



A Publication of C.J.F. Ministries and Messianic Perspectives Radio Network

# Messianic Perspectives®

*God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.*



**THE SEVEN BLESSINGS  
OF THE BOOK OF  
REVELATION**

BY GARY HEDRICK

The Book of Revelation is one of the most misunderstood and mishandled books in the Bible. Some people call it “Revelations” (plural), thinking it consists of several revelations rather than just one. But they’re wrong. It’s *one* revelation consisting of a *series* of visions, all experienced by John around the same time during his exile on the Isle of Patmos.

Also, many English Bibles title the Book of Revelation like this: THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN. However, it’s more accurate to say it’s THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH SAINT JOHN. That is, John was the channel through whom this Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was given.

You see, the *source* and *subject* of the Revelation is Yeshua himself—not the Apostle John. Yeshua is the One who revealed Himself (and His plans for the last days<sup>1</sup>) to John, the last, surviving Apostle.<sup>2</sup> The aged Apostle, in turn, shares that revelation of Yeshua with subsequent generations—including us.

The English word “Revelation” translates the Greek *Apokalypsis* (Ἀποκάλυψις), which means, “a revealing or unveiling” of something that was not previously known. In the Book of Revelation (sometimes called the Apocalypse), then, the Lord Yeshua is revealing Himself in all His glory, along with key elements of His plan for the first-century *present* (Chapters 1–3) and subsequent *future* (Chapters 4–22), to the Apostle John—and, through John, to us.

## How Much Does God Want Us to Know?

The future is one of the great mysteries of life. We have a pretty good idea about what happened in the past, and what is happening right now, in the present. The future, however, is a different story. It’s still unknown. We can’t see it until it happens.

However, the Lord doesn’t want us to remain in the dark about His plan for the future. The Apostle Paul, in fact, when he was teaching his Greek followers about the resurrection events at the end of this age, said he didn’t want them “to be ignorant . . . concerning those who have fallen asleep [i.e., experienced physical death], lest [they] sorrow as others who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4:13).

<sup>1</sup> Technically, the term “last days” refers to the two thousand years of the present Church Age. See Hebrews 1:2, where the writer says he was living “in these last days” two thousand years ago.

<sup>2</sup> Tradition and textual evidence suggest that the Apostle John lived until at least AD 95. After the Crucifixion and Ascension of Yeshua, John assumed responsibility for Miriam (Mary, the Lord’s mother; see John 19:27). They are thought to have relocated to Ephesus, where they would have been joyfully joined to the local assembly. Near the end of his life, and by then alone, John was exiled on the remote Greek isle of Patmos, where we believe he penned the Book of Revelation. John died later of natural causes; the other Apostles had all been martyred decades earlier. Mary the mother of Jesus may have died while she and John were still living in Ephesus. Catholic dogma says she was caught up to Heaven without experiencing death (the so-called “Assumption of Mary”), but there is no biblical or historical evidence to support such a teaching.

God, then, doesn’t want His people to be ignorant about these matters. Yet the sad reality is that prophetic ignorance reigns in many churches today. The reason for this is that prophetic themes are not taught from the pulpits. And they’re not proclaimed from many pulpits because they’re not taught in the mainstream seminaries. Yet the future import of Revelation is very clear.

In the first chapter, in fact, John provides us with an outline that he will be following: “*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this*” (1:19, emphases added). From John’s first-century perspective, he wanted believers in his day and beyond to be duly informed about the past, the present, and especially the future.

However, this emphasis on the future doesn’t mean that the Lord has handed us a magical crystal ball. Prophecy is like everything else in God’s Word—he wants us to handle it responsibly. We should avoid a shallow, sensationalized, tabloid-style preoccupation with the future. The Lord doesn’t intend for us to calculate months or years for prophetic events. Date-setting and related shenanigans are one reason Chiliasm (an early form of Premillennialism) fell out of favor with much of Christendom from the fourth century on.

## Major Views of the Book of Revelation

### PRETERIST

Preterists believe the events described in the Book of Revelation took place during the days of the ancient Roman Empire. They say John was not prophesying about the future, but using a sort of code language to talk about events in his day. This view was developed by the ancient Jesuits, and is still held in some form by many Roman Catholics and some Protestants.

### HISTORICIST

This view is associated with postmillennialism and says that the Book of Revelation presents a panorama of church history from the inception of the apostolic era to the consummation of the present age. This position was held by Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, and most of the other Reformers, with the notable exception of the Anabaptists (see “futurist” below).

### IDEALIST

Closely associated with amillennialism, this view suggests that Revelation should not be interpreted as an account of actual, literal events, whether past or future, but rather as a metaphor for the grand, cosmic struggle between good and evil. This view can be traced to the heretical Alexandrian school (Origen, Clement, Dionysius) in the third century and was later adopted and legitimized by Augustine, who had formerly been a futurist.

### FUTURIST

Premillennialists recognize that there are many symbols in the Book of Revelation, but they believe the main import of its message is literal and prophetic. They are regarded as futurists because they view the first three chapters of Revelation as a summary of church history, and from chapter four on as future prophecy about the Messiah’s coming and the end of this age. Historical premillennialism was known in ancient times as “chiliasm.” This was the view of several ancient church fathers (like Barnabas) and the Anabaptists of the Reformation era. Philip Schaff, the eminent 19th-century church historian, concluded that this was the view of the apostles and the Early Church (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, AD 100–311, Chapter 12).

## Messianic Perspectives®

Dr. Gary Hedrick, *Editor in Chief*  
Brian Nowotny, *Publisher*  
Erastos Leiloglou, *Creative Director*

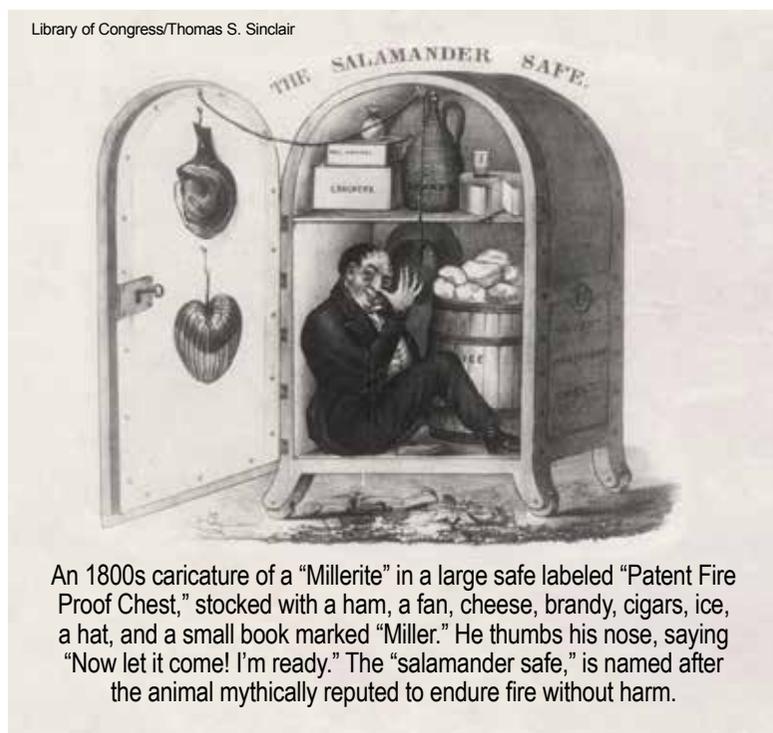


*Messianic Perspectives* is published quarterly by CJF Ministries, P.O. Box 345, San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345, a 501(c)3 Texas nonprofit corporation: Dr. Charles Halff (1929-2000), Founder; Dr. Gary Hedrick, President; Brian Nowotny, Vice President for Administration; Erastos Leiloglou, Creative Director. Subscription price: \$10 per year. The publication of articles by other authors does not necessarily imply CJFM’s full agreement with all the views expressed therein. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). Visit us online at [cjfm.org](http://cjfm.org). Toll-free OrderLine: (800) 926-5397. © 2023 by CJF Ministries. All rights reserved.

