

# **OUR SORCEROUS AGE**

## **Prelude to Armageddon**

*By Steve Rafalsky*

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*The first two of these three brief essays are new, and the last one—“New Insights in Amillennial Eschatology”—is from the book, A Great and Terrible Love: A Visionary Journey from Babylon’s Sorceries to God’s Paradise (a couple of links herein lead to free digital versions of this book). The present booklet, Our Sorcerous Age, is about drugs—the recreational psychedelic drugs, including LSD, mescaline, DMT, psilocybin mushrooms, peyote, marijuana and its derivative hashish, &etc—and their part, strange as it may initially seem, in eschatological events, i.e., those happenings prophesied to occur at the end of the present age.*

*There may be some slight redundancy—passages repeated—in the three essays; please excuse these.*

*The purpose of what is in this booklet is to alert its readers to the significance of the remarkable emergence, a global phenomenon, of these drugs and their affect within the collective consciousness of humankind—the zeitgeist, or spirit of the age. In case they seem alarmist to some—particularly one of the chapters in the larger work, A Great And Terrible Love, “The Fate of Babylon, a study in determining the identity and demise of Babylon in John’s Apocalypse”, it really is appropriate we should be alarmed. Perhaps in the jadedness of our minds, what with the excesses of apocalyptic super-hero movies and like fare, we hohum the writing on the wall: The Day of Judgment is just around the corner and nearing, its preliminary catastrophes even nearer, while our “civilization” is falling apart before our eyes. Things are not well. We should be taking God’s word very seriously, and learning to draw near to Him, the one safe place in all creation.*

# Opening the Gates of Hell Upon the Earth: Prelude to Armageddon

Starting with Biblical definitions, for the terms in the title are from the Bible: Armageddon is the lethal *global* war by hostile unbelievers upon the people of God—the “saints” (Rev 20:7-10)—at the very end of this present age. The “Gates of Hell” refers to the demonic realm, