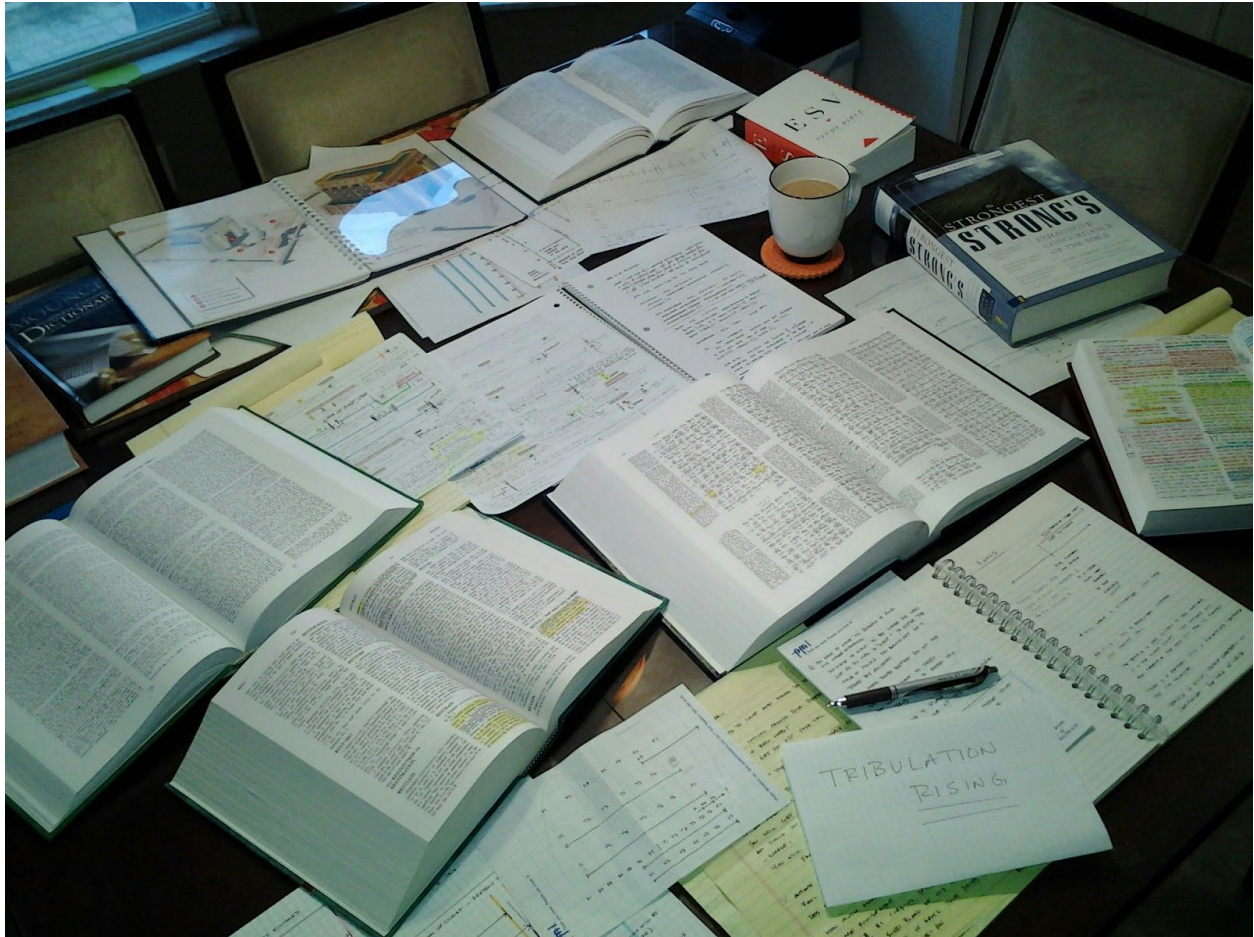


TRIBULATION RISING: THE SERIES



JOHN, ANGELS AND MARTYRS - FINAL PROOF OF THE PRE-TRIB RAPTURE

RICHARD KENDRICK JR.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 2004013063

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One of the great tragedies in today's society is an inability to observe differences. It speaks to a loss of critical thinking abilities that has permeated not just the United States and western society, but the world has a whole. Now, this does not take away from the fact that the Lord hides things in His word for revealing at the times He so chooses. He does indeed do this very thing. Yet, there are many truths in the Bible that are ripe for the picking, and the Lord has put them on the lowest branches for all of us to partake.



While it takes the Holy Spirit to open up many of the deeper truths in the Bible, there are many truths that are found in the exercise of simple observation. What I mean is this. Many times, the heart of what the Bible is telling us on a particular subject is found

simply in the noticing of differences and unusual occurrences. It is then reinforced by the action of questioning what you have just discovered.

Many times the Lord will combine observation with revelation. In other words, He will bring revelation after you make the observation. Here is the key to this - the observation must come first. Observation is always in the power of the individual. Observation of differences in the text comes only with careful study.

I had someone ask me once why there are so many versions of God's truth if the Bible was the single source for His word. She was asking how so many people garnered so many interpretations from reading the exact same words. What we have here is a prime example of how false doctrine is born.

Many times, the person reading the Bible is interested only in answers that agree with them. In other words, their flesh sets the agenda when they read the Bible. If they are a person that has lived a hard life, then their flesh may be predisposed to seeking justice. So, they will be more inclined to believe that no one will escape the tribulation. So, as they read through the Bible, they do so looking for that magic bullet that will confirm that which they already "know".

If they have to suffer in this world, then surely that means the rest of the world must suffer!

This is but one of many examples I encounter. In every case, the person involved never sees revelation knowledge on the subject. This stems from the fact that all they truly wanted was for the Bible to cater to their flesh, instead of their flesh catering to the Bible. So, when they found those verses that could be bent to fit their narrative on the plain reading their search stopped. They never dig deeper into what they have been reading.

Proverbs 25:2 KJV - It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

Isaiah 28:10-13 KJV - For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Understand, the Lord waits on us to see if we will do the work and put in the time. Are we interested only in our answers? If so there will be no revelation knowledge.

However, if we are willing to read the text and break it down, observing the individual pieces and comparing them to one another, then the Lord sees our seriousness to His Word. From there, He will begin to open up the deeper understanding of the Word.

When we do this there will be things that jump out at us. Sometimes, the Lord will even help with the first part - observation - when it becomes clear that we value His answers above our own.

That said, we will be diving deeper into this subject in just a few minutes. What you are going to read in the presentation is a prime example of revelation knowledge that starts with basic observation. You are going to read some of the most amazing revelations in the Bible that you have likely never seen before. But first, we need to address several things that will be critical to what you will read later on.

Angels in the Bible

I am going to make a statement that may come as a shock to many of you:

Angels are not just “angels” in the Bible. Sometimes angels are people.

I can already hear the collective gasp as people read these words. That said, do you know who didn't gasp at my statement? Bible scholars. Here is why - what you are about to read is already known, accepted, understood - and taught at seminary.

“Wait just one minute. If it is known, then why have I never heard this before?”

The answer is simple. It is a subject that rarely comes up in most Bible studies. Stated differently, most Bible studies don't cover angels or angelic encounters. The few that do almost exclusively involve what we typically think of as “angels” - the created heavenly beings such as the archangels, or the angels that announced the birth of John and Jesus.

We simply add in our own assumptions when we hear the word “angels”. We have a picture in our mind, and anytime we see angels in the Bible we attach that picture to what we read. Here is the problem with that.

It impedes the observation process.

As we get into the heart of this discussion you are going to see some things that have always been there, yet you have missed. These are things that observation alone should have revealed, yet when we attach our understanding the picture becomes muddy. Stated differently, you will sit there dumbfounded when you realize what you have been simply reading right over this whole time. I am talking full facepalm dumbfounded.

“How did I ever miss that?”

That said, here is what Bible scholars and students already know, but never get a chance to talk about - you can read through this now or later:

Strong's Concordance

aggelos: an angel, messenger

Original Word: ἄγγελος, ου, ὁ

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: aggelos

Phonetic Spelling: (ang'-el-os)

Short Definition: an angel, messenger

Definition: a messenger, generally a (supernatural) messenger from God, an angel, conveying news or behests from God to men.

HELPS Word-studies

32 ággelos – properly, a messenger or delegate – either human (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24, 9:52; Gal 4:14; Js 2:25) or heavenly (a celestial angel); someone sent (by God) to proclaim His message.

32 (ággelos) is used 176 times in the NT (usually of heavenly angels), but only the context determines whether a human or celestial messenger is intended. For

example, 32 (ἄγγελος) in Rev 1:20 can refer to heavenly angels or key leaders (perhaps pastors) of the seven churches.

[32 (ἄγγελος) can refer to "a human messenger" (cf. John the Baptist, Mt 11:10, quoting Mal 3:1; see also Lk 7:24, 9:52). 32 /ἄγγελος (plural, angeloi) refers to heavenly angels over 150 times in the NT, i.e. spiritual beings created by God to serve His plan.

In Rev 2, 3, "angels" seems to refer to heavenly angels that serve God in conjunction with these seven local churches.

(Rev 2:1) – "Probably 'the angels of the churches' (Rev 1:20, 2:1, etc.) – i.e. really angels, and not pastors" (DNTT, Vol 1, 103).]

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 32: ἄγγελος, ἄγγελος, , ὁ,

a messenger, envoy, one who is sent: Matthew 11:10; Luke 7:24, 27; Luke 9:52; Mark 1:2; James 2:25. (From Homer down.)

In the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, one of that host of heavenly spirits that, according alike to Jewish and Christian opinion, wait upon the monarch of the universe, and are sent by him to earth, now to execute his purposes (Matthew 4:6, 11; Matthew 28:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 16:22; Luke 22:43 (L brackets WH reject the passage); Acts 7:35; ; Galatians 3:19, cf. Hebrews 1:14), now to make them known to men (Luke 1:11, 26; Luke 2:9ff; Acts 10:3; Acts 27:23; Matthew 1:20; Matthew 2:13; Matthew 28:5; John 20:12f); hence, the frequent expressions ἄγγελος (angel, messenger of God, ἄγγελλος) and ἄγγελοι κυρίου or ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ. They are subject not only to God but also to Christ (Hebrews 1:4ff; 1 Peter 3:22, cf. Ephesians 1:21; Galatians 4:14), who is described as hereafter to return to judgment surrounded by a multitude of them as servants and attendants: Matthew 13:41, 49;

Matthew 16:27; Matthew 24:31; Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7, cf. Jude 1:14.

Single angels have the charge of separate elements; as fire, Revelation 14:18; waters, Revelation 16:5, cf. Revelation 7:1; John 5:4 (R L). Respecting the ἄγγελος τῆς ἀβύσσου, Revelation 9:11, see Ἀβαδδὼν,

Guardian angels of individuals are mentioned in Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15. 'The angels of the churches' in Revelation 1:20; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; Revelation 3:1, 7, 14 are not their presbyters or bishops, but heavenly spirits who exercise such a superintendence and guardianship over them that whatever in their assemblies is worthy of praise or of censure is counted to the praise or the blame of their angels also, as though the latter infused their spirit into the assemblies; cf. DeWette, Düsterdieck (Alford) on Revelation 1:20, and Lücke, Einl. in d. Offenb. d. Johan. ii., p. 429f, edition 2; (Lightfoot on Philip., p. 199f). διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους that she may show reverence for the angels, invisibly present in the religious assemblies of Christians, and not displease them, 1 Corinthians 11:10. ὧφθη ἀγγέλοις in 1 Timothy 3:16 is probably to be explained neither of angels to whom Christ exhibited himself in heaven, nor of demons triumphed over by him in the nether world, but of the apostles, his messengers, to whom he appeared after his resurrection. This appellation, which is certainly extraordinary, is easily understood from the nature of the hymn from which the passage ἐφανερώθη ... ἐνδόξῃ seems to have been taken; cf. Winer's Grammar, 639f (594) (for other interpretations see Ellicott, at the passage). In John 1:51 (52) angels are employed, by a beautiful image borrowed from Genesis 28:12, to represent the divine power that will aid Jesus in the discharge of his Messianic office, and the signal proofs to appear in his history of a divine superintendence. Certain of the angels have proved faithless to the trust committed to them by God, and have given themselves up to sin, Jude 1:6; 2 Peter 2:4 (Enoch c. vi. etc., cf. Genesis 6:2), and now obey the devil, Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7, cf. 1 Corinthians 6:3 (yet on this last passage cf. Meyer; he and others maintain that ἄγγελοι without an epithet or limitation never in the N. T. signifies other than good angels). Hence, ἄγγελος Σατᾶν is tropically used in 2 Corinthians 12:7 to

denote a grievous bodily malady sent by Satan. See δαίμων; (Sophocles' Lexicon, under the word ἄγγελος; and for the literature on the whole subject B. D. American edition under the word Angels — and to the references there given add G. L. Hahn, Theol. des N. T., i., pp. 260-384; Delitzsch in Riehm under the word Engel; Kübel in Herzog edition 2, *ibid.*).

STRONGS NT 32b: ἄγγοςἄγγος, (εος, τό(plural ἄγγη), equivalent to ἀγγεῖον, which see: Matthew 13:48 T Tr WH. (From Homer down; (cf. Rutherford, New Phryn., p. 23).)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

angel, messenger.

From aggello (probably derived from ago; compare agele) (to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an "angel"; by implication, a pastor -- angel, messenger.

see GREEK ago

see GREEK agele

Forms and Transliterations

αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελοι αγγελον
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αγγελων αγγελων αγγελων αγγος angelo angelō angeloι angéloi ángelōi ángeloι
ángeloι angelois ángelois angelon angelōn ángelon ángelōn ángelon ángelōn angelos
ángelos ángelos angelou ángelou angelous ángelous

Strong's Concordance

malak: a messenger

Original Word: מַלְאָךְ

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

Transliteration: malak

Phonetic Spelling: (mal-awk')

Short Definition: angel

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin - from an unused word

Definition - a messenger

NASB Translation

ambassadors (2), angel (101), angels (9), envoys (1), messenger (24), messengers (76).

Brown-Driver-Briggs

מַלְאָךְ

214 noun masculine messenger; — מ' Exodus 23:20 48t.; construct מַלְאָךְ Genesis 16:7 69t.; suffixes מַלְאָכִי Exodus 23:23 3t.; מַלְאָכֶיךָ Genesis 24:7,40; plural מַלְאָכִים Genesis 32:4 63t. + 2 מלאכים Samuel 11:1 Kt (מלכים Qr); construct מַלְאָכֵי Genesis 28:12 11t.; מַלְאָכֶיךָ Numbers 24:12; 2 Kings 19:23; מַלְאָכֶיךָ Nahum 2:14 error for מַלְאָכֵיךָ = מַלְאָכֶיךָ Ges§ 91,

(2) Anm. 2 or < for מְלַאֲכֵךְ by dittograph from following הוי Kōii. 1. 571). מְלַאֲכֵיChronicles 36:15 8t.; —

messenger,

one sent with a message Genesis 32:4 8t. J E;Deuteronomy 2:26, (not in P); Judges 6:35 8t.; 1 Samuel 6:21 51t. Samuel Kings, 1 Chronicles 14:1; 1 Chronicles 19:2,16; 2Chronicles 18:12; 35:21; Nehemiah 6:3; Job 1:14; Proverbs 13:17; Proverbs 17:11; Isaiah 14:32; Isaiah 18:2; Isaiah 30:4; Isaiah 37:9,14; Jeremiah 27:3; Ezekiel 17:15; Ezekiel 23:16,40; Ezekiel 30:9; Nahum 2:14; מְלַאֲכֵי שְׁלוֹם, messengers of peace Isaiah 33:7.

a prophet Isaiah 42:19; Isaiah 44:26; 2Chronicles 36:15,16;Haggai 1:13; the herald of the advent מְלַאֲכֵי Malachi 3:1.

priest Malachi 2:7, probably Ecclesiastes 5:5 (RV angel).

" מְלַאֲכֵי Job 33:23, a messenger from God acting as an interpreter and declaring what is right (angel of RV too specific).

figurative מְלַאֲכֵי messengers of evil Psalm 78:49; מְלַאֲכֵי מוֹת messenger of death Proverbs 16:14; רוּחוֹת winds his messengers Psalm 104:4.

angel, as messenger of God, מְלַאֲכֵי with God in theophaniesGenesis 19:1,15; Genesis 28:12; Genesis 32:2 (JE), praising him;Psalm 103:20; Psalm 148:2; in his sight not without error Job 4:18charged with the care of the pious Psalm 91:11; elsewhere singular sent to a prophet 1 Kings 13:18; 1 Kings 19:5,7; 2 Kings 1:3,15;Zechariah 1:9 18t. in Zechariah 1-6; excellent, wise, powerful 1 Samuel 29:9; 2 Samuel 14:17,20; 2 Samuel 19:28; Zechariah 12:8; encamping about the faithful Psalm 34:8; chasing his

enemies Psalm 35:5; Psalm 35:6; destroying by judgment of Yahweh 2 Samuel 24:16,17 = 1 Chronicles 21:12-30; 2 Kings 19:35 = Isaiah 37:36 2Chronicles 32:21.

the theophanic angel מַלְאָכִים in the story of E: Genesis 21:17; Genesis 31:11; Exodus 14:19, also in Judges 6:20; Judges 13:6,9; יהוה־י in the story of J: Genesis 16:7,9,10,11; Genesis 22:11,15; Exodus 3:2; Numbers 22:22,23,24,25,26,27,31,32,34,35 and in Judges 2:1; Judges 2:4; Judges 5:23; Judges 6:11; Judges 6:12; Judges 6:21 (twice in verse); Judges 6:22 (twice in verse); Judges 13:3,13,15,16 (twice in verse); Judges 13:17,18,20 (twice in verse); Judges 13:21; מַלְאָךְ Genesis 48:16 (E); מַלְאָךְ Exodus 23:20 (E), Exodus 33:2; Numbers 20:16 (JE), Hosea 12:5; מַלְאָכִי Exodus 23:23 (E), Exodus 32:34 (J); מַלְאָכֹו Genesis 24:7,40 (J), פְּנִיו Malachi 3:1 (referring to the ancient יהוה־י; הכרית יהוה־י Malachi 3:1 (referring to the advent of י for judgment, see BrMP 473). The theophanic angel is not mentioned in D and P.

(לאר, מֵלֶאך Biblical Hebrew (√ of following; לאר).

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

Ambassador, angel, king, messenger

From an unused root meaning to dispatch as a deputy; a messenger; specifically, of God, i.e. An angel (also a prophet, priest or teacher) -- ambassador, angel, king, messenger.

Forms and Transliterations:

[illegible]

המלאך המלאך המלאכים המלאכים המלאכים המלאכים המלאך המלאך:
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bə·mal·'ā·kê bəmal'ākê bemalaChei ham·mal·'ā·kîm ham·mal·'āk hammal'āk
hammal'ākîm hammalAch hammalaChim hammaloCh kə·mal·'ā·kî kə·mal·'āk kəmal'āk
kəmal'ākî kemalAch kemalaChi lam·mal·'ā·kîm lam·mal·'āk lammal'āk lammal'ākîm
lammalAch lammalaChim lə·mal·'ā·kê ləmal'ākê lemalaChei mal'āk mal'āk mal'āk-
mal'ākāw mal'ākê mal'ākê- mal'ākekā mal'ākêkêh mal'ākî mal'ākîm mal'ākōw
mal·'ā·kāw mal·'ā·kê mal·'ā·kê- mal·'ā·ke·kā mal·'ā·kê·kêh mal·'ā·kî mal·'ā·kîm
mal·'ā·kōw mal·'āk mal·'āk mal·'āk- malAch malaChav malaChechēh malaChei
malaCheicha malaChi malaChim malaCho maloCh ū·bə·mal·'ā·kāw ū·mal·'ā·kāw
ū·mal·'ā·kîm ū·mal·'āk ū·mal·'āk ūbəmal'ākāw ūmal'āk ūmal'āk ūmal'ākāw ūmal'ākîm
umalAch umalaChav umalaChim uvemalaChav vehammalAch wə·ham·mal·'āk
wəhammal'āk ~~~

This is a lot to take in. There are more revelations in the material above than we can cover in this project. Also, there is a good bit of of the material above that will come out in the study as it progresses. I would suggest that you use the academic material as a reference source as you read through this presentation. Otherwise, you will never get to the presentation. You will get stuck in the material above and that will be the last we ever see of you!

That said, we need to add one more source for your examination as the study progresses. Here are excerpts from Vine's on both the Hebrew and Greek forms for "angel":

Vine's - Hebrew for angel

ANGEL (מַלְאָכִים, 4397), "messenger; angel." In Ugaritic, Arabic, and Ethiopic, the verb means "to send." Even though מֵלֵךְ does not exist in the Hebrew Old Testament, it is possible to recognize its etymological relationship to מֵלֵךְ. In addition, the Old Testament uses the word "message" in Hag. 1:13; this word incorporates the meaning of the root מֵלֵךְ "to send." Another noun form of the root is מַלְאָכָה "work," which appears 167 times. The name מַלְאָכָה—literally, "my messenger"—is based on the noun מַלְאָכָה. The noun מַלְאָכָה appears 213 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Its frequency is especially great in the historical books, where it usually means "messenger": Judges (31 times), 2 Kings (20 times), 1 Samuel (19 times), and 2 Samuel (18 times).

