is always with his Church has to say:

*2. I know what you are doing, and of your hard work and long waiting, and that you will not put up with evil men, and have put to the test those who say they are apostles and are not, and have seen that they are false;*

2. 'I know what is going on there at Ephesus. I know you have worked hard at sharing and living the Gospel of my kingdom. I know it seems to you that you have been waiting a long time for me to entirely close out the old covenant age. I know you do not put up with people who reject the commands of God. I know you have had your suspicions about certain people who claim to be my messengers. You took note of their behavior and their teaching and discov-

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first century Jewish mind. Thus the mystery of the gospel includes a temporary blindness of the Jews at the end of the old covenant age to allow a certain number of Gentiles to enter a relationship with God during the old era (Romans 11:25). The mystery of the gospel is that the old covenant place of the dead - hades - was transitory and new covenant believers would not enter "sleep" upon death (1 Corinthians 15:51). The mystery of the gospel is that God intended Gentiles to be fellow heirs with the Jews and that this truth would be manifest to the spiritual realm by the integrated Church (Ephesians 3:1-12). The mystery of the gospel includes the intimacy of relationship between Jesus the Christ and his Bride (Ephesians 5:32), and so on.



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ered that they are not delegates of mine after all.

*3. And you have endurance, and have undergone trouble because of my name, without weariness.*

3. 'You have endured. You have faced tribulation because you refused to deny my lordship and you did so without giving up.

*4. But I have this against you, that you are turned away from your first love.*

4. 'However, I find I am against you because you are not committed to me like you used to be.

*5. So keep in mind where you were at first, and be changed in heart and do the first works; or I will come to you quickly, and take away your light from its place, unless your hearts are changed.*

5. 'So, I am telling you to recall how it was when you were really committed to me. You need to repent and go back to living for me with the same passion you had when each of were first made a new creation. If you do not do so soon, I will come to you and wipe you out. Unless you all repent and recommit your lives to me you will cease to be part of the Church!

*6. At least you have the credit of hating the works of the Nicolaitians, as I do.*

6. 'Really, the only reason I don't get rid of you right now is because you hate those Judaizers<sup>171</sup> who seek to conquer my people with false

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171 I will use the term Judaizers in this document to describe those Jews who either refuse Jesus as the Christ altogether or taught that faith in Christ alone was not enough. If there is a need to further define the term I will do so in the text or in a footnote. Yet why consider the Nicolaitians Judaizers? There was a large Jewish population in Ephesus to be sure but most importantly the new testament makes it clear that Believers of the first century were not seduced away from following Jesus Christ by pagan licentiousness but by Judaic legalism. Two of Paul's letters (if we consider Hebrews a letter of Paul) are devoted entirely to this topic while the remainder of his epistles at least touch on it as an issue requiring attention. Moreover, as we shall see, The Revelation is a covenant document aimed at the apostates who have not only rejected Jesus the Christ but desire to lead others

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doctrines.

*7. He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give of the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.*

7. 'If you have a mind to listen, then pay attention to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. Those who conquer the ones who want to conquer my people will be saved and will enjoy the benefits of the new covenant age.'"

*8. And to the angel of the church in Smyrna say: These things says the first and the last, who was dead and is now living:*

8. "To the leaders in the church in Smyrna say, 'This is what the one who claims the name of God as first and last, the one who was dead but rose again, this is what I have to say to you:

*9. I have knowledge of your work and tribulation and how poor you are (but you have true wealth) and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are a Synagogue of Satan.*

9. 'I know you have worked hard at sharing and living the Good News, the news that I have authority over every part of life, and have experienced tribulation because of it. I know you are materially poor, even though you have been consistently obedient to me and so have the great reward of close relationship with me. I know those who claim to be true Jews are speaking against me. I know they say they are God's covenant people but they are really an assembly of Satan.<sup>172</sup>

*10. Have no fear of the things you are about to suffer: see, the Devil will send some of you into prison, so that you may be put to the test; and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be true till death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

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into error.

<sup>172</sup> Jesus was not squeamish about calling the Jews who rejected him children of Satan (John 8:38-47 cf. Acts 13:6-10).

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10. 'Do not be afraid even though your suffering will soon grow worse. The devil will oppress you as he did Job. He will test and trouble you for an appropriate time determined by me. If you are loyal to me even to death then your salvation is secure and you will reign and be blessed in your arena of activity as you bring it under my authority.<sup>173</sup>

*11. He who has ears, let him give ear to what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not come under the power of the second death.*

11. 'He who has ears, let him really listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the Church. Anyone who verifies their new birth by remaining in me and my overcoming power will never see hell.'"