## The Great Disappointment

History tells us that if we fail to handle the prophetic Word responsibly, the Blessed Hope can become a Great Disappointment. This is what happened to many of the ancient chiliasts when they were lured into sensationalism, wish fulfillment, and questionable theorizing.

Perhaps the most notable example of misguided date-setting in modern times is that of William Miller, a Baptist farmer in the 1800s whose study of Daniel 8 led him to believe that the Lord would return on October 22, 1844. Miller managed to convince an estimated 100,000 people (known at first as “Millerites,” and later as “Adventists”) in the southeastern United States that the Lord would return on that date. As the appointed time approached, many Millerites signed away their homes and other belongings. Once they had divested themselves of their money and possessions, they donned white robes and gathered on nearby mountaintops, or other elevated areas, to wait for the Second Coming. If there were no mountains in the vicinity, some of the faithful improvised. They climbed trees or accessed the rooftops of tall buildings, where they camped out, awaiting the Lord’s return. Once it was clear that Miller had been in error, the so-called Great Disappointment set in. Many of his followers were disillusioned and heartbroken. They truly loved Jesus, but they had been misled by Mr. Miller.



An 1800s caricature of a “Millerite” in a large safe labeled “Patent Fire Proof Chest,” stocked with a ham, a fan, cheese, brandy, cigars, ice, a hat, and a small book marked “Miller.” He thumbs his nose, saying “Now let it come! I’m ready.” The “salamander safe,” is named after the animal mythically reputed to endure fire without harm.

So, it’s true that Chiliasm/Millenarianism has had its fanatical fringe. Traditionalists like to remind us of these fringe groups and use that association to paint us all with the same broad brush.<sup>3</sup> These critics say that ancient Chiliasm was based on “carnal” Jewish “misapprehensions” about a literal fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The premillennial camp isn’t the only one that’s had issues with its fringe of extremists. Harold Camping was an amillennialist in the late twentieth century who set a date in September of 1994 for the end of the “final Tribulation” and the Second Coming (1994? [Great Barrington, MA: Vantage Press, 1992], 507). To his credit, Mr. Camping recanted his date-setting errors before he died in 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 673. Note the obvious historical symmetry between a literal first coming in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1–8) and a literal *Second* Coming two thousand years later at Armageddon (Rev. 16:16; 19:11–16). These are literal events, not spiritualized metaphors.

Nonetheless, historical evidence suggests that Chiliasm—that is, its original, reasonable, and biblical version—was the nearly uniform eschatological position of the Apostles and the Early Church.<sup>5</sup> Here are just a few of the Early Church leaders who were chiliasts/millenarians:

- **Papias of Hierapolis** (c. 60-130 AD) was a contemporary of the Apostle John who advocated for a literal, thousand-year Millennium in his five-volume work, *Exposition of the Sayings of the Lord*.
- **Justin Martyr** (c. 100-165 AD), an early Christian apologist, defended his belief in a literal, thousand-year reign of the saints in Jerusalem in his *Dialogue with Trypho*.
- **Irenaeus of Lyons** (c. 130-202 AD) wrote *Against Heresies*, in which he expounded his views on eschatology, saying the Messiah would establish His thousand-year Kingdom on the earth.
- **Tertullian** (c. 155-240 AD) was a prominent theologian in the Church’s formative years. Several of his writings have survived in which he advocated strongly for a coming, earthly, millennial Kingdom of Messiah Jesus.
- **Hippolytus of Rome** (c. 170-235 AD) explained his views on the future, literal Millennium in two groundbreaking works on eschatology: *On Christ and the Antichrist* and *Commentary on the Prophet Daniel*.
- **Nepos** (3rd century AD) was an Egyptian bishop who, in the eponymous Book of Nepos, expressed his frustration with fellow clerics who were claiming that the Millennium in Revelation 20 was allegorical rather than literal.

Philip Schaff, perhaps the most eminent and prolific church historian of modern times, affirms that Chiliasm was the dominant position of the Early Church. He writes:

The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age [1st–3rd centuries AD] is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment.<sup>6</sup>

So, the evidence tells the tale: Most of the Early Church started out on a solid, premillennial footing—with only a handful of early leaders dissenting. Those premillennial believers took the Scriptures in the most simple, literal sense.<sup>7</sup> The majority believed in a literal Second Coming followed by the establishing of a literal, earthly Kingdom on the earth. The first thousand years of that Kingdom would be the Millennium. Augustine himself, in fact, embraced Chiliasm in his early years. It was only later, by the time he published his classic treatise *City of God*, that he began advocating an allegorical (amillennial) approach to the Book of Revelation (and to the Bible in general).

<sup>5</sup> Some ancient chiliastic factions were fettered by certain doctrinal peculiarities—like their belief in soul sleep, for instance. The chiliast movement was so quirky, in fact, the term itself was often used as a pejorative. For our purposes here, however, we are interested primarily in the less-quirky, early chiliasts (like Papias and Tertullian) and their literal view of Revelation 20.

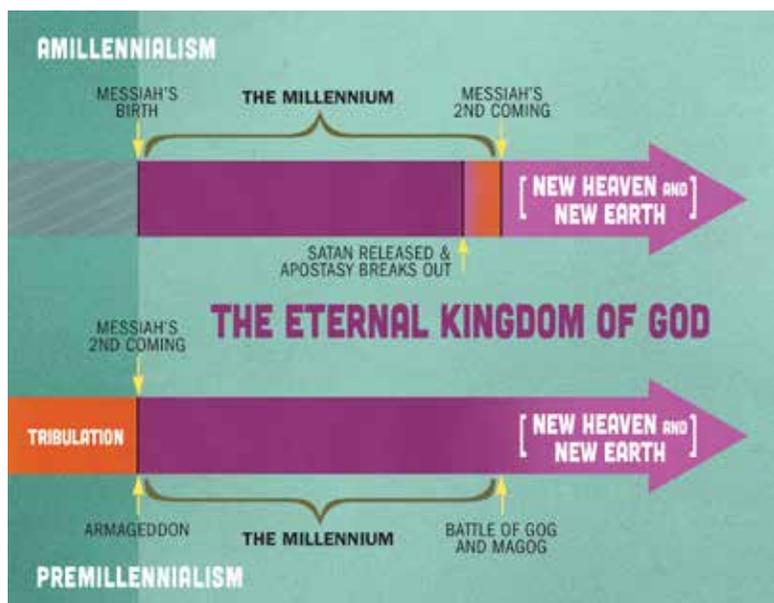
<sup>6</sup> Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, *Ibid.*, 614.