The prophetic works are very moderate in their usage of מַלְאָכָה with the outstanding exception of the Book of Zechariah, where the angel of the Lord communicates God's message to Zechariah. For example: "Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked to me, 'What are these, my lord?' And the angel answered and said unto me, 'These are the four spirits [pl. of מַלְאָכָה] of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth'" (Zech. 6:4-5). The word מַלְאָכָה denotes someone sent over a great distance by an individual (Gen. 32:3) or by a community (Num. 21:21), in order to communicate a message. Often several messengers are sent together: "And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers [pl. of מַלְאָכָה] and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease" (2 Kings 1:2).

The introductory formula of the message borne by the מַלְאָכָה often contains the phrase "Thus says ...," or "This is what ... says," signifying the authority of the messenger in giving

the message of his master: “Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon” (Judg. 11:15). As a representative of a king, the might have performed the function of a diplomat. In 1 Kings 20:1ff., we read that Ben-hadad sent messengers with the terms of surrender: “He sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad ...” (1 Kings 20:2). These passages confirm the important place of the . Honor to the messenger signified honor to the sender, and the opposite was also true. David took personally the insult of Nabal (1 Sam. 25:14ff.); and when Hanun, king of Ammon, humiliated David’s servants (2 Sam. 10:4ff.), David was quick to dispatch his forces against the Ammonites.

God also sent messengers. First, there are the prophetic messengers: “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy” (2 Chron. 36:15-16). Haggai called himself “the messenger of the Lord,” ’(. There were also angelic messengers. The English word is etymologically related to the Greek word whose translation is similar to the Hebrew: “messenger” or “angel.” The angel is a supernatural messenger of the Lord sent with a particular message. Two angels came to Lot at Sodom: “And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground ...” (Gen. 19:1). The angels were also commissioned to protect God’s people: “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Ps. 91:11).

Third, and most significant, are the phrases ’(“the angel of the Lord,” and “the angel of God.” The phrase is always used in the singular. It denotes an angel who had mainly a saving and protective function: “For mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites,

and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off” (Exod. 23:23). He might also bring about destruction: “And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces” (1 Chron. 21:16). The relation between the Lord and the “angel of the Lord” is often so close that it is difficult to separate the two (Gen. 16:7ff.; 21:17ff.; 22:11ff.; 31:11ff.; Exod. 3:2ff.; Judg. 6:11ff.; 13:21f.). This identification has led some interpreters to conclude that the “angel of the Lord” was the pre-incarnate Christ. In the Septuagint the word *angelos* is usually translated by *angelos* and the phrase “angel of the Lord” by *angelos the Lord*. The English versions follow this twofold distinction by translating *angelos* as simply “angel” or “messenger” (KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV)

Vine’s - Greek for angel

ANGEL (*angelos*, 32), “a messenger” (from *angelos*, “to deliver a message”), sent whether by God or by man or by Satan, “is also used of a guardian or representative in Rev. 1:20, cf. Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:15 (where it is better understood as ‘ghost’), but most frequently of an order of created beings, superior to man, Heb. 2:7; Ps. 8:5, belonging to Heaven, Matt. 24:36; Mark 12:25, and to God, Luke 12:8, and engaged in His service, Ps. 103:20. “Angels” are spirits, Heb. 1:14, i.e., they have not material bodies as men have; they are either human in form, or can assume the human form when necessary, cf. Luke 24:4, with v. 23, Acts 10:3 with v. 30. “They are called ‘holy’ in Mark 8:38, and ‘elect,’ 1 Tim. 5:21, in contrast with some of their original number, Matt. 25:41, who ‘sinned,’ 2 Pet. 2:4, ‘left their proper habitation,’ Jude 6, , a word which occurs again, in the NT, only in 2 Cor. 5:2. Angels are always spoken of in the masculine gender, the feminine form of the word does not occur.”* :&9, “equal to the angels,” occurs in Luke 20:36.¶

It should be noted that I added the spacing in the examination for the Hebrew meaning of angel to help in readability. Otherwise it becomes very difficult to parse through what is given on the subject.

That said, here is the nickel tour of what we have just shared. Angels are not just the created beings that we typically think of. They are also men that are tasked by God to deliver a message or deliver His judgment. It can be better said like this - angels can be men that have completed their earthly assignment, and now work on their heavenly assignment.

As we go through this study, you will find that angel is more of a heavenly term than an earthly one. Stated differently, “angel” is a term used more generically than we realize. It is a term that the Bible ascribes to ANYONE that has been given a divine assignment from the Lord, directly from heaven. We can go one further on this. A man is a man on earth, but before the Lord in heaven he assumes his heavenly title if dispatched by the Lord to complete a task. Also, angel is a term of transition. What that means is this. You may be a man now, serving the Lord. Yet, when you stand one day before the Throne of God you will be called an angel. Furthermore, when all of heaven looks down on the work you were assigned on earth, it will be the work assigned to an angel - you!

We will touch on all of this as we go along. For now, the biggest takeaway is that this is not a new concept, or some radical new re-interpretation. It is simply one of those nearly unspoken facts that rarely has a chance to come out. It is simply not relevant to most of the studies in the Bible. It is, however, critical to the study of the end times and Biblical prophecy. It is also critical to understanding the timing of the rapture.

With that, let's take a look at something else that will be critical to understand as we go through this study.

What is a vision?

Visions are another example of how we attach our own understanding to a word given in the Bible. Not an unreasonable thing to do as most visions fit the idea that we all have typically. In most cases a vision comes to a man and he sees something “afar off” in his mind, and a scene plays out before him in his mind. He is a third party witness to the events and has no involvement in them.



This description fits most of the visions in the Bible. Also, the primary difference between a dream and a vision is whether or not you are awake when you receive the revelation. Take the exact same event - if it comes while you sleep it comes as a dream. If it comes while you are awake it is a vision.

Most visions are this disconnected “showing” of something to come in the future. Usually, it is simply the scenes of impending prophecy that plays out in the mind of the recipient. However, visions can be interactive as well. In this case the vision will usually involve a conversation, and usually with an angel. Daniel comes to mind on this. In Daniel chapters 11 and 12, Daniel sees the progression of end times events. He also converses with two angels that are narrating the events from two sides of a river. They speak as Daniel watches. Also, Daniel asks question of them regarding the things he saw.

Some instances in the Bible are unclear as to whether the person saw a vision, or it was an actual angel that spoke to them in person. Mary, Joseph and Elizabeth are examples of this. We don’t know exactly how the angel came to the three of them. It may have been a vision in their minds. It may have been a physical manifestation. Either way, the result was the same.

We have clear cut examples of angels physically coming to earth to interact with the subjects of their assignments. Jacob and the angel is one such example. Lot in Sodom is another example. Abraham before Sodom is another example that gets into another aspect of angels, dreams and visions - a theophany, or appearing of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. We also see this in Babylon when Daniel’s three friends are thrown into the furnace for not bowing to Nebuchadnezzar.

There are numerous other examples of all three instances. However, far and away the most common understanding for vision is what we said earlier - In most cases a vision comes to a man and he sees something “afar off” in his mind, and a scene plays out before him in his mind. He is a third party witness to the events and has no involvement in them.

We can speak of it in these terms.

When most think of visions, they get an idea or impression not unlike going to see a movie. In their understanding, the person seeing the vision is literally watching a “movie” play in their mind. When the movie is over, they sit down and write what literally amounts to a “movie review” of what they just watched. Not an incorrect understanding most times. However, the problem becomes that we have a tendency to assign this understanding to ALL visions and deliveries of prophetic understanding. This can get us into serious trouble. It can lead to disastrous assumptions regarding what we have are reading in the Bible.

The Book of Revelation is one such example.

In simply assigning our generic understanding of “visions” to Revelation, it causes us to miss critical observations. These observations are the heart and soul of the things to come. Missing these observations are why so many have fallen away from the promise of the soon return of the Lord, turned back to their own understanding - and why they will be destroyed for it.

When reading of visions, and the delivering of prophetic revelations, we must stop and examine each instance in and of itself. There is a reason why both Daniel and John have similar experiences when they receive the understanding of the end times. Both of these events are unique amongst Bible visions and revelations. When you pull back the generic understanding of visions and let the text define and speak for itself, it will open up to you in a manner that can only be described as “mind blowing”.

With that, we are ready to proceed with the study.

A simple observation

There is something that nobody ever seems to catch in Revelation, or at least they don’t talk about it. In the beginning of the book, John tells us the details of how he received

the revelation of Jesus Christ. He tells us that he was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and that an angel came and revealed things to him. After that, he hears the iconic words "Come up here!" and away he goes! From there the entire revelation unfolds.

He is given messages for the seven churches in Asia Minor. He is told to write everything down and give it to the churches. He sees a great assembly in heaven, a seven sealed scroll, seven angels with trumpets, seven bowls, the Antichrist, the Harlot, Armageddon and finally the Second Coming followed by the 1,000 reign of Christ and eternity.

Along the way he sees different groups and different people. He sees different circumstances surrounding where they are at. He sees the judgments that fall. He sees the righteous and unrighteous.

Here is the thing. There are no errant words in the Bible. There are no accidents, no phrases uttered "just because". Every last word and phrase is specifically placed to reveal the truth of the Lord. Likewise, there are no errant order of events in the Bible. There are no errant counts in the Bible either. When the Lord gives an order to something, it is an exact order for an exact reason. We miss some of the most powerful revelations by simply assuming that the Lord just popped off the parables in a random order, for no good reason.

This is how so many people misinterpret Matthew 24 and 25 for example. They never observe the order given in the parables.

All of this holds true for Revelation as well. If you read Revelation haphazardly, never stopping to account for "why" a particular group shows up when it does, the differences between the groups, or who exactly John is conversing with - you will miss the greatest gems in Bible prophecy.

You will also miss the last ironclad proofs that the Lord encoded in the Bible as proof of a pre-trib rapture. They were encoded specifically to fight against the false doctrines that we see rising against the rapture - false doctrines that 2 Peter chapter 3 specifically told us would come.

2 Peter 3:2-4 KJV - That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

There is a reason it says the “promise of His coming” and not “His coming”. What exactly does “promise” mean?

Strong's Concordance

epaggelia: a summons, a promise

Original Word: ἐπαγγελία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: epaggelia

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-ang-el-ee'-ah)

Short Definition: a promise

Definition: a promise.

HELPS Word-studies

1860 epaggelía (a feminine noun comprised of 1909 /epí, "appropriately on" and aggellō, "announce") – a promise which literally "announces what is fitting" (apt, appropriate).

1860/epaggelia ("an appropriate promise") is nearly always used of God's promises in the NT – and hence guaranteed by His own eternal Law (Being).

[In the NT (and throughout antiquity), 1860 (epaggelía) is a legal term that refers to an officially sanctioned promise. "Almost every NT use of the word promise (epaggelia) points back to the OT" (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Back Toward the Future, Hints for Interpreting Bible Prophecy, 102).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from epaggellomai

Definition

a summons, a promise

NASB Translation

promise (37), promised (1), promises (12), what was promised (2).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1860: ἐπαγγελία

ἐπαγγελία, ἐπαγγελίας, ἡ (ἐπαγγέλλω);

announcement: 1 John 1:5 (Rec., where ἀγγελία was long since restored); κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν ζωῆς τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, to proclaim life in fellowship with Christ, 2 Timothy 1:1 (Winers Grammar, 402 (376); cf. κατά, II. at the end. But others give ἐπαγγελία here as elsewhere the sense of promise, cf. 2 below).

promise;

the act of promising, a promise given or to be given:

2 Peter 3:4; κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν according to promise,

I had not yet given the full definition to the word “promise” in 2 Peter chapter 3 in Tribulation Rising, so I figured this was a good time to do so. Indeed, it is not the coming of the Lord that people doubt - it is the promise.

“How can people doubt the promise of His coming, yet not His coming?”

Simple - the promise of His coming is that He went to prepare a place for us, that where He is, there we may be also. He made promise that those who overcome will be hidden away until the wrath of God be passed. He made a promise that as it was in the days of Lot and Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. In those days, the world was happy and blind. Then, as a snare - or a trap that is unseen and sprung at the last moment, and inescapable - His return comes upon the whole world! In other words, it is the promise of the rapture BEFORE the advent of the tribulation.

“The word rapture is not in the Bible!”

“The Bride must be purged to be worthy!”

“The last trump is the trumpet of the seventh angel in Revelation!”

“Counted worthy to escape means that you prepare to survive the tribulation!”

“Saints are being martyred, so the church MUST go through the tribulation!”

If Jesus suffered, and the Disciples - then why should we not expect to die for the faith?”

As we progress through this study, you will see the relevance of all these things. However, all of this starts back at the beginning of Revelation, with John recounting how all of this started. When he speaks of these things, he mentions something that most miss as we said earlier. It is this simple observation that opens everything up!

Let's start by looking at one verse in particular:

Revelation 1:10 KJV - I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet

We spoke earlier of revelations given through visions. Indeed, this is exactly what it appears that we have here - a vision. Being in the spirit certainly speaks to such a thing. I submit that this is probably the very best explanation for what John says here. So far, so good. No real issues to speak of - until we get a little further into Revelation:

Revelation 4:1-2 KJV - After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with

me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Question - why does John again tell us that he was in the spirit after hearing the words "Come up here, and I will show you the things that come after this"? Here is why I ask.

From his first reference of being in the spirit in 1:10 until 4:2, there is absolutely no indication that John ever left the spirit, or came out of the spirit. To the contrary, 1:10 to 4:2 is the exact same conversation, and it occurred in one sitting. When you go back and examine the verse between these two, it becomes clear that he never got "out of the spirit".

So, the question remains - why the double reference?

Double references are not new in the Bible. They come in several forms. For instance, there is a prophetic double reference when it comes to Jesus going to Egypt as a baby. It is spoken when Israel goes to Egypt and when Jesus goes to Egypt. In one instance it says "my son, Israel". In the other instance it says "my Son". Both scriptures are nearly exact in their presentation. However, one speaks to Israel and the other to Jesus.

There is another type of prophetic double reference as well. In the story of Esther, the Bible tells us that the ten sons of Haman were hanged upon the gallows. Yet, several verses later, the Bible once again speaks to this. In both cases it is a present tense verse speaking to something that was soon to happen. Yet, the second reference occurs AFTER they have already died!



Jewish scholars thought this a mistake for thousands of years. That was until 1946.

When you look at the names of the ten sons of Haman in the original Hebrew, three of the sons have something peculiar with their names. One Hebrews letter is written only about half the size of the other letters. This is not normal. However, when you take the numeric value of those three letters as a date on the Jewish calendar, it matches the Gregorian year of 1946. That was the year that 10 Nazi's were hanged for crimes against the Jewish people, and their attempts to exterminate the Jews - just as Haman and his ten sons tried to do.



It was not a mistake. It was a prophetic double reference designed to conceal evidence until the right time. It was offered as prophetic proof that the Word of God is truth.

Indeed, that is what separates Jesus Christ from every other attempt at religion. Only the one true living God knows the ending from the beginning.

That is what we have in Revelation. The two references to being in the spirit are meant to reveal something to us that is critical to understand. While both instances appear to be the same thing, they are not. There is a difference between the two. Both do mean

“in the spirit”. They are similar in the original text as well. Yet, there is something even there that comes into play with this discussion.

Strong's Concordance

pneuma: wind, spirit

Original Word: πνεῦμα, ατος, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: pneuma

Phonetic Spelling: (pnyoo'-mah)

Short Definition: wind, breath, spirit

Definition: wind, breath, spirit.

HELPS Word-studies

4151 pneúma – properly, spirit (Spirit), wind, or breath. The most frequent meaning (translation) of 4151 (pneúma) in the NT is "spirit" ("Spirit"). Only the context however determines which sense(s) is meant.

[Any of the above renderings (spirit-Spirit, wind, breath) of 4151(pneúma) is always theoretically possible (spirit, Spirit, wind, breath). But when the attributive adjective ("holy") is used, it always refers to the Holy Spirit. "Spirit" ("spirit") is by far the most common translation (application) of 4151 (pneúma).

The Hebrew counterpart (rûach) has the same range of meaning as 4151 (pneúma), i.e. it likewise can refer to spirit/Spirit, wind, or breath.]

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4151: πνεῦμα

πνεῦμα, πνεύματος, τό (πνέω), Greek writings from Aeschylus and Herodotus down; Hebrew רוּחַ, Latin spiritus; i. e.:

The Scriptures also ascribe a πνεῦμα to God, i. e. God's power and agency — distinguishable in thought (or modalistic, as they say in technical speech) from God's essence in itself considered — "manifest in the course of affairs, and by its influence upon souls productive in the theocratic body (the church) of all the higher spiritual gifts and blessings"; (cf. the resemblances and differences in Philo's use of τό θεῖον πνεῦμα, e. g. de gigant. § 12 (cf. § 5f); quis rer. div. § 53; de mund. opif. § 46, etc.).

bb.; γεννάω, 1 at the end and 2 d.; ἐκχέω b.; χρίω, a.); γίνεσθαι ἐν πνεύματι, to come to be in the Spirit, under the power of the Spirit, i. e. in a state of inspiration or ecstasy, Revelation 1:10; Revelation 4:2.

In both cases, we see that this is more than John simply being "in the spirit", but rather, being "in the Spirit" as in "under the direct control of the Holy Spirit". This difference is best understood in the light of what we commonly understand as being in the spirit. We get in the presence of the Lord, and can feel the move of the Holy Spirit. During this time we feel the fellowship with God. Also, it is not unusual for the Lord to reveal things to us.

Yet, what we see here speaks to something more. Given that the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is about to reveal the last piece of prophecy this is not unexpected. Yet,

there is something that we must remember. This book is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ for a reason.

That means the Jesus Christ Himself is going to reveal something directly to John. The Holy Spirit reveals many things to us. Much of what you will read in this presentation came by revelation of the Holy Spirit. Yet, there is only one Bible and one Revelation of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

With something of this importance, simple revelation through the Holy Spirit is not enough. Even as Paul was sent to Mount Sinai to receive the Revelation of Jesus Christ in person (for those that never realized that Paul is called Apostle, yet he did not come into the picture until AFTER Christ ascended back to heaven), so John must be taken somewhere significant to prophecy and given the revelation in person.

In both instances, the word for “spirit” is **πνεύματι (pneumati)**. There are 92 occurrences in the New Testament for this word. Yet, upon further examination there is a subtle difference between the uses. Many of the occurrences are **πνεύματι**. Think of the first letter as lowercase. However, in 1:10 and 4:2, we have the word **Πνεύματι**. Notice the first letter. Think of that as uppercase.

In other words, one form is used to describe a general “spirit”, and the other form described THE Spirit - which is the Holy Spirit.

This tells us of the importance in what we are about to learn. John isn't at his local church, worshiping in the spirit as we typically do. This tells us that the Lord showed up personally, and that things are about to get really deep.

This point is driven home by two things we see in the text before we get to 4:2. In the very first verse of Revelation we see that the Lord sent an angel to John to reveal things to him. After this, John tells us that he was in the Spirit. Then in verse 17, the Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ literally lays His right hand upon John. Right from the get go, we can see that something is different this time. This is not your run of the mill vision, or “movie playing in John’s mind”. It is something that has not happened before. It is close to what Daniel experienced, but with dramatic differences.

At this point, it is clear that the Lord actually came to John. Clearly an angel was sent to John. Yet, we have no indication that John went anywhere else. Still, he hears the voice of Jesus behind him, and Jesus physically touches him with His right hand. The word used in the original Greek was *ἐπι*’ - which always has a literal meaning. In other words, this was not a figurative or spiritual laying on of the hand of Christ. It was an actual, physical event that required both John and Christ to be in the same location! In this case it was Patmos.

This becomes critical to the discussion, and the observation that started this presentation. Up until 4:1 we have John in the Spirit on Patmos, with both an angel of the Lord and the Lord Himself present with John. Given the numerous examples throughout the Bible where the Lord or His angels show up in spirit, yet physical things manifest, it is not hard to understand this. In fact, it is not much of a surprise so far. Some of you reading this will be shocked to read this, yet others will not. It is no stretch to say that the Lord can show up in the Spirit, yet touch you physically. We see this with healing all the time.

Two solid examples of what we are talking about can be found in the three Hebrews in the furnace and Moses at the burning bush. In both cases the Lord Himself showed up and manifested physical things. Yet, He was there in spirit as He neither walked out of the furnace nor consumed the bush. One minute He was there, the next He was gone.

Here is the critical observation - John tells us in 1:10 that he is in the Spirit. Yet, in 4:2 he again says he was in the Spirit, and adds “immediately”. Here is what we presented earlier:

Revelation 4:1-2 KJV - After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Question - why does John again tell us that he was in the spirit after hearing the words “Come up here, and I will show you the things that come after this”? Here is why I ask.

It comes down to a simple observation - if Jesus Christ Himself can show up in person and speak to John - then John can be brought to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ personally! That is the reason for the prophetic double reference. John was not simply watching Revelation play out as a movie. He was there in person!

