

Through the Bible

REVELATION - IV

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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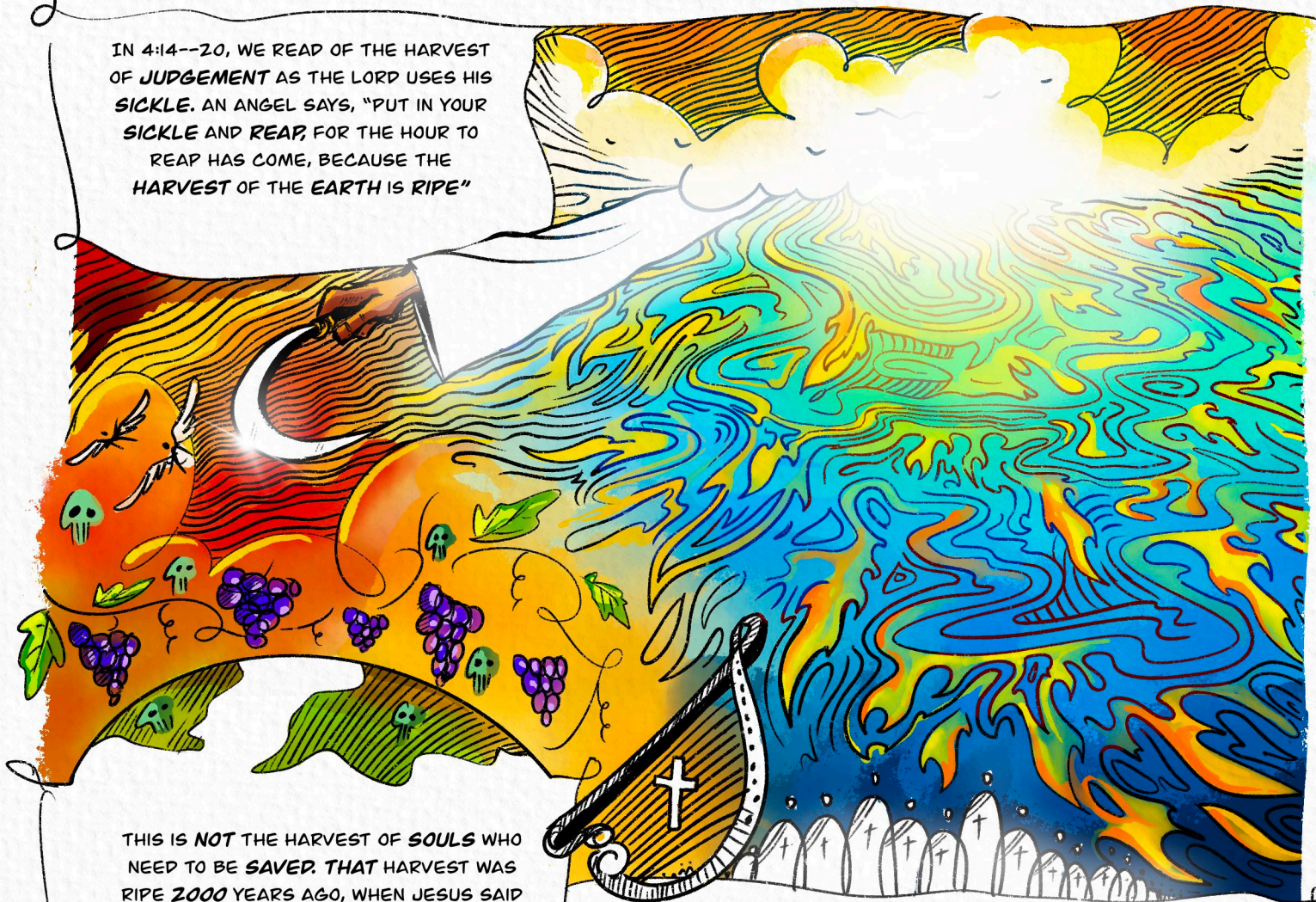
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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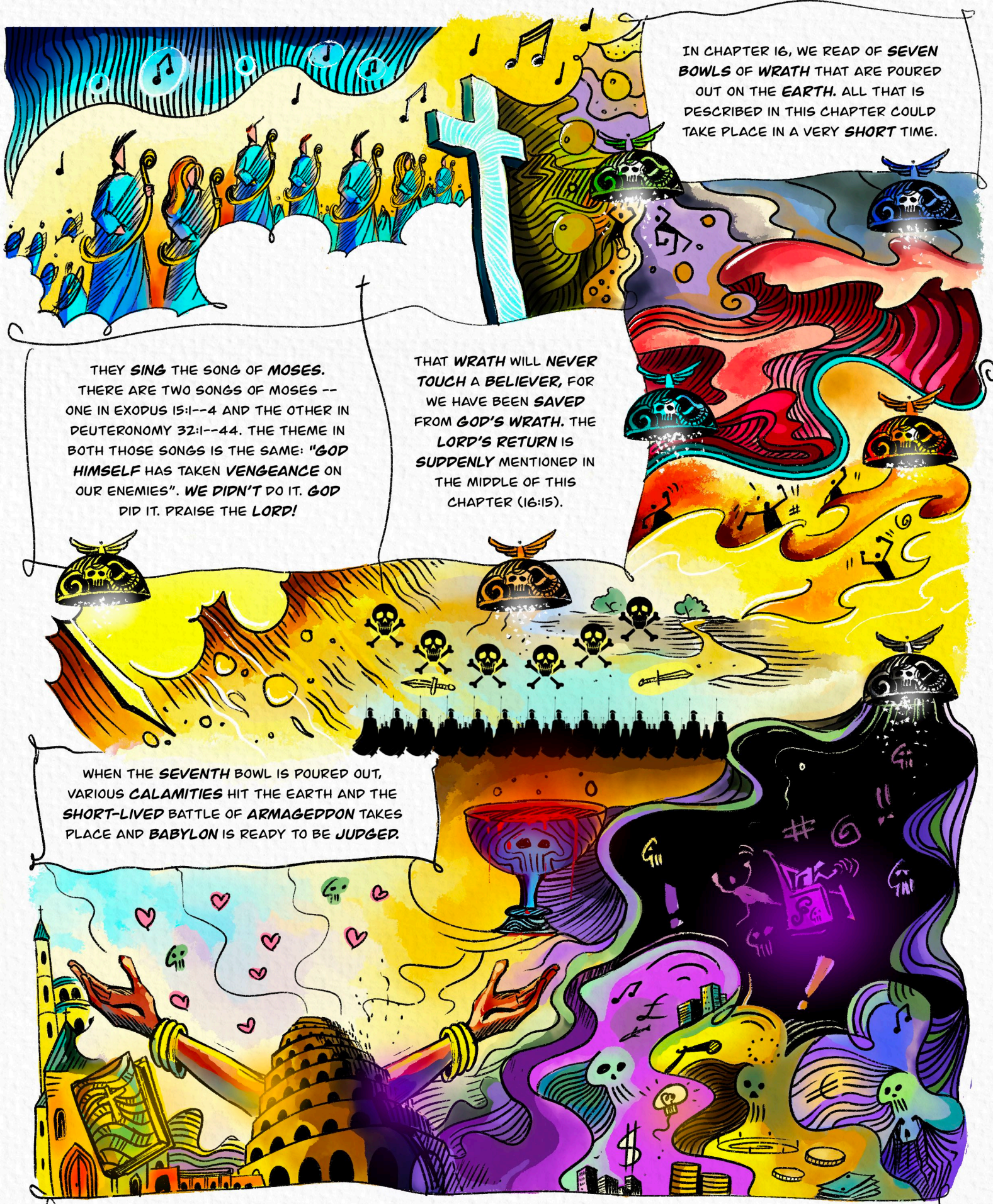
IN 14:7--11, WE READ OF **THREE ANGELS** PROCLAIMING THREE MESSAGES OF **JUDGEMENT**. THE FIRST ONE SAYS, "**FEAR** GOD AND GIVE HIM **GLORY** BECAUSE THE **HOUR** OF HIS **JUDGEMENT** HAS **COME**." THE SECOND ONE SAYS, "**FALLEN, FALLEN** IS **BABYLON THE GREAT**." AND THE THIRD ONE SAYS, "**IF ANYONE** FOLLOWS THE **BEAST**, HE WILL BE **TORMENTED FOREVER**."

IN 4:14--20, WE READ OF THE **HARVEST** OF **JUDGEMENT** AS THE LORD USES HIS **SICKLE**. AN ANGEL SAYS, "**PUT** IN YOUR **SICKLE** AND **REAP**, FOR THE **HOUR** TO **REAP** HAS **COME**, BECAUSE THE **HARVEST** OF THE **EARTH** IS **RIPE**"



THIS IS **NOT** THE **HARVEST** OF **SOULS** WHO NEED TO BE **SAVED**. THAT **HARVEST** WAS **RIPE** **2000** YEARS AGO, WHEN JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "**LIFT** UP YOUR EYES AND **LOOK**. THE **FIELDS** ARE **RIPE** FOR **HARVEST**" (JOHN 4:35). BUT WHAT WE SEE HERE IS **ANOTHER** **HARVEST** -- A **HARVEST** OF GOD'S **JUDGEMENT** ON THE **WORLD** AT THE **END** OF THIS **AGE**.

IN CHAPTER 15, WE SEE ANOTHER PICTURE OF THE **BRIDE** OF **CHRIST** (15:2). SHE STANDS **VICTORIOUS** HERE ON A **SEA** OF **GLASS** MIXED WITH **FIRE**. A **SEA** OF **GLASS** IS A PICTURE OF A **LIFE** OF **PERFECT REST**. HERE ARE BELIEVERS WHO HAVE ENTERED INTO "**THE SABBATH REST** IN **CHRIST**" IN THEIR LIVES (HEBREWS 4:9--11).



IN CHAPTER 16, WE READ OF **SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH** THAT ARE POURED OUT ON THE **EARTH**. ALL THAT IS DESCRIBED IN THIS CHAPTER COULD TAKE PLACE IN A VERY **SHORT TIME**.

THEY **SING** THE **SONG OF MOSES**. THERE ARE TWO SONGS OF MOSES -- ONE IN **EXODUS 15:1--4** AND THE OTHER IN **DEUTERONOMY 32:1--44**. THE THEME IN BOTH THOSE SONGS IS THE SAME: "**GOD HIMSELF HAS TAKEN VENGEANCE ON OUR ENEMIES**". **WE DIDN'T DO IT. GOD DID IT. PRAISE THE LORD!**

THAT **WRATH** WILL NEVER **TOUCH A BELIEVER**, FOR WE HAVE BEEN **SAVED FROM GOD'S WRATH**. THE **LORD'S RETURN** IS **SUDDENLY MENTIONED** IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CHAPTER (16:15).