<sup>7</sup> A literal hermeneutic allows for legitimate figures of speech, like metaphors, when they occur in Scripture. However, it doesn’t allow us to reduce something that’s obviously literal to mere symbolism. We have long subscribed to David L. Cooper’s “Golden Rule of Bible Interpretation,” which states: *When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.*

## Objections to the Millennium

Centuries later, one of John Calvin's objections to millenarianism was that it limited the reign of King Jesus to a mere thousand years. For this and other reasons, he said the idea of a literal Millennium in Revelation 20 was a "fiction" that was "too puerile" to deserve serious refutation.<sup>8</sup>

With all due respect, however, Calvin was wrong about this. What he failed to see was that many of us who are millenarians recognize fully that the earthly Kingdom of God—which is synonymous with the reign of King Jesus—is described in the Bible as *eternal* (Dan. 7:27; 2 Peter 1:11; Rev. 11:15). This means *the Millennium is only the first thousand years of the eternal Kingdom*. The reason the Kingdom's first thousand years is marked off with a beginning and an ending (i.e., the Millennium) is to show how the Lord systematically cancels evil and vanquishes the Evil One once and for all, culminating at the final Battle of Gog and Magog (20:8).<sup>9</sup>



We most decidedly do *not* limit the reign of King Jesus to a mere thousand years. On the contrary, His reign continues indefinitely *after* the Millennium—into what some charts show as “the eternal state.” The Kingdom is eternal: *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His [Messiah], and He shall reign forever and ever!”* (11:15, emphasis added).

Any viewpoint can be taken to extremes. Some amillennialists, for instance, go to the extreme of spiritualizing almost everything in the Bible, and some premillennialists go to an extreme in the opposite direction. This is what happened during the early years of the Church. Originally, Chiliasm was the dominant viewpoint. Within just a few decades, though, some chiliasts were taking their literalism to unwarranted extremes. They succumbed to sensationalism. Some of the silly stunts they pulled were downright embarrassing. They would have done well to heed the Lord's admonition that we should resist the temptation to assign dates to specific prophetic events: *And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority”* (Acts 1:7).

<sup>8</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion III*, xxv, 5 (three times).

<sup>9</sup> Two battles of Gog and Magog are depicted in Scripture. Gog and Magog I (near the close of the Tribulation) is mentioned in Ezekiel 38:2 and Gog and Magog II (at the conclusion of the Millennium) is found in Revelation 20:8.

At the same time, though, rejecting Premillennialism because of the foolish excesses of later chiliasts is ill-advised. It amounts to throwing the premillennial baby out with the date-setting bath water. Not all chiliasts/millenarians were (or are) cranks or kooks—far from it, in fact. Some of the most distinguished leaders of the Early Church were subscribers to this view, as we have already noted.

## It's a Jewish Revelation

We have also noted that some Reformed critics claim that the futurist view of Revelation is too “Jewish.” On this point, we would agree! The futurist view is, indeed, a very Jewish way of looking at the Apocalypse. But the critics go on to say it's based on the rabbis' “misapprehensions” (i.e., errors) about such matters. What makes this so sad is that these critics and their followers will never truly understand Revelation while they see it through this anti-Judaic lens.

The truth is that the Book of Revelation may be the most Jewish book in the entire New Covenant (New Testament). In a way, it's ironic because John cites no direct quotations from the Older Testament (OT) in Revelation. However, there are literally hundreds of places where he alludes in one way or another to the older, Hebrew Scriptures.

Commentator Alan Johnson explains the Hebraic character of Revelation like this:

[Cambridge Professor of Divinity Henry] Swete mentions that of the 404 verses of the Apocalypse, 278 contain references to the Jewish Scriptures (p. cxxxv). UBS's Greek NT (2d ed.) cites over five hundred OT passages in connection with the book (pp. 897–920) . . . The OT used by John is primarily Semitic rather than Greek, agreeing often with the Aramaic Targums and occasionally reflecting Midrashic background materials to the OT passages; and it can be shown that he used a text other than the Masoretic that has a close affinity with the Hebrew text of the Qumran [scrolls]. From the Prophets, John refers quite frequently to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. John also refers repeatedly to the Psalms, Exodus, and Deuteronomy. Especially important are John's christological reinterpretations of OT passages he alludes to. He does not simply use the OT in its pre-Christian sense but often recasts the images and visions of the OT. While there is an unmistakable continuity in Revelation with the older revelation, the new emerges from the old as a distinct entity.<sup>10</sup>

Anyone who has studied *Koine* (“common”) Greek in seminary knows that the text of the Book of Revelation is grammatically unconventional. In fact, John appears to have come up with some Greek words that are unique to his work and aren't found anywhere else in the Greek world. This means that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John may have made up some of his own words when there wasn't an existing word to convey his meaning.

However, a certain amount of irregularity is precisely what we would expect from a Jewish writer who was thinking in Hebrew while writing in Greek.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Alan F. Johnson, “Revelation,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebel, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 411.

<sup>11</sup> See Steven W. Thompson's *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (1985), and G. Mussies' earlier, more detailed treatise, *The Morphology of Koine Greek as Used in the Revelation of St. John* (1971).

## A Word from God for Our Time

One reason it's important to recognize that Revelation is substantially talking about the future is that if we relegate it only to the past, we are in danger of losing its benefits and blessings today and in the future!

It's sad that so many Christians in our day reduce the Book of Revelation to a chronicle of events long passed, stripping it of any prophetic significance or relevance to the twenty-first century. Full preterists, for example, say the extensive prophecy of Matthew 24 was fulfilled in AD 66–70, when Titus and his Roman legions laid siege to Jerusalem and eventually destroyed the city.<sup>12</sup> To them, this prophecy was fulfilled in its entirety by the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the events leading up to it.

This deconstruction of the Apocalypse by the doubters is extremely unfortunate because we are living in earthshaking times—not unlike the days of the Early Church—and we could use some encouragement right about now! As we approach the mid-point of the twenty-first century, Western culture seems to be decaying right before our very eyes. Debauchery and confusion that would have been unthinkable only a decade or so ago is now commonplace—and is in the process of becoming normalized. This downward spiral is evident all around us.

Fainthearted brethren are tempted to fall into despair, thinking that the world is careening wildly out of control. Consequently, the cry rising these days from many quarters of the Christian world is, “We need a word from the Lord!”

Well, here it is. The Apostle John's message in the Book of Revelation is the word the Church needs right now. It assures us that the chaos swirling around us is an illusion. Nothing is out of control—far from it! Revelation, our guidebook to the future, assures us that no matter how chaotic and sin-crazy the world becomes, God is firmly in charge—and He has set limits on how far the chaos can go.

This amazing Book unlocks the mysteries of OT prophetic books like Ezekiel and Zechariah. It's full of pathos, intrigue, and riveting drama. And, of course, its central theme is God's plan for the future. Revelation is about the cosmic conflict between good and evil, between light and darkness, between God and the devil—and the ultimate victory of the Son of God at the end of the age.

## The Seven Blessings of Revelation

One of the features of the Book of Revelation is its series of seven imbedded promises, or blessings. Blessedness, in the Bible's vernacular, is often synonymous with happiness.<sup>13</sup> For many people, especially today, joy and happiness are elusive. It's a painful truth that depression and even suicide are on the rise in our modern culture.