John never stopped being in the Spirit. He rolls right from 3:22 where he has just received the last of the warnings to the seven churches. Remember, the Bible wasn’t written in chapter and verse form. It was written as a series of single letters and narratives (for the most part). Revelation is no different. When John speaks in 3:22, and then speaks in 4:1, it is the exact same conversation occurring at the exact same time. As we said a moment ago, John never left the Spirit. This tells us that something else has happened. John started the conversation “in the Spirit”. Yet now, he is even more “in the Spirit”. The key to understanding what happened is also revealed in these two verses. We find the answer in the phrase “**Come up here**”!

This phrase is divided into two parts in the original Greek. “Come up” which is **Ἀνάβα (Anaba)**, and “here” which is **ἧδε (hōde)**. In this phrase we have something that occurs just one time in all the Bible - verse 4:1.

Let's start with “here”:

Strong's Concordance

hóde: so, to here, here

Original Word: ἧδε

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: hóde

Phonetic Spelling: (ho'-deh)

Short Definition: here

Definition: here, the things here, what is here, what is going on here, the state of affairs here.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

demonstrative adverb from hode,

Definition

so, to here, here

NASB Translation

here (56), there (1), this case (2), this place (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 5602: ὧδε

ὧδε, adverb (from ὅδε);

so, in this manner (very often in Homer).

adverb of place;

hither, to this place (Homer, Iliad 18, 399. Od 1 182; 17, 545; cf. Buttmann, 71 (62f) (cf. Winers Grammar, § 54, 7; but its use in Homer of place is now generally denied; see Ebeling, Lex. Homer, under the word, p. 484b; Liddell and Scott, under the word, II.)): Matthew 8:29; Matthew 14:18 (Tr marginal reading brackets ὧδε); ; Mark 11:3; Luke 9:41; Luke 14:21; Luke 19:27; John 6:25; John 20:27; Acts 9:21; Revelation 4:1; Revelation 11:12 (the Sept. for ἐλθ, Exodus 3:5; Judges 18:3; Ruth 2:14); ἕως ὧδε (even unto this place), Luke 23:5.

What we need to take from “here” is that it literally means “here”, as in the place where the Lord is and John is not. It is not spiritual or figurative in any sense. It is the real heaven, where John will see the real Lord, the real angels, and the real judgments of God fall on the earth. However, just in case you find yourself doubting what I have shared, or are not yet connecting the dots on what is actually happening, we can look at the next piece of the puzzle - the meaning of “Come up”:

Strong's Concordance

anabainó: to go up, ascend

Original Word: ἀναβαίνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anabainó

Phonetic Spelling: (an-ab-ah'-ee-no)

Short Definition: I go up, mount, ascend

Definition: I go up, mount, ascend; of things: I rise, spring up, come up.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from ana and the same as basis

Definition

to go up, ascend

NASB Translation

arise (1), ascend (2), ascended (7), ascending (3), came (7), climbed (1), climbs (1), come (4), comes (2), coming (3), entered (2), go (6), goes (1), going (6), gone (3), got (2), grew (1), grows (1), rises (1), started on our way up (1), went (25).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 305: ἀναβαίνω

ἀναβαίνω; (imperfect ἀνέβαινον Acts 3:1; future ἀναβήσομαι Romans 10:6, after Deuteronomy 30:12); perfect ἀναβέβηκα; 2 aorist ἀνέβην, participle ἀναβάς, imperative ἀνάβα Revelation 4:1 (ἀνάβηθι Lachmann), plural ἀνάβατε (for R G ἀνάβητε) Revelation 11:12 L T Tr (WH; cf. WHs Appendix, p. 168{b}); Winers Grammar, § 14, 1 h.; (Buttmann, 54 (47); from Homer down); the Sept. for ἤγ;

There is something here that I want to point out in this. If you are not observationist by nature you will miss it. It is this:

imperative ἀνάβα Revelation 4:1

Let's bring in another piece:

Englishman's Concordance

Ἀνάβα (Anaba) — 1 Occurrence

Revelation 4:1 V-AMA-2S

GRK: ἐμοῦ λέγων Ἀνάβα ὧδε καὶ

NAS: with me, said, Come up here,

KJV: me; which said, Come up hither, and

INT: me saying Come up here and

The root word of **anabainó: to go up, ascend** is used a total of 82 times in the Bible. You will recall that I made this statement just a moment ago:

This phrase is divided into two parts in the original Greek. “Come up” which is **Ἀνάβα (Anaba)**, and “here” which is **ἔδε (hōde)**. In this phrase we have something that occurs just one time in all the Bible - verse 4:1.

Here is what we have. In 4:1, we have **Ἀνάβα** - the only occurrence in the Bible for this form of “Come up”. Notice also that each of the English translation make a point of capitalizing “Come”. There is a reason for this. Notice the attributions in the Englishman’s Concordance. Anaba is listed as V-AMA-2S. What exactly does this mean? This tells us that Anaba is a verb, in the Aorist Imperative, it is active voice, and it is in the second person tense. Yeah, I know. “What????”

Stated differently, it is a direct command, to be carried out now, issued from one person to another. It is a literal command, issued for a specific result. Not only that, but in the second person it can either be addressed to John himself - or to an entire group of people!

Talk about concealed prophetic references!

When the Lord tells John to “Come up here”, He is literally telling him to come to heaven. He does not tell him to look through some vision and see heaven afar off. He does not bring a vision of things to come to a cave on the Isle of Patmos.

He does not play “Revelation” the movie for John, and then John writes a movie review afterwards!

John is literally commanded to come from Patmos to heaven itself. Mind you, not just heaven during John’s time, but heaven during the end times and tribulation. But wait, there’s more! The second person form of **Anaba** tells us that this also applies to a

group of people. Get ready to have your mind blown. John did not just see the tribulation. . .

He went in the actual rapture!

Recall earlier that we made this statement:

It comes down to a simple observation - if Jesus Christ Himself can show up in person and speak to John - then John can be brought to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ personally! That is the reason for the prophetic double reference. John was not simply watching Revelation play out as a movie. He was there in person!

When John follows “Come up here” with “immediately I was in the Spirit” it tells us something else. It tells us that something beyond his initial “in the spirit” comment has occurred. He went from being in the Spirit to being in the Spirit. Now that we have the additional pieces we can see exactly what this was. However, it also reveals something else.

John went up in the rapture, but did not go through the rapture.

Stated differently, he went along for the ride, but did not go through the process of being changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We also know this from what John describes next. From verse two forward, John is seeing the Throne of God, the four living creatures, the multitudes etc. What John did not see was the process of actually entering the Holy Temple of God. Remember, everything on earth is a copy of the things in heaven.

At the Temple in Jerusalem, when the sheep were brought to the Temple, they passed through the gates under the rods of 24 priests. On one side of the gates stood 12 priests with silver rods symbolizing the passing through redemption. On the other side of the gates stood 12 priests with golden rods representing the divinity of God. Taken

together, it was the process of accounting the sheep worthy to enter the Temple as they have passed through the redemption of the divine and Holy God.

In other words, they passed through the gates of the Temple because the redemption of Christ was there to account them worthy!

Not only that, but as we will see in a few moments, there is a process whereby those called to the Great Assembly are changed into the white raiment of the Kingdom of Priests. John neither participated in this process, nor saw it occur. Yet we know that it occurred as the multitudes are all clad in the white raiment.

We see the actual process for the commissioning of the Kingdom of Priests in the listing of things given to those that overcome in Revelation chapters two and three. Here is the things given to those that overcome:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Understand that John has the first two secured already, as we all do. He is in line for the others, as we all are. Of course, that is assuming you are an overcomer. While it is beyond the scope of this discussion, it is worth reading these same two chapters to see what exactly it means to not overcome. The difference comes at number three:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Each gift to the overcomer is progressive. As you secure each you move to the next. This is the order of sanctification, and it is the order of the commissioning process. Salvation is what makes these possible. Overcoming is what secures them.

When we get to the third reward, we see the hidden manna, white stone and new name. These are directly tied to the priesthood, and reveal the link between the rapture and

the priesthood. It is number three that first confirms the rapture must happen before the seven year tribulation by showing that the initiation of the priesthood is one of the fulfillments that comes during the tribulation.

It is also where John was not permitted to go. If he had been given access to rewards three through seven, he could not have returned to give us the Book of Revelation. Stated differently, if he had been a witness to three through seven, he would have went through them!

Instead, he hears the command to come up, and nearly instantaneously he finds himself on the other side of the doors of heaven - doors that he saw before the command to come up. That is something else that needs to be understood. In 4:1 John sees the gates of heaven already standing open. This is yet another iron clad proof of the rapture. Here is why.

Before the Great Assembly, the King would proceed to the doors of the Temple. Once he was at the doors, they would be opened and he would blow the two silver trumpets to call the assembly. On the Jubilee year it would be the two gold trumps of God. The Great Assembly would pass through the gates and enter the Temple.

Matthew 24:33 KJV -So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Mark 13:29 KJV - So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

That is what Jesus is saying in both these verses. Did you ever wonder what doors He was talking about, or how doors even figured into the conversation? It helps to understand that just three verses later, in the same conversation Jesus tells us this:

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

From reward number three forward, John cannot partake. He can only see the results lest he remain with the Lord at the conclusion of these things. That in and of itself is problematic given that John is one of the 24 elders that he himself will see, yet never recognizes who they are. There is a reason for that. How do you write down that you saw yourself in heaven? Especially given that it is only now, at the times of the end that the Lord has opened up enough understanding for overcomers to comprehend such things. It is akin to the imagery in chapters 17 and 18 where John describes Rome, yet does not use the name. If he had spelled out Rome, the Roman officers would have never permitted Revelation to ever leave the island when John was released. Instead, they saw nothing more than the ramblings of a mad man!

Incidentally, it is precisely because Satan is opposing the promise of the soon return of the Lord that such things are now being given to us to understand. As Satan recycles old lies into “new” doctrines against the rapture, the Lord simply opens up the next piece of the puzzle.

As we were saying, John saw the open doors yet did not go through them. One instant finds him on Patmos looking up. The next instant finds him on the other side, looking upon those that actually passed under the rods of gold and silver. Once on the other side he sees the elders, living creatures and the multitudes of angels clad in white raiment. There is no indication of timing, other than the time it took for John to complete this transition. You may already be seeing part of what we were speaking about when we detailed angels earlier. However, this is just the start of what you are about to learn.

Is there additional evidence of what we have presented so far, that John did indeed go up into heaven and witness the actual events of the end times and tribulation as they actually unfolded? Did John simply see a movie play out in his mind, or did he see the

actual coming of the Messiah, the actual kingdom, the actual New Jerusalem - and actual eternity?

Yes, there is direct evidence of these very things beyond what we have shown so far!

With that, let's move forward and bring in three scriptures that have a bearing in this very subject:

Matthew 16:28 KJV - Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Luke 9:27 KJV - But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Mark 9:1 KJV - And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

If you have studied the Bible in more than a passing interest, then you have likely come across these three scriptures. Likewise, you have most likely considered any number of commentaries dealing with these scriptures. You were probably just as confused as most are when they also read these scriptures.

“Did Jesus just say that some of the disciples would not die until they saw the kingdom of God coming?”

Earlier we spoke of the inability to make observations. These three scriptures are a prime example of that. What exactly do these three scriptures mean? Clearly, the kingdom has not yet come, and all of the disciples have long since died. So what gives? Did the Bible lie?

No, it did not lie - not even close.

I need to address something at this point. If you encounter something in the Bible that you do not understand - especially if you are an “expert” - do yourself a favor. Either say that you don’t understand or simply move on to something else. Do not try to blather your way through it because you are the guy that is supposed to have all the answers. No one will hold it against you if you don’t know something. None of us can know everything in God’s Word. It is simply not possible.

Here is why I say this. I have never seen so much nonsense as I have seen connected to these three verses. When I say nonsense, I mean that most of the explanations I found from “experts” on these three verses were enough to make politicians look like amateurs when it comes to baloney.

Oscar Meyer couldn't package more filler themselves if their lives depended on it!

From the Preterists claiming that Jesus has already returned (all of those scriptures that detail what Christ does after His return are merely allegorical), to otherwise rational believers breaking out into some long thesis on spiritual fulfillments and why the Kingdom came - even though it did not come!

The answer to these three scriptures can be found in two words - taken together or separate:

John.

Revelation.

Was that really so hard? What makes this worse is that the Bible even addresses this subject further. Let me tell you a story about a guy named Peter.

You see, it is after the death and resurrection of Christ. The time for Christ to return to heaven is at hand, and Christ is speaking with the disciples. He then proceeds to tell Peter how he will die. Peter gets upset, as all the disciples knew that at least one of them would be alive when Christ returned.

So, in a manner that is uniquely Peter, he points to John and asks Jesus “well, what about him?”

Jesus, looking aggravated that Peter is not satisfied with simply carrying out the task at hand, looks at Peter and declares “what is it to you if I want John around till I come? Worry about yourself and the task I have given you!”

However, in human typical fashion, everybody heard only what they wanted and the rumors started flying.

“Jesus said John will not die until He returns!”

Poor John has to set the record straight on this. “Look, Jesus did not say I wouldn’t die before He returned. He asked Peter what it was to him if Jesus wanted me to remain till He comes. He didn’t say that I would not die”.

“Look, I was there - and Jesus was talking about me. For the record, I was never told that I would not die before Jesus comes back”.

John 21:20-25 KJV - 20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”

When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”

Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

So the saying spread abroad among the brothers[b] that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”

This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

When Jesus told the disciples that some of them would not taste death, the Bible actually lays out three things that at least one of them would see before their death:

the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

the kingdom of God.

the kingdom of God come with power.

It appears that all three say the same thing, but they do not. Each reveals a piece of the puzzle that confirms that Revelation was the fulfillment of the three scriptures in question. Also, there are two operative pieces to the three scriptures that set the context to Revelation:

till they see

till they have seen

These two pieces define what would happen to John. He would see something. The additional three pieces define what exactly he would see. He would see Christ return.

Then he would see the kingdom. Finally, he would see the Kingdom come. That is exactly what we have in Revelation - in that order.

However, for the sake of a thorough study, we need to examine these three scriptures a bit closer to confirm that they were indeed fulfilled when John received the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The key to unlocking the three verses resides in the meaning of “they see” and “have seen”. We could look at the meaning of “kingdom” as well, but the answer will none the less be found in exactly what and how the kingdom was to be “seen”.

I compared the original Greek from to different sets of manuscripts, and obtained two different words used for these three scriptures. In both cases, the same word is used in all three scriptures. The two primary words used here are **horaó** and **eidó** respectively. However, I soon discovered that this would be one of the most difficult word studies I have ever done. The reason is simple and straightforward - the three verses in question use transliteration of our two primary words.

In other words, the primary words were not direct interpretations. That is not an issue usually, as the different forms and transliterations are usually common enough words in their own right. That did not turn out to be the case this time. To the contrary, the usage of these two words ended up being a very rare occurrence. In fact, the words used in these three scriptures are used a grand total of nine times in the entire Bible! There were more similar uses than you could shake a stick at. Yet, the exact words in question became a real treat to dig out.

I exhausted my online sources, and every book that I had trying to nail down exactly what Jesus was saying here. For the record, here are the two actual forms used in the three scriptures:

ἴωσι - “they see” - is the form found in my interlinear. Strong’s 1492 - form of **εἶδω**.

ἴδωσι - “have seen” - is the form in the online interlinear. Strong’s 3708 - form of **όράω**.

“Form of” is an understatement!

At any rate, I kept plugging away. In a case such as this, you start with the knowns and see what is revealed.

Strong's Concordance

eidó: be aware, behold, consider, perceive

Original Word: οἶδα

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: eidó

Phonetic Spelling: (i'-do)

Short Definition: I know, remember

Definition: I know, remember, appreciate.

HELPS Word-studies

1492 eídō (oída) – properly, to see with *physical* eyes (cf. Ro 1:11), as it naturally bridges to the *metaphorical* sense: *perceiving* ("*mentally seeing*"). This is akin to the expressions: "I see what You mean"; "I see what you are saying."

1492 /eídō ("*seeing* that becomes *knowing*") then is a *gateway* to grasp spiritual truth (reality) from a physical plane. 1492 (eídō) then is physical seeing (sight) which should be the constant bridge to mental and spiritual seeing (*comprehension*).

Strong's Concordance

horaó: to see, perceive, attend to

Original Word: ὁράω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: horaó

Phonetic Spelling: (hor-ah'-o)

Short Definition: I see, look upon, experience

Definition: I see, look upon, experience, perceive, discern, beware.

HELPS Word-studies

3708 horáo – properly, see, often with *metaphorical* meaning: "to see with the mind" (i.e. spiritually see), i.e. perceive (with inward spiritual perception).

[The aorist form (*eidon*), is discussed at 1492 /eídō, "see." The future tense, and middle-passive form, are discussed under 3700/*optánomai*, "see."]

You can see that both words are similar in meaning. One has an emphasis on literal seeing, with understanding what you see - while the other has more of an emphasis on understanding. However, being that the actual words were rare forms of the originals, we need more information. This would take a great deal of comparison with the different parts of each word. That was no easy task. However, by the grace of the Lord I began to see the pieces fall into place. That left one final task to complete to confirm what I had found.

It was time to see the context of the two given words in additional scriptures.

ἰδωσιν (idōsin) — 9 Occurrences

Matthew 5:16 V-ASA-3P

GRK: ἀνθρώπων ὅπως **ἰδωσιν** ὑμῶν τὰ

Matthew 13:15 V-ASA-3P

GRK: μή ποτε **ἰδωσιν** τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς

Matthew 16:28 V-ASA-3P

GRK: ἕως ἄν **ἰδωσιν** τὸν υἱὸν

Mark 4:12 V-ASA-3P

GRK: καὶ μή **ἰδωσιν** καὶ ἀκούοντες

Mark 9:1 V-ASA-3P

GRK: ἕως ἄν **ἰδωσιν** τὴν βασιλείαν

Luke 9:27 V-ASA-3P

GRK: ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν

John 12:9 V-ASA-3P

GRK: τὸν Λάζαρρον ἴδωσιν ὃν ἤγειρεν

John 12:40 V-ASA-3P

GRK: ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς

Acts 28:27 V-ASA-3P

GRK: μὴ ποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς

The context of these scriptures confirmed what the Lord was showing me. When He told the disciples that some of them would not taste death, He was telling them that they would literally look upon Him, His return, and the Kingdom with their own two eyes! It was not a figurative, allegorical or spiritual meaning. It meant to literally, physically look upon the literal, physical kingdom!

There is more, however. In addition to the literal meaning of “see”, the original Greek also has a primary meaning of understanding or comprehending. That said, the original forms of the words did not quite capture the true meaning of what Jesus was saying. Bear in mind that the authors were trying to capture TWO primary meanings in the text. They were conveying both a literal seeing of the Lord and the Kingdom, and achieving an understanding too deep for the normal words of the day.

It is important that we understand something. The primary emphasis falls first on the literal viewing of the kingdom, or the seeing it with their two physical eyes. It is followed

by the secondary emphasis on understanding something previously not understood. The more accurate translation would be ***to understand beyond comprehension BECAUSE of what you have just seen.***

Not two separate actions, but a single action drawn in two parts. Jesus was saying in no uncertain terms that at least one disciple would see these things, and because of what they saw they would gain an understanding beyond all human comprehension. This single action drawn into two parts can be understood in this simple statement - John did not just see the kingdom - he actually experienced it!

Otherwise known as the level of mysteries!

Let's bring back something we stated earlier:

When the Lord tells John to "Come up here", He is literally telling him to come to heaven. He does not tell him to look through some vision and see heaven afar off. He does not bring a vision of things to come to a cave on the Isle of Patmos.

He does not play "Revelation" the movie for John, and then John writes a movie review afterwards!

John is literally commanded to come from Patmos to heaven itself. Mind you, not just heaven during John's time, but heaven during the end times and tribulation. But wait, there's more! The second person form of ***Anaba*** tells us that this also applies to a group of people. Get ready to have your mind blown. John did not just see the tribulation. . .

He went in the actual rapture!

Jesus wasn't promising some run of the mill vision with a run of the mill understanding. He was telling them something much more. He was telling them that they would see

something that no one else has ever seen, and do so in an up close and personal manner unlike ever before. That is except for one other person. . .

Daniel.

What the Lord revealed to both Daniel and John could not be trusted to a simple vision. It had to be delivered with such an impact as to be unmistakable. They could not simply be given a “movie” that played out in their minds. They had to see and experience what the Lord intended for them to share. They had to be there first hand. In Daniel’s case these things came to him. In John’s case he was brought to these things. Either way the result was the same.

They literally looked upon the real things as they occurred, and experienced them in the process.

For many of you, the Lord is already confirming this in your spirit. The Holy Spirit is quickening you as we speak. However, some of you are getting nervous by what you have been reading. You are struggling to find a reason why this cannot be right. At this point, there is little that can be argue against John actually going to heaven, during the times of the tribulation, and seeing the actual events themselves take place.

So, like so many skeptics, you will search for anything to grasp on to. Undoubtedly, you will run to the only refuge you can find in this.

“None of this means it was the rapture. There is no direct proof that John went in the rapture, as there would be others there. If John actually went in the rapture, then show me where others did also.

Show me the proof that the rapture actually happened when John went up!”

OK - I will do just that.

