

It Will be Worth it All!

Four Horsemen and the Coming World Madness – Part VIII

Revelation 7:9-17

Introduction

Have you ever felt like the world around you is getting older, faster than you?

A woman was sitting in the waiting room for her first appointment with her new dentist. She noticed his diploma hanging on the wall and thought she recognized his name. She remembered that a tall, dark-haired boy with the same name had been in her high school class many years ago. Could it be the same guy she had a big crush on back in the fifties? Surely not!

She quickly discarded the thought when she met the balding, grey-haired dentist. After he examined her teeth, she asked, “Did you happen to attend Morgan Park High School?”

He said, “Yes, I did!”

She asked, “When did you graduate?”

He replied, “In 1957.”

She could not believe it. She said to him, “You were in my class!”

“Really?” he asked. Then, looking at her closely, he added, “What class did you teach?”

Everyone ages faster than we do, right?

Van Morris told the story of three sisters, ages 92, 94, and 96, who lived together in the same two-story house. One night, the 96-year-old drew a bath. She got halfway in, then paused and yelled, “Was I getting in the tub or out?”

The 94-year-old hollered back, “I don’t know, I’ll come up and see.”

She started up the stairs, but then stopped halfway up. She yelled, “Was I going up or coming down?”

The 92-year-old was sitting at the kitchen table having tea, listening to her sisters, shaking her head with disbelief. She muttered to herself, “I hope I never get that forgetful,” and she knocked on the wooden table for good measure – you know, “knock on wood”. She then yelled up, “Listen, I’ll come up there and help you both as soon as I see who’s at the door.”ⁱ

Proof that you are getting old is that you did not think this was funny.

I recently read online about the woman with the longest recorded life span. She was interviewed at 120 years of age – Jeanne Calment of Arles, France. In fact, I watched the interview.

This remarkable woman was quite a celebrity. France’s minister of health even attended her 120th birthday party. Medical scientists have researched her life and habits to try to discover secrets to her longevity. This did not offer much help as she smoked moderately until she decided to quit at the age of 117. She loved chocolate and ate about two pounds of chocolate candy a week. She did, however, take vigorous walks and rode her bicycle until the age of 100. A reporter at her birthday party asked her what kind of future she expected, and she replied, “A very short one.” She would live to the age of 122.ⁱⁱ

With seventy-seven million “baby boomers” nearing retirement in America, the desire to slow down the aging process is, no pun intended, booming.

The American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine reports the industry of supplements, home remedies, vitamins, and medicines designed to prevent the decay of the body’s organs, vitality, strength, etc. now bring incredible revenue. Arlene Weintraub, a senior writer for *BusinessWeek’s* science and technology department, reported that in the year 2009 alone, the amount spent by Americans on anti-aging products will reach seventy-nine billion dollars.ⁱⁱⁱ

It is interesting to me to discover, however, that these people who have reached such advanced years are no more secure in their future.

The current oldest living man, a Japanese man who is now 112 years of age, said, “I just don’t want to die.”

Even Jeanne Calment of France told reporters sometime before she died that she felt she had been forgotten by a good God.

At the heart of much of what the human race does to live longer is the motivation, not of a desire to remain as healthy as possible in order to make a continued contribution to life, ministry, the glory of

God, and the advancement of the church and the gospel, but of a sense of dread and a fear of life after death.

USA Today ran an article with the results of a 2007 survey among fifty year olds and up. This survey revealed that 94% of these Americans said they “believed in God” and 82% said they were “religious”. I found it especially interesting that less than half of these believed heaven was an actual, literal place, but instead believed it was merely a state of being.^{iv}

Perhaps the connection between this belief and the seventy-nine billion dollars spent this year to stay young is either willful disbelief or ignorance of the record of scripture.

Life on Earth is a prelude to life that will not end. This is not even the opening chapter – because it is not long enough compared to eternal life. It is barely the opening line.