Contrary to what many people these days seem to think, God wants us to be happy. He's not a Grinch who sits on His throne in Heaven thinking of ways to make us miserable and frustrated. On the contrary, He wants us to experience what the Bible calls “*shalom*.” It's a Hebrew term that means soundness, completeness, prosperity, wholeness, contentment, and, of course, peace.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Partial preterists, unlike full preterists, allow for some future fulfillments of prophecy.

<sup>13</sup>*Esher* (אֶשֶׁר) is translated both “blessed” and “happy” in various translations and contexts. The NASB, for instance, has “blessed” in 1 Kings 10:8, while in the KJV and NKJV it's “happy.” *Esher* is related to the name *Asher* (Leah's son, and one of the tribes of Israel), which also means “happy” (Gen. 30:13).

<sup>14</sup>See *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* at the entry for שָׁלוֹם, *shalom*.

The Bible teaches that happiness is not so much an emotion as it is a *choice*. It's related to our God-given power to choose. And an informed choice is a matter of *obedience*. Joshua, the successor of Moses, set the precedent for us. Here's what he told the children of Israel: “*And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*” (Josh. 24:15, emphasis added in bold).

Here are the seven blessings John embedded in the Book of Revelation:

1. **The blessing that results from reading and heeding God's Word:** *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near* (Rev. 1:3).

The Apostle John opens the Apocalypse with these penetrating words. He says there's a special blessing for anyone who hears these words and then obeys them. Hearing by itself doesn't mean much. It only registers if we hear *and then* obey. Parents know how this works. We know a child has internalized a word of instruction if he or she puts it into action and obeys. When there is no change in behavior, it means there is more work to do.



Yeshua himself said the same thing in His famous Sermon on the Mount: “*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock*” (Matt. 7:24).

John doesn't wait long to introduce this controversial issue of imminence. Note the last part of the verse: *For the time is near*. So, there is a timing issue. Here in the first chapter, referring to “the words of this prophecy,” John says, “The time is near” (v. 3). In the last chapter, referring to “the prophecy of this book,” he says:

Then [the angel] said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. “Behold, I am coming quickly!” (22:6–7a).

And [the angel] said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand” (v. 10).

Here, the Lord says He is “coming quickly” (3:11). This is a reference to His Revelation to the world. It’s the second phase of the Second Coming, at the close of the Tribulation—not the Rapture.<sup>15</sup> This distinction is important because it helps us understand that the saints (believers) who are on earth during the Tribulation will be people who have come to faith in the Lord Yeshua during that seven-year period (Rev. 7:9).

This brings up an interesting matter: If the Church (Body of Messiah) has already been caught up in the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:15–17) and no believers at that point remain on earth, how will people during the Tribulation hear the Gospel?<sup>16</sup> Good question! There’s an important principle to remember here: namely, that *God never leaves Himself without a witness*. Never! During the Tribulation, even angels will make themselves available to proclaim the Gospel (14:6).<sup>17</sup> But that’s not all. As the number of Tribulation believers multiplies, God will also send out an army of young Jewish evangelists—144,000 of them, if we take the number literally, or 12,000 from each of the twelve surviving tribes of Israel (7:1–8), to preach the everlasting Gospel to the unsaved earth-dwellers (14:6).

The preaching of the 144,000 will be reinforced by the proclamation of the Gospel by “two witnesses” mentioned in Revelation 11:1–6.<sup>18</sup> When they have finished their testimony to the world (after 1,260 days), these two prophets will be martyred, and their bodies will be on display in the streets of Jerusalem (vv. 7–10). The wicked earth-dwellers will be jubilant—that is, until three and a half days later, when the two prophets are miraculously resurrected to the wide-eyed amazement of millions of fearful viewers on television and social media worldwide (vv. 11–12).

The Gospel message will spread rapidly and multitudes all over the world will come to faith during this time. Many of these new believers will be martyred (7:9–17), like the “two witnesses” were (see above). One of the great paradoxes of the Tribulation, then, will be that this period of the greatest apostasy the world has ever seen will be matched side-by-side with the greatest evangelistic campaign in all human history. In a mighty work of God’s Spirit, multitudes will come to know *Adon Yeshua HaMashiach* (the Lord Jesus Christ) personally.

<sup>15</sup>We use the term “Second Coming” not to refer to a single event, but to a series of events marking the Lord’s two-phase return to Planet Earth. The Rapture takes place first, followed seven years later by the Revelation (at the close of the Day of the LORD, or the Tribulation), when our King-Messiah is revealed to the world. The Tribulation comes to an end after seven years, when Yeshua returns in power and glory to vanquish His enemies at Armageddon. The pre-tribulation Rapture, then, is distinct from His post-tribulation Revelation. A well-regarded Messianic (Jewish-Christian) commentator, the late David H. Stern, writes: “The event described in Matthew 24:29–31, the second coming (proper), is not the same event as the [Rapture] described here. Here [in 1 Thessalonians 4] it is the Lord Himself who comes to take His own to Himself, but in Matthew 24:31, this is the task of elect angels. Also, based on other texts that describe the second coming (proper) (cf. Joel 2:12–16; Zech. 14:1–5; Rev. 19:11–21), there are significant differences between the two events: here He comes in the air, but then He comes to the Mount of Olives; here the prospect is comfort and fellowship with the Lord, then the prospect is judgment (cf. Matt. 24:36–44)” (*Jewish New Testament Commentary* [Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992], Kindle Edition).

<sup>16</sup>This is a reference to the pre-Tribulation Rapture (our position), which maintains that the Church will be removed from earth before the Tribulation begins. However, we recognize that many sincere and astute believers hold other positions, like the Mid- and Post-Tribulation Rapture theories. All three viewpoints have capable defenders in evangelicalism. For more information on the Pre-Trib position, see “Why We Believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture” in the January-February 2009 issue of *Messianic Perspectives* (pp. 8–9). Also, see “Mapping the End Times in Light of Ancient Jewish Wedding Customs” in our January-February 2019 issue. Archives may be accessed at [cjfm.org](http://cjfm.org).

<sup>17</sup>The Hebrew and Greek words for “angel” mean, literally, a “messenger.”

<sup>18</sup>For more information about the 144,000 Jewish evangelists in Revelation 7 & 14, see “Seven Things Every Christian Should Know About the 144,000” in our September-October 2019 issue. For our thoughts on the possible identities of the “two witnesses” in Revelation 11, see “The Second Coming of Elijah” in our March-April 2012 issue.

## SEVEN DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE TWO STAGES OF THE SECOND COMING

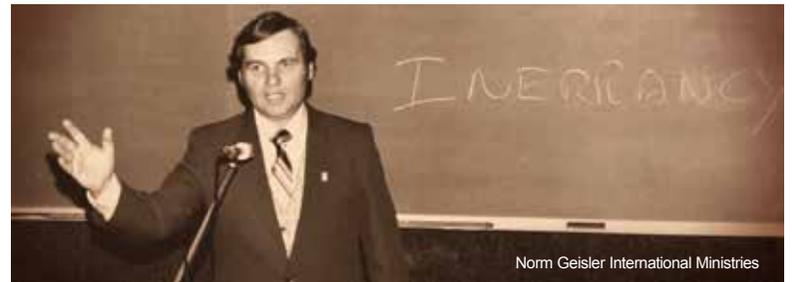
THE RAPTURE	THE REVELATION
Meeting us in the air (1 Thess. 4:17)	Taking us to the earth (Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:11)
Taking believers to Heaven (John 14:3)	Bringing believers back to earth (Rev. 19:14)
Coming for His saints (2 Thess. 2:1)	Coming with His saints (Jude 14)
Only believers see Him (1 Thess. 4:17)	Everyone sees Him (Rev. 1:7)
No signs precede it (1 Thess. 5:1–3)	Many signs precede it (Matt. 24:3–30)
The hope of the Church (Titus 2:13)	The hope of Israel (Luke 21:25–28)
The Tribulation begins (2 Thess. 1:6–9)	The Millennium begins (Rev. 20:1–7)

Preterists (and others who say that Revelation is past history rather than future prophecy) use the Lord’s comment about “coming quickly” to demonstrate that everything was fulfilled within a few decades, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. However, there is nothing in the context here to indicate that this is the case.