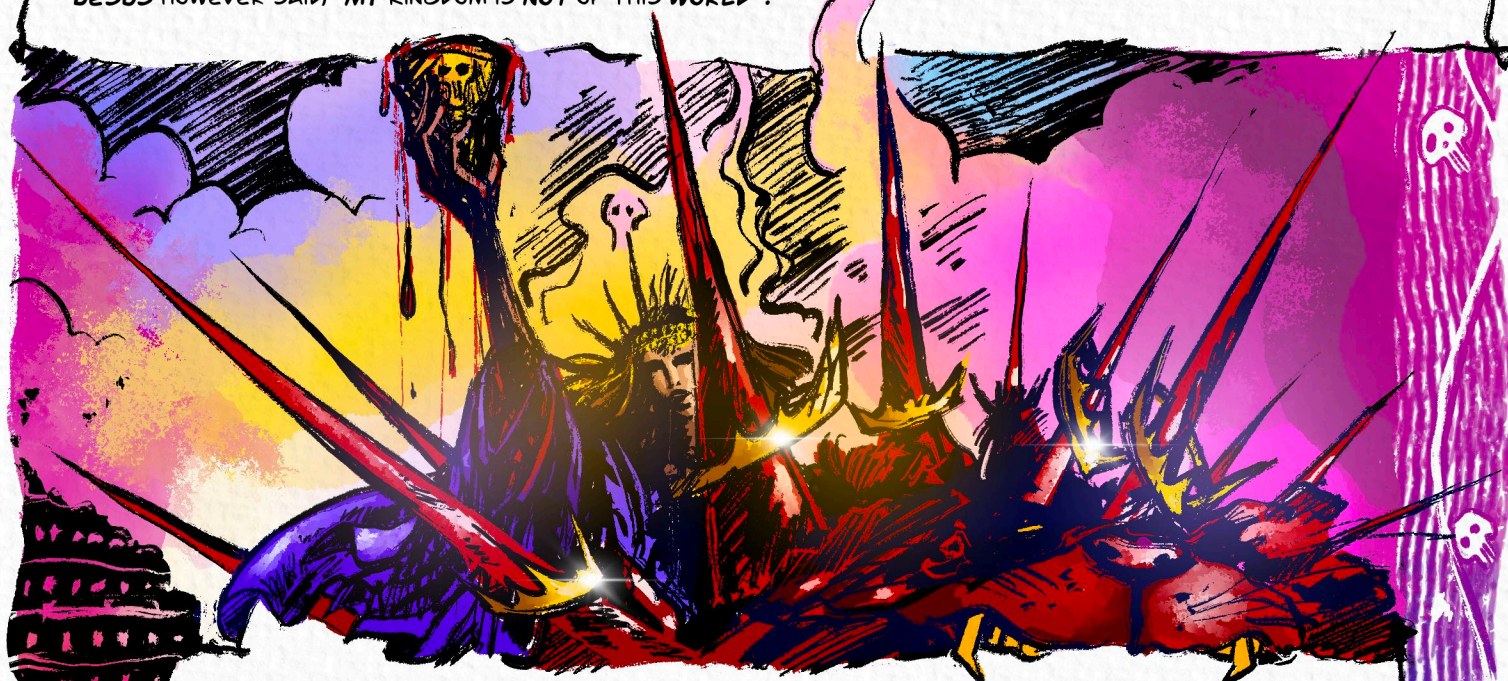
WHEN THE **SEVENTH BOWL** IS POURED OUT, VARIOUS **CALAMITIES** HIT THE **EARTH** AND THE **SHORT-LIVED BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON** TAKES PLACE AND **BABYLON** IS READY TO BE **JUDGED**.

CHAPTERS 17 AND 18 ARE ABOUT **BABYLON** -- WHICH IS **BOTH** A **RELIGIOUS SYSTEM** AND A **POLITICAL SYSTEM**. IT SYMBOLISES **CORRUPT CHRISTENDOM** WHICH HAS THE **SAME** SPIRIT AS THE **CORRUPT POLITICAL PARTIES** IN THE **WORLD**. **BABYLONIAN CHRISTIANITY** SEEKS FOR **EARTHLY POWER AS WELL AS** FOR **GOD'S POWER**.

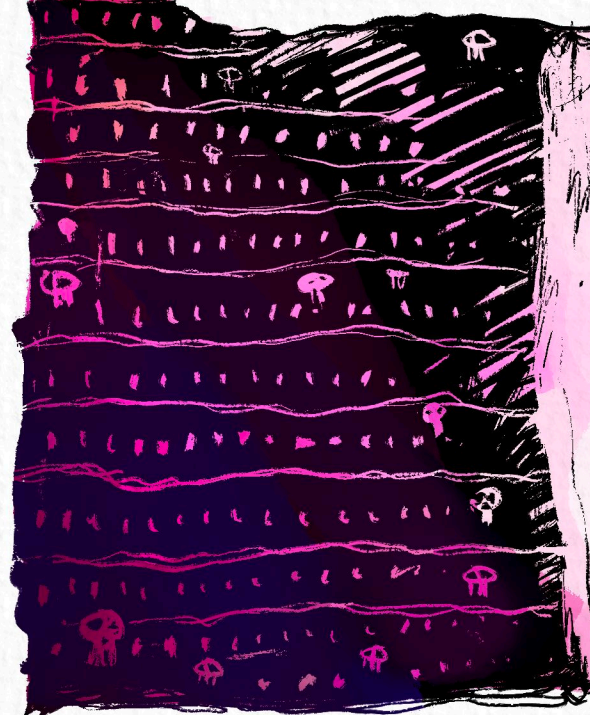


BUT SINCE GOD'S POWER CANNOT BE MIXED WITH EARTHLY HONOUR AND POWER, SATAN **DECEIVES** CHRISTENDOM WITH **COUNTERFEITS** OF GOD'S POWER -- AS WE SEE BEING EXERCISED BY THE GREAT MULTITUDE OF **BABYLONIAN** PREACHERS TODAY. **JESUS** HOWEVER SAID, "MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD".

BABYLONIAN CHRISTIANS SEEK TO GET **ALL** THEY CAN OF THIS **WORLD** WHILE PROFESSEDLY SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD FIRST. BUT THEY WILL DISCOVER IN THE FINAL DAY THAT SATAN **DECEIVED** THEM AND THEY DO NOT GET THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT ALL.