*12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos say: These things says he who has the sharp two-edged sword:*

12. "This is what I want you to tell the leaders in the church of Pergamos: 'This is what the word of God who speaks the words of literal life and death from God has to say to you:

*13. I know about your works and where you live, where Satan's throne is: and you are true to my name, and were not turned away from your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my true witness, who was put to death among you, where Satan has his place.*

13. 'I am aware of your kingdom activity and where you live. I know you live where Satan has his eastern throne of Empire worship.<sup>174</sup> Yet, you are loyal to me and did not become faithless even when Antipas - a true witness of my messianic kingdom - was put to death in your midst, in that place where Satan dwells.

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173 "You will bring your arena of activity under my authority on earth and in eternity."

174 "The Imperial cult, the worship of the spirit of Rome and of the Emperor, with a loyalty test of formal incense burned at the foot of Caesar statue, found its center, appropriately enough, in Pergamum, and colored the city's life." Merrill C. Kenny, Stephen Barabas, eds., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5 Vols., (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1976), Vol 4, page 702

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14. *But I have some things against you, because you have with you those who keep the teaching of Balaam, by whose suggestion Balak cast a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, taking food which was offered to false gods, and to commit fornication.*

14. 'Nonetheless I find that I am against you because you tolerate people who are not of my people, destroyers who entice my people into false worship and unfaithfulness to me.

15. *Thus you have those who keep the teaching of the Nicolaitians, which I also hate.*

15. 'Thus, you tolerate Judaizers who conquer my people with enticements to false worship focused on the completed temple<sup>175</sup> in Jerusalem, false worship that is unfaithfulness to me - and I hate them!<sup>176</sup>

16. *See, then, that you have a change of heart; or I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.*

16. 'If you do not have a sudden change of heart about these false

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175 Throughout the remainder of the rendering, I will use the term "completed temple" to refer to the temple in Jerusalem refurbished, (indeed rebuilt), by Herod the Great and "completed temple Judaism" in reference to the settled apostasy of those Jews who rejected Jesus as the Christ. The work on the temple began in 20 B.C. and was not finished until A.D. 64. The significance of the "completed temple" is that prior to its being finished, the special privilege afforded Jews had not come to an end. Once the temple was complete and dedicated by the high priest, the general first century Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Christ was settled. It was then that covenant sanctions were employed. The particular time of "to the Jew first" had come to an end (Mark 10:5-7, Acts 13:46, Romans 1:16). Within two years after its completion, the Jews revolted against Rome and the events portrayed in The Revelation began to take place. "The temple was completed in A.D. 64, the same year that Rome burned and a new Rome began to be built. The completion of the temple was taken as a sign by the wicked Circumcision that God was on their side. It encouraged them to rebel against Rome, which resulted in their destruction. But it also encouraged them to persecute the Christians as never before." James B. Jordan, *The Vindication Of Jesus Christ: A Brief Reader's Guide To Revelation* (Monroe: Athanasius Press, 2008), 59.

176 Leviticus 20:23, Psalms 5:5

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Jews I will quickly come in destructive judgment on those in your midst who have mixed loyalties.

*17. He who has ears, let him give ear to what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, of which no one has knowledge but he to whom it is given.*

17. 'Listen, if you will, to what the Holy Spirit says to the Church. Those who confirm their new creation by working out their salvation<sup>177</sup> may rest assured that I am theirs and they are mine and I will strengthen them.<sup>178</sup> They may be confident they are each a new creation and will not lose their place in Eternity since they are known by me.'"

*18. And to the angel of the church in Thyatira say: These things says the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and his feet like polished brass:*

18. "Say this to the leadership in the Thyatira church: 'This is what the Son of God says, the one who is the image of the Ancient of Days, with flaming eyes and feet like molten metal; completely other and yet completely human.

*19. I have knowledge of your works, and your love and faith and help and strength in trouble, and that your last works are more than the first.*

19. 'I am aware of your Gospel labors and of your brotherly love, your faithfulness to the Gospel and your willingness to lend a strong hand to others in times of trouble. Moreover, I am aware that you are doing this more now than you did in the past.

*20. But I have this against you, that you let the woman Jezebel say she is a prophet and give false teaching, making my servants commit fornication and eat food offered to false gods.*

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177 Philippians 2:12-13

178 John 6:35-58

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20. 'However, I find that I am against you! You have let a large portion of the church in Thyatira prostitute itself, to be unfaithful to the covenant. That faction makes claim to prophetic gifts, teaches falsehood and leads my people into Judaism and Empire worship.