Furthermore, when the Lord says, “I am coming quickly” (*erchomai tachy*; ἐρχομαι ταχύ), that word *tachy* (from *tachus*) has a range of meaning that includes “quickly, speedily, promptly, soon, without delay.”

The late apologist and theologian Norman Geisler elaborates:

The Bible teaches that Jesus may come at any moment (viz., imminently), but it does not teach the moment at which He is coming (Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:6–7). This argument confuses imminency and immediacy. There are many texts in which Christ’s coming is said to be imminent, that is, at any moment. Again, A. T. Robertson said, “Quickly should be translated ‘I am coming (imminently).’ ... We do not know how quickly is meant to be understood. But it is a real threat” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 7.306; cf. Morris, RSJ, 258; Seiss, A, 523). The word means “suddenly,” not necessarily “soon.”<sup>19</sup>



We should be candid and transparent enough to acknowledge that *tachy* does carry with it a sense of urgency and immediacy. The Holy Spirit, who was superintending the writing of Revelation, may have chosen this term because He wanted those early generations of believers to realize that the Lord might return during their lifetime. And since the Rapture, technically, is a signless event, no one was being misled because it was surely true that He *could* have come while their generation was still living. Paul set the example when he said, “**We** who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord,” including himself in that number (1 Thess. 4:15, emphasis added). He was hopeful that it might be true!

<sup>19</sup>Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology, Volume Four: Church, Last Things* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2005), 640.

So, the term *tachus* was appropriate here because it conveys a sense of immediacy and emphasizes the urgency of the Christian mission. By design, the Lord wanted each forthcoming generation to have the hope that the Lord could—potentially—come during their lifetime. Again, we look to the Apostle Paul, who said we should always be “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).<sup>20</sup> The alternative would have been to try to explain to a first-century audience that the Lord’s coming might be delayed by many centuries—a disclaimer that surely would have been counterproductive and demoralizing, especially during those early days of intense imperial persecution.

It made much more sense to approach the issue of timing strategically. So, that’s what the Holy Spirit prompted the NT writers to do. They presented prophecy in such a way that each successive generation could realistically have an expectation that *the Lord could return during their lifetime*. That’s why each successive generation was admonished to be watching for His return (Rev. 3:2; 16:15).

“These last days” would mark out an indefinite period beginning in the first century and continuing into the twenty-first century or even beyond (Heb. 1:1–2).

**2. The blessing of dying as a believer:** *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them”* (Rev. 14:13).

Dying isn’t usually thought of as a blessing. We see it more as a tragedy. Paul said, *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death* (1 Cor. 15:26). Little wonder death is considered our enemy; it’s ugly, brutal, final, unrelenting, and heartbreaking.

But sometimes God can use even an enemy to bless us; and this is one of those cases. The Bible tells us, *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints* (Psalm 116:15). The Hebrew word that’s translated “precious” (*yaqar*; יקר) means something valued or costly, like jewels or gems. The LORD knows His people intimately and He places a high value on the time when one of His saints makes the transition from this world into His presence. He welcomes us home!

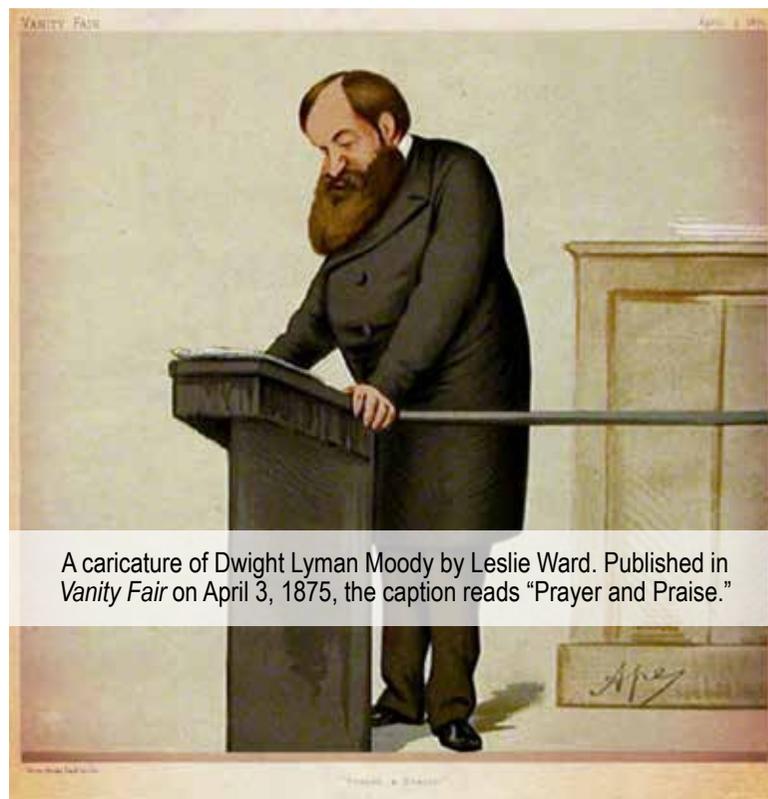
The Apostle Paul called death a “departure” (Phil. 1:23), using a Greek word (*analuō*; ἀναλύω) that often (in classical usage) described a ship that was untied from its moorings so it could sail away on a long journey.<sup>21</sup> Leaving friends and loved ones behind, of course, would be sad; but, reaching the destination on the other side at long last is happy and glorious!

<sup>20</sup>The Greek construction here equates the “blessed hope” with the “glorious appearing,” so they are folded in together under the general category of the Second Coming. The two stages of the Second Coming, then, are the Rapture and the Revelation seven years later. John MacArthur says the blessed hope/glorious appearing also includes the resurrection of believers. Presumably, believers will be resurrected both before and after the Tribulation (Rom. 8:22–23; 1 Cor. 15:51–58; Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; 1 John 3:2–3) (*The NASB MacArthur Study Bible*, Kindle Edition, note at Titus 2:13). Therefore, Tribulation believers who read this verse during that seven-year period of persecution (especially the final three-and-a-half years) will be able to legitimately appropriate this encouragement for themselves.

<sup>21</sup>The Apostle says, *For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you* (Phil. 1:23–24). Paul was torn between two alternatives. One was for him to depart this life (i.e., in death) and go to his reward in Heaven. The other was to remain here on earth so he could nurture and encourage the young believers he had brought to faith in the fledgling congregations. He concluded that the latter alternative was, for the time being, “more needful” for his followers.

