

This destruction, however, will not affect all men. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is, in addition to being the judge (1:13-16; 19:11-21), also the Lamb of God (5:5-6) slain to redeem to God a great multitude (5:9-12; 7:9-12, 14-17). The end of the present heaven and earth will usher in the new heaven and earth (21:1) which will be the place of eternal life and blessing for the redeemed of God, for his angels and, in their midst, for God, himself (21:3-5, 7, 22-27; 22:3-5). His chosen people, the redeemed (7:10, 14), those who overcome (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28), will be in a new way the servants of God (22:3-4).

The judgments of Revelation fall upon the kingdom of evil. Satan (12:3-4, 7-9, 17), his slaves (13:1-18) and the world system fostered by them (17:1-18) will be condemned to the second death, the lake of fire (18:1-24; 19:19-21; 20:7-10) forever. The many judgments which fall upon mankind seem to be given so that they might see the futility of their rebellion against God and repent, but they do not do so (6:1-14, 15-17; 9:20-21; 16:10-11, 21). They would rather die than repent (6:16-17) and they will die (20:15).

In the midst of this judgment the world's hatred of God will be against those who are his (6:9-11; 11:1-10; 13:9-10; 14:12-13) just as it has always been. This calls for perseverance and patient endurance on the part of the saints, possible only as they (we) remember that God is he who sits on the throne and that the Word of God, incarnate, redeems eternally all who trust in him.

#### Questions

How is Revelation to be interpreted? Is any one way correct? How can we know with certainty? Did John the Apostle write Revelation? Is the millennium a literal thousand years? If so, what events does it encompass?

#### Archaeology

Revelation is addressed to the churches in seven cities which may have been located along a circular mail route beginning and ending in Ephesus, the major city of Roman Asia.

Ephesus was the metropolis ("mother city") of Asia with a population of one-third of a million. It was a major religious center featuring the temple of Artemis (Diana was her Roman name), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ephesus was also a major center of the imperial cult (emperor worship).

Smyrna, destroyed c. 600 BC, was refounded three centuries later; it became a city famous for its beauty, its wealth and the latter came from both its position as a port and its fertile location--it was truly a resurrected city.

Pergamum was the first city to build a temple for the emperor cult (c. 29 BC). This new cult became the standard of loyalty under Domitian who demanded that he be called Dominus et Deus (Lord and God). This was impossible for Christians to say; the new cult became the cause of much persecution for the church.