The next piece of our discussion revolves around the various groups and people that John encountered during his time in heaven. Yes, I said people. I said this for reasons that will become apparent in a few moments. Let's take the next few moments and break down the different groups, and touch on some things that should be obvious to most, but sadly are not. This goes back to missing the forest for the trees. Most of you are going to be absolutely stunned at just how much you have missed when you have read Revelation.

The Seven Angels of the Seven Churches

We will begin with the seven angels, as they establish several points that will be critical to what we share with the other interactions. The first thing that we must establish is the identity of the seven angels.

HELPS Word-studies

32 ánggelos – properly, a messenger or delegate – either human (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24, 9:52; Gal 4:14; Js 2:25) or heavenly (a celestial angel); someone sent (by God) to proclaim His message.

32 (ánggelos) is used 176 times in the NT (usually of heavenly angels), but only the context determines whether a human or celestial messenger is intended. For example, 32 (ánggelos) in Rev 1:20 can refer to heavenly angels or key leaders (perhaps pastors) of the seven churches.

[32 (ánggelos) can refer to "a human messenger" (cf. John the Baptist, Mt 11:10, quoting Mal 3:1; see also Lk 7:24, 9:52). 32 /ánggelos (plural, angeloi) refers to heavenly angels over 150 times in the NT, i.e. spiritual beings created by God to serve His plan.

In Rev 2, 3, "angels" seems to refer to heavenly angels that serve God in conjunction with these seven local churches.

(Rev 2:1) – "Probably 'the angels of the churches' (Rev 1:20, 2:1, etc.) – i.e. really angels, and not pastors" (DNTT, Vol 1, 103).]

I underlined part of the commentary that underscores a debate that has existed for quite some time, at least until recently. There have differences of opinion of the meaning of the angels of the seven churches. It has been understood that pastors are referred to as angels. Yet, there has been a degree of uncertainty regarding these seven. As I said, that was until recently.

The Lord gave an understanding on something everybody had been missing.



Each of the warnings to the seven churches has the same opening - "to the angel of the church of. . ." However, it was this statement - with a little help from the Lord, that opened up the entire conversation on the subject:

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Here is why. Can you think of any reason why John would be required to write down heavenly things in a book, and give it to heavenly angels?

Of course the Lord can do anything that He wants. Yet, there is not a single example in all of the Bible where He does something "just because". Everything He does has a common sense and practical reason behind it. The two scriptures above reveal the answer in the question of who the seven angels actually are. They are the pastors of the seven churches.

History records that after the death of the Emperor Domitian, John was released from Patmos. He was in his mid-90's. He then traveled to the seven churches, writing Revelation seven times as he went. It was only after he handed down the seventh copy that he was finally allowed to pass away (Rome tried to boil John in oil, but he was not permitted to die as he had not yet seen the kingdom).

That was seven books, written and delivered to the seven pastors of the seven churches.

Right now, you are probably wondering what this has to do with the rapture. You are about to find out, and see something that you have never understood before. Consider next this statement:

Revelation 1:12-16 ESV - Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden

sash around his chest.14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

The part we need to focus in on is the statement that John saw seven stars and seven golden lampstands. Consider now these scriptures:

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

One of the more confusing aspects of scripture is the symbolism. However, have you ever wondered why the symbolism is used in the first place? What is the connection between the different examples. Sometimes there is a practical reason. We spoke earlier of the symbolism of Rome, and how it allowed the Revelation of Jesus Christ to leave the Island of Patmos. Clearly, a Rome that was concerned with sedition would be less than thrilled in the manner in which it was described in Revelation 17 and 18. In this case the symbolism had a practical purpose. However, that is not the only reason the symbolism is used. There is an incredibly significant reason as well.

Let's start by asking a question. What do the following scriptures have in common?

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. 5 And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." 6 And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

Give up yet? None of the things listed above happen in heaven. Everything above occurs on the earth. However, there is more.

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

When these three blocks of scripture are taken with the others, several amazing insights are revealed. These insights will also be critical to some things we discuss in a few moments. Here is what these scriptures reveal:

Every living thing created by God has an example or symbol in heaven. Stated differently, even though you and I are here on earth, we are right now represented in heaven. This is going to become evident shortly.

Those things that occur on the earth are not seen as they are, but by their heavenly representation.

Those things that cannot be looked upon directly in heaven can only be seen by their representations.

When you look at the first scriptures we shared, you can see that none of those things are in heaven at the time they are witnessed and spoken of. At Revelation chapter one, John is still in the cave on Patmos. The pastors are still alive and on earth. The church is still on the earth. The pastors and the churches are shown in heaven, or with Christ, as the stars and lampstands, precisely because they still live and breath on the earth. This understanding will become critical to something that we will cover when we discuss the groups of martyrs.

In the example of the two olive trees and lampstands that stand beside the Lord of all the earth, we have the revealing of the two witnesses. We see this symbolism and description first in the Book of Zechariah. At their revealing in Revelation chapter 11, the tense of the text tells us that they are on the earth and not in heaven when John is first given understanding. Tense is one of the keys to scripture that many people simply read past in their studies. However, it becomes imperative that you understand the tense of the scriptures you are reading. Are you reading something past, present or future?

With the two witnesses in chapter 11, you will see a change from past and present tense to future tense at verse seven. When John first sees the witnesses in verses one through six they are on earth. That is why they must be described as the two olive trees and lampstands. They are still called the two witnessed, but their physical description must be given in the symbolic form. However, at verse seven, the tense shifts to future. In other words, what John speaks in verse one through six are things that have happened, and are happening as he speaks. However, from verse seven forward John reveals things that are yet to come from his perspective.



I cannot stress this enough. The tense of every scripture is beyond critical. The Lord allowed the prophets to see things from different tenses based on what was being concealed prophetically. It is the key to putting what seems to be mysterious or hidden pictures together. It is also one of the safeguards against false doctrine. Tense matters as it reveals the critical elements of timing for the things of the end. Once you understand and notice tense, you then see the true timing of the tribulation and rapture. You can see the full seven years of the tribulation, the full eight years from the rapture to the Second coming, and the placement of the rapture at the start of all these things.

You can also see that the wrath of God runs the entire length of the tribulation, and actually starts before the tribulation, after the rapture.

We have the same thing with the women, the beast, the harlot and the beast kingdom. All of these things happen on the earth and not in heaven (the third heaven, or “Heaven” proper). There symbolic images are what must be seen.

This brings up another point. Absent the blood of Christ on your life, you are seen in heaven for exactly WHAT you are. If you are a beast on earth, you will be a beast in heaven before the Throne of Almighty God. It really puts “hiding from God” into a whole new and very sobering perspective.

What exactly do you look like to God?

The seven pastors are seen as angels, and the church is seen as lampstands. By the way, to show the significance of the lampstands, it might help to understand that these are not your mother’s candlesticks in the dining room table. The lampstand is always the Holy Menorah, which is lit night and day before the Throne of God in His Holy Temple!

All of this tells us that we have a choice. We can stand alone before God Himself, in our broken and sinful form - or we can cover ourselves in the blood of the risen Savior, and be a part of the light of the Holy Lampstand.

All that said, we notice the next pieces in the scriptures that were detailed next. We see that the martyrs are seen as martyrs, the elders are seen as elders clothed in the white raiment of the priesthood, and the four living creatures as they physically appear. These observations tell us that those things that stand before heaven are seen as they are. They are not veiled in symbolism, but can be seen in their actual form. That is, of course, all but our next example:

Jesus Christ Himself.

When you read through the Bible, and especially Revelation, each attempt to describe the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in His present form and appearance becomes a nearly impossible task. Each time we see that the writer cannot bear to look upon the Savior. That is why extended “exposure” always comes in the Lord’s symbolic form - the form that speaks to what He has done that made Him worthy of that particular event, title or action. He is either the Lion or the Lamb, High Priest or King of Kings. Even His description in the Second Coming is absent many detail about His physical appearance, save His eyes. The rest concentrates on that which He wears (which is also a key to unlocking prophecy before the Second Coming).

There is another observation that presents itself in these scriptures. Let’s bring in another piece which will help in recognizing this additional point:

And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice

We will going into more detail on these scriptures in a moment, but for now let’s notice something. The elders are called elders. The living creatures are called living creature. The angels are called angels. What do these all have in common?

They are titles.

What these reveal is that all living creatures created by God have titles. That title denotes our official capacity before God. We can evidence this further by going back to the seven angels of the seven churches. We have already established that they are in

fact the pastors. We have also established that “angel” is not just the title of the heavenly angels, which is the only description that ever really pops into our mind.

We can do one better on this. Depending on the context, even Jesus Christ Himself holds the title of “Angel”. In the case of the Savior, He is referred to as a “theophonic angel”. This denotes His appearing in the Old Testament, as well as His appearance in the New Testament after His ascension back to heaven. We see this in Revelation as well.

Revelation 8:3-5 ESV - And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, 4 and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings,[a]flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

This is an example of Christ in His role as a theophonic Angel. The events that unfold in heaven during the time of the tribulation are the fulfillments of the services at the Temple. The offering of the incense was a function that could be performed by the High Priest alone. It was performed in the one place where the High Priest alone could go - the Holy of Holies. What did Paul tell us? The things on earth are copies of the things in heaven. It was the shed blood of Christ that alone made Him worthy to take the sealed book, to enter the Temple of God, and to offer the incense.

That said, we can see by the scriptures that we have detailed that these titles apply to us whether we are on earth or in heaven. The seven pastors help drive this home, in that they are called angels even while they live on the earth. Likewise, as we will see in

a moment, the timing of the rapture is directly indicated by titles and appearances throughout Revelation.

Before we move on, let's recap what we have learned so far:

Every living thing created by God has an example or symbol in heaven. Stated differently, even though you and I are here on earth, we are right now represented in heaven. This is going to become evident shortly.

Those things that occur on the earth are not seen as they are, but by their heavenly representation.

Those things that cannot be looked upon directly in heaven can only be seen by their representations.

What these reveal is that all living creatures created by God have titles. That title denotes our official capacity before God.

We can see by the scriptures that we have detailed that these titles apply to us whether we are on earth or in heaven.

Depending on the context, even Jesus Christ Himself holds the title of "Angel". In the case of the Savior, He is referred to as a "theophonic angel".

There is something else to keep in mind. If what we have just shared is correct, then after Revelation 4:1, we will see the church portrayed not as symbolism from being on the earth - we will see them as they are in heaven, addressed in full heavenly title alone! If the rapture occurs at Revelation 4:1. there will be no more mention of the church as the lampstands.

We do in fact know this to be the case as we will see later. Not only this, but it is not until after the rapture at 4:1 that the two witnesses can be referred to as the two lampstands.

With that, let's keep moving!

John and the Two Angels

The next area we need to examine are two encounters that John had with two of the angels in Revelation. These are not the next two events chronologically, but detailing them will help with the additional studies that come after. With that, let's take a look at several blocks of scripture:

Revelation 19:10-11 ESV - And the angel said[b] to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." 10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant[c] with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God".

Revelation 22:8-9 ESV - I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, 9 but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant[d] with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

I give you a warning - this will be a full "face palm" moment for many of you.

How many have read these two blocks of scripture and missed what can only be described as the most obvious thing you have never seen? How many of you have

read these scriptures and knew there was something there - yet you just couldn't put your finger on it?

Here are the two statements that are going to blow your mind:

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant[c] with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

“You must not do that! I am a fellow servant[d] with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book.

Did you catch that? **They are John's fellow servants!** What's more is that we have a link between the Church and the Old Testament Saints. The angels that John tries to bow before are brothers in Christ, and may even be Old Testament prophets. Perry Stone does an excellent study of this subject, and shares that each of the judgments of God in the tribulation has an Old Testament equivalent, and that there was a prophet that announced that judgment. It may be that these same prophets are those that pour out the judgments.

The word here for “fellow servant” is **σύνδουλος (syndoulos)**, and it is used four times in the Bible in this form, and 10 times total in similar form.

Strong's Concordance

sundoulos: a fellow servant

Original Word: σύνδουλος, ου, ό

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: sundoulos

Phonetic Spelling: (soon'-doo-los)

Short Definition: a fellow servant, colleague

Definition: a fellow slave, fellow servant; of Christians: a fellow worker, colleague.

HELPS Word-studies

4889 *sýndoulos* (from 4862 /*sýn*, "closely identified *with*" and 1401/*doúlos*, "bond-slave") – properly, a *fellow* bond-servant (slave), *belonging to* the same master.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from sun and doulos

Definition

a fellow servant

NASB Translation

fellow bond-servant (2), fellow servant (2), fellow servants (1), fellow slave (2), fellow slaves (3).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4889: σύνδουλος

σύνδουλος, συνδούλου, ὁ (σύν and δοῦλος), a fellow-servant; one who serves the same master with another; thus used of

the associate of a servant (or slave) in the proper sense: Matthew 24:49.

one who with others serves (ministers to) a king: Matthew 18:28, 29, 31, 33.

the colleague of one who is Christ's servant in publishing the gospel: Colossians 1:7; Colossians 4:7 ((where cf. Lightfoot)).

one who with others acknowledges the same Lord, Jesus, and obeys his commands: Revelation 6:11.

one who with others is subject to the same divine authority in the Messianic economy: so of angels as the fellow-servants of Christians, Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:9. (Moeris says, p. 273, ὁμόδουλος ἁπτικῶς, σύνδουλος ἑλληνικῶς. But the word is used by Aristophanes, Euripides, Lysias.)

The last statement here is another example of how the Lord has opened up our understanding. The last statement from Thayer's declares this :

one who with others is subject to the same divine authority in the Messianic economy: so of angels as the fellow-servants of Christians,

However, we now understand that this is not what the meaning of fellow servant tells us in Revelation 19:10 and 22:9. We know this now because the same word **σύνδουλος** is used two additional times. Let me state that differently - it is not just an understanding of angels - but angels that were the fellow servants of John on earth. Here are the other two scriptures that bear out the rest of the meaning:

Colossians 4:7 ESV - Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant[a] in the Lord.

Matthew 18:29 ESV - So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

I included Matthew 18:29 second for a reason. This is the parable of the unforgiving servant. The word "fellow servant" is used several times in this parable, yet only once is the Greek word **σύνδουλος** used. It is used to describe the servant that asked for mercy, yet was given none by the fellow servant that HAD received mercy from the Master. Here is the rest of the story:

Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers,[k] until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

This speaks to forgiveness, yet there is a greater mystery here. All involved were fellow servants of the Master. Yet, one of those fellow servants was cast into prison, though he served the same Master as the others.

Matthew 24:45-51 ESV - "Who then is the faithful and wise servant,[c] whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 48 But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow

servants[d]and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know 51 and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We have detailed this extensively throughout the project, and specifically in “The Final Warning”. The use of the word “fellow servant” in these four scriptures conceals a prophetic truth. Those that serve the Master, yet fall away from Him shall be destroyed!

Gives new meaning to “depart from me you worker of iniquity, for I never knew you!”

As we said a moment ago, the four uses of **σύνδουλος** not only refer to an angel, but an angel that was once human and serving on the earth - just as John! This is further evidenced by the declaration that the angels are also of the prophets - a title that is NEVER ascribed to a heavenly angel.

But wait, there's more!

Revelation gives us several additional evidences that need to be understood. What were these angels doing that John felt the need to bow in the first place? What made them different from the other we see in Revelation? We will detail these additional angel's in a moment as well. How exactly did John meet up with them in the first place?

Let's start with the first angel that John was going to bow before. It turns out that John meets him for the first time in Revelation 17:1.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual

immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”

Now, for the second angel. John meets him for the first time in Revelation 21:9.

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

First, we can address a minor point for the sake of the discussion. These are not two meetings with the same angel, but two separate angels despite both having done the same thing prior to speaking with John. Given that there are no accidents in the Bible, and that every last words is specifically placed, the absence of all indication that John recognized the second angel tells us that it was in fact a different angel. Also, John never declares that he departs from the first angel. In fact, he is still conversing with the first angel half way through chapter 20.

Now, get ready to hit the floor.

You may have the feeling that you are missing something here, or that there is something that you can't quite put your finger on. There is a good reason for this. Let me ask you a question that will absolutely blow the doors off the timing of the rapture:

How exactly did fellow servants of John get to heaven as angels to pour out judgments if there had not yet been a rapture?

Take a minute and let that sink in.

Now, we can address another question that will arise at some point. We have already covered that the angels that pour out the judgments may in fact be Old Testament prophets. So, the question is this - if they are in fact Old Testament prophets then why

would there need to be a rapture for them to be angels? After all, the Old Testament saints were brought to heaven when Jesus ascended in secret to sprinkle His blood on the furniture of the Temple.

Hebrews 11:39-40 ESV - And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Prior to these two verses, Paul laid out the faith of many of the Old Testament prophets, and the promises they waiting for them in the fullness of time. Here is what the Bible tells us just a few verses earlier:

These all died in faith,

not having received the things promised,

but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 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 for them a city.

What Hebrews 11 tells us is that the Old Testament Saints could not be perfect without the New Testament Saints. Remember, Paul is addressing the church in Hebrews 11. He is speaking of faith in Jesus Christ and contending for the faith. As we will see in just a bit, none of us can stand before the Throne of Almighty God Himself until we are perfected. That does not happen until the rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:50-56 ESV - I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This brings us back to the original revelation, that John could not be talking to these angels of judgment if the rapture had not yet occurred. There is something else that we must understand. As we will see shortly, the perfection that Paul speaks about in Hebrews 11 is the only way that these saints can stand before the Throne of God. Until the rapture, all that die in the Lord go to paradise, which is found under the altar of heaven. It is not until the rapture that these souls are taken from paradise, rejoined with their perfected bodies as the dead in Christ. Only then can any of us stand before God Himself. Even the Old Testament Saints that were seen walking the streets of Jerusalem are not yet perfected as Paul clearly addresses in Hebrews 11. Whatever state they were in, it was not yet perfected.

Remember, Jesus brought the dead to life during His time on earth. Even Lazarus, whom the Bible tells us already was in a state of corruption. He was already beginning to decay, as the Bible tells us it had been four days and he was stinking.

However, we can evidence this further with another observation. Recall what both angels said to John when he tried to bow before them:

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant[c] with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Notice how the angels say this to John. They declare that they are his fellow servants. There is something here that we can glean from the words spoken. Rather, it is what was not said that we gain the additional insight.

“You are our fellow servant.”

You are probably wondering what the difference is. Recall earlier that we spoke of tense in the scriptures, and the absolutely critical nature of understanding whether something is past, present or future. Tense is a key part of what is revealed here.

When the angels tell John that they are his fellow servants, it speaks to a condition of present tense, and also past tense. Here is what I mean. When they declare themselves as John’s fellow servants, it places John as the subject in the conversation. It tells us that they had to have been human at one point, prior to becoming angels that pour out judgments. It set John as the standard for service to which they were once bound. As John is now human and in the service of the Lord, so then were these angels prior to John seeing and conversing with them in Revelation.

If they had declared John as their fellow servant, it would speak to a condition of future tense. It would set the angels as the example to which John would one day become. This becomes even more problematic given something we discussed earlier. John’s future assignment is not an angel. It is to serve as one of the 24 elders. These two angels are actually talking to one of their bosses in the coming kingdom!

Remember, John was not permitted to see the identity of the elders. He only knew that they were the elders.

There is something else that we need to point out here. In the interactions with these two angels, we have yet another proof that John did indeed go in the rapture, and is actually in heaven during the real tribulation. There is something you might not have picked up on.

These angels pour out their judgments BEFORE they talk to John.

That goes to this point. If this had simply been a case of “Revelation - the Movie” playing in some cave on Patmos, John would not be talking to angels that poured out judgments after they had fulfilled their assigned task. We know this as he would not have actually been present when they did. It’s not even that John talked to angels. He could have done this in the movie scenario. In fact, that is not an uncommon occurrence when it comes to dreams and visions. **However, this is the only time in all the Bible where the person interacts with the angels that perform the task AFTER they have done so.**

The closest we get to this is Daniel, in which the Lord and two angels were present as Daniel was given the vision of the tribulation and the rise of the Antichrist.

At this point we have established beyond doubt that the rapture is not post-trib, and that there is in fact a rapture in the first place. Now, we will proceed to show that Revelation 4:1 is the rapture and that all remaining positions beyond pre-trib are false doctrine. Let’s take a look at the next piece of the puzzle.

The Martyrs

In Revelation, John is introduced to three separate groups of martyrs at different points during his time in heaven. Upon first reading, or a cursory reading, it seems that all

three groups are the exact same (not one group seen three times, but three separate groups of the same “kind”). However, nothing could be further from the truth. Each group has separate and distinct differences which hold the key to the timing of the things that come in the tribulation.

They are also the key to understanding the rapture, and exactly who will and will not go through the tribulation.

For the sake of brevity, we will get right to the discussion on the martyrs and what each group reveals. Lets start with the scriptural references for the three groups.

Group number one:

Revelation 6:9-11 ESV - When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. 10 They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants[c] and their brothers[d] should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

Group number two:

Revelation 7:9-14 ESV - 9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12

saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” 14 I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Group number three:

Revelation 20:4-6 ESV - 4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

The first observation we need to make comes in a distinct difference between the three groups. Let’s look again at something from each group:

Group one - **Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer**

Group two - **They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

Group three - **no robes worn or given.**

Here is what we must understand. These three observations reveal critical information. With the first group, we need to realize that these martyrs get their robes for the first time in heaven. They are under the altar, and must rest for a while. Here is the first takeaway:

They were not believers prior to their deaths, and came to Christ in the moments before they passed into eternity.