For the believer, the only part of our biography of everlasting life that has any sorrow, pain, difficulty, challenge, or heartache is a word or two at the beginning – and then the rest is incredible, unspeakable, unimaginable glory.

The apostle Peter wrote,

In this you greatly rejoice . . .

so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ

(I Peter 1:6-7)

The hymn writer put it well when he wrote,

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus;

Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ;

One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,

So bravely run the race till we see Christ.

Peter wrote that our testing time will be turned into praise and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, so let us turn to the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ and see this literally played out in the lives of millions of people who have died and gone to heaven – which happens to be, by the way, an actual, real, literal place!

A Great Multitude in Heaven during the Great Tribulation

In Revelation chapter 7, verse 9, we read,

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . .

Questions about the great multitude

Now, immediately upon reading this text our minds race with several questions. Let me ask and answer three of them.

1. First, where did this vast number of people come from?

Look at the middle of verse 14 where John is clearly given the answer to this question.

. . . These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation . . .

The term, “Great Tribulation” was coined by Christ Himself as He described this eschatological period of divine wrath in Matthew 24. He used the phrase “great tribulation,” in Matthew 24:21, to refer to the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week.

This is the final 3½ years of the Tribulation period – the last half – when disaster and persecution rise to unprecedented levels of horror and devastation.^v

To identify these people as the saved of all time, or the saved church, would be to ignore the definitive vocabulary of John’s own words, as he says – “These are the ones who come out of *the* – definite article – great tribulation . . .”

This is not just “great tribulation,” which the church has suffered over the centuries, but “*the* Great Tribulation” – which is an eschatological term for the last week of Daniel’s prophetic vision.^{vi}

These are they who come out of the Great Tribulation.

In fact, the original language uses a present participle that is translated in our English Bibles, in verse 14, “who come out” – “These are the ones who come out”. So, it can literally be translated, “These are the ones who are presently coming out of the Great Tribulation”.

In other words, the early vision of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who are preaching on Earth is occurring simultaneously with this vision of all these

believers, now literally pouring into heaven, who have just died on Earth.

Imagine this scene. As John is watching, the number of people entering heaven is actually growing. Like people streaming through the gates into a football stadium, these people keep coming.

Ladies and gentlemen,

. . . to be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:8)

There is no intermediate purgatory in which we have our sins judged and paid for in the flame before entering heaven. There is no soul sleep where we wait in limbo until a further summons. There is no waiting in the grave until the resurrection. The body waits as if it was asleep, but the spirit immediately goes to be with the Lord.

These people have come from Earth – and from the period of time known as *the* Great Tribulation.

2. Secondly, who are these people?

Notice as John specifically identifies these saints, in verse 9b, as coming from every:

- **nation** – this is the word is “ethnos” (ἔθνος), which refers to an ethnic body of people united by culture and common tradition;
- **tribe** – this refers to the same family line or clan;
- **people** – a word that refers to race;
- **language** – this is the word “glossa” (γλῶσσα), which refers to every group of people distinguished by a language.

Do not miss the fact that this is an amazing revelation of the grace of God.

While all the terrible things are happening on the Earth as the seals are opened and the scroll unrolled and the wrath of God poured out, millions of people are crying out to be hidden by the rocks; to be hidden from,

. . . Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16)

In other words, “Hide me from God!”

However, from this scene in Revelation 7, we learn that at the same time, millions more are praying in faith to receive the Lamb of God as their own Savior.

God could have easily said, “It’s too late! No way! I’ve had enough! That’s it! No more people will receive My mercy and saving grace. From here on out, it’s wrath and judgment alone.”

This is not the case, however, for John is watching as millions pour into the royal court of almighty God.

The apostle John even implies his surprise as he writes in the opening line of verse 9,

. . . I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count . . .

In other words, “Would you look at that . . .?!”

This leads to another question.

3. Thirdly, why are so many people saved during the Tribulation?

It is amazing to see so many people coming to Christ in our generation, but it is nothing compared to this.