21. *And I gave her time for a change of heart, but she has no mind to give up her unclean ways.*

21. 'I gave that faction a chance to change but they are not inclined to give up their unfaithfulness.

22. *See, I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, if they go on with her works.*

22. 'So watch and see what I am going to do. I will curse the leaders of that faction and those who follow their false teaching. If they continue in their ways, they will suffer greatly in the days of vengeance against the false Jews and the great tribulation<sup>179</sup> of the Church about to come.

23. *And I will put her children to death; and all the churches will see that I am he who searches into the secret thoughts and hearts of men: and I will give to every one of you the reward of your works.*

23. 'I will destroy the heretical churches that are born of that false doctrine and the Church will understand that I see the very thoughts of man. Thus I am able to give each one what he truly deserves.

24. *But to you I say, to the rest in Thyatira, even to those who have not this teaching, and have no knowledge of the secrets of Satan, as they say; I put on you no other weight.*

24. 'Now to the rest of you in Thyatira, those who have rejected that filthy doctrine and have stayed away from the Judaic Gnosticism that is a part of their bag of tricks,<sup>180</sup> of you I ask for nothing additional.

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179 The days of vengeance came upon the apostate Jews (Luke 21:22) while the tribulation was endured by the Church (Matthew 24:9-29)

180 Colossians 2:16-23. For additional insight concerning the Judaic Gnosticism that threatened the churches of the Lycus valley see: <http://dewms.com/>



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*25. But what you have, keep safe till I come.*

25. 'Simply continue to obey me, keeping safe what you have until I come in judgment to close out the old covenant age.

*26. He who overcomes, and keeps my works to the end, to him I will give rule over the nations,*

26. 'He who resists temptation and remains obedient to me in this time of trial will be empowered to bring his arena of responsibility under my authority.

*27. And he will be ruling them with a rod of iron; they shall be smashed to pieces like clay vessels,*

27. 'And he will reign in his sphere of influence by virtue of obedience to my law. Those who oppose his quiet submission to me will be left in his dust as I bless him for his faithfulness according to God's covenant promises.

*28. as I also have received from my Father. And I will give him the morning star.*

28. 'He will be successful in his arena of responsibility and will have a covenant relationship with me.

*29. He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

29. 'Anyone who has ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the Church.'"

### **Chapter Three**

*1. And to the angel of the church in Sardis say: These things says he who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I have knowledge of your works, that you seem to be living but are dead.*

1. "To the leaders in the church in Sardis say: 'The one from whom proceeds the perfect Holy Spirit (by whom is empowered the Church leadership) says this: I know what you are doing and that you appear

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to be spiritual but are worldly.

*2. Be on the watch, and make strong the rest of the things which are near to death; because as judged by me your works have not come up to God's measure.*

2. 'Watch out! Strengthen the graces you still have for they are in danger of being taken away. From my point of view your works do not align with God's law.

*3. Keep in mind, then, the teaching which was given to you, and be ruled by it and have a change of heart. If then you do not keep watch, I will come like a thief, and you will have no knowledge of the hour when I will come on you.*

3. 'Remember what you were taught and live in obedience to that doctrine. Repent of your disobedience. If you do not, I will come upon you in sudden and unexpected judgment.

*4. But you have some names in Sardis who have kept clean their robes; and as a reward they will go in white with me.*

4. 'You do have some in Sardis who indeed have walked even as I have walked. As a reward they will continue to grow in Christlikeness.

*5. He who overcomes will be dressed in white, and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will give witness to his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

5. 'He who proves his new birth by steadfast Holy Spirit empowered obedience will remain in covenant relationship with me and I will make sure his name is known to my Father and his angels.

*6. He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

6. 'Anyone who has ears should listen to the what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. "'

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7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia say: These things says he who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, opening the door so that no one may shut it, and shutting it so that no one may open it.*

7. "To the leadership in the Philadelphia church say: 'The one who is set apart, who is genuine, who shoulders the kingly authority of David, who gives access to the covenant promises and denies access to the covenant; this is what I say:

8. *I have knowledge of your works. See, I have put before you an open door which may be shut by no one because you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have been true to my name.*

8. 'I know what is going on there. So look, I've opened a door to the covenant promises right in front of you and no one can shut it! I know you do not have the same local influence as the assembly of the children of Satan. But you have obeyed me and have not denied me.