“How can we know that this is the case? It does not say they became believers just before they died.”

Actually it does, if you understand what you are reading. We will detail one proof now, and an even more dramatic observation in just a moment. However, we see proof of the deathbed confession of the first group in something revealed by the second group.

What does the scriptures tell us about the second group of martyrs?

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Here is what we need to understand - ***this group was not given their robes when they got to heaven. They already had them!*** To the contrary, this group already had their robes, and had made them dirty. ***This group had to wash their robes to GET to heaven!***

Unlike the first group, which did not receive their robes for the first time until they got to heaven.

This goes back to something we detailed earlier. All living creatures have a representation in heaven. As a believer, you receive your robes at the time you come to Christ. The first group never had time for this to occur. The second group did. How

exactly do you receive your heavenly robes while you yet walk the earth? It is your representation that receives the robe.

We can evidence this with the understanding that the first group can never have dirty robes. How do we know this? Simple - they are in heaven when they receive their robes in the first place. Sin is how robes are dirtied. Sin never again occurs in heaven. The first group has already died, and is already IN heaven.

That same understanding covers how the second group required washing their robes in the blood that they might be made clean and white again. I say again as the Lord does not hand out dirty robes. The second group could not have dirtied their robes in heaven. It is only a sinful world that offers such an opportunity. They did, however, already wash their robes to stand before the Lord.

We see additional evidence of the receiving of robes prior to heaven in several scriptures that reveal something fascinating. Here is an excerpt from the project on tithing - though it covers tithing, it shows how the tithes are actually, literally received in heaven, by Jesus Christ Himself. This is the exact process by which we are awarded robes while we yet walk on the earth:

Hebrews chapter seven tells us that Christ is in heaven now, behind the veil, making intercession for us. It also tells us that He receives a more perfect tithes even now. The question becomes this:

“Does that mean that when we give our tithes, we are actually giving them to Christ Himself?”

Yes it does. We touched on this earlier, but we can expand it a bit further. Scripture tells us that what we do on earth we also do in heaven before Christ.

Matthew 18:18 – Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed[f] in heaven.

Matthew 6:10 – Your kingdom come, your will be done,[b] on earth as it is in heaven.

On face value, it can be argued that these scriptures are not speaking to tithes being received by Christ. However, these are not the only scriptures we can look to for guidance. What does Isaiah tell us?

Line on line, precept upon precept – here a little, there a little, until the whole truth is revealed.

Remember, we are speaking on the level of mysteries in the Bible. There is prophetic meaning and revelation in the scriptures given above. It just so happens that the Bible addresses the subject of “doing unto Christ” in more detail:

Matthew 25:34-39 ESV – Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

Look at the response given in the next verse:

Matthew 25:40 ESV – And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[f] you did it to me.’

Wow, what a bombshell! Clearly the Lord has an eye to the things we do now. Why shouldn't He? After all, look at what He was willing to do so that none of us perished. Is it any wonder that God Himself places the same emphasis on our sacrifice that He places on the sacrifice of His only Begotten Son. Remember, without our sacrifice to God, no one else hears of the sacrifice of Christ for us.

However, this is not the end of the conversation. The Lord goes even further in Matthew 25, and establishes the link between what we do on earth, and how these actions are directly linked to Him. In fact, they are not just linked to Him – they are DONE to Him. The wording here is very specific, and in the original Greek denotes present tense, just as Hebrews seven denotes present tense when speaking of Christ receiving the tithes:

Matthew 25:41-44 ESV – “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’

Watch the response the Lord gives to those that did not do to the Lord that which they should have:

Matthew 25:45-46 ESV – Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

It is worth remembering that those who go into eternal punishment are those that actually called “Lord, Lord”, doing what they thought was right before the Lord. Yet, there was something lacking that cost them everything. What do all of these examples have in common?

Giving – pure and simple. However, it was not just giving of an abundance. In each cited example, the giving required taking something from yourself, and voluntarily entering a state of “less” than another might have. When you give food to the hungry you have less food for yourself. When you clothe the naked you have less for yourself.

However, when you tithe and place yourself into a situation where you face certain ruin without the Lord’s intervention – for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, the message of salvation – then there can be no greater sacrifice in our power to give. ~~~

We can add another piece to this puzzle:

Hebrews 8:4-5 ESV - 4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. 5 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.

Hebrews 9:23-24 ESV - 23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

We have spoken in detail about what Paul reveals here. All the things on earth that are connected to the worship of God are but copies of the heavenly things. This includes the order of the priests. As we will cover shortly, the clothing you wear in heaven is directly representative of the life you lived for Christ on earth. For now, let's establish that the receiving of the robes begins on earth and are received in earnest in heaven.

Exodus 19:5-6 ESV - Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV - 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Revelation 1:4-6 ESV - Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen

We are the order of the priesthood before the Throne of Almighty God - if we overcome. We will be bringing in additional scripture in a later part of this discussion which also ties directly to what we have learned here. We will see shortly that there are differences in

what we wear, and what we start out with when we come to Christ is not necessarily what we end up with when it is all said and done.

Stated differently, we can be demoted along the way, and our uniform will reveal exactly that.

We can add to these observations that the third group is never spoken of with robes of any nature. This does not mean that they do not get robes. It simply means that the timing of those robes is one of the keys to the overall timing concealed in the three groups of martyrs. Remember, the timing of the tribulation and rapture is at the heart of this discussion, and the growing false doctrine against the rapture is the reason why the Lord reveals the groups in the manner and timing that He does.

Before we go further, let's recap what we have seen so far:

The first group does not get their robes for the first time until they get to heaven. They are white and can never become dirty.

The second group has their robes before they reach heaven, and they have soiled their robes while on earth. Those robes had to be washed in the blood of the Lamb to become clean once more.

The third group does not receive any robes at any time during the whole of the Book of Revelation. We can surmise that those robes come at some point during the 1,000 year reign of Christ, yet this is only an assumption. We only know that as of Revelation chapter 20 the third group does NOT have white robes, as that is the only direct observation made.

There is another small observation that we must make before we reveal one of the most astounding revelations in all of the Bible regarding the timing of the rapture. **That small observation is this - the word "overcomer" is never used once with regards to**

any of these three groups of martyrs. This cannot be stated clearly enough. This is critical to what we will say next, and something that we will detail shortly. A study of the original Greek will confirm this observation.

What I am going to point out next will blow your mind. Care to guess what is missing from these three groups of martyrs?

Where are those that received their robes on earth, yet never soiled them?

Crickets.

Take a moment and let that sink in.

How many times have you read these three blocks of scripture on the martyrs, yet never put these two things together? Go back and look again. The word overcomer is used many times and in many different capacities. **Yet, at the time when the martyrs are being officially recognized, it is NOT as overcomers.** There are no accidents in the Bible, nor is this an accident. It is intentional as it reveals a prophetic mystery.

We will detail shortly who is recognized as overcomers, and it will prove the timing of the rapture when you see it. Not only this, but there is a reason why there is no mention of those with robes that never need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb when the martyrs are introduced. They are not among the tribulation martyrs, or those that die after the the judgments begin.

They were taken in the rapture at 4:1! But wait, there's more.

If you have any experience in reading the Bible, or do not believe in the pre-trib rapture, you will likely be sitting there with the belief that you now have the evidence you need to discard this teaching with the statement that the martyrs are never declared overcomers. However, that would be woefully incorrect. Chances are you have already

headed for you Bible and pulled out Revelation 12:11, and are ready to declare that your beliefs are intact. Here is the scripture in question:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Open and shut case, right? Clearly these are the martyrs, and they are overcomers. Well, not exactly. Here is where those long lost skills of observation come into play.

You are going to see that there is a dramatic difference in overcoming one thing, on one day, at one time - and actually being declared an overcomer! Look at 12:11 - it uses the word "overcame" instead of declaring them "overcomers" for a reason. You will understand the difference in just a moment. The Lord could have uttered these words instead:

"And they were overcomers by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; overcoming the accuser, loving not their lives unto the death."

Yet, these are not the words that the Lord spoke. Nor did the Lord speak similar words to convey the same message. Instead, the choice of the word "overcame" is far different than "overcomer" or "overcomes" - and it is different for a very specific reason. More on this in a moment.

Let's look at the minor points. First off, who exactly is the Bible addressing here? It is addressing those that loved not their lives unto the death. Now, it is a safe assumption that all three are taken together and that this speaks to martyrs, yet it is not expressly declared as such. Remember, there are no accidents in the Bible. There are no assumptions given. The only things we know for certain is that these folks overcame by the blood of the Lamb, they died, and the loved Christ until the moment of their death.

This passage does not speak to the manner of death. To the contrary, this is the one passage that opens the possibility that believers may be able to die by other means aside from martyrdom. Personally, I ascribe this passage to martyrdom, yet I have learned that you must always start with what is explicitly stated. Usually, it means there is a prophetic revelation within the scripture in question. That is exactly what we have here.

If you are a pre-trib rapture critic, you are likely ready to jump out of your seat right now. “If that’s all you have, then it proves that I am right!”

Never mind everything else that has been presented, and the vast amount of material yet to go. If you are holding on to this one piece as the sole reason why you are vindicated, it already shows how tenuous your position is. Given everything that you have been reading, it is a good bet that I am about to answer this in the same undeniable terms as everything else we have seen here.

I simply need to take the time and purposely point out what is going through the minds of nearly every rapture critic that is reading this page. This is done because it is proof that the Lord is indeed guiding this work. If I can state without hesitation those things which I am not supposed to know, yet somehow know them - then it proves the validity of the work you see here.

We do this now because this is the lone example where the pre-trib rapture critic has any chance of formulating a defense against the evidence in the project. With that, let's address Revelation 12:11 in a bit more detail.

Let's look at the meaning of the word “overcame” in the original Greek:

Strong's Concordance

nikaó: to conquer, prevail

Original Word: νικάω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: nikaó

Phonetic Spelling: (nik-ah'-o)

Short Definition: I conquer, overcome

Definition: I conquer, am victorious, overcome, prevail, subdue.

HELPS Word-studies

3528 nikáō(from 3529 /níkē, "victory") – properly, conquer (overcome); " 'to carry off the victory, come off victorious.' The verb implies a battle" (K. Wuest).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from níké

Definition

to conquer, prevail

NASB Translation

conquer (1), conquering (1), overcame (2), overcome (11), overcomes (10), overpowers (1), prevail (1), victorious (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 3528: νικάω

νικάω, νικῶ; present participle dative νικούντι, Revelation 2:7 Lachmann Revelation 2:17 L T Tr (yet all νικῶντας in Revelation 15:2) (cf. ἐρωτάω, at the beginning); future νικήσω; 1 aorist ἐνίκησα; perfect νενίκηκα; (νίκη); (from Homer down); to conquer (A. V. overcome);

absolutely, to carry off the victory, come off victorious: of Christ, victorious over all his foes, Revelation 3:21; Revelation 6:2; ἐνίκησεν ... ἀνοίξει κτλ. hath so conquered that he now has the right and power to open etc. Revelation 5:5; of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and their temptations and persecutions, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; Revelation 3:5, 12, 21; Revelation 21:7; with ἐκ τοῦ θηπίου added, to conquer and thereby free themselves from the power of the beast (R. V. to come victorious from; cf. Winer's Grammar, 367 (344f); Buttmann, 147 (128)), Revelation 15:2. when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one's cause (so in the Attic orators; also νικάν δίκην, Euripides, El. 955): Romans 3:4 (from the Sept. of Psalm 50:6 ()). b, with the accusative of the object: τινα, by force, Luke 11:22; Revelation 11:7; Revelation 13:7 (L omits; WH Tr marginal reading brackets the clause); of Christ the conqueror of his foes, Revelation 17:14; τόν κόσμον, to deprive it of power to harm, to subvert its influence, John 16:33; νικάν τινα or τί is used of one who by Christian constancy and courage keeps himself unharmed and spotless from his adversary's devices, solicitations, assaults: the devil, 1 John 2:13; Revelation 12:11; false teachers, 1 John 4:4; τόν κόσμον, 1 John 5:4f. νικάν τό πονηρόν ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ, by the force which resides in goodness, i. e. in kindness, to cause an enemy to repent of

the wrong he has done one, Romans 12:21; νίκασθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, to be disturbed by an injury and driven to avenge it, *ibid.* (Compare: ὑπερνικάω.) ~~~

There is something that needs to be noticed in the definitions above. Overcoming in all its forms speaks to action. It is the act of obtaining victory over something. That is a fairly solid general explanation. It would confirm the rapture critics position - if that was all we had. Here is the thing - as with all verbs in the Greek language, the general definition is just the beginning.

The core definition for overcame speaks to a singular victory in a singular moment. Indeed, that is what we have in Revelation 12:11. The word we find in 12:11 is **ἐνίκησαν (enikēsan)**, and it is used just one time in the Bible, here at 12:11. There are two similar forms of overcoming which also draw on **ἐνίκησαν** - they are **ἐνίκησα** and **ἐνίκησεν**.

All three speak to a singular event, action or situation. The difference in the forms of these three words comes from the addition of “has”, “they”, “and”, etc. - all articles to give tense to the singular action of overcoming. Even in Revelation 3:21, where Christ uses this singular form to describe His overcoming (not ours), it is in the tense of a singular action in a singular moment.

That would be the cross. His entire life and everything that came with it are for nothing if that one final action is not taken. It matters little how perfect Christ is absent the cross. No cross, no overcoming!

Here is where the rubber meets the road.

Earlier we discussed the things revealed by the letters to the seven churches in chapters two and three. We laid out how the listing of the things to overcome reveal patterns and mysteries. We even spoke on the order of receiving given by the Savior.

However, there is much more we can learn from the seven churches, and him that “overcomes”.

Of the 28 forms and occurrences of “overcome” that appears in the Bible, the most common use is found eight times - all in Revelation, and all addressing the letters to the seven churches. First off, the form of overcome used to describe what we are required to do is NEVER associated with the martyrdom in the tribulation. Here is the form of overcome we have when addressing the seven churches - **νικῶν (nikōn)**.

From the start we can see the difference in the construction of the word. The differences stem from an actual difference we see in the Bible itself. When you compare the difference in the forms of overcoming in the Bible, you find something interesting:

The form of overcoming spoken to the seven churches is a continuous action, never ceasing.

When we combine that with our earlier study on the seven churches, an interesting picture emerges. In the original Greek, to be declared an overcomer requires an unceasing action that never brings completion. It is a condition that indicates striving without stopping. Indeed, when we take the actions required in the seven letters, we see an entire series of actions that require continuous efforts throughout the life of the overcomer.

To the contrary, what we see in Revelation 12:11 is an act of overcoming a singular series of events and actions - the efforts of the accuser AFTER he has been cast down.

In contrast, the singular use of the word **νικῶν (nikōn)** in the letters to the seven churches tells us that to be declared an overcomers requires overcoming ALL the elements given in the letters to the seven churches.

Stated differently, you can overcome any one thing at any time. However, to be declared an overcomer requires overcoming all things at all times! As we said earlier, to be an overcomer requires overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil. Those that fight the rapture are not overcomers because they do not overcome the flesh:

2 Peter 3:3-4 KJV - Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Matthew 24:48-51 KJV - 8 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

For the record, the original language here for “fellow servants” is the exact language used when the angels declare themselves as John’s fellow servants. There is a reason for this:

How many pre-trib rapture critics have scoffed, demeaned, belittled and humiliated those that do believe in the pre-trib rapture?

Not only this, but there is a reason why there is no mention of those with robes that never need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb when the martyrs are introduced. They are not among the tribulation martyrs, or those that die after the the judgments begin.

They were taken in the rapture at 4:1! But wait, there's more.

There are several other observations that we need to point out with regards to the the three groups of martyrs. The first of which is the timing of the revealing of groups one and two.

We find that group one is revealed at the fifth seal. Group two is revealed at the sixth seal. It would not seem that this is critical to any blockbuster revelations, yet it would only seem that way. What a difference the space of one seal can make. We go into detail on the timing of the timing of the tribulation in “Time, Times and a Dividing of Times” and on “Coming Signs 2”. On these two pages, we show that the official start of the tribulation comes after seal 6, and not before seal number one.

That tells us that group number one is revealed before the start of the tribulation. It also tells us that group number two is revealed AFTER the start of the tribulation. This is an absolute bombshell. Here is why.

In seeing that group one is revealed before the start of the tribulation, we see that the events which unfold during the first five seals drive many to Christ for the very first time, to the point that they are willing to declare Him as Lord even as they are about to die. That means these are unbelievers right up until the time of their deaths. Given what the Lord says about overcoming, and what it takes to be an overcomer, it is no surprise that they are never declared as such. As we detail in Coming Signs 2, there are no words to

describe what the world is going through before the seven year treaty and the start of the tribulation. We can only say that nearly two billion people die because of it.

Here comes the hammer for those that fight the pre-trib rapture, and are absolutely convinced that the Body of Christ must go through the tribulation. There is a reason why group two is not officially revealed until AFTER the start of the tribulation. You may recall something we said just a moment ago:

Where are those that received their robes on earth, yet never soiled them?

Let's go one better - you may have noticed that group two is nothing BUT those with SOILED ROBES that had to be made white!

There are no robes that were never soiled on earth.

There are no robes received for the first time in heaven.

There are only those that failed to overcome for Christ - those that received robes of white, yet made them dirty on earth.

Here is what must be understood. We have said it numerous times, and will continue to do so. There are no accidents in the Bible. Every word, every phrase, every statement is specifically placed to reveal the Lord's truth. This is no different.

The reason group two is not officially revealed before the sixth seal is to confirm that which the entire New Testament bears out. **If you fail to overcome you will not go in the rapture.** However, it also reveals beyond doubt that those that DID overcome are not present with those that failed. It confirms that those who do not overcome must enter the tribulation.

It proves that those who DO overcome DO NOT enter the tribulation!

As we said twice before, where are those that never soiled their robes on the earth?

The first group also bears this out. They are those that get their robes for the first time. Again, there are none in this group that had the robes already and never soiled them. Yet, in getting their robes for the first time in heaven, this group by its very definition cannot be those that had their robes on earth, yet failed to overcome.

That distinction belongs to the second group of martyrs alone!

We see this premise confirmed by the third group of martyrs as well. It is the third group that receives no robes, and is spoken of in future tense when it speaks to their rewards for enduring to the end (again, not overcoming). This third group does not have ANY robes as of chapter 20 as we pointed out earlier.

We should note that this does not mean that our failed believers do not start dying until after the sixth seal. It only means that they are not revealed as a group until then. To the contrary, we see that they can indeed die before the start of the tribulation.

It simply means that they do not go in the rapture in the first place.

Actually, there is something we see in the first group that reveals an interesting observation:

Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants[c] and their brothers[d] should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

The first group is told to rest until their full number of martyrs is complete. Several things jump out here. First, the deaths do not end with the revealing of the martyrs.

They will continue for a set time. This is the indication that the revealing of groups one and two is just that - the revealing in order to present prophetic truth. It also tells us that there will be a final martyr in the age of grace. We cover this in detail on the martyrs project page. The Holy Spirit is present during the first 42 months of the tribulation, and those that find Christ (or find Him again) do so under grace, and will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. However, at the conclusion of the first 42 months, the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, along with the 144,000 sealed Jewish witnesses, and grace comes to a close.

After that, enduring for Christ becomes a real Old Testament exercise. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be in the end.

At this point, there are several observations that we can make with regards to the third group of martyrs. Chief among these is the meaning of the First Resurrection, and how it does NOT set the timing of the rapture to the end of the tribulation, as many pre-trib rapture critics try to proclaim. Here is an excerpt from the page detailing the order of martyrdom, resurrections:

There is something that we must address from the outset of this article – the meaning of the First Resurrection. The key is the meaning of the word “first”, as this is the very heart of the debate.

What exactly does “first” mean in the Bible, and in Revelation 20:5? The first thing we need to address can be found in this definition of “first” regarding the First Resurrection.

In Revelation 20:5, we have the original Greek:

Revelation 20:5 Adj-NFS

GRK: ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη

NAS: This is the first resurrection.

KJV: This [is] the first resurrection.

INT: resurrection first

Why is this important? Simple – because of what it DOES NOT say. Here what what “first” does not mean in Revelation 20:5.