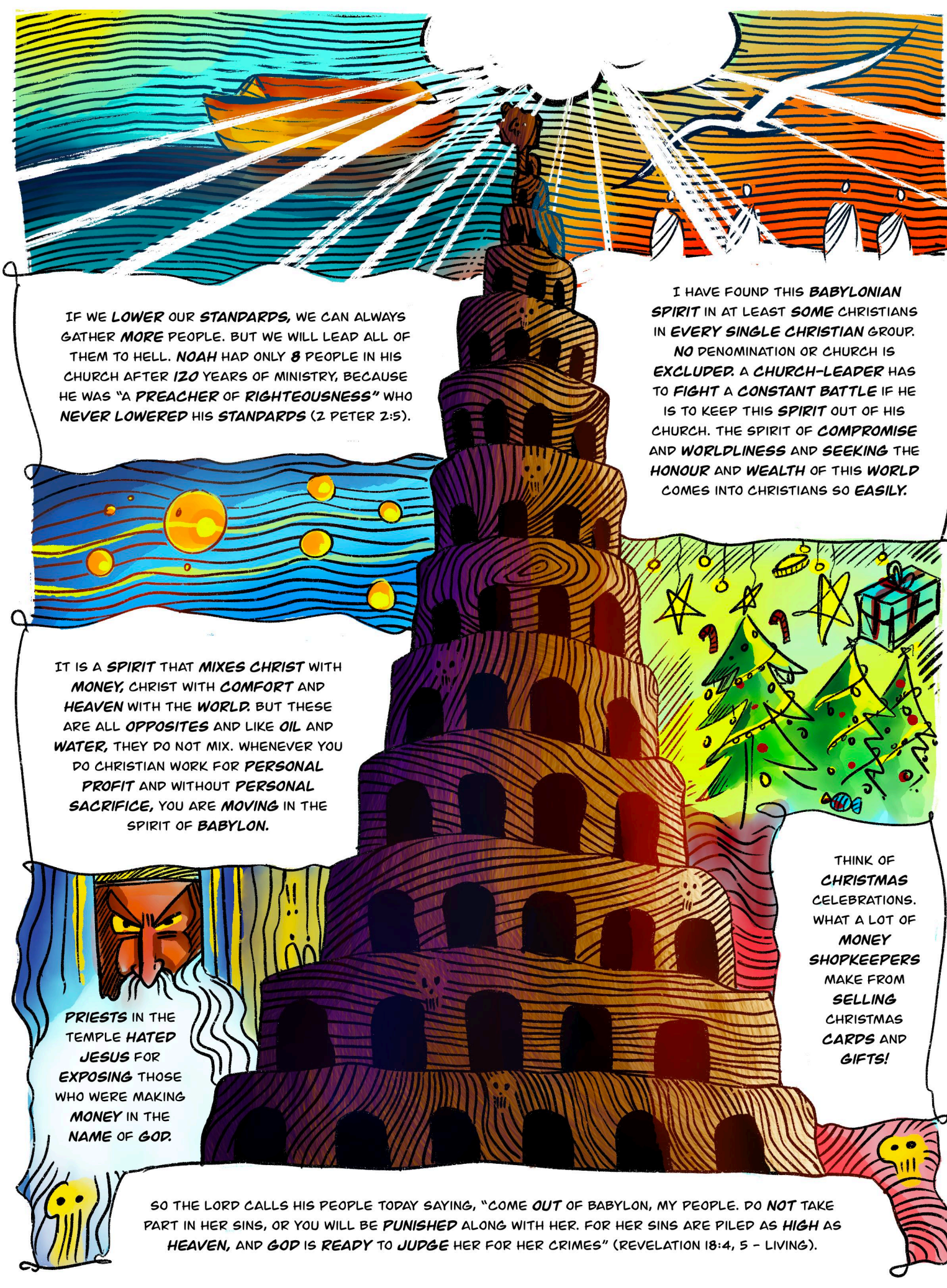


IN CHAPTER 17, WE SEE A **WOMAN** RIDING ON THE **BEAST**. THE **BEAST** IS THE WORLD'S **POLITICAL** SYSTEM, AND THE **WOMAN** IS **RELIGIOUS** CHRISTENDOM -- AND THEY ARE HAND IN GLOVE WITH EACH OTHER.



IN 17:5, WE READ OF 'BABYLON THE **GREAT**.' BABYLON IS CALLED '**GREAT**' 11 TIMES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. JERUSALEM HOWEVER IS CALLED THE '**HOLY**' CITY (REVELATION 21:2). THE CONTRAST BETWEEN '**GREAT**' AND '**HOLY**' IS THE CONTRAST BETWEEN **QUANTITY** AND **QUALITY**.





IF WE LOWER OUR STANDARDS, WE CAN ALWAYS GATHER MORE PEOPLE. BUT WE WILL LEAD ALL OF THEM TO HELL. NOAH HAD ONLY 8 PEOPLE IN HIS CHURCH AFTER 120 YEARS OF MINISTRY, BECAUSE HE WAS "A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" WHO NEVER LOWERED HIS STANDARDS (2 PETER 2:5).

I HAVE FOUND THIS BABYLONIAN SPIRIT IN AT LEAST SOME CHRISTIANS IN EVERY SINGLE CHRISTIAN GROUP.

NO DENOMINATION OR CHURCH IS EXCLUDED. A CHURCH-LEADER HAS TO FIGHT A CONSTANT BATTLE IF HE IS TO KEEP THIS SPIRIT OUT OF HIS CHURCH. THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE AND WORLDLINESS AND SEEKING THE HONOUR AND WEALTH OF THIS WORLD COMES INTO CHRISTIANS SO EASILY.

IT IS A SPIRIT THAT MIXES CHRIST WITH MONEY, CHRIST WITH COMFORT AND HEAVEN WITH THE WORLD. BUT THESE ARE ALL OPPOSITES AND LIKE OIL AND WATER, THEY DO NOT MIX. WHENEVER YOU DO CHRISTIAN WORK FOR PERSONAL PROFIT AND WITHOUT PERSONAL SACRIFICE, YOU ARE MOVING IN THE SPIRIT OF BABYLON.

PRIESTS IN THE TEMPLE HATED JESUS FOR EXPOSING THOSE WHO WERE MAKING MONEY IN THE NAME OF GOD.

THINK OF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS. WHAT A LOT OF MONEY SHOPKEEPERS MAKE FROM SELLING CHRISTMAS CARDS AND GIFTS!

SO THE LORD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TODAY SAYING, "COME OUT OF BABYLON, MY PEOPLE. DO NOT TAKE PART IN HER SINS, OR YOU WILL BE PUNISHED ALONG WITH HER. FOR HER SINS ARE PILED AS HIGH AS HEAVEN, AND GOD IS READY TO JUDGE HER FOR HER CRIMES" (REVELATION 18:4, 5 - LIVING).

HALLELUJAH

IN CHAPTER 19, WE READ THE WORD 'HALLELUJAH' OCCURRING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THERE ARE ONLY 4 OCCURRENCES OF THE WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT -- AND ALL 4 ARE IN THIS CHAPTER.

THREE TIMES THEY SHOUT "HALLELUJAH", BECAUSE **BABYLON** HAS BEEN **DESTROYED!** (19:1--4). WILL YOU ALSO JOIN THEM TODAY AND SAY, "HALLELUJAH! LORD, YOU ARE GOING TO DESTROY THIS **WRETCHED** **MONEY-MAKING, PLEASURE-LOVING** CHRISTIANITY THAT HAS LED SO MANY PEOPLE **ASTRAY**"?

THE FOURTH TIME THEY SAY "HALLELUJAH" IS BECAUSE "THE LORD GOD IS **REIGNING** AND THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME AND HIS BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF **READY**" (19:6, 7). THIS IS YET ANOTHER THING WE MUST SHOUT **HALLELUJAH** FOR, THAT THE LORD IS PREPARING THE **BRIDE** OF CHRIST IN **PURITY** ON EARTH TODAY.