9. *See, I will make those of the Synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews, and are not, but say what is false; I will make them come and give worship before your feet, and see my love for you.*

9. 'Watch! I'll make the assembly of the children of Satan who say they are Jews, in covenant with God, but are not and speak lies; I will make them fall at your feet like the persecuting heathens they really are. They will discover that God's love is reserved for all who relate to him in Jesus Christ, not for those who continue in a perversion of the old covenant ways.<sup>181</sup>

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181 The strong Jewish community in Philadelphia was known for its persecution of Christians. Once again, I ask you to keep in mind "there is no such thing as Orthodox Judaism; there is no such thing as a genuine belief in the old testament that is consistent with the rejection of Jesus Christ as Lord and God. Those who did not believe in Christ did not believe the old testament either. The God of Judaism is the devil. The Jew will not be recognized by God as one of his chosen people until he abandons his demonic religion and returns to the faith of his fathers - the faith which embraces Jesus Christ and his gospel. When Christ rejecting Jews claim to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, Jesus says they lie." David Chilton, *Vengeance*, 127.

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*10. Because you have kept my word in quiet strength, I will keep you from the hour of testing which is about to come on the whole Roman world, to put to the test those who live on the land.*

10. 'Because you have endured in your obedience to me I will keep you from the tribulation that is about to come upon the entire Roman world.<sup>182</sup> This is about to happen so that the Jews in Palestine (and Jews elsewhere who continue to embrace temple-centered Judaism) will be judged.

*11. I am coming quickly: keep that which you have, so that no one may take your crown.*

11. 'I am coming in judgment on old Israel very soon. Continue in quiet submission to me so that you might substantiate your new birth and be empowered to bring your sphere of influence under my authority.

*12. him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the house of my God, and he will go out no more: and I will put on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.*

12. 'He who remains true to his confession of faith will maintain his role as my temple without interruption. This one will be called God's true child and a citizen of his heavenly kingdom and a Christian.

*13. He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

13. 'He who is really listening, let him hear what the Holy Spirit says to the Church.'"

*14. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea say: These things says the amen, the true and certain witness, the beginning and head of God's new creation:*

14. "To the leaders in the church at Laodicea say: 'These are the

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182 The Greek here is οἰκουμένης (oy-kou-men'-ays) meaning, the Roman world, empire or as I like to term it, the "Roman house."

## *Explanatory Rendering And Text Comparison*

things said to you by the amen, the genuine and absolute witness, the beginning and head of God's new covenant order.

*15. I have knowledge of your works, that you are not cold or hot: it would be better if you were cold or hot.*

15. 'I know who you are. I know that you do not do one thing or the other to see my authority recognized in your life and arena of activity and so you are useless! Clearly it would be better for you to do something productive on my behalf.

*16. So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.*

16. 'But because you are neither this nor that, because you are good for nothing, I will treat you like those who are outside the covenant<sup>183</sup> and cut you off from the covenant blessings!

*17. For you say, I have wealth, and have become rich, and have need of nothing; and you are not conscious of your sad and unhappy condition, that you are poor and blind and without clothing.*

17. 'You say you are super spiritual and don't need to concern yourself with God's word. In truth you are wretched, miserable, spiritually destitute, spiritually blind and out from under the protection of the covenant.

*18. I counsel you to buy from me gold tested by fire, so that you may have true wealth; and white robes to put on, so that your shame may not be seen; and oil for your eyes, so that you may see.*

18. 'So, I tell you to get right religion. Embrace my covenant conditions so you will be under my protection. Walk in the power of the Holy Spirit so you will not play the part of the foolish hypocrite. Cry out for spiritual sight so you will recognize the disaster that looms before you.

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183 Leviticus 18:28

## Apocalypse

19. *To all those who are dear to me, I give sharp words and punishment: then with all your heart have sorrow for your evil ways.*

19. 'Keep in mind that I bring chastening to my true followers so they will be cut to heart and be sorry for their sins.

20. *See, I am waiting at the door and knocking; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him and he with me.*

20. 'You see, once someone has made a confession of faith I am loath to let them go. I will pursue you and if you respond to the wooing of the Holy Spirit I will reestablish covenant fellowship with you.

21. *To him who overcomes I will give a place with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am seated with my Father on his throne.*

21. 'The one who remains in the faith will rule in their own God-given arena of responsibility even as I rule all creation which is my sphere of God-given responsibility.

22. *He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

22. 'If anyone is really listening then let him hear and understand what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church.'"