Our media ministry, *Wisdom for the Heart*, as I have learned in recent days – in fact, was shown data from our internet site – now has 8,000 to 10,000 podcasts of sermons every week, representing more than thirty countries. I looked at the list of counties to see Vietnam, Japan, the Arab States, Kazakhstan, France, the Philippines, and many others. We do not know who the people are, as they usually log on and download a sermon and that is all. There is no further information gleaned from this free resource other than the sense that the gospel is going to places of which we never dreamed. Perhaps some of these people, who are now hearing the gospel for the first time, will receive Christ after the rapture.

I have always been challenged by J. Vernon McGee’s personal desire. Do you know who he is? He takes people on a “Bible bus” through the Bible in one year. All I can say is his bus is moving faster than mine – I think we are riding a tortoise! McGee’s desire was for *Thru the Bible Radio* to be broadcasting throughout the Tribulation period as an aid to the gospel witness and a part of this vast harvest.

Can you imagine 144,000 spirit-empowered evangelists/missionaries using every possible technology available to spread the gospel around the world – and the vast harvest that will come about as a result? This is a portion of the harvest that is visible to John before the throne of God, wearing white robes and singing praise!

However, why are there so many?

One author provoked my thinking when he said that God got the attention of these people much like a flight attendant on an airplane.

I have been there many times. In fact, tomorrow evening I am flying to England and will sit and

maybe watch the attendant go through the motions about the seat belt, the air mask that drops down, the cushion on which I am sitting that is designed to serve as a flotation device – which makes sense because it certainly was not designed for comfort. I will not be in first class, in case you are wondering, but will be back with the cattle.

During flight attendants' presentations, I have looked around at businessmen reading their newspapers, couples talking to each other – no one pulls out the plastic card to look at the details. Why? Because most people do not believe their plane will crash and the rest of the people do not want to think about it. So, maybe the best way to not think about it is to ignore the flight attendant.

“There really is no personal creator God with sovereign control over the planet; there really is no God of wrath who will judge the world, so why bother with the instruction card called Revelation that tells us it will all come true? Who cares?!”

Then, however, flaming asteroids begin streaking toward the planet like burning torches; the sun goes dark and the moon turns blood red; earthquakes shake the planet; diseases have already turned into epidemics killing millions of people; famine is sweeping the world and nearly everyone around seems to be dying. “Where is that instruction card?!”

People will no longer be casual about God – or the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. God will not be an ignored Sovereign anymore.^{vii}

People will either cry out to hide from Him or cry out to hide in Him.

Then, would you believe – God in His unbelievable grace will allow millions to turn to His word, read the instructions, and as they die, either in the devastations hitting planet Earth or as martyrs for having believed, pour into the gates of heaven.

You might say, “This doesn't seem right. We believe now and get eternal life, and these people catch on in the last hour and receive the same gift of everlasting life as we do.”

Do you remember the parable of the generous landowner that our Lord mentioned in Matthew 20? The landowner hired workers at the early part of the day, and then hired workers in the middle of the day, and even hired workers at the very end of the day – and paid them all the same.

This was an illustration, among other things, of God's grace and generosity to those who enter the kingdom. Those who come early and those who come late receive the same benefit of everlasting life.

These people are all completely forgiven. They are all received without disclaimers or addendums or penalties into the joy of heaven.

Observations of the great multitude

Let us make several observations of these believers from this joyful scene.

1. **First, notice what these people are wearing.**

The middle part of Revelation 7:9 informs us that these believers are,

... clothed in white robes ...

White robes stand for purity. These people have been forgiven. Their scarlet-stained lives are washed white as wool – as this pictures them in their white robes.

White robes also represent victory. Roman generals would wear white clothing as they rode into their capital city following victory in a battle. It was the color of conquerors. It was not the color of the soiled, mud-caked clothing of armies that lay defeated in the dirt. It was the color of the clothing of victors.

Note, ladies and gentlemen, these people do not arrive in the presence of God weary, battered, worn out, discouraged. Oh no! They are victorious.^{viii}

These believers may have been cut down by an executioner, but they are actually the victors. They have, through Christ, conquered death, and now stand awaiting the final resurrection, singing praise to God.