THE **BRIDE** OF CHRIST COMPRISES OF THOSE WHO HAVE KEPT THEMSELVES **PURE** FROM THE SPIRIT OF **BABYLON**. SHE IS CLOTHED IN **PURE, WHITE LINEN**, WITHOUT ANY GOLD, SYMBOLISING THE **RIGHTEOUS** LIFE THAT THOSE BELIEVERS LIVED. THIS IS NOT THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS** OF CHRIST BUT "THE **RIGHTEOUS ACTS** OF THE **SAINTS**" (REVELATION 19:8).

THIS **PURE WHITE** DRESS IS IN **CONTRAST** TO THE **GAUDY** DRESS OF THE **HARLOT**, WHO IS DECKED IN **PURPLE** AND **SCARLET** WITH **GOLD, PRECIOUS STONES** AND **PEARLS** (17:4).

JOHN WAS SO **EXCITED** WHEN HE SAW THE **BRIDE** OF CHRIST THAT HE FELL DOWN TO **WORSHIP** THE ANGEL. BUT THE ANGEL SAID, "**DON'T** **WORSHIP** ME, **WORSHIP** **GOD**" (19:10).

DON'T DO THAT!

THEN WE SEE **CHRIST** RETURNING TO EARTH, AS A **WARRIOR**, ALONG WITH THE **SAINTS** WHO HAD JUST BEEN **RAPTURED** TO MEET HIM IN THE AIR TO **WELCOME** HIM TO EARTH (19:11--16). HE IS COMING TO **ESTABLISH** HIS **KINGDOM**.



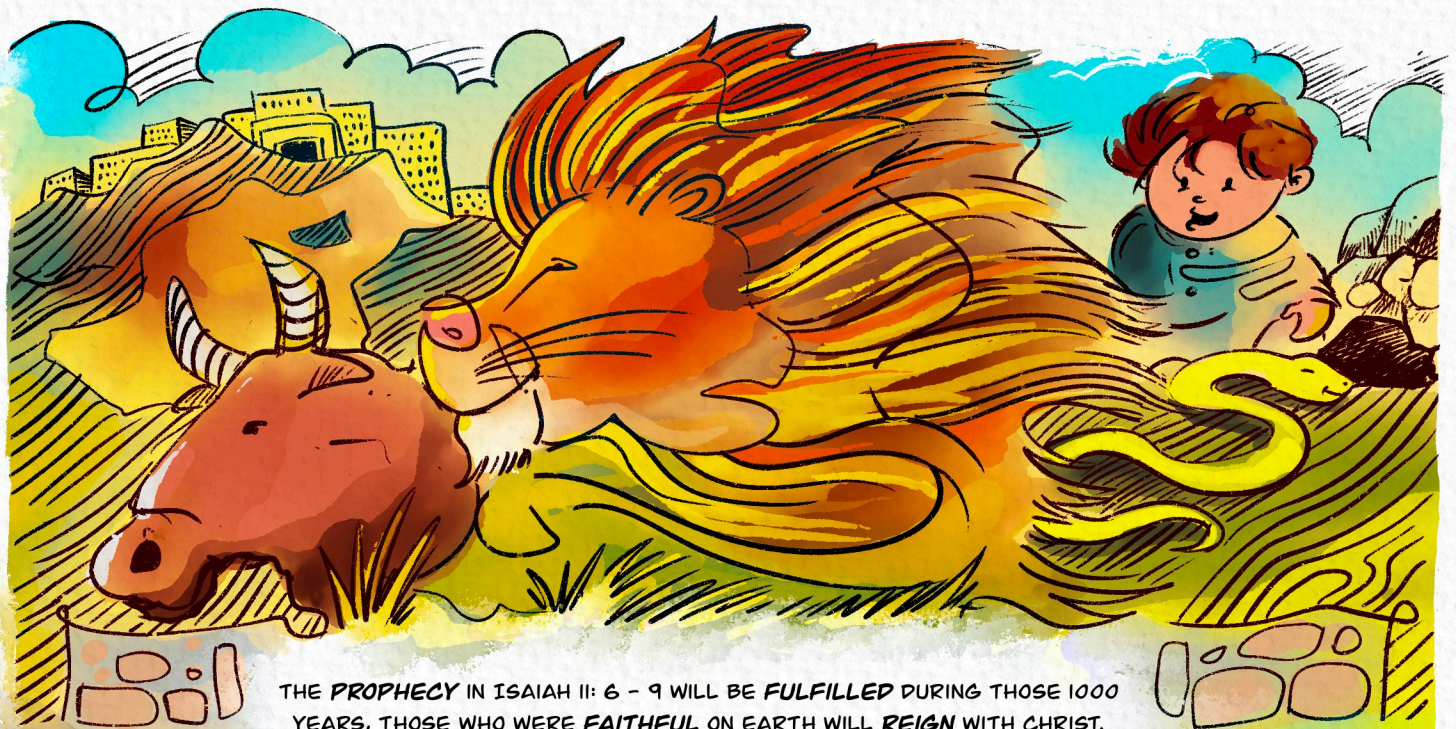
THERE IS A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BATTLE OF **ARMAGEDDON** HERE (19:17--21).



THEN THE **ANTICHRIST** AND THE **FALSE PROPHET** ARE TAKEN AND THROWN INTO THE **LAKE OF FIRE** (19:20). THEY ARE THE **FIRST TWO** OCCUPANTS OF THE **LAKE OF FIRE**. THE **LAKE OF FIRE** IS A **BIGGER** VERSION OF **HELL**.



IN CHAPTER 20, WE READ OF **SATAN** BEING **BOUND** IN THE **BOTTOMLESS PIT** FOR **1000 YEARS** WHEN **JESUS** **REIGNS** ON THE EARTH.



THE PROPHECY IN ISAIAH 11: 6 - 9 WILL BE FULFILLED DURING THOSE 1000 YEARS, THOSE WHO WERE FAITHFUL ON EARTH WILL REIGN WITH CHRIST.