### **Chapter Four**

1. *After these things I saw a door open in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was like the sound of a trumpet, saying, Come up here, and I will make clear to you the things which are to come.*

1. After Jesus finishes with his messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor, I, John, understand I am about to be given insight into the events soon to unfold. I hear the trumpet-like voice telling me to look into heaven where I see a symbolic representation of reality.

2. *Straight away I was in the Spirit: and I saw a throne in heaven, and one was seated on it;*

2. Suddenly, I see through spiritual eyes, seeing and understanding



## *Explanatory Rendering And Text Comparison*

things I could not see or understand by natural sight. There I see that all history and creation are ruled by one who is not of this world. I see that the earthly tabernacle was a replication of the heavenly one and the new earthly tabernacle, the Church, and the heavenly tabernacle are one.

*3. And to my eyes the throne and the one on it were like a jasper and a sardius stone: and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald.*

3. My spiritual sight enables me to see that it is the Ancient of Days who rules - he ruled in the old covenant age and he rules in the new covenant age as well. I am reminded that he had once destroyed every living thing on the earth but had promised to never do it again. However, destruction of a kind is coming.<sup>184</sup>

*4. And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and on them I saw four and twenty elders seated, clothed in white robes; and on their heads crowns of gold.*

4. Others rule under the authority of the Ancient of Days. They look to him and surround him. They are representative of the old covenant age, the age of a priestly caste.

*5. And out of the throne came lightnings and voices and thunders. And seven torches of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;*

5. God in the old covenant is the same as he is in the new covenant. He remains the glorious omniscient Yahweh. The omnipresent, complete, Holy Spirit remains the same. Again, God, the ancient of Days is completely other.

*6. And before the throne there was, as it seemed, a clear sea of glass like crystal; and in the middle of the throne, and round about it, four living*

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<sup>184</sup> Jews considered the rainbow Yahweh's war-bow. "The covenant with Noah in Genesis means that Yahweh sets aside his bow and hangs it in the clouds as a sign that his anger has subsided." J. Massyngberede Ford, *Revelation: A New Translation With Introduction And Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 71.

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*beings full of eyes round about.*

6. There is a terrible distance between God and mankind; humanity is frozen out of relationship on all but God's terms. Worship of God by all of creation is mandated. And God has eyes everywhere, omnipresent in his creation and all knowing.

*7. And the first living being was like a lion, and the second like an ox, and the third had a face like a man, and the fourth was like an eagle in flight.*

7. The four corners of creation are ruled by God: wild beasts, livestock, humanity and even the devil himself<sup>185</sup> are ruled by God and rule in their sphere by God's direction. Indeed, the events about to take place are ruled by powers identified with each sphere of creation. Moreover, all aspects of creation give praise to God.

*8. And the four living beings, every one of them having six wings, are full of eyes round about and inside: and without resting day and night, they say, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, almighty, who was and is and is to come.*

8. The powers that rule the old creation give shape to God's omnipresence. They do his bidding. What they do is done as continual praise to God. Indeed, they lead all of creation in praise to the Ancient of Days.

*9. And when the living beings give glory and honor to him who is seated on the throne, to him who is living for ever and ever,*

9. At the turning of the ages,<sup>186</sup> the powers ruling the old creation (the old covenant world) summon all of creation to praise the everlasting God for what he is doing.

*10. The four and twenty elders go down on their faces before him who is seated on the throne, and give worship to him who is living for ever and*

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185 The four living beings may correspond to the four quarters of the Zodiac, with the eagle representing "Scorpio" a courier of calamity and woe and often associated with Satan. (cf. Revelation 8:13.) In any case they represent the world wide power of God and his manifold activities. cf. Ford, 75.

186 1 Corinthians 10:11, Hebrews 1:2, 9:26

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*ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

**10.** The old covenant glorifies God and is designed to make way for the fulfillment of God's promises. In my spiritual sight I see the powers ruling under the old covenant dispensation praise the Ancient of Days and voluntarily give up their authority as the old covenant age comes to a conclusion.

*11. It is right, our Lord and our God, for you to have glory and honor and power: because You created all things, and by Your will they existed and they were created.*

**11.** Those powers acknowledge that God deserves glory and honor and power because he can do whatever he wants with his creation. The created realm is by him and for him and designed to unfold his purpose.

### **Chapter Five**

*1. And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne, a book with writing inside it and on the back, sealed with seven seals.*

**1.** In my spiritual sight, I, John, see that the Ancient of Days exercises judicial oversight concerning the execution of the covenant. He does not allow its sanctions to be realized unless his conditions are met.