In verse 14, John adds the detail that,

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

The idea of making something white by washing it in blood seems paradoxical and even somewhat shocking. Not, however, to those with an Old Testament background – when such washing denoted spiritual purity through the sacrifice of a Lamb.^{ix}

Keep in mind as well that when we think of shedding blood, we immediately think of death. The Jewish people immediately thought of life. The life is in the blood (Genesis 9:4).

When the New Testament speaks about the blood of Jesus Christ, it means not only His death, but His life and death. The blood of Christ stands for all Christ did for us and means to us in His life and death.^x

This text could be expanded and understood to say, “These saints have washed their garments white and have become pure and victorious because they

have washed them in the totality of Jesus Christ – both in the shedding of His blood as the sinless Lamb of God and in the perfection of His deity and life as God the Son who lived and died and lives again forevermore.”

So, these people stand in their pure garments, victorious over death and sin and Satan.

2. Secondly, notice what these saints are holding.

At the end of verse 9, we are told these people are holding,

. . . palm branches . . . in their hands

These saints are waving palm branches before the throne of God.

You may remember that this also happened when Jesus Christ rode into the city of Jerusalem. The people took palm branches and went out and waved them at Christ as He entered the city (John 12).

This created quite a stir. Why? Because waving palm branches before someone was an activity reserved for royalty. This was only done for kings.

The Jewish people in Jerusalem on this day were recognizing the One they believed would establish His Messianic kingdom and rule over them. They were declaring their King had come. This is the reason they shouted,

. . . “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.” (John 12:13)

In other words, “Here comes the King!”

However, the same people would later reject Him, and He, according to divine plan, would suffer as the Passover Lamb.

In Revelation 7, we see the Lamb again. This time, untold millions are waving palm branches before the throne of God the Father and His Son, the Lamb.

3. Thirdly, notice what this multitude is saying.

Look at verse 10.

And they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

This is all about Him.

a. These saints praise Him, first, for His great salvation.

As we read in Ephesians 2:8-9,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

not of works lest any man should boast.

Salvation belongs to our God.

Do you hear anyone boasting of their deeds in this scene? Do you see anyone before this throne admiring their own efforts to earn their ticket in?

No! These believers are praising God for His great plan of salvation.

The writer of Hebrews urgently wrote,

How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? . . . (Hebrews 2:3)

This is the only way in!

This is the only way out!

This is the only way up!

God alone created the plan of salvation. God alone offers the gift of salvation. God alone grants the faith for salvation. God alone receives the praise for His great salvation.

b. These believers praise Him, secondly, for His global sovereignty.

The song of this multitude goes on in verse 10,

. . . “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne . . .”

There is no question about it; there is no debating it, God alone sits upon the throne of the heavens and He alone rules His universe as Sovereign.

These believers praise Him for His great salvation and for His global sovereignty.

c. These saints praise Him, thirdly, for His gracious sacrifice.

The song of this great multitude continues further in verse 10,

. . . “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

There He stands, the Lamb, as pictured in Revelation chapter 5 – bearing in His glorified body the wounds of crucifixion. Our Lord’s own presentation in the upper room to Thomas pictured this for us (John 20). He showed him the nail prints retained in His hands and feet, and perhaps even cuts on His forehead from the makeshift crown of thorns used by the human race to mock His claim to divine royalty.

There He stands, and millions of redeemed can do nothing but shout over and over again,

. . . “*Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.*”

. . . “*Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.*”

The seven-fold angelic doxology

This is such a moving sight and filled with such wonder that the angels are swept up in it and fall down before the throne. Notice verses 11-12a.

And all the angles were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they [the angels] fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

Saying, “Amen . . .”

These angels get so swept up that they cannot help but shout, “Amen!”

They must be Baptist angels!

This is the only doxology in the Bible that begins and ends with the word “amen”. It means, “This is the truth!”

The angels effectively add their testimony to their creator God in this seven-fold angelic doxology.