As a pastor, I have joined grieving families at the bedside of a dying loved one. For me, those occasions were an almost surreal experience—very often with a tingling and hard-to-describe sense of unseen (angelic) activity and excitement in the room. In 1987, when my elderly friend Joe Wagner (in his 90s) lie dying in his bed at home in Eureka, Illinois, I told his family that I felt like that bedroom had become a NASA launching pad and the countdown had begun!

After D.L. Moody, the famous evangelist, died of heart failure in 1899 at the age of 62, his friend J. Wilbur Chapman described his final hours. He said Moody complained on his last day about being confined to bed, asking, “Can’t a man die as well sitting up as lying down?” So, they got him out of bed and put him in a chair for a few minutes. Once he was back in bed, as his life ebbed away, Moody said, “Is this dying? Why this is bliss. There is no valley.” Later, hovering between consciousness and unconsciousness, he whispered, “I have been within the gates.” Then he said, “Earth is receding; Heaven is opening; God is calling; I must go.”



Just when they thought he had departed, Moody revived briefly and said that “. . . he had seen his loved ones in Heaven, giving their names, and when someone in the room suggested that he had been dreaming, he assured them it was not so, but that he had actually been within the gates of Heaven.”<sup>22</sup>

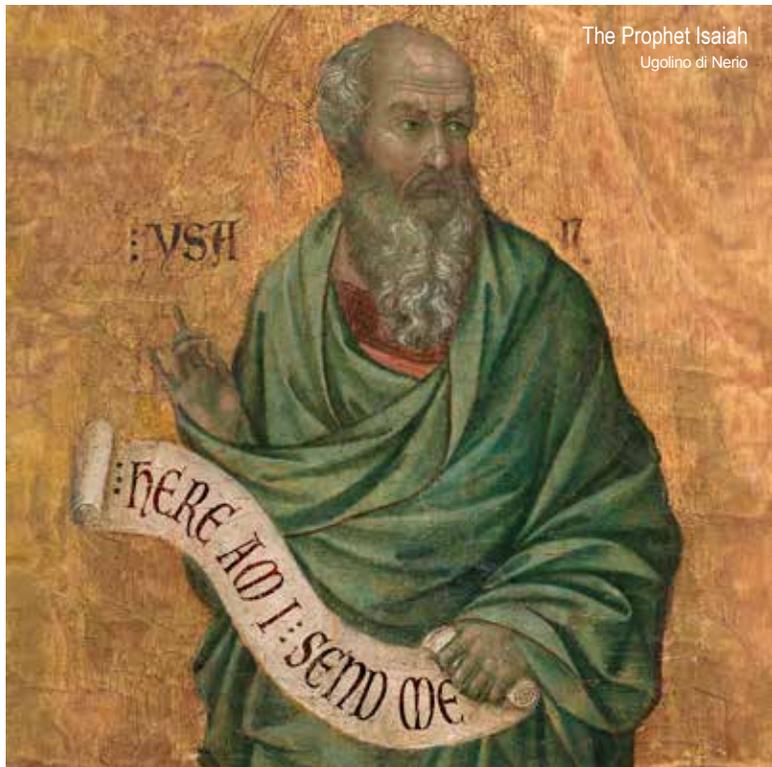
What a contrast between a scene like this and the death of an unbeliever who doesn’t share our hope!<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>*The Life and Work of Dwight Lyman Moody* by J. Wilbur Chapman (Chapter 27, “The Funeral”).

<sup>23</sup>The Apostle Paul said that when believers in Messiah lose loved ones in death, we don’t “sorrow [i.e., grieve] as others who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4:13). “Hope” in the NT is a confident expectation of the Lord’s victory over all opposition (including death, our last enemy) and our ultimate, eternal salvation. Skeptics and infidels, on the other hand, say that when we die, we dissolve into nothingness. However, believers possess the assurance that when we depart this life, we graduate to the next. The Lord himself said that He is preparing an eternal dwelling for us in the New Jerusalem (i.e., Heaven; John 14:2). We have His word on it.

3. **The blessing of expectancy:** “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame” (Rev. 16:15).

As believers in Yeshua, we watch and wait for His coming. This disciplined watchfulness helps us maintain our focus on Him, even while we continue to carry out our earthly responsibilities. We won’t fall into the trap, as Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. says, of “becoming so heavenly-minded, we are no earthly good.”<sup>24</sup> The Lord is looking for faithful workers, especially in these closing days of world history. The Prophet Isaiah responded to a similar call 2,800 years ago: *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me”* (Isa. 6:8).



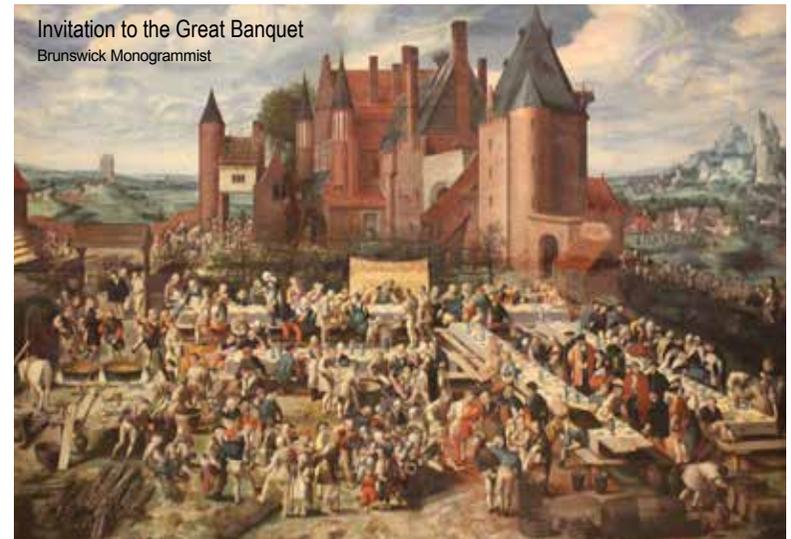
The phrase “keeping his garments” refers to personal holiness (Rev. 3:4–5). No believer is completely free of sin in this life (1 John 1:8); however, we trust Him daily to make us more and more like Him (1 John 3:2–3). In the end, it is the Lord himself who graciously clothes His people in the white robes of His righteousness (Rev. 6:11; 7:9–14; cp. 1 John 5:4).

4. **The blessing of being the Lord’s dinner guest:** *Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God”* (Rev. 19:9).

A dinner invitation is always nice—but this isn’t just any dinner invitation. We (i.e., the Bride or the Church) are beckoned to a very special banquet—the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We believe the *Kehila*, the Church, will be in Heaven while the seven-year Tribulation is unfolding down here on earth. The wedding will take place in Heaven during the Tribulation; the subsequent, celebratory Messianic banquet (the Marriage Supper) will take place on earth during the Millennium.