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4413: *πρῶτος* (note the differences in the original script from above)

πρῶτος, *πρώτη*, *πρῶτον* (superlative of *πρό*, contracted from *προστος*, whence the Doric *πρατός*; the comparative *πρότερος* see in its place) (from Homer down), the Sept. for *מִשְׁכָּל* and often for *תְּחִלָּה* and *שְׁאֵר*, first;

neuter *πρῶτον* as adverb, first, at the first;

in order of time: Luke 10:5; John 18:13; Acts 11:26 (here T Tr WH *πρώτως*, which see); followed by *εἴτα*, *ἔπειτα*, or *δεύτερον*, Mark 4:28; 1 Corinthians 15:46; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Timothy 3:10; followed by *μετά ταῦτα* Mark 16:9 cf. Mark 16:12; the first time, opposed to *ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ* (the second time), Acts 7:12, 13; *τέπρῶτον καί*, first and also (or afterward), i. e. as well as, Romans 1:16 (but here L Tr marginal reading WH brackets *πρῶτον*); ; without *τέ*, 2 Corinthians 8:5; 2 Timothy 1:5; first i. e. before anything else is done; first of all: Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:1; John 7:51 L Tr WH; Romans 1:8; 1 Timothy 5:4; 2 Peter 1:20; 2 Peter 3:3; *πρῶτον πάντων*, 1 Timothy 2:1. first, i. e. before something else: Matthew 8:21; Mark 7:27; Mark 9:11, 12; Luke 11:38; Luke 14:28; Romans 15:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Peter 4:17, etc.; before other nations, Acts 3:26; Acts 13:46; before others (R. V. the first to partake etc.), 2 Timothy 2:6; followed by *τότε* or *καί τότε*, Matthew 5:24; Matthew 7:5; Matthew 12:29; Mark 3:27; Luke 6:42;

John 2:10 (T WH omit; L Trbrackets τότε); ἐμέ πρῶτον ὑμῶν (Tdf. omits ὑμῶν) me before it hated you, John 15:18 (see 1 b. ἄ.). τό πρῶτον. at the first, i. e. at the time when one did a thing for the first time: John 10:40; John 12:16; John 19:39.

in enumerating several particulars; first, then, etc.: Romans 3:2; 1 Corinthians 11:18; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Hebrews 7:2; James 3:17. ~~~

One of the favorite arguments against the pre-trib rapture comes from Revelation 20:5, declaring that the rapture is the First Resurrection and as such, does not occur until after the tribulation.

However, there are several glaring issues with this logic. First, as we read above, “first” in Revelation 20:5 is not a chronological designation as we think about it in modern times. The First Resurrection is not the first chronological resurrection to occur.

That distinction belongs to Christ, and the Old Testament Saints that were seen walking the streets of Jerusalem at the death and resurrection of Christ.

Not only that, but the rapture aside, there will be a resurrection of the Two Witnesses (yes, what happens to them at mid-trib meets the Biblical definition of the resurrection). Also, there are 144,000 sealed witnesses which suddenly appear in Heaven in Revelation 12. As early as chapter six these witnesses were still on the earth – and they cannot be harmed. That means they are not a part of the martyrs that appear at different points in Revelation. That is three separate events that occur BEFORE Revelation 20:5!

This does not even account for the rapture, which we will show CANNOT be the First Resurrection at Revelation 20:5 in just a moment.

Let’s take a look at what we can find on “first” in Revelation 20:5.

Strong's Concordance

prótos: first, chief

Original Word: πρῶτος, η, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: prótos

Phonetic Spelling: (pro'-tos)

Short Definition: first, before

Definition: first, before, principal, most important.

HELPS Word-studies

4413 prótos (an adjective, derived from 4253 /pró, “before, forward”) – first (foremost).

4413 /prótos (“first, foremost”) is the superlative form of 4253 /pró (“before”) meaning “what comes first” (is “number one”).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin - contr. superl. of pro

Definition: first, chief

NASB Translation

before (3), best (1), first (128), first of all (2), first importance (1), first man (1), first one (1), first things (1), first time (1), foremost (5), leading (2), leading man (1), leading men (5), outer (3), previous (1).

Here is what Vine's tells us on the subject:

RESURRECTION

(1, 386) denotes (I) "a raising up," or "rising" (, "up," and , "to cause to stand"), Luke 2:34, "the rising up"; the KJV "again" obscures the meaning; the Child would be like a stone against which many in Israel would stumble while many others would find in its strength and firmness a means of their salvation and spiritual life; (II), of "resurrection" from the dead,

(b) of those who are Christ's at His Parousia (see COMING), Luke 14:14, "the resurrection of the just"; Luke 20:33, 35, 36; John 5:29 (1st part), "the resurrection of life"; 11:24; Acts 23:6; 24:15 (1st part); 1 Cor. 15:21, 42; 2 Tim. 2:18; Heb. 11:35 (2nd part), see RAISE, Note (3); Rev. 20:5, "the first resurrection"; hence the insertion of "is" stands for the completion of this "resurrection," of which Christ was "the firstfruits"; 20:6; ~~~

As we can see, "first" is more than just a chronological designation. Now, I will let you in on something. In just a moment, I am going to show you that there is a chronological component to "first".

"Wait a minute – you just said it was not chronological!"

No, I said it was not chronological as we understand it in modern times. In the original Greek, there is more than one chronological meaning.

However, there are a few things that we must notice first. When you read through the definitions and studies above, you can see that the primary emphasis for the word “first” is that stature, importance and preference.

In other words, the First Resurrection is not “First” because it occurs before any other resurrection. It is called “First” because it is the first, or referred of the two resurrections.

The First Resurrection is to life. The Second Resurrection is to death. In Vine’s we see another interesting piece of the puzzle:

Note (3); Rev. 20:5, “the first resurrection”; hence the insertion of “is” stands for the completion of this “resurrection,” of which Christ was “the firstfruits”; 20:6; ~~~

This denotes that what Revelation 20:5 calls the First Resurrection is actually the completion of the preferred Resurrection – of which Christ was the First Fruits. This tells us that Christ Himself is considered as the first instance of the First Resurrection. He was then followed by the Old Testament Saints that were raised with Him.

As you will see a little later in this study, the counting of the omer is a critical piece of the continuation of the First Resurrection.

I stated a moment ago that there was actually chronological aspect. It goes hand in hand with what we have covered so far. When you look at the First Resurrection, and the resurrections in general, you may have noticed something:

Up until the resurrection of the unjust at the Great White Throne Judgment, there has been NO resurrecting of the unrighteous prior.

In other words, the chronological aspect of “first” denotes that the resurrection of the righteous comes before the resurrection of the unrighteous. The unrighteous are raised

only once in all of eternity – just before formal sentencing to the Lake of Fire. First comes the different resurrections of the righteous. Then comes the one time only resurrection of the unrighteous.

However, there is one more thing that must be discussed with regards to the First Resurrection, and why it IS NOT the rapture that occurs in Revelation 20:5:

Revelation 20:4-6 ESV – Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!

Does anything jump out at you here? Who is actually called to this resurrection?

the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus

those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.

They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

By its very definition, this resurrection CANNOT be the rapture!

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 KJV – For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

At the resurrection in Revelation 20:5, these are those that perished in the second 42 months of the tribulation. The dead in Christ, those that are alive and remain, the 144,000 sealed witnesses and the martyrs of the first 42 months that still found salvation through grace have already completed this process, which concluded with the BEMA, the Judgment Seat of Christ at mid-trib. We will detail this in greater detail shortly.

Also, there is one more thing that must be understood. While it is beyond the scope of this study, there is a difference in the Kingdom of Priests, or the Kings and Priests mentioned in Revelation 1:6, and the priests that we see after the First Resurrection. It is a distinction rooted in the fulfilling of the 24 courses of the priesthood, the difference between the on-duty priesthood serving in the Heavenly Temple throughout the tribulation and the off-duty priests, and the distinction between established priests and those new initiates not yet commissioned. However, for the purposes of this study, we can bring out one final observation regarding the differences between the martyrs in Revelation 20 and the Kingdom of Priests. It is in the timing. In Revelation 20, those that are martyred are to become priests of God and Christ in the future. The Kingdom of Priests are already commissioned and in service by Revelation chapter five. ~~~

There is something that must be emphasized here. Though many believe otherwise, there will be no Gentiles that survive to the end of the tribulation and stand for Christ.

We see the word “saints” used throughout the Bible and Revelation. We attach our understanding to the word, and many assume “church” or “Christian”. However, there are several definitions for the word “saint”.

If you are a Gentile that enters the tribulation, the only way you can make it to the end is to reject Christ.

Those that are called saints at the end of the tribulation are Jews alone. Remember, long before the servants of Christ were called saints, it was a title that alone belonged to the righteous of Israel. Look once more at exactly who is present at the occurrence of the First Resurrection following the Second Coming:

I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

There are none alive in this group. All here have died for Christ, and they alone are those mentioned before the thrones of judgment. The Jews that serve the Lord and live (those that will enter the millennial reign of Christ and repopulate the earth) are a separate study that is well worth the time to undertake. For the purposes of the present topic, it is a subject we will leave for another time, as it does not bear on the current conversation.

At this point, there is one final group that needs addressed. Let’s take a look at the last piece of the puzzle.

The Multitude of Chapter Five

As always, let’s start with an examination of the scriptures in question:

Revelation 5:8-14 KJV - And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

The first thing we need to do is bring in several additional scriptures that reveal critical information on exactly who the elders and the multitude of angels are.

Revelation 4:4 KJV - And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

I have underlined “clothed in white raiment” for a very special reason. There are very few examples in the Bible where a singular phrase contains so much prophetic truth. What you are about to see the the true difference between those that claim to “study” the Bible and reject the pre-trib rapture, and those that actually study the Bible searching for the Lord’s answers. The “white raiment” is the single greatest concealed mystery that few ever see.

First, I have a question. If I said “white raiment” and “white robes”, would you see any difference? The answer would be no. We know this to be true from the fact that almost nobody speaks to any distinction. Yet, the difference between the two is nearly beyond comprehension.

Let’s put three of these scriptures together, and let the picture emerge:

Revelation 4:4 KJV - And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

Revelation 6:11 KJV - And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Revelation 7:13-14 KJV - And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

There are two primary Greek words used in these three blocks of scripture - **himation** and **stolé**. The white robes are **stolé**, and the white raiment is **himation**. Under a cursory examination, both appear to be very similar in form. Both are garments that are worn over undergarments. One is typically longer than the other, but they seem to have a similar construction - or so it would seem. Let's take a closer look:

Strong's Concordance

himation: an outer garment, a cloak, robe

Original Word: ἱμάτιον, ου, τό

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: himation

Phonetic Spelling: (him-at'-ee-on)

Short Definition: outer garment

Definition: a long flowing outer garment, tunic.

HELPS Word-studies

2440 *himátion* – a cloak; the *outer* garment worn over the 5509/*xitōn* ("the under-garment worn *next* to the skin").

[2440 /*himátion* ("a robe") was often made of wool with openings for the head and arms, and worn loosely over the 5509/*xitōn* ("the under-tunic").]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

dim. form of *heima* (a garment)

Definition

an outer garment, a cloak, robe

NASB Translation

cloak (8), cloaks (1), clothes (1), clothing (2), coat (4), coats (8), dresses (1), garment (8), garments (18), outer garments (2), robe (4), robes (4).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2440: ἱμάτιον

ἱμάτιον, ἱματίου, τό (diminutive of ἱμα equivalent to εἶμα, an article of clothing, garment; and this from ἔννυμι to clothe, cf. German Hemd); (from Herodotus down); the Sept. mostly for בגד, also for שמלה, etc.;

1. a garment (of any sort): Matthew 9:16; Matthew 11:8 (R G Lbrackets; others omit; cf. Winers Grammar, 591 (550); Buttmann, 82 (72)); Mark 2:21; Mark 15:20; Luke 5:36; Luke 7:25; Hebrews 1:11; plural garments, i. e. the cloak or mantle and the tunic (cf. Winers Grammar, 176 (166); Buttmann, 24 (23)):

Matthew 17:2; Matthew 24:18 (Rec.); ; John 19:23; Acts 7:58; James 5:2, etc.; to rend τάϊμάτια (see διαρρήγνυμι), Matthew 26:65; Acts 14:14; Acts 22:23.

2. the upper garment, the cloak or mantle (which was thrown over the tunic, ὁ χιτῶν) (Rutherford, New Phryn., p. 22): Matthew 9:20; (xxiv. 18 L T Tr WH); Mark 5:2; Luke 8:44; John 19:2; Revelation 19:16; it is distinguished from the χιτῶν in Matthew 5:40; Luke 6:29; (cf. John 19:23); Acts 9:39. (Cf. Trench, § I.; BB. DD. under the word ; Edersheim, Jewish Social Life, chapter xiii.; especially 'Jesus the Messiah,' 1:620ff) ἱματισμός, ἱματισμοῦ, ὁ (ἱματίζω), clothing, apparel: universally, Luke 7:25; Acts 20:33; 1 Timothy 2:9; of the tunic, Matthew 27:35 Rec.; John 19:24; of the cloak or mantle, Luke 9:29. (The Sept.; Theophrastus, Polybius, Diodorus, Plutarch, Athen.) (Cf. Trench, § I.) ~~~

Now, let's bring in stole:

Strong's Concordance

stolé: equipment, apparel

Original Word: στολή, ῆς, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: stolé

Phonetic Spelling: (stol-ay')

Short Definition: a long robe

Definition: a long robe, worn by the upper classes in the East.

HELPS Word-studies

4749 *stolḗ* – a long, flowing robe worn by the elite (people of high station, wealth). "4749 (*stolḗ*) is a long robe, worn by the upper classes in the east" (Souter), "especially *flowing raiment, a festal robe*" (A-S).

["Milligan also finds in the papyri that *robes* are the expression of *character*" (Vincent, *ala WP*).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from stelló

Definition

equipment, apparel

NASB Translation

long robes (2), robe (3), robes (4).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4749: στολή

στολή, στολής, ἡ (στέλλω (which see) to prepare, equip, 2 perfect

1. an equipment (Aeschylus).
2. an equipment in clothes, clothing; specifically, a loose outer garment for men which extended to the feet (cf. English stole (Dict. of Chris. Antiq. under the

word)), worn by kings (Jonah 3:6), priests, and persons of rank: Mark 12:38; Mark 16:5; Luke 15:22; Luke 20:46; Revelation 6:11; Revelation 7:9, 13 (14{a}, 14{b} Rec.; Revelation 22:14 L T Tr WH). (Tragg., Xenophon, Plato, and following; the Sept. chiefly for $\tau\alpha\chi\eta$.) (Cf. Trench, § I.) ~~~

As we said, on first appearance it does not seem that there is much difference in the two. It only seems that way. There is a reason why one is translated as raiment, and the other as robe. That difference is a bombshell!

Let's bring in Vine's to really add some perspective:

(, 1, 2440), "an outer garment, a mantle, thrown over the " In the plural, "clothes" (the "cloke" and the tunic), e.g., Matt. 17:2; 26:65; 27:31, 35. See APPAREL, No. 2.

(0, 5509) denotes "the inner vest or undergarment," and is to be distinguished, as such, from the . The distinction is made, for instance, in the Lord's command in Matt. 5:40: "If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat (,) also." The order is reversed in Luke 6:29, and the difference lies in this, that in Matt. 5:40 the Lord is referring to a legal process, so the claimant is supposed to claim the inner garment, the less costly. The defendant is to be willing to let him have the more valuable one too. In the passage in Luke an act of violence is in view, and there is no mention of going to law. So the outer garment is the first one which would be seized. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took His garments (, in the plural), His outer garments, and the "coat," the , the inner garment, which was without seam, woven from the top throughout, John 19:23. The outer garments were easily divisible among the four soldiers, but they could not divide the without splitting it, so they cast lots for it. Dorcas was accustomed to make coats () and garments (), Acts 9:39, that is, the close fitting undergarments and the long, flowing outer robes. A person was said to be "naked" (\$), whether he was without clothing, or had thrown off his outer garment, e.g., his \$, (No. 6, below), and was clad in a light undergarment, as was the case with Peter, in John 21:7. The high priest,

in rending his clothes after the reply the Lord gave him in answer to his challenge, rent his undergarments (*chiton*), the more forcibly to express his assumed horror and indignation, Mark 14:63. In Jude 23, “the garment spotted by the flesh” is the *chiton*, the metaphor of the undergarment being appropriate; for it would be that which was brought into touch with the pollution of the flesh. 4. (*himation*, 2441), in form a collective word, denoting “vesture, garments,” is used generally of “costly or stately raiment,” the apparel of kings, of officials, etc. See Luke 7:25, where “gorgeously apparelled” is, lit., “in gorgeous vesture.” See also Acts 20:33 and 1 Tim. 2:9, “costly raiment.” This is the word used of the Lord’s white and dazzling raiment on the Mount of Transfiguration, Luke 9:29. It is also used of His *chiton*, His undergarment (see note above), for which the soldiers cast lots, John 19:23-24, “vesture”; in Matt. 27:35 it is also translated vesture. See APPAREL, RAIMENT, VESTURE.¶

(*himation*, 4749), (Eng., “stole”), denotes any “stately robe,” a long garment reaching to the feet or with a train behind. It is used of the long clothing in which the scribes walked, making themselves conspicuous in the eyes of men, Mark 12:38; Luke 20:46; of the robe worn by the young man in the Lord’s tomb, Mark 16:5; of the best or, rather, the chief robe, which was brought out for the returned prodigal, Luke 15:22; five times in the Apocalypse, as to glorified saints, 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 22:14.¶ In the Sept. it is used of the holy garments of the priests, e.g., Exod. 28:2; 29:21; 31:10.

Notes: (1) 8, from *himation*, “to throw around,” lit., “that which is thrown around,” was a wrap or mantle. It is used in 1 Cor. 11:15, of the hair of a woman which is given to her as a veil; in Heb. 1:12, of the earth and the heavens, which the Lord will roll up “as a mantle,” RV, for KJV, “vesture.” The other word in that verse rendered “garment,” RV, is *himation*. (2) *himation*, is “a putting on (of apparel),” 1 Pet. 3:3. Cf. No. 5.¶ (3) *himation*. See APPAREL, No. 1. (4) The *himation* was a short “cloak” or robe, worn over the *chiton* (No. 3), by emperors, kings, magistrates, military officers, etc. It is used of the scarlet robe with which Christ was arrayed in mockery by the soldiers in Pilate’s Judgment Hall, Matt. 27:28, 31. What was known as purple was a somewhat indefinite color. There is nothing contradictory about its being

described by Mark and John as “purple,” though Matthew speaks of it as “scarlet.” The soldiers put it on the Lord in mockery of His Kingship.¶ (5) The was another sort of outer garment, reaching to the feet (from \$, “the foot,” and , “to fasten”). It was one of the garments of the high priests, a robe (Hebrew,), mentioned after the ephod in Exod. 28:4, etc. It is used in Ezek. 9:2, where instead of “linen” the Sept. reads “a long robe”; and in Zech. 3:4, “clothe ye him with a long robe”; in the NT in Rev. 1:13, of the long garment in which the Lord is seen in vision amongst the seven golden lampstands. There, is described as “a garment down to the feet,” indicative of His High Priestly character and acts.¶

APPAREL, APPARELLED 1. (#), 2066), and (#), 2067), connected with \$, “to clothe” means “clothing, raiment,” usually suggesting the ornate, the goodly. The former is found in Luke 23:11, RV, “apparel” (KJV, “robe”); 24:4 (KJV, “garments”); Acts 10:30 (KJV, “clothing”); 12:21; Jas. 2:2 (RV, clothing,” twice; KJV, “apparel” and “raiment”); 2:3 (“clothing”). , is used in Acts 1:10, “apparel.” See CLOTHING.¶ 2. (,1, 2440), a diminutive of , “a robe,” was used especially of an outer cloak or mantle, and in general of raiment, “apparel” in 1 Pet. 3:3. The word is not in the original in the next verse, but is supplied in English to complete the sentence. See CLOTHING No. 2, GARMENT, RAIMENT, ROBE. 3. (, 2441), a collective word, is translated “apparelled” in Luke 7:25, and preceded by , “in,” lit., “in apparel.” See CLOTHING, No. 4, RAIMENT, VESTURE. 4. (), 2689), connected with , “to send or let down, to lower” (, “down,” , “to send”), was primarily a garment let down; hence, “dress, attire,” in general (cf. , a loose outer garment worn by kings and persons of rank,—Eng., “stole”); 1 Tim. 2:9, “apparel.” See CLOTHING.¶

This is a lot to digest, so I will sum it up for you. As you study the material above, it will become plain in light of what we are about to share.

The first and primary difference between himation and stole is the purpose of use. The himation or raiment is not unlike a shirt worn over a T-shirt. It can be similar to a sweater worn over a regular shirt. Think of it as two pieces to your regular clothing.

The stole or robe is more akin to light outer jacket, or even a suit jacket in modern understanding.

Another core difference would be the length. The raiment could be anywhere from waist length to knee length, even falling to the shins. The robe was always nearly floor length.

This is where the similarities end. Now for the differences.

When the robes are discussed with regards to the martyrs in Revelation, they use the word **στολᾶς (stolas)**, a form of stole found only four times in the Bible - all in Revelation, and all used in connection with the martyrs. Here is the first thing that we need to catch - stole in ANY form is NEVER associated with Christ. It is a term that is applied only to men.

Not only that, but there is a very specific use of the word stole that must be understood.

Mark 12:38-40 KJV - And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

Luke 15:21-24 KJV - And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Luke 20:45-47 KJV - Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

These three blocks of scriptures reveal two critical truths. However, before we look at those two truths, we should mention that there is one more use for *stolas* - it is Mark 16:5 - where the young man is wearing a long robe in the empty tomb of Jesus. He declares that Jesus is risen. This is yet another study in that which we covered earlier - the appearance of men as angels. While we will not break down this piece of the picture, as we have done so in great detail already - it merits mentioning in case you wish to pursue the topic in greater detail.