HERE IS A BRIEF HISTORY OF SATAN. HE WAS ORIGINALLY CAST DOWN FROM THE THIRD HEAVEN TO THE SECOND HEAVEN WHEN HE REBELLED AGAINST GOD. ONE DAY HE WILL BE THROWN DOWN FROM THE SECOND HEAVEN TO EARTH (AS WE SAW IN CHAPTER 12). HERE WE SEE HIM BEING CAST FROM THE EARTH INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT. AFTER 1000 YEARS, HE WILL BE RELEASED FOR A SHORT WHILE AND THEN HE WILL BE THROWN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. THAT WILL BE HIS FINAL END.

WE ALSO READ HERE ABOUT THE FIRST RESURRECTION -- THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS (20:6). THE WICKED WILL NOT BE RAISED FOR THEIR JUDGEMENT UNTIL THE 1000-YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST IS OVER.

AT THE END OF 1000 YEARS SATAN WILL BE RELEASED FOR A SHORT PERIOD JUST TO SHOW PEOPLE THAT EVEN AFTER PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THE PEACEFUL REIGN OF JESUS FOR 1000 YEARS, THEY STILL WANT TO FOLLOW SATAN, BECAUSE MEN ARE SELFISH, SELF-CENTRED AND DO NOT WANT TO SUBMIT THEIR LIVES TO GOD. BUT IN A MOMENT, THE FIRE OF GOD COMES DOWN AND BURNS THEM ALL UP AND THEN THE DEVIL IS THROWN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE (20:9, 10).



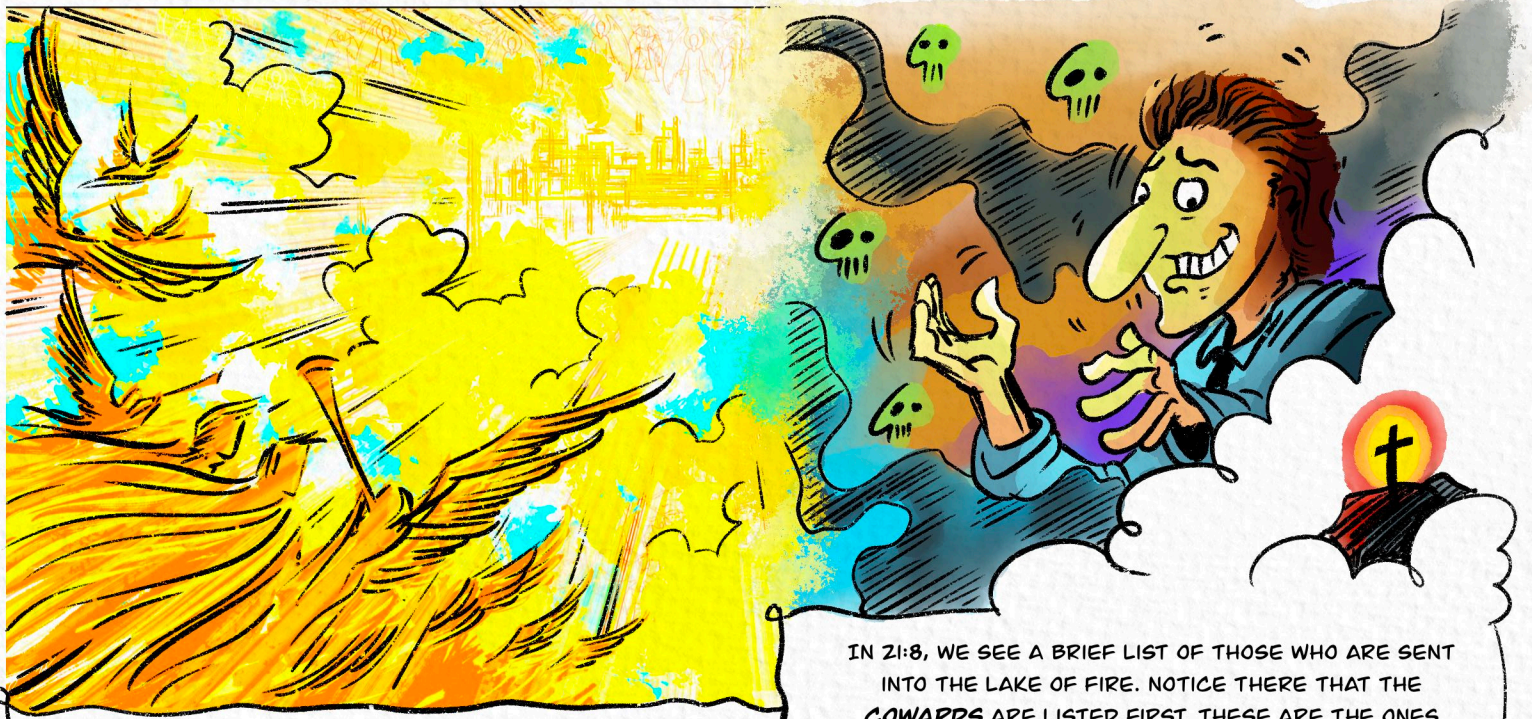
THEN COMES THE **SECOND RESURRECTION**, WHEN GOD WILL SIT ON THE **GREAT THRONE OF JUDGEMENT** AND **UNBELIEVERS FROM ALL THE AGES** WILL BE **RAISED FROM THE DEAD** TO STAND BEFORE HIM. THE **RECORDS OF THEIR LIVES** WILL THEN BE **OPENED** (20:11, 12).

WHEN **REVELATION** WAS WRITTEN, BOOKS WERE NOT LIKE THE BOOKS WE HAVE TODAY. THEY WERE **ROLLED-UP SCROLLS OF PARCHMENT**. THE NEAREST TO THAT, THAT WE SEE TODAY, IS A **VIDEO-TAPE** WHICH IS ALSO **ROLLED UP LIKE A SCROLL**.

SO GOD TAKES THE **VIDEO TAPE** OF EACH ONE'S **MEMORY** AND "PRESSES THE **REWIND BUTTON**". THE PERSON'S MEMORY GOES **BACK** TO THE TIME WHEN HE WAS **BORN** AND HIS LIFE IS **PLAYED BACK** FROM THERE -- FOR THE **WHOLE WORLD** TO SEE.