<sup>24</sup>Hilder, Monika B. (2018) “The Packed Reality of Heaven”: C.S. Lewis’s Imaginative Re-education of the Modern Pilgrim,” *Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal*: Vol. 12 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

Believers who are under the impression that the New Jerusalem is going to be a boring place, where we will occupy ourselves by floating on clouds while singing hymns and strumming on our harps, are in for a rude awakening! On the contrary, Heaven will be a busy, bustling hive of ceaseless activity, night and day. Among the many activities on the heavenly docket during this seven-year interlude in Heaven will be the mandatory *Bema* judgment of believers<sup>25</sup> and the marriage (*Nisuin*) of the Lamb<sup>26</sup> to His Bride, the Church. The *Erusin* (Betrothal) and *Nisu’in* (Marriage) were typically separated by a year or more while the groom was occupied with preparing a dwelling for his new bride.<sup>27</sup>



The Apostle Paul tells us that we are currently “betrothed” to the Lord (2 Cor. 11:2). We will be wedded to Him in the New Jerusalem while the Tribulation is happening on the earth below. Afterward, the saints will return to the earth with the Lord (Rev. 19:11–16; cf. 1 Thess. 4:15–17) to continue the celebration with the millennial Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6–9).<sup>28</sup>

5. **The blessing of ruling with the Messiah in His Kingdom:** *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years* (Rev. 20:6).

Depending on how faithful we were in this life, we will “receive a reward” of some sort when we stand before God in the *Bema* Judgment (1 Cor. 3:11–15). Yeshua’s stewardship parables indicate that one aspect of this reward will be our position in the future Kingdom (e.g., Matt. 25:21–23). That is, the more faithful we have been during our lifetime, the more responsibility we will have in the next world.

<sup>25</sup>This is a judgment to determine rewards, not punishment (1 Cor. 3:13–15). For further information about the believers’ *Bema* judgment, see “The Eight Judgments of the Last Days,” Part Two, in the July–August 2021 issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

<sup>26</sup>The “Lamb” is the main symbol John uses in Revelation for Yeshua, the Son of God (e.g., 5:6–13). According to Revelation 21:2, the Marriage of the Lamb will have already taken place by the time the Bride descends (with the New Jerusalem) to the earth at the beginning of the Millennium. From this, we infer that the Marriage (*Nisuin*) of the Lamb took place earlier, while the Church was in Heaven. Note that Isaiah’s vision in Chapters 65–66 equates the Millennium with “the new heavens and the new earth.” This differs slightly from the understanding of many of our fellow dispensationalists, but Isaiah makes the association very clearly.

<sup>27</sup>In modern Judaism, the Betrothal (*Erusin*) and the Marriage (*Nisu’in*) are folded into the same ceremony under the chuppah. They are no longer regarded as two distinct events separated by an extended period (up to a year or more), like they were in biblical times.

<sup>28</sup>Again, see “Mapping the End Times in Light of Ancient Jewish Wedding Customs” in our January–February 2019 issue. Also, cf. “Betrothal” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Vol. 3, Skolnik and Berenbaum, eds. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 539–541.

## Keeping the Words of This Prophecy

1. Remember your first love—2:4-5
2. Don't let the devil intimidate you—2:10
3. Turn away from idolatry or sexual immorality—2:14
4. Reject false prophets and seducers—2:20-21
5. Be watchful and "strengthen the things that remain"—3:2
6. "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent"—3:3
7. Keep the Lord's command to persevere—3:10
8. Have a realistic self-image, one that's humble and not inflated—3:17-18
9. Tribulation saints should heed the message of the two prophets in the streets of Jerusalem, even while the world mocks—11:3-6
10. Don't fear death: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death"—12:11
11. Don't take "the mark of the beast"—13:15-18; 14:9-10
12. Keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus—14:12
13. Tribulation believers should separate themselves from ("come out of") Babylon the Great—18:4
14. Rejoice when Babylon the Great falls—18:20
15. Praise God for His Tribulation victories—19:5
16. Prepare for the wedding: "Be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready"—19:7
17. Partake of the Tree of Life and enjoy the benefits of wholeness and immortality—22:14 (cp. Gen. 2:9)
18. Refuse to add or subtract anything "from the prophecy of this book"—22:18-19



Sadly, some believers will have little in the way of reward to look forward to at the Bema. Due to the poor quality of their earthly service, and their misguided priorities, these folks will be "saved, yet so as through fire" (v. 15). They will be saved, as it were, by the skin of their teeth.

### 6. The blessings of obedience: "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. 22:7).

Once again, we encounter that Greek word *tachu* (ταχύ), which we said means "quickly" or "suddenly." In other words, once the countdown on God's timer reaches zero, the predicted events will begin happening in rapid-fire sequence—"quickly" or "suddenly"—like a Titan rocket sitting on the launching pad for a long time and then suddenly and forcefully rising into the sky when its engines ignite. Although "soon" (immediacy) falls within *tachu's* range of meaning, it also denotes something that happens suddenly, abruptly, or joltingly. That is, *tachu* can be more a matter of *how* these things will happen than about *when* or how soon they will take place.

Here, we read that we enjoy special blessings if we "keep the words" of the prophecy of the Book of Revelation. So, how do we do this? Very simply, by observing the things John mentions in its inspired pages (see inset "Keeping the Words of This Prophecy").

God's ways are always the best ways. That's why blessing and abundance in the Hebrew Bible are consistently associated with obedience:

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go (Josh. 1:7).

### 7. The blessing of taking up residency in the New Jerusalem: *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city* (Rev. 22:14).

In the early 1990s, *Beverly Hills, 90210* was a popular television series about a collective of young friends who resided in a prestigious, California zip code. The show was a success and continued for ten seasons. God's New Jerusalem, however, is the ultimate prestigious residence—more so than Beverly Hills, Paris, Rome, or any other, upscale earthly destination.

The New Jerusalem will be the handiwork of the Master Builder himself—Yeshua, "the carpenter" (Mark 6:3), who's been working on it for 2,000 years now!

Before He returned to Heaven, He made us this promise: "*In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know*" (John 14:2-4, emphasis added).

The last time we saw this Tree of Life was near the beginning of Genesis: *And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* (Gen. 2:9, emphasis added).

Now, at the end of Revelation, this Tree of Life reappears: *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations* (22:2, emphasis added).

Ordinarily, a tree is not situated in the middle of the road. In fact, this "tree" appears to have three trunks—one in the middle of its street and one on either side of the river—for a total of three. So, much of this language, based on our Golden Rule of Interpretation, may very well be symbolic.

What's unmistakably literal, however, is the remedial effect of this tree. Whatever it represents, the tree's "leaves" will be efficacious for "the healing of the nations" (v. 2). What an amazing, remarkable promise for a sad, broken, suffering world—healing is coming! 



Gary Hedrick  
is president of  
CJF Ministries.

# SPECIAL UPDATE: RUTH NESSIM

Many of our supporters have been asking about Ruth Nessim, our longtime worker and evangelist in Northern Israel. She and her late husband, Albert, came on board with CJFM back in the early 1990s. Albert passed away in the aftermath of a botched hip replacement surgery at a hospital in Haifa in early 2007. His memorial service a few days later was attended by a “who’s who” of Messianic leaders—nearly 150 men and women from all over Israel, in addition to immediate family and friends. Albert’s homegoing was a great loss for all of us—especially for Ruthie. However, her heartache didn’t slow her down for long. Before we knew it, she was back in the saddle, continuing the work in Galilee.

Ruthie now resides in a small but comfortable apartment at Ebenezer Home in Haifa. She and her family recently celebrated her 87th birthday. She continues to share Yeshua faithfully with anyone the Lord brings across her path. She also continues to be in touch with some of the Arab/Palestinian friends she and Albert helped in various ways over the years.