*2. And I saw a strong angel saying in a loud voice, Who is able to make the book open, and to break its seals?*

**2.** The Eternal Son proposes a rhetorical question to the Father and to all of creation: "Is there anyone who meets the criteria demanded by the Ancient of Days, anyone who can fulfill the terms of the covenant and so apply its sanctions - both blessing and cursing?"

*3. And no one in heaven, or on the land, or under the land, was able to open the book, nor to look at it.*

**3.** The answer is no. No angel, man or other created being has met the requirements set forth by God. No one has fulfilled the terms of the covenant and so no one can effectuate it.

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4. *And I began to weep much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, nor to look at it.*

4. I, John, weep over this circumstance. God has made a covenant with his people but now it seems the covenant will never be realized because no man has met the requirements for reclaiming Adam's position of covenantal executor.

5. *But one of the elders said to me, Do not weep: see, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome, and has power to open the book and its seven seals.*

5. However, it is made known to me by an old covenant power that in fact there is someone who has lived in complete obedience to the Father and so has fulfilled the terms of the covenant. It is someone who lays claim to the Abrahamic promises and the Davidic promises. *That someone is authorized to effectuate the covenant.*

6. *And I saw in the middle of the throne and of the four living beings, and in the middle of the elders, a Lamb in his place, which seemed as if it had been put to death, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the land.*

6. Suddenly, my spiritual sight enables me to understand that at the center of the old covenant has always been the Christ. I understood that Jesus who died on the cross is God himself, having all power and all knowledge.

7. *Then he came and took it out of the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.*

7. After he was crucified and buried, after he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven he had finished the work of meeting the covenant stipulations and so he is qualified to effectuate the covenant; qualified to open it, discern its contents, and issue orders of binding arbitration to all of creation.

8. *And when he had taken the book, the four living beings and the four and*

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*twenty rulers went down on their faces before the Lamb, having every one a harp, and gold vessels full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

8. Once he has done this the process of closing out the old covenant era begins. All of creation now looks to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain as their representative before God. The powers of the old covenant era recognize Jesus' lordship and the members of the new covenant era begin to ask him to conclude the old age and fully realize the new.

*9. And their voices are sounding in a new song, saying, It is right for you to take the book and to make it open: for you were put to death and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, men of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation,*

9. All creation, old covenant powers and new covenant saints, recognize Jesus as the rightful executor of the covenant. This is so because he is the last Adam, having undone the disorder brought about by the sin of the first Adam. Jesus died in the place of God's people and is bringing into the covenant people from the four corners of the globe.

*10. And have made them kings and priests to our God, and they are ruling on the land.*

10. Those who come into the covenant share in Jesus' rule, bringing their arena of activity under the lordship of Jesus the Christ. They also have the privilege of leading many Jews to a knowledge of the truth.<sup>187</sup>

*11. And I saw, and I heard the sound of a great number of angels round about the throne and the living beings and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and a thousand thousands;*

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187 "This vision of a community rescued by the cross and transformed into kingdom-bringers, follows directly from the story the four evangelists are telling. ...The slaughtered and enthroned lamb of Revelation 5 is not only the shepherd of his people; he is also their template." N. T. Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story Of The Gospels*, (New York: Harper One, 2012), 203.

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11. At the conclusion of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, every power and authority in creation burst forth,

*12. Saying with a great voice, It is right to give to the Lamb who was put to death, power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.*

12. giving voice to praise for what Jesus has accomplished. Acknowledging that his death on behalf of God's people earned him unqualified power and working resources and wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing.

*13. And to my ears came the voice of everything in heaven and on land and under the land and in the sea, and of all things which are in them, saying, to him who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, may blessing and honor and glory and power be given for ever and ever.*

13. Then all of creation did the same, for the old age is coming to an end and the glorious new age of the Son of Man, the age of the last Adam is beginning.

*14. And the four living beings said, So be it. And the rulers went down on their faces and gave worship.*

14. The powers of the old age and the old covenant rulers acknowledged that it was right for their time to end and they paid homage to Jesus, the newly recognized king.

## **Covenant Law Adjudicated & Announced**

### **Chapter Six**

*1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard the voice of one of the four living beings, saying as with a voice of thunder, Come.*

1. Then in my spiritual sight, I, John, understand that upon his ascension, Jesus began to conclude the old covenant in order to fully realize the new. He began the process of final adjudication according