This is a seven-fold doxology whereby the angels reinforce the worship of the saints by quoting from the résumé of God. They chant, “This is the truth...”

1. He is worthy of *eulogia* (εὐλογία) – this is “blessing” – from which we get our word “eulogy,” which means, “to speak well of someone”. We usually reserve a eulogy for someone after they have died. Often eulogies are nothing more than carefully worded lies. However, not this eulogy – the well-speaking offered to the living God – He is worthy of all commendation and praise.
2. He is worthy of *doxa* (δοξα) – the glory derived from a good reputation;
3. He is worthy of all *sophia* (σοφία) – wisdom which is embodied in our God;
4. He is worthy of *eucharistia* (ευχαριστία) – gratitude and thanksgiving;
5. He is worthy of *time* (τιμη) – great esteem;
6. He is worthy of *dunamis* (δυναμις) – power to act independently of anyone but His triune counsel;
7. He is worthy of *ischus* (ισχυς) – strength throughout history – part of His divine résumé

of attributes – His will is accomplished by His divine strength.^{xi}

For how long is our God worthy of all this – for a month, or a year, or even a century? No, John writes,

. . . *forever and ever . . .*

In other words, God is worthy of this without end.

. . . *Amen.*

This is the truth!

Conversation with an elder

At this point, an interesting conversation has begun between John and a believer. This believer is an elder, who, as I have explained earlier, represents the church, raptured to heaven prior to the Tribulation. This elder is emphasizing to John the importance of recognizing who these white robed saints are. He asks John, in Revelation 7:13b,

. . . “*who are they, and where have they come from?*”

We read John’s answer in verse 14a.

I said to him, “My lord, you know.” . . .

In other words, “I don’t know who they are. My lord, you know!”

By the way, John was not ascribing deity to this man. This was simply a polite way of addressing someone, like we would do today by saying, “Sir.” This is the way Mary referred to Christ after His resurrection – as “Sir” (John 20).

People from the South understand this. People from the North who move to the South have to learn their manners.

In the South, we say, “Yes, sir,” and “Yes, ma’am.” Right? Northerners say, “Yep.” What are they doing – driving horses?

The proper way to respond, according to the Bible, is “Yes, sir.” Right???

I am speaking to an audience of northerners transplanted to the South. How many moved here from the North? Are you glad to be here?

“Yep.”

Ah, the things I suffer.

“Sir, you know the answer,” John responds.

The elder knew the answer, but this was his way of opening the conversation to clarify for John, and us, that these were not members of the church, already raptured. These were believers who had been saved and then died sometime during the Tribulation.

The joys of heaven

Now these believers are enjoying heaven. The joys of heaven are seen as two-fold.

1. First, these believers are sheltered by their Sovereign.

Look at Revelation 7:15b.

... and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

They are safe! They are forever secure in His dwelling place.

2. Secondly, they are satisfied by their Shepherd.

Continue to verse 16.

They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat

This verse, many believe, is a reference to the fourth bowl that will be poured out, causing intense heat from the sun. Perhaps it is a reference, some believe, to the martyrdom of these believers – being forced out into the scorching sun where they die of exposure, thirst, and hunger.^{xii}

These saints will no longer endure such deprivation and suffering.

Continue to verse 17.

for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

This is the prayer of David, in Psalm 23, that we have often uttered,

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want – that is, I shall not lack anything;

He makes me lie down in green pastures... – that is, He makes it possible for me to lie down and rest, free from fear and hunger;

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me . . . and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Dear friend, if you want Him to be your Shepherd over there, you must have Him as your Shepherd over here. Those who follow this Shepherd on Earth, will one day be led by this Shepherd in heaven.

John's vision ends with the promise in verse 17 that,

... God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Many have taken this to mean that we will never cry in heaven. I believe this is taking this phrase out of context. This is in reference to crying over great suffering and hardship; to tears shed by humans enduring the pain of the human condition.

I believe there will indeed be no more tears of hardship, suffering, loss, and pain.