We recently asked Ruthie’s daughter, Miryam, to provide an update on her “mum.” Here’s some of what she had to say:

I’d like to thank the many people who still pray for my Mum and ask about her. She is happily settled in a Messianic home for the elderly and is being very well cared for. The nurses and staff are very kind to all the residents in the home, but I like to think that some of them are very fond of her in particular. They take note of her keen sense of humor and courage.

She has come through a lot over the last couple of years, including a nasty bout of shingles. And even worse, she was stricken a few years ago with a case of trigeminal neuralgia, which was heart-wrenching for us to watch. Thankfully, it now seems to be under control. She also fell several times, but the Lord protected her, and apart from some very colorful effects (bruises here and there), she was fine. Her vision and hearing are very impaired, but she doesn’t give up on communication. She has to be careful on her feet, but she insists on making her own bed. An old friend came to visit a couple of weeks ago, whom at first she had difficulty recognizing or hearing. Once she realized who the person was, they had a great time together, and she was as funny, witty, and sharp as ever.

Mum spends much of the day in her armchair, enjoying rest after years of so much business and service. I must also add that she spends a lot of time in that chair, missing my father sorely. She is always happy to receive friends and family and shows a keen interest in and much affection toward her grandchildren. Never have I heard her ask anyone where they were or why they hadn’t been to visit her in a while, she’s too happy welcoming and loving us all.

The family was particularly moved on her recent 87th birthday to see how quickly Mum went from extreme pain and weakness to sweet anticipation when we told her that some special friends were coming to celebrate with her. On the appointed morning, she arose and got herself ready—just like old times! Her honored guests began arriving, and they all spent a wonderful time together singing, laughing, remembering, and praying. Personal relationships have always been one of Mum’s great treasures. We could tell that this birthday party did her heart good, and she was much consoled. These things show what Mum really holds dear to her heart.

Thanks for keeping Mum in your prayers,

Miryam



Ruth celebrating 87!



# Fruit from the Harvest



by Violette Berger



## An Open Door

**Rob Styler, CJFM Director of Missions (Arizona)**, writes about the dynamics of witnessing. “Sometimes we go out to share the Gospel and sometimes people come to us.” And that’s exactly what happened to Rob. He was in his garage on a day that registered 107 degrees and opened the garage door because it helps a little. While in the garage, three young Mormon missionaries were passing by. Noticing Rob, one of them told him that they were the Hispanic team, and asked if he knew any Hispanic families in the neighborhood. Rob replied, “Yes, but I don’t think they would like me sending you to their houses.” (Which, Rob emphasizes, “was true.”) But he did invite them into the shade of his garage and gave them some cold water. Rob goes on to explain: “Their name tags always say ‘Elder’ even though they are younger than my own children, closer to my grandchildren’s ages. We talked for a few minutes and I asked them if I could share my story. I told them of God’s grace and His gift of the Messiah. We spoke about forgiveness of sin and who God really is. I don’t know if any seeds were planted that afternoon, but I do know that three young elders heard the truth about the God of Israel.”

*“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).*

## A “First”

**Michael Campo, Jr, CJFM representative (Chicago, IL)**, writes that after 30 years in ministry, the Lord brought a “first” into his life. He had never counseled a counselor! They were a married couple whose marriage was on shaky ground. Michael said, “One of the spouses wanted something odd: a Christian pastor instead of a secular counselor – even though that was their profession. They both knew I came from a different religious background. A God thing, right? However, one of the spouses was reluctant to meet with me because I was a pastor/missionary and would try to convert them and made that very clear on their first visit. Now, we know that we cannot convert anyone. All we can do is share the Gospel and be there to answer questions.” Michael began their first session with Ephesians 5:25, which was also a wonderful segue to the Gospel. Michael says, “This was my Christocentric counseling for their first time together. It blesses me to inform you that both spouses have repented and believe the Gospel.” Since their conversions, Michael also disciples the husband privately and the couple together and states: “Conversion is not simply a change in beliefs, but also a change in behavior.” He asks: “Pray for my counseling and discipleship as I observe them becoming more like Christ together, all for the glory of God! We just never know how God will bring someone who needs conversion into our lives. Jesus used a child as an example for His adult disciples.”

*“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. 18:1-3 NASB).*

## Campus blessings

**Eric Chabot, CJFM representative (Columbus, OH)**, was eager to share about his “blessed September month” at both The Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College where he leads campus ministries. On both campuses, he and his respective teams spoke with over 200 students, and 13 students made first-time spoke commitments to the Lord. Eric uses a white board on campus and poses a different question each time to engage with the students and encourage them to respond in writing or verbally. This time the question was: “What is the meaning of life?” He asks us to pray for the 13 who made commitments—that they would become fully committed disciples; for all of the other students they spoke with—that whatever seeds were planted would take root in their hearts; for the salvation of a 16-year-old student and Eric’s ongoing discussion with him about the existence of God; and for the Jewish student who asked for prayer.

Eric is holding a free event in the Ohio Union at The Ohio State University in October. The speaker is Dr. Frank Turek; his topic is “I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist.” Please pray for a good turnout and that hearts would be touched.

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19 NASB).*

## Encouraging Feedback

**CJFM representative Diann Parkas (New Jersey)**, recently taught a Zoom semester course on the “*Holy Days of Israel*” to a group of 26 believing and unbelieving students. She was so encouraged by the comments she received from them at the end of the course that she wanted to share the following:

1. “Thank you for your guidance and knowledge throughout this class. I will carry the lessons I’ve learned from you and hope to see you again next semester.”
2. “I think that the most important thing I learned was knowing that the holy days are prophetic, and many of them have been fulfilled in Jesus.”
3. “Holidays based on religion were pretty much just resting days for me. Through this class I learned that these holidays have meaning other than ‘just a day off.’”
4. “One important lesson I learned is the understanding that salvation is a gift offered by God’s grace, not something that can be earned through works of human effort alone.”

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16 NASB).*

## IN THIS ISSUE

### The Seven Blessings of The Book of Revelation

by Dr. Gary Hedrick  
Page 1

**Special Update:**  
Ruth Nessim  
Page 10

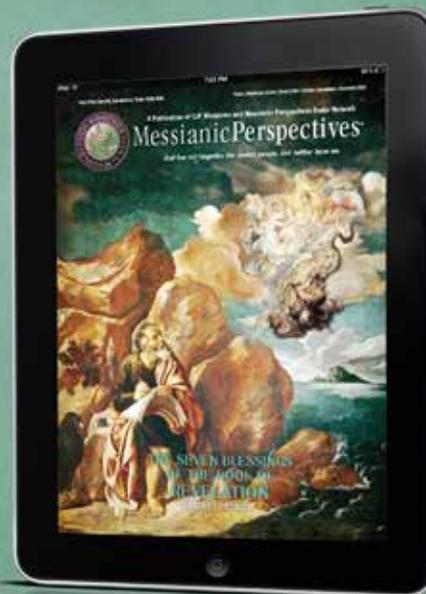
**Fruit from the Harvest**  
by Violette Berger  
Page 11

## CJF Ministries®

Post Office Box 345  
San Antonio, Texas 78292-0345

# DID YOU KNOW?

YOU CAN ACCESS THIS COPY OF  
*MESSIANIC  
PERSPECTIVES*  
AS WELL AS OUR ARCHIVE  
OF PREVIOUS ISSUES.



VISIT [CJFM.ORG/PAPER](http://CJFM.ORG/PAPER) ON ANY COMPUTER OR TABLET.