THESE PEOPLE WERE **ALREADY IN HELL**. WHY WERE THEY **RAISED UP** TO BE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE? IT WAS SO THAT THE **WHOLE WORLD** MAY SEE THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S JUDGEMENTS** -- THAT **EVERYONE** WHO IS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE **DESERVES** TO GO THERE. **JUDGEMENT** MUST **NOT ONLY** BE DONE, BUT ALSO **SEEN** TO BE DONE.

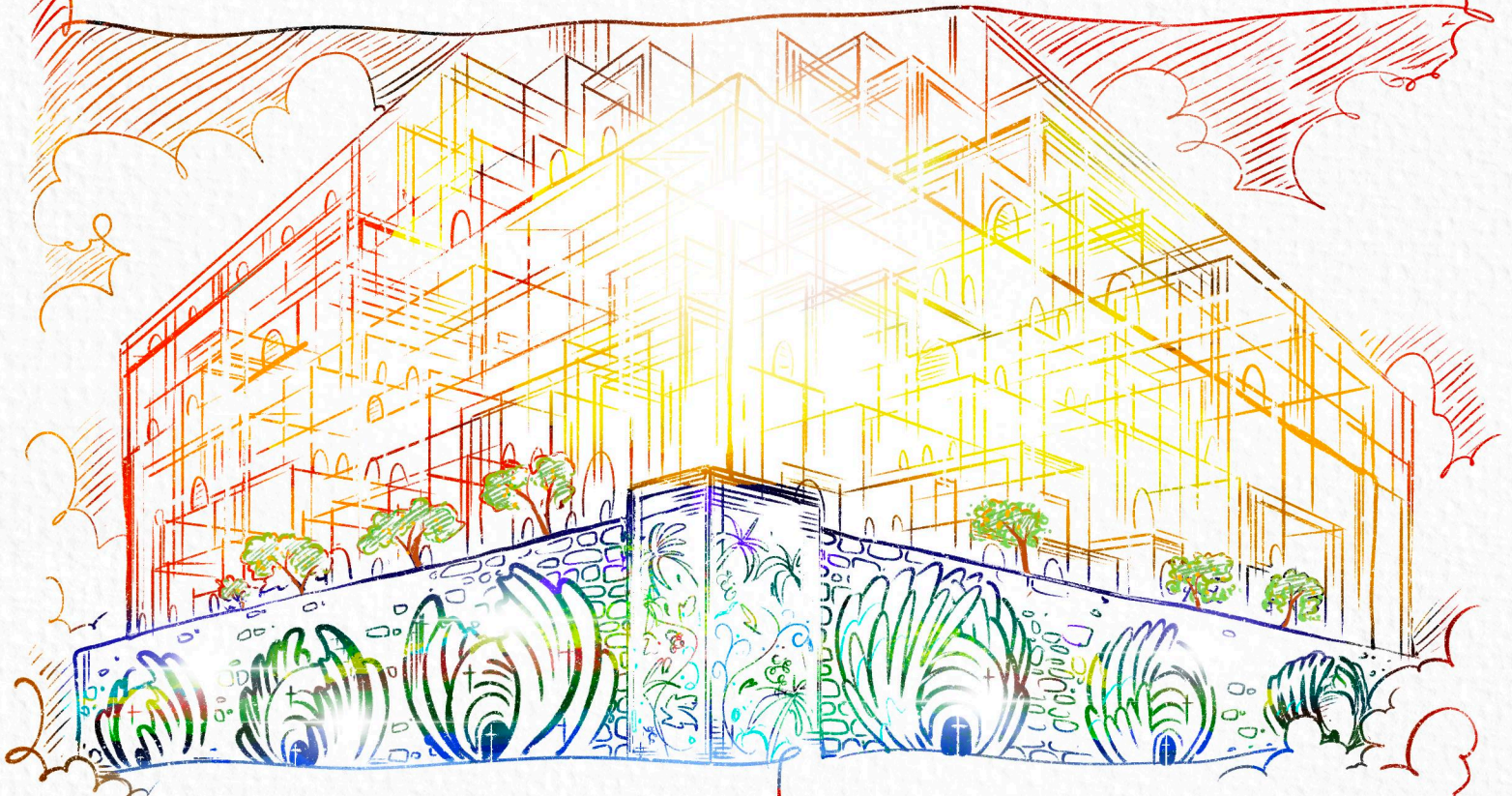
THERE IS ONLY **ONE** WAY FOR ALL OUR SINS TO BE **BLOTTED OUT** FROM THAT VIDEO TAPE. BY AN **HONEST CONFESSION** OF OUR GUILT, A **GENUINE REPENTANCE** AND TURNING AWAY FROM THAT SIN AND ASKING CHRIST TO **CLEANSE** US WITH HIS **BLOOD** FROM ALL SIN.



IN CHAPTERS 21 AND 22, WE READ ABOUT THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH. HERE IN THE **NEW JERUSALEM**, THE **OVERCOMERS** WILL **INHERIT EVERYTHING** (21:7).

IN 21:8, WE SEE A BRIEF LIST OF THOSE WHO ARE SENT INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. NOTICE THERE THAT THE **COWARDS** ARE LISTED FIRST. THESE ARE THE ONES WHO **FEARED MEN** MORE THAN GOD AND WHO CARED FOR THE **APPROVAL OF MEN** MORE THAN FOR THE **APPROVAL OF GOD** AND WHO THEREFORE DID **NOT** HAVE THE **COURAGE** TO STAND UP FOR THE **TRUTH**.

THE NEW JERUSALEM IS MADE OF **CRYSTAL-CLEAR** MATERIAL (21:10, 11). THIS SYMBOLISES THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING **TRANSPARENT** AND **TOTALLY FREE** FROM ALL **HYPOCRISY** IF WE ARE TO BE A PART OF THIS **GLORIOUS** CHURCH.



WE ARE TOLD THAT "THE **LENGTH, WIDTH AND HEIGHT** OF THE CITY ARE ALL **EQUAL**". IT IS A **CUBE**. ITS DEPTH IS **EXACTLY** THE SAME AS ITS FRONTFACE (LENGTH AND WIDTH). SO **SEEK** TO HAVE AS MUCH **SPIRITUAL DEPTH** IN YOUR **LIFE** AS OTHERS SEE ON YOUR **OUTSIDE**.