Ah, but have you ever cried tears of joy? Have you ever sung a hymn and wept? Have you ever thanked the Lord for His goodness and had tears come to your eyes?

Tears are created by God – and not necessarily as a result of the fall or directly connected to a sinful nature. They are a God-created avenue for an emotional response.

I believe heaven will be a place of joyful tears shed by believers moved at the sight of the Lamb. They will be thrilled with wonder at their place before His throne, shedding tears of gratitude through purified, perfected, glorified, God-pleasing, joyful emotion. This is part of heaven.

We will study more of heaven as we move through the latter part of Revelation – we are getting there. Remember, we are riding a tortoise, not a bus.

I am whipping this turtle along as fast as I can, by the way. PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) is not going to like that comment. I am encouraging this turtle to move as fast as he wants to! And only as fast as he wants to because he is actually in charge of my life and the planet belongs to him and I am just in the way. Whew, just wanted to get that on record.

By the way, last Sunday I mentioned trees. It occurred to me that if millions of people in this scene in heaven have palm branches, imagine how many millions of palm trees there will be in heaven.

It is possible that the signature tree in the capital city of the New Jerusalem will be the palm tree. In the past, the Judean date palm tree was the symbol of the Jewish nation. At one point, the Jews had coins designed with the palm tree and the vine. When the Roman General Titus destroyed Jerusalem, he had medals created that showed a slave sitting under a palm tree as a symbol of Israel's destruction.

Oh? I wonder if this will be one more interesting twist as the royalty of Christ is seen reigning in Jerusalem. The palm tree may once again be a symbol of Israel's future – resting no longer as slaves to Rome, but servants of the living God.

We do know that one day there will be millions of people waving palm branches before the true and living God.

I also know this – there is no need to fear death; there is no need to spend a fortune trying to hold back the inevitable. Yes, take care of yourself so that as long as you are able, you can make a contribution to your Lord until He takes you home.

However, clear up your perspective – do not be riveted on Earth. Look at this revelation of Jesus Christ – and millions in heaven who are, in this scene, literally exploding with joy.

Conclusion

I will close with the words of a nineteenth century American pastor who wrote,

I'm standing on the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She's an object of beauty and strength and I stand and watch her until, at length, she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and the sky come down to mingle with each other. And then I hear someone say, "There, she's gone."

Gone? Where? Gone from my sight, that's all. She is just as large in mast and hull as she was when she left my side. And just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at my side says, "There, she's gone," there are other eyes watching her, and there are other voices ready to take up the glad shouts, "Here she comes."^{xiii}

She's gone!

She's arrived!

There they go!

Here they come!

Tears of sorrow here – tears of joy there.

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus;

Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;

One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,

So bravely run the race till we see Christ.

ⁱ <http://preachingtoday.com/aging>.

ⁱⁱ Craig Brian Larson, 750 Engaging Illustrations (Baker Books, 2002), p. 307.

ⁱⁱⁱ Arlene Weintraub, "Selling the Promise of Youth," Business Week (Mar. 20, 2006).

^{iv} Gretchen Anderson and Jean Koppen, "Thoughts on the Afterlife Among U.S. Adults 50+," USA Today (Sept. 25, 2007).

^v Stewart Custer, From Patmos to Paradise (BJU Press, 2004), p. 91.

^{vi} Robert L. Thomas, Revelation: Volume 1 (Moody Press, 1992), p. 484.

^{vii} Adrian Rogers, Unveiling the End Times in Our Time (Broadman Holman, 2004), p. 102.

^{viii} William Barclay, The Revelation of John: Volume 2 (Westminster Press, 1976), p. 26.

^{ix} Thomas, p. 498.

^x Barclay, p. 31.

^{xi} Thomas, p. 492.

^{xii} Kendell H. Easley, Holman New Testament Commentary: Revelation (Holman Reference, 1998), p. 132.

^{xiii} Randy Alcorn, In Light of Eternity (Waterbrook Press, 1999), p. 152.