With that, let's look at these two revelations for a moment. What do both have in common? They describe the robes of those that have served the Lord, yet turned from

him. Not only that, when taken with the martyrs in Revelation, we see a disturbing and refreshing picture emerge. Here is what we see from the word **stolas** in the Bible:

All who wear the **stolas** in the Bible start out in the service of the Father, and they are His sons.

All who wear the **stolas** in the Bible turn away from the Father.

All who wear the **stolas** in the Bible are found filthy.

All who wear the **stolas** face eternal judgment if they do not return to the Father.

The **stolas** is the uniform of those that had the inheritance of the Father, yet threw it all away. It is the uniform of those that believe themselves righteous, yet are wicked in their hearts. It is the uniform of those that lift themselves up, declaring that if others do not do as they do, then those shall be lost.

It is the uniform of those that fell away from the Lord - some to judgment, some eventually returning to Him. It is the uniform of those that are as filthy rags, though they say "Lord, Lord".

Even those in martyrs in Revelation chapter 6 that find Christ for the first time as they perish. The **stolas** given to them for the first time is yet another confirmation of what we covered earlier. These martyrs never accepted Christ in the lives prior to being cast to the judgment. **Stolas** is the confirmation of just how filthy mankind has become as a whole.

In the use of himation in Revelation, we actually find it in the form of ἱματίοις (**himatiois**). This is a form of the word that is used only three times in the Bible - twice in Revelation for the white raiment, and once in Luke.

Now, the two examples in Revelation make sense, as they describe the same thing. You would expect the same word to be used to describe the same thing. However, it is the example in Luke that leaves us scratching our heads. It seems completely unrelated to Revelation. At first glance it seems to introduce a strange element to the conversation that unseats the understanding that *himatiois* is more than “just a word used” in Revelation, with no special significance. As we are about to find out, this is far from the case. First, let's take a look at the scripture in Luke:

Luke 7:24-30 KJV - And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

I will go ahead and say it - how many of us have literally scratched our heads at these scriptures? How many times have you asked “what in the world is Jesus talking about?” How many times have you wondered what these things have to do with John the baptist?

People living in king’s courts?

Weeds blown about by the winds?

The part about the prophets seems simple enough. But what about the other two? Honestly - how many of you have simply written these two off because they made absolutely no sense to you?

Me too - or at least I used to.

Let’s start with the easier of the two - the reed shaken in the wind. What we have to remember is that people were the same in the days of the Bible as they are now. They had sayings, they spoke in slang, they used expressions, they shortened expressions - all things that we do today. Likewise, many of the writers of the Bible and their contemporaries that wrote on other subjects would communicate those same expressions in their writing. As it is today, many who spoke publicly would use the expressions of the day. They would speak in allegories and colorful examples. That is essentially what we have here. Let’s take a look at something that helps to clear up the confusion. Let’s examine the original Greek for “wind” in the text:

Strong's Concordance

anemos: wind

Original Word: ἄνεμος, ου, ὁ

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: anemos

Phonetic Spelling: (an'-em-os)

Short Definition: the wind

Definition: the wind; fig: applied to empty doctrines.

HELPS Word-studies

417 *ánemos* – properly, a gust of air (wind); (figuratively) something with gusting, storm-like force, like someone bent in a particular direction (cf. Eph 4:14; Rev 7:1).

(Mk 6:48) Ironically, obedience to the Lord sometimes does bring us *into storms*! Here God meets (transforms) us in ways that could never happen otherwise. Praise the Lord!

Mk 6:45,48: "45Immediately *Jesus made His disciples get into the boat* and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. . . . 48Seeing them straining at the oars, for the *wind* (417 */ánemos*) *was against them*, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them" (NASU).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from a prim. root ane- (to blow, breathe)

Definition

wind

NASB Translation

wind (20), winds (11).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 417: ἄνεμος

ἄνεμος, ἀνέμου, ὁ (ἄω, ἄημι, to breathe, blow, (but etymologists connect ἄω with Sanskritva, Greek ἀήρ, Latinventus, English wind, and ἄνεμος with Sanskritan, to breathe, etc.; cf.Curtius, §§ 419, 587; Vanicek, p. 28)) (from Homer down), wind, a violent agitation and stream of air (cf. (Trench, § lxxiii.) πνεῦμα, 1 at the end): Matthew 11:7; Matthew 14:24; James 3:4, etc.; of a very strong and tempestuous wind: Matthew 7:25; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24, etc. οἱ τέσσαρες ἄνεμοι, the four principal or cardinal winds (Jeremiah 25:15 ()), τῆς γῆς, Revelation 7:16 hence, the four quarters of the heavens (whence the cardinal winds blow): Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27; (Ezekiel 37:9; 1 Chronicles 9:24). Metaphorically,ἄνεμος τῆς διδασκαλίας, variability and emptiness (?) of teaching, Ephesians 4:14. ~~~

Initially, I was looking to see if there was a connection to the Holy Spirit, or spirits in general. In the Bible, wind and blowing is often associated with such things. For instance, the Holy Spirit is actually a translation from the Hebrew which means “Holy wind”, “Breath of the Holies”, or “Holy Breath”. The same premise holds with other spirits and demonic beings. I wondered if Jesus was saying “hey, did you expect to see a ghost?”

Yeah, I know. That makes no sense whatsoever.

Then the Lord impressed on me to find the meaning of wind in Vine's. So, that is what I did. Here is the contribution of Vine's to the subject:

WIND (Noun)

(/, 417), besides its literal meaning, is used metaphorically in Eph. 4:14, of variable teaching. In Matt. 24:31 and Mark 13:27 the four "winds" stand for the four cardinal points of the compass; so in Rev. 7:1, "the four winds of the earth" (cf. Jer. 49:36; Dan. 7:2); the contexts indicate that these are connected with the execution of divine judgments. Deissmann (0-\$) and Moulton and Milligan (F!) illustrate the phrase from the papyri.

(, 4157), "a blowing, blast" (akin to , "to blow"), is used of the rushing wind at Pentecost, Acts 2:2. See BREATH. 3. \$ (, 4151) is translated "wind" in John 3:8 (RV, marg., "the Spirit breatheth," the probable meaning); in Heb. 1:7 the RV has "winds" for KJV, "spirits." See SPIRIT. Notes: (1) For , "to blow" ("wind" in Acts 27:40), see BLOW, No. 1. (2) For , Jas. 1:6, "driven by the wind," see DRIVE, No. 5.¶ WIND (Verb) 1. (!, 1210), "to bind," is translated "wound (it in linen clothes)," John 19:40, KJV, of the body of Christ (RV, "bound"). See BIND, No. 1, TIE. 2. \$ (!, 4958) is translated "wound ... up" in Acts 5:6 (RV, "wrapped ... round"). See SHORTEN, No. 2, WRAP. 3. (#!, 1750), "to roll in, wind in," is used in Mark 15:46, of "winding" the cloth around the Lord's body, RV, "wound" (KJV, "wrapped").¶ ~~~

Wind is word that is used extensively in the Bible. In such cases, every use will not be documented in the definition of the word. Vine's is a solid example of this, though the same holds true for all such resources. So, what the authors try to do is isolate broad examples of each use, and leave it to the reader and the Lord to show where their particular question fits in.

In our case, we see the Luke chapter seven is not listed in Vine's. Yet, the word is still used. So, we have to rely on the Lord and the context of the passages to set the meaning. Here is what Jesus was actually saying to those that were asking of John the Baptist:

“What exactly did you think you would find - some guy that is moved by empty and false doctrine?”

Remember who we are talking about. Jesus is speaking of John the Baptist. He was a hard man that pulled no punches. His fame was spreading, and people could not believe what they were hearing. Nobody was speaking the way that John spoke, and certainly not about the powers to be. People sought John out half expecting to find that the rumors were false.

They thought the stories of John were an embellishment, because NOBODY did the things John did, and spoke the way John spoke. It simply was not done if you valued your life.

Jesus flat out asked them if they thought they would find a soft man, saying soft things. That was exactly what many thought they would find when they saw the man and separated rumor from fact. After all, the stories are always bigger than the truth.

Remember the “soft man” remark - it will come into play in a moment.

We now have a shifting understanding of this conversation. We started out with three elements - those in king's courts, weeds blown by the wind, and prophets. The three made no sense when taken together as we see them in English translations of the Bible. Now, we are seeing a different picture emerge.

Here is what we have now:

Those that are in king's courts.

Those that are easily moved be false doctrines.

Prophets.

It is a safe bet that we may have missed something in the translation from the original Greek on the first example. I say that as the last two match a pattern. They speak to issues of faith and matters of God - false doctrines and prophets. What is the old song - one of these things is not like the others? Absolutely right.

The issue here was not the original Greek, as I have resources that draw on the Alexandrian text, the Majority text, the Received text, and the critical text. They all bear out the exact same original language. The issue becomes the understanding of men when trying to match up an unfamiliar Greek concept to familiar English concept. Actually, it is more accurate to say that it comes when trying to match up an unfamiliar Hebrew concept to a familiar English concept - via the Greek language! In Luke chapter seven that is exactly what we have.

It is worth noting that it has not been until the 20th century that the Lord began to really open up the Hebrew aspects of our Christian faith. There are many scriptures which cause us to scratch our heads. However, when the Hebrew understanding behind what was said comes to light the scripture finally makes sense. That is the case here as well. It is also the key piece to the difference between the robes and raiment in Revelation.

So, the question is this. Was Jesus actually talking about men that were in the courts of king's, or was He speaking of something else that the western mind has missed?

Consider this. When these words were spoken, it was at a time when there was no Jewish monarchy. Only a small portion of what was once the Israel had a "king" - and he was nothing more than a puppet of Rome. The line of David was no longer in power.

There was no traditional Jewish court in Jerusalem as there had once been. Not only that, but what the western minds understood as a “court” never existed in Israel.

In the monarchies of Europe, the courts of the various nations consisted of noble lords that had a blood tie to the monarch. Not every lord was related by blood to the king or queen. Instead, there would be a collection of powerful families to which each noble could trace their lineage to. So, each family or bloodline would endeavor to secure power. When your family came to the throne, it was a good bet you would be summoned to court, and required to serve as a member. Any noble lord could be called for any purpose, and indeed they were. But, the common understanding of court where the courtiers were present on a daily basis is drawn from this premise. Also, as time would go on, the courtiers would be drawn from the two or three most powerful families, as the adage “keep your enemies close” played out in living color. Even then, to be a member of the court required a blood admission.

In ancient Israel, there were no Lord’s as there were in the western world. There were powerful families, families that owned land, hereditary title that passed through the generations. Yet, it was not what we would see in Europe. The kings of Israel were typically surrounded by some family, but also by the “best and most qualified” for the task at hand. It would be a court, but not quite what the western translators of the English Bible would have imagined when they set about their work. This becomes critical to understanding how they missed what they missed. The court in Israel was less about blood, and more about ability (or it started that way, anyhow).

Here is where the problem starts.

When you look at Luke 7:24-28, the English translation speaks to royalty and royal courts because the original Greek seems to do the same. Here is the problem. When the original Greek speaks to royalty in ancient Israel, it is not speaking in terms of western royalty. It is speaking in terms of a kingdom well above any other on earth.

However, by the time we started to get English translations of the Bible, a working understanding of what the Jewish authors - in Israel - were referencing had long since vanished from the knowledge base of the church.

The key to understanding what Jesus was saying can be found in several words from the text.

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

Specifically, here is the original Greek for each:

Soft raiment - μαλακοῖς ἱματίοις - Strong's 3120 and 2440.

Gorgeously apparelled - ἱματισμῷ ἐνδόξῳ - Strong's 2441 and 1741.

Live delicately - τρυφῇ ὑπάρχοντες - Strong's 5172 and 5225.

King's courts - βασιλείοις, ον - Strong's 933 and 934.

Now, let's examine the meanings for each (since we covered the forms of himation earlier, we will leave them out now):

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 3120: μαλακός

μαλακός, μαλακή, μαλακον, soft; soft to the touch: ἱμάτια, Matthew 11:8 R G L brackets; Luke 7:25 (ἱματίων πολυτελῶν καὶ μαλακων, Artemidorus Daldianus, oneir. 1, 78; ἔσθής, Homer, Odyssey 23, 290; Artemidorus Daldianus, oneir. 2, 3; χιτῶν, Homer, Iliad 2, 42); and simply τὰ μαλακά, soft raiment (see λευκός, 1): Matthew 11:8 T Tr WH. Like the

Latin *mollis*, metaphorically, and in a bad sense: effeminate, of a catamite, a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness, 1 Corinthians 6:9 (Dionysius Halicarnassus, Antiquities 7, 2 under the end; ((Diogenes Laërtius 7, 173 at the end)).

Strong's Concordance

endoxos: held in honor, glorious

Original Word: ἔνδοξος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: endoxos

Phonetic Spelling: (en'-dox-os)

Short Definition: highly esteemed, splendid, glorious

Definition: highly esteemed, splendid, glorious.

HELPS Word-studies

1741 *éndoksos* (from the prefix, 1722 */en*, "engaged *in*," which intensifies 1391 */dóksa* ("glory, *inherent worth*") – properly, "in glory," expressing the *dignity* (exalted status) of something and *viewed "in a state of high honor and repute"* (A-S).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1741: ἔνδοξος

ἔνδοξος, ἔνδοξον (δόξα), held in good or in great esteem, of high repute;

1. illustrious, honorable, esteemed (Xenophon, Plato, and following): 1 Corinthians 4:10 (thus in the Sept. for 1 ,תָּבָבָ Samuel 9:6; 1 Samuel 22:14; Isaiah 23:8, etc.; Sir. 11:6 Sir. 44:1, etc.).
2. notable, glorious: τὰ ἑνδοξά, wonderful deeds (A. V. glorious things), Luke 13:17; (for τολῶν, Exodus 34:10).
3. splendid: of clothing (A. V. gorgeous), Luke 7:25; figuratively equivalent to free from sin, Ephesians 5:27.

STRONGS NT 5172: τρυφή

τρυφή, τρυφῆς, ἡ (from φρύπτω to break down, enervate; passive and middle to live softly and delicately), softness, effeminacy, luxurious living: Luke 7:25; 2 Peter 2:13. (Euripides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, and following; the Sept..)

truphé: softness, daintiness, luxuriousness

Original Word: τρυφή, ῆς, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: truphé

Phonetic Spelling: (troo-fay')

Short Definition: effeminate luxury

Definition: effeminate luxury, softness, indulgent living.

HELPS Word-studies

5172 *tryphḗ* (from *thryptō*, "to break down due to over-indulgence, i.e. living in excessive luxury") – properly, *feebleness* brought on by self-indulgence (luxury); (figuratively) moral and spiritual breakdown ("enfeeblement") from over-indulging in dainty ("delicate") things, i.e. "dainty living" that deteriorates soul and body.

STRONGS NT 5225: ὑπάρχω

ὑπάρχω; imperfect ὑπῆρχον;

properly, to begin below, to make a beginning; universally, to begin; (Homer, Aeschylus, Herodotus, and following).

to come forth, hence, to be there, be ready, be at hand (Aeschylus, Herodotus, Pindar, and following): universally, and simply, Acts 19:40 (cf. Buttman, § 151, 29 note); Acts 27:12, 21; ἐν τίνι, to be found in one, Acts 28:18; with a dative of the person ὑπάρχει μοι τί, something is mine, I have something: Acts 3:6; Acts 4:37; Acts 28:7; 2 Peter 1:8 (where Lachmann παρόντα; Sir. 20:16; Proverbs 17:17; Job 2:4, etc.); τὰ ὑπάρχοντα τίνι, one's substance, one's property, Luke 8:3; Luke 12:15 L text T Tr WH; Acts 4:32 (Genesis 31:18; Tobit 4:8; Dio C. 38, 40); also τὰ ὑπάρχοντα τίνος, Matthew 19:21; Matthew 24:47; Matthew 25:14; Luke 11:21; Luke 12:15 R G L marginal reading, 33, 44 (here L marginal reading T marginal reading the dative); ; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Hebrews 10:34 (often in the Sept. for כִּשְׁלִי, כִּשְׁלִי, כִּשְׁלִי; Sir. 41:1; Tobit 1:20, etc.); τὰ ἰδίᾳ ὑπαρξοντα, Polybius 4,3, 1).

to be, with a predicate nominative (as often in Attic) (cf. Buttman, § 144, 14, 15 a., 18; Winer's Grammar, 350 (328)): as ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς ὑπῆρχεν, Luke 8:41; add, Luke 9:48; Acts 7:55; Acts 8:16; Acts 16:3; Acts 19:36; Acts 21:20; 1 Corinthians 7:26; 1 Corinthians 12:22; James 2:15; 2 Peter 3:11; the participle with a predicate nominative, being i. e. who is etc., since or although he etc. is: Luke 16:14; Luke 23:50; Acts 2:30; Acts 3:2; Acts 14:8 Rec.; ; (); Romans 4:19; 1 Corinthians 11:7; 2 Corinthians 8:17; 2

Corinthians 12:16; Galatians 1:14; Galatians 2:14; plural, Luke 11:13; Acts 16:20, 37; Acts 17:29; 2 Peter 2:19. ὑπάρχειν followed by ἐν with a dative of the thing, to be contained in, Acts 10:12; to be in a place, Philippians 3:20; in some state, Luke 16:23; ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τίνος, to be left in one's power or disposal, Acts 5:4; ἐν ἱματισμῷ ἐνδόξῳ καὶ τρυφῇ, to be gorgeously apparelled and to live delicately, Luke 7:25; ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχειν, to be in the form of God (see μορφή), Philippians 2:6 (here R. V. marginal reading Gr. being originally (?; yet cf. 1 Corinthians 11:7)); followed by ἐν with a dative plural of the person, among, Acts 4:34 R G; 1 Corinthians 11:18. μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνός ... ὑπάρχοντα, Acts 17:27; πρὸς τῆς σωτηρίας, to be conducive to safety, Acts 27:34. (Compare: προὑπάρχω.)

Strong's Concordance

basileios: royal

Original Word: βασιλῆιος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: basileios

Phonetic Spelling: (bas-il'-i-os)

Short Definition: courtiers, palaces, a body of kings, royal

Definition: courtiers, palaces, a body of kings, royal.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 934 *basíleios* – properly, *kingly*, *royal*. See 932 (*basileia*).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 934: βασιλειος

βασιλειος (rarely βασιλεία), βασιλειον, royal, kingly, regal:1 Peter 2:9. As a substantive, τό βασιλειον (Xenophon, Cyril 2, 4, 3; Proverbs 18:19, the Sept.; Josephus, Antiquities 6, 12, 4), and much more often (from Herodotus 1, 30 down) in plural τά βασιλεία (the Sept. Esther 1:9, etc.), the royal palace: Luke 7:25 (A. V. "kings courts). ~~~

As with everything in this study, there is a lot to digest here. What we are seeing are definitions that seem to indicate royalty from a western mindset - hence the translations to English that reflect such. Yet, none of these definitions are a clear cut indication of exactly the western mindset of royal understanding. It was the best interpretation by far, until the Hebrew origins of the faith began to open up.

For example, the word for soft does indeed mean soft, as in soft cloth. Perhaps that is why it is translated as such most times. However, appareled seems to open the possibility of something more than simply wearing a garment, albeit is a really nice one. We see indications of garments that denote rank or position, garments that show who a person is simply by wearing them.

Live delicately appears to indicate more than a soft man. It also indicates a moral breakdown in the fabric of the life lived. It has an application to a position in life that has been corrupted. Think of it in terms of the members of an institution once revered for its moral honor, now fallen from its once lofty position. The meaning of the word for live speaks to more than just physical life. It speaks to existence in that life. It is more accurately translated "to exist and operate daily in a state of decayed honor".

The wording for those in the courts of the palace is curious. Depending on the original text used, the exact same word is given for Strong's 933 or 934. This shows the conflict

with which the translators wrestled when trying to ascribe the best western definition for the original Greek word shown - which is the exact same word in all the texts. This gives us a good rule of thumb. When you see the same Greek or Hebrew word translated differently, with slight differences in the definition of the word, it is an indication that there may be something more than meets the eye in the text. That is exactly what we have here.

In the definition for 933, we have an indication of a more generic palace or royal residence (not included above, but easy to verify). It would speak more to the palace or residences of a Lord or other high official, but not necessarily the king himself. In 934, we have a greater emphasis on the kingly nature of the structure. Yet, in 934 we do not have an emphasis on the king himself. It is akin to “the palace of the king, yet the king is not there”.

In both 933 and 934, the king himself is strangely absent from the understanding, given that there are similar words that can be used to communicate the “palace of the king, with the king in residence”. Perhaps, what we have in 934 can be better given as “that which belongs to the king”.

Then something in 934 caught my eye.

basileios: royal

Original Word: βασιλειος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: basileios

Phonetic Spelling: (bas-il'-i-os)

Short Definition: courtiers, palaces, **a body of kings**, royal

Definition: courtiers, palaces, **a body of kings**, royal. ~~~

Now this was starting to make sense. I was seeing something, or I should say that the Lord was showing me something. Now, the difference between robes and raiment was making a great deal more sense. Not only that, but now I could see the connection to other scriptures. There would be one final confirmation of this. When I was nearing the end of this study and had hit the wall, the Lord gave me one final instruction on where to go for answers. It was in that piece of information that the truth fully emerged. Let's take a moment and bring in Vine's. However, let's do this for something we have not yet discussed - yet the Lord clearly wanted to tie into this study - the word "Temple" in the original Hebrew:

TEMPLE

(', 1964), "**palace; temple.**" This word is indirectly derived from the Sumerian, "large house, palace," and more directly from the Akkadian \$, "large house." The influence of the Akkadian \$ spread to the Northwest Semitic languages. In post-biblical Hebrew the meaning became limited to "temple." The B) ("Temple of Solomon") in modern Jerusalem signifies the building of Israel's chief rabbinate, in absence of the temple. The word occurs 78 times from First Samuel to Malachi, most frequently in Ezekiel. The first usage pertains to the tabernacle at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:9).