IN 21:12 AND 14, WE READ ABOUT THE 12 TRIBES OF **ISRAEL** AS WELL AS THE 12 APOSTLES OF CHRIST. THIS SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE **OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS** AND **NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS** WILL **BOTH** HAVE A PART IN THIS **NEW JERUSALEM**.

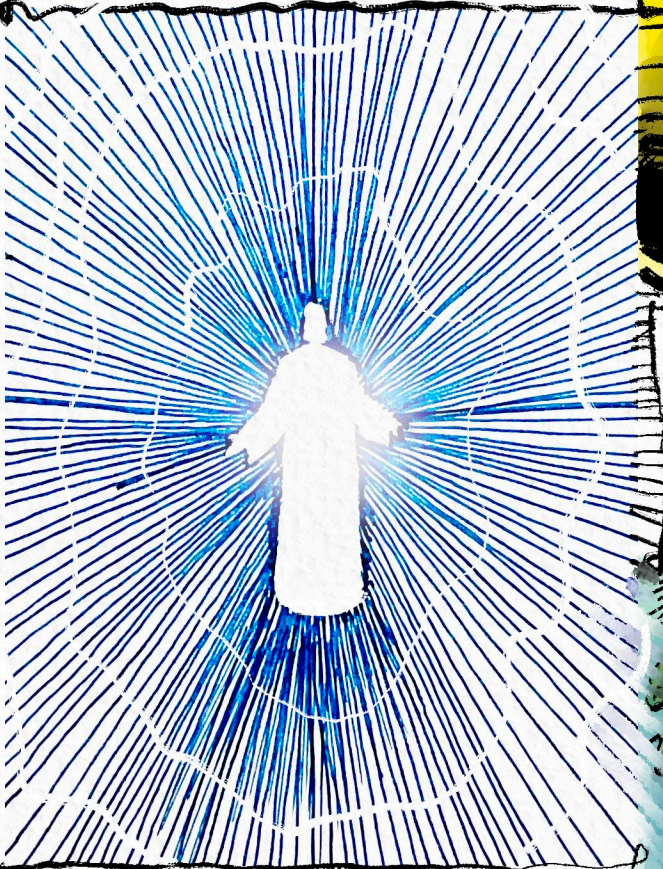
THEN IN 22:1, 2, WE SEE THE **RIVER OF LIFE**, THE **TREE OF LIFE**, AND THE **THRONE OF GOD AND OF CHRIST**. THERE WILL NO LONGER BE ANY **CURSE** ANYWHERE (22:3). THE **TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL** HAS BEEN DESTROYED. THERE IS NO MORE NEED FOR THE **LIGHT OF THE SUN** FOR **GOD HIMSELF IS THE LIGHT** THERE (22:5). THIS IS A PICTURE OF OUR **ETERNAL HOME**.



A FINAL INVITATION IS GIVEN BEFORE THE BIBLE CLOSES, TO ALL WHO ARE THIRSTY FOR THE DIVINE LIFE TO COME AND PARTAKE OF ETERNAL LIFE FREELY (22:17). THERE ARE TWO INVITATIONS IN REVELATION: UNBELIEVERS ARE INVITED TO BE SAVED. BELIEVERS ARE URGED TO OVERCOME.



IN 22:11, WE SEE AN **AMAZING** EXHORTATION. WHAT THAT MEANS IS THAT IF YOU HAVE READ THE **WHOLE BIBLE** AND COME TO THE **LAST PAGE** AND YOU **STILL** WANT TO DO **WRONG** AND BE **FILTHY**, THEN **GOD TELLS** YOU TO GO AHEAD AND DO **WRONG** AND BE **FILTHY**



THEN JESUS SAYS, "I AM COMING **QUICKLY**. BE **READY**. **BLESSED** IS THE MAN WHO **OBEYS** THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK" (22:7). THE LORD IS COMING **SOON** AND HE WILL **GIVE** TO EVERY MAN **ACCORDING** TO WHAT HE HAS **DONE** (22:12).



THE **FIRST SIN** MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE IS LYING WHEN SATAN TOLD EVE THAT SHE WOULD "**NOT DIE**" (GENESIS 3:4). THE **LAST SIN** MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE HERE, IS ALSO LYING. (22:15)



A **FINAL WARNING** IS ALSO GIVEN TO ANYONE WHO **REMOVES OR MODIFIES** ANY OF THE **COMMANDMENTS** GIVEN IN THIS BOOK (22:18, 19).



THE BIBLE CONCLUDES WITH THE WORDS OF **JESUS** PROMISING TO COME **BACK TO EARTH** (22:20) AND THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLE JOHN: "THE **GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST** BE WITH ALL THE SAINTS. AMEN" (22:21).

SUPPOSE THERE WAS A **CRICKET MATCH** BETWEEN YOUR COUNTRY AND **ANOTHER COUNTRY** AND YOU WATCHED IT ON **TELEVISION** AND YOU SAW THAT **YOUR COUNTRY'S TEAM WON THE MATCH**.

A **FRIEND OF YOURS**, WHO DID **NOT** SEE THE MATCH AND DOES **NOT** KNOW THE **RESULT**, WATCHES A **REPLAY** OF THAT MATCH ON TELEVISION A FEW HOURS **LATER**. YOU SIT **WITH HIM** AND WATCH THE MATCH TOO.



DURING THE **REPLAY**, AT TIMES WHEN YOUR TEAM IS DOING **BADLY**, YOUR FRIEND IS **TENSE** AND WONDERS WHETHER YOUR TEAM WILL **LOSE**. BUT **YOU** ARE **TOTALLY RELAXED**, BECAUSE YOU ALREADY KNOW THE **FINAL RESULT**.

APPLY THAT TO OUR **BATTLE WITH SATAN**. THERE YOU CAN SEE THE **REASON** WHY SOME BELIEVERS ARE **TENSE, DISCOURAGED AND WORRIED FREQUENTLY** AND WHY OTHER BELIEVERS ARE AT **REST**. "WHEN THE DEVIL **REMINDS** YOU OF YOUR **PAST**, YOU REMIND HIM OF HIS **FUTURE!**"



JESUS AND THE SAINTS ARE TRIUMPHANT IN THE END. SO THEY KNOW THAT **EVEN IF SATAN WINS A FEW BATTLES** HERE AND THERE, AT **PRESENT**, HE HAS **ALREADY LOST THE WAR**. **PRAISE THE LORD**.