The word "palace" in English versions may have one of three Hebrew words behind it: , or ! The Sumero-Akkadian meaning "palace" for is still to be found in biblical Hebrew. The with its 15 usages as "palace" refers to the palaces of Ahab (1 Kings 21:1), of the king of Babylon (2 Kings 20:18), and of Nineveh (Nah. 2:6). The "palace" was luxuriously decorated and the residents enjoyed the fulfillment of their pleasures; cf.: "And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in

their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged” (Isa. 13:22). The psalmist compared beautiful girls to fine pillars in an ornate “palace”: “... That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace” (Ps. 144:12).

Amos prophesied that the “songs of the palace” (KJV, “temple”) were to turn to wailing at the destruction of the northern kingdom (Amos 8:3, NASB). B with the meaning “temple” is generally clarified in the context by two markers that follow. The first marker is the addition “of the Lord”: “And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel” (Ezra 3:10). The second marker is a form of the word %, “holy”: “O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps” (Ps. 79:1). Sometimes the definite article suffices to identify the “temple in Jerusalem”: “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (Isa. 6:1), especially in a section dealing with the “temple” (Ezek. 41).

The Old Testament also speaks about the heavenly , the of God. It is difficult to decide on a translation, whether “palace” or “temple.” Most versions opt in favor of the “temple” idea: “Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord God be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple” (Mic. 1:2; cf. Ps. 5:7; 11:4; Hab. 2:20). “In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears” (2 Sam. 22:7). **However, since Scripture portrays the presence of the royal judgment throne in heaven, it is not altogether impossible that the original authors had a royal “palace” in mind. The imagery of the throne, the “palace,” and judgment seems to lie behind Ps. 11:4-5.** “The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the

righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.” **The Septuagint has the words (“temple”) and (“house; palace; dwelling; household”).**

What a bombshell! This was the final piece of the puzzle on Luke 7:25, and the differences between robes, raiment, and why they are worn by the different parties.

This gives the connection on why the interpreters went with a Gentile understanding of royalty, as opposed to the Lord’s definition. There were things they did not understand about a nation that no longer existed on earth. The Temple was God’s palace on earth, and the order of the priests were the members of the court. You even had to be connected by blood to the tribe of Levi to serve as a priest. More on this in a moment.

Get ready friends - scripture is about to open up, and you will never look at Revelation or the rapture the same way again.

Let’s bring something back in that we said earlier:

We now have a shifting understanding of this conversation. We started out with three elements - those in king’s courts, weeds blown by the wind, and prophets. The three made no sense when taken together as we see them in English translations of the Bible. Now, we are seeing a different picture emerge.

Here is what we have now:

Those that are in king’s courts.

Those that are easily moved be false doctrines.

Prophets.

It is a safe bet that we may have missed something in the translation from the original Greek on the first example. I say that as the last two match a pattern. They speak to issues of faith and matters of God - false doctrines and prophets. What is the old song - one of these things is not like the others? Absolutely right.

Now we have the first piece of the puzzle. Jesus wasn't asking if the people expected to see a member of the royal court when they went to find John in the wilderness.

He was asking if they were expecting to find a priest! Here is what we actually have when translated with the full context of the times and location - ancient Israel, speaking to Jews seeking the Messiah:

A priest of God's Temple.

Those that are easily moved be false doctrines.

Prophets.

Now this makes sense! It had been 400 years since the last prophet walked the earth. Malachi had declared that Elijah would come before the Messiah and make His way ready. In these three questions exist the totality of what Jews would have wondered, and what they thought Elijah would come as - a priest or a prophet. Still others expected to find yet another empty promise - another false desert prophet leading the people astray!

This now explains the difference between the robes and raiment. Notice that Jesus attaches raiment to the priesthood. Why?

Raiment and clothing are both forms of the same Greek word - **himation, Strong's 2440**. We detailed the meaning of the word earlier. In either form (himation or clothing), the word is used over 30 times in the Bible. However, the word for himation is

used only 13 times, with three of those being ἱματίους, which is what brought us to Luke chapter seven in the first place. These three occurrences are Luke 7:25, Revelation 3:5 and 4:4.

I took a look at Strong's to see where the 13 uses for raiment were found. This will blow your mind!

Matthew 11:8, 17:2, 27:31

Mark 9:3

Luke 7:25, 9:29, 23:34

John 19:24

Acts 18:6, 22:20

Revelation 3:5, 3:18, 4:4

Every last one of these examples are tied DIRECTLY to the raiment worn by Christ, or the Kingdom of Priests!

Only Luke 7:25 is not directly tied to either. Instead, it serves as the prophetic key to understanding what is revealed in Revelation regarding the multitude in chapter five. Get ready for it - that multitude is the very Kingdom of Priests that the Bible calls the overcoming Bride of Christ!

Exodus 19:5-6 ESV - Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV - 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Revelation 1:4-6 ESV - Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen

Understand that if it was simply a matter of clothing, then “garments” or other forms of himation could have been used by Christ. However, there are no accidental words in the Bible. Why raiment? What was different between raiment and robes? You may recall that earlier we made a statement about a “soft man”, and that we would get back to that statement later? Here is where this come into play.

When you go back to the definitions and descriptions of robes and raiment, you will see that raiment is a garment that is more akin to a long shirt, whereas robes are more akin to an outer coat. Both can be an outer garment, yet the raiment does not have to be. Just as we would expect an outer coat to be a lesser softness than our shirt, we would expect our shirts to be softer and more comfortable to wear.

Especially if we had to perform long, tiring and physical work in it - and it was to be worn next to the skin. Now comes the rest of the story.

When you were a priest at the Holy Temple, you wore a very specific uniform when you were on duty. It was the four piece white linen garments, which were extremely soft. They were very specifically made in accordance with the Laws of Moses. They were distinctive, and ONLY the order of priests wore them. Upon seeing a priest in the raiment of the office, the Jews would have known instantly who and what the priest was, and the absolute authority of the words they spoke - as the raiment of the office was their writ of the authority of God Himself! You may be seeing the link between what the western translators of the Bible mistook for earthly royalty, and what Jesus was speaking in regards to heavenly royalty in Luke 7.

The priest was an official member of the court of God Himself. In fact, the service of the priest in the Temple - God' Palace - is where we get the more modern understanding of a royal court and serving in that court. The Holy Temple was divided into three parts - the outer court, the inner court, and the Holy of Holies. At the start of the course early on the Sabbath, the priests would cast lots to see who would draw what service during the eight day shift. You were assigned to either the inner court or outer court based on the results of the lottery.

After arriving at the Temple to start your shift, you would ritually prepare and purify yourself for service. You would then dress in the four white linen garments of the priesthood. The lots were drawn and off you went.

The Temple Institute has some tremendous pictures of the daily uniform of the priesthood. It should be noted that as all things on earth are copies of the things in heaven, the pictures will go along way to explain exactly what we be wearing as the Bride of Christ when we are in the service of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now comes the first of several kickers - the High Priest. Make sure you catch what I am about to say.

On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would not wear the Garments of Beauty that he wore during every other official function in the Temple. These garments are what we traditionally think of when we picture the High Priest. The breastplate, ephod, crown, etc. The High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies wearing the same white linen raiment as the other priests.

The same four linen garments that Mary saw Jesus wearing when He came out of the tomb. The same garments that our High Priest was wearing in preparation for His secret ascension to heaven to sprinkle His blood on the instrument and furniture of the Temple. The same garments for which He could not yet be touched, lest He be made unclean.

Now, catch this. For those that continue to declare that the groups of martyrs are the proof that the church goes through the tribulation - I offer you this.

There is only ONE robe that is EVER worn in the Temple. It is worn by the High Priest alone, as a part of the Garments of Beauty! The regular priests NEVER wear a robe during their official duties in the Temple. If you are wearing a white robe in heaven during the tribulation, it means that you were NOT called to the Great Assembly or commissioned into the Kingdom of Priests.

Raiment is used for the description of the garments worn by the on-duty priests as it is the best fit. The outer garment was the signature piece of the uniform, and it resembled a pullover linen dress. It was the primary garment visible to the public, and it was distinctive in its appearance. It could be worn over an undershirt of sorts (akin to a modern T-shirt), or alone next to the skin. It was very soft and considered of fine construction. It had a distinctive checkerboard pattern, and it was instantly recognizable as the rank and status of the man wearing it. Just as the more recognized courts of

Europe had courtiers that wore distinctive jackets that showed their rank and station while at court, so too did the priest at God's Holy Temple.

Now comes the next kicker in this - the robes.

When a priest was not at the Temple during their course (the shift that is on duty to minister to the nation, perform the sacrifices, etc.), they would not wear the raiment of the office. Instead, they had uniforms the same as any other official in the land. It is not even so much a uniform, as it is a garment that shows their rank, status and position as a priest. Must do not realize that priests were not always on duty in the Temple. To the contrary, they would serve on duty just a few times during the year. After that, they would turn to other Temple business. Sometimes it was in Jerusalem, sometimes it was abroad.

A good example of this is the Sanhedrin, or the supreme council in Israel. Every member of the Sanhedrin as a priest. The High Priest presided over the council. The Sanhedrin conducted its business throughout the year. Yet, the on-duty priests could not participate while they were engaged in the Temple rituals. Likewise, a priest could be called to Temple business at any time they were not on active duty.

When a priest was on official business not connected to the active course, they would likewise have robes that would identify them as a member of the Temple. Likewise they would have the white stone that served as an ID card of sorts. The white stone was the "key" to gaining access to the innermost parts of the Temple. It was also the credentials of the priest. If the white stone sounds familiar, it is because we discussed it earlier in this presentation. It is the same white stone spoken of in Revelation chapter two.

The first thing that you must understand is that the robes denoting rank as a priest were **NEVER** worn as part of the on-duty capacity. Only the High Priest wore a robe of any

type during this time. However, that is not the most amazing thing about this. You are about to see something that is going to blow your mind.

At anytime during your term as a priest, and especially during the seven day initiation, if you were disqualified from serving as a priest - the white robe you wore as a member of the priesthood was taken from you. You were in turn given a “dirty” robe. This was a black robe that signifies that you had failed. It was a shame and a disgrace.

Understand that you underwent a vetting process to become a priest in the first place. So, anything that disqualified you from service could ONLY be something that you alone did to merit ejection from the order.

Some things are about to make a great deal of sense.

When you started the process to become a priest, your lineage had to be verified. There must be proof of blood to be admitted to the order of the priests. This lineage was confirmed by finding your name and qualifications in city register in Jerusalem. If your name was not found written in the book, you could not join the priesthood - let alone gain access to the city or Temple. Once you were found written in books of the city, you were called to the seven day assembly at the Temple.

Upon entering the Temple you were given a white stone and a new name. From there, you were ritually dressed in the white raiment. For the next seven days you completed the initiation process. You would watch, learn and take part in the process. At the end of the course seven days later - early on the Sabbath (the course ran Sabbath to Sabbath), you would be confirmed as a priest by the final act. Your name was now recorded in the Temple register, granting you access to the Holy Temple of the Most High God.

After the course went off-duty and the next course went on duty, you would then attend a dinner with all, of your brother in the service of the Lord. On the eighth day all would

dine in the Palace of the Most High God. The following day you would depart the Temple and return home. In all, from the time you were summoned from home to the Temple and returned it would be a total of ten days.

Now, taking this back to the ejection from the priesthood, we can see that the vetting process was very thorough. So, there were no accidents when it came to getting tossed from the order. If you were ejected, it was by your own hand alone that it would happen.

Here is the rest of the story.

When you were stripped of your white robe and given the dirty robe, your name was erased from the books. Not just the Temple register, but the city register as well. You were bound hand and foot, and forcibly removed from the Temple. You were taken to the city gates and thrown into “outer darkness” and the doors were slammed and locked, leaving you “naked” and in darkness.

Let’s bring in a small observation from Vine’s regarding the stole:

Acts 9:39, that is, the close fitting undergarments and the long, flowing outer robes. A person was said to be “naked” (stole), whether he was without clothing, or had thrown off his outer garment, e.g., his stole,

What you are about to read is going to make a lot of sense. In our project on Matthew 24 and the rapture, we detail how Matthew 24 and 25 is not the first the disciples hear of the rapture. That distinction belongs to Luke chapter 17. What we did not cover was this conversation in Matthew 22, though we do cover it in “The Final Warning”. This is the second time that Jesus speaks of the rapture before the Olivet Discourse.

Matthew 22 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants[a] to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’

5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Remember, all scripture has four levels or layers of interpretation. While this does indeed speak of the rejection of Christ by Israel, and taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, it is also a fourth level prophetic reference to the coming wedding of Messiah.

Many are called, but few are chosen!

By now you are seeing the difference between the robes and raiment. There is another aspect that must be addressed here. In the time from the rapture to the second coming, there are a number of aspects of the Law of Moses that will be fulfilled. Among them are the Ten Days of Awe, the daily service at the Temple, the Sabbath cycle, the eight days of the course of the priest just to name a few. Each fulfillment is a cycle unto itself, with all of these things happening at the the same time. Once a particular aspect is fulfilled, it need never be fulfilled again.

Of interest to this discussion is the initiation of the new priests at the Temple, and the eight day course of the priests. Both if these things are fulfilled at the calling of the Kingdom of Priests. By the way, the reason it is called the Kingdom of Priests, and it is only those that are called to the Great Assembly (the rapture) is the sheer number involved. The Kingdom of Priests will consist of 2,000 years of dead believers along with those that are alive and remain. The martyrs of Christ will also rule and reign with Christ, but they are not called to the Kingdom of Priests. Here is why - the Kingdom is the fulfillment of both the eight day course of on-duty priests AND the eight days required to initiate new priests.

Here is the kicker - it is precisely because the Kingdom of Priests are called first that someone can even be martyred in the first place, and not simply perish for eternity having missed the rapture. The Kingdom of Priests will fulfill the seven days that a new priest is required to be at the Temple before Almighty God Himself. In other words, no more need for a full seven days to become a priest of God and Jesus Christ. Because of this, a person can be martyred at ANYTIME during the tribulation, and still end up as a priest.

That is why the Lord distinguishes between robes and raiment. The white raiment is worn by the Kingdom of Priests, who are also the active course of priests in heaven

during the tribulation. The martyrs are the oncoming courses of priests, set to serve for the first time at the actual Third Temple in Jerusalem after the second coming. That is why they are seen in the robes and not the raiment. It is also why the third group of martyrs have yet to receive robes or raiment as of Revelation chapter 21. They will become a future course of priests to be initiated at some point once the millennial reign of Christ is in full swing, after the Third Temple has been cleansed, rededicated and the first Feast of Tabernacles has been celebrated.

With all that we have discussed so far concerning the multitude in Revelation chapter 5, is there any additional evidence that they are the Kingdom of Priests, and that their very presence in chapter five is proof that the rapture has occurred? Is there any proof that their appearance in chapter five is literal, and that they really are there in heaven before the first judgments ever fall?

The answer is a resounding YES!

Let's start by bringing in several blocks of scripture:

Revelation 5:9-10 KJV - And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 11:16-18 KJV - And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Revelation 14:1-3 KJV - And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Revelation 15:2-4 KJV - And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Revelation 19:6-9 KJV - And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

What we have above are examples of the songs and sayings that occur throughout Revelation which narrate the events that are transpiring. Most of us simply read past these songs, regarding them as merely incidental to what is happening. However, this is a tremendous mistake.

By now, you have become quite familiar with something we speak on a regular basis. There are no accidental or errant words in the Bible. Every word, every phrase every saying - even every letter - has significance and was shared for a reason. The songs and sayings are no exception. To the contrary, they reveal some of the most direct evidence of the timing of the tribulation and the rapture.

A full study of the songs and sayings is beyond the scope of this particular study, so we will confine our examination to those things that relate directly to the rapture. Also, these are not the only songs and sayings. However, the things we discuss here with regards to understanding how they reveal prophetic truth holds for all the songs and sayings. With that, let's move forward.

Earlier in the study we spoke on the subject of tense. The tense of a given scripture is critical to revealing timing. The three woes are a prime example. By understanding tense, the three woes become the timing key to understanding that the tribulation is indeed a full seven years, and that the two witnesses are here during the first three and a half years, as opposed to the last three and a half years. This is a case where tense means everything.

Tense is a key component of the songs and sayings as well. It reveals the timing for the things that the song or saying announces. Revelation 11:18 is another good example. It is one of the proofs that the entire tribulation is a time of God's wrath, and not just the last three and a half years, or the last month, week or day as many try to claim. When you see the tense of the songs and sayings, you can determine whether or not what they proclaim is soon to happen, has happened, or is happening as the song is sung. This becomes critical as all three are present in Revelation, and all taken together reveal the full timing of the things to come AFTER the Great Assembly is called.

Let's look again at one block of scripture of particular interest to our current study:

Revelation 5:9-10 KJV - And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Given the premise of this conversation, you may already be seeing the bombshell in these two scriptures. However, let's set the tense of each piece for the record, and leave nothing to assumption. In this song we see the following things:

The Lamb **IS** worthy - present tense.

The Lamb **WAS** slain - past tense.

The multitude **WAS** redeemed - past tense.

*****out of every kindred, blood and nation*****

We **WERE** made kings and priests - past tense.

We **SHALL** reign on the earth -future tense.

Did you catch that? The multitude is WE, and we WERE redeemed, and we HAVE BEEN made kings and priests!

The tense of the first two statements is the proof that the tense for the rest of the two scriptures is correct upon face value, and not some alternate meaning that can be mistaken. Understand that Christ WAS slain, but is NOW worthy. When the scripture says that we were redeemed, and made a Kingdom of Priests (other translations and text have this as the Kingdom of Priests), it is a past tense action, and has already been completed. We have covered this prior. We cannot stand before God as priests in His Temple until AFTER we are perfected. As we see from the groups of martyrs, there is a tense to the wearing of the robes and raiment - and you cannot stand before God until AFTER you are wearing the appropriate attire.

We see from the parables of Jesus that failure to wear the appropriate garments will get you tossed into outer darkness. We see that a priest that does not keep the ways of the Lord will have that garment taken and be left "naked".

We see in Revelation 4:4 that the multitude is already clothed in the white raiment. We see in Revelation 5:11 that the multitude of the angels are also there with the 24 elders

and the living creatures. We see from earlier in this study that we are indeed a part of the angelic host of heaven, as angels or more than just beings living in heaven with halo's, harps and wings!

In other words, we are the multitude, we are redeemed, made perfect, standing before the Throne, clothed in white raiment, singing the song of the redeemed, before the first judgment is ever delivered. . .

And we could not be there if the rapture had not yet occurred!

Remember, the rapture occurred at 4:1 - just one chapter prior. The first official judgment does not come until the next chapter. We are part of the passing of the scroll, which is the instrument that actually BRINGS the tribulation and the judgments. We are not just watching the events of Revelation - we are participating in them, and do so from the very beginning!

We can take this one step further - is there additional proof that the multitude of angels is actually with the 24 elders and the four living creatures, and not a separate occurrence that opens the possibility that they are not singing the song of the redeemed? The answer is yes - and it is found in the very next verses.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Not only do these two verses set the angels, elders and living creatures to the same setting, song and context - they then confirm yet again the overall context of past, present and future. Again we see that the Lamb WAS slain, but NOW is worthy.

At this point, there is more than enough information presented to keep serious Bible students digging for months. When this project is taken with the other core pre-trib rapture defense projects, there can be no remaining doubts as to the truth of the subject.

We will link in the other project pages so that you have a full reference to the material on the rapture defense.

With that, we close this study on John, Angels and Martyrs.

In the name of the Most Blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Here are the links:

<http://tribulationrisingcom.fatcow.com/matthew-24-and-the-rapture/>

<http://tribulationrisingcom.fatcow.com/scriptural-evidence-of-a-pre-tribulation-rapture/>

<http://tribulationrisingcom.fatcow.com/is-the-7th-trumpet-of-revelation-the-last-trump-of-the-rapture/>

<http://tribulationrisingcom.fatcow.com/does-pray-you-are-counted-worthy-to-escape-show-the-rapture/>

<http://tribulationrising.com.fatcow.com/the-rapture-bombshell-in-2-thessalonians/>

Every effort has been made to document each source that was reviewed, consulted and quoted in the production of Tribulation Rising. However, the research for this project extends back for more than 20 years.

It is simply not possible to document every source that contributed to this material.

The bibliographical information presented here represents our best effort to compile as many of the sources as possible. This was an effort that began in earnest once the direction for this project was made known by the Lord.

There are more contributors represented in this material than we have the ability to thank individually. To that end, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of the faithful scholars that have heard the voice of the Lord, and completed the task He placed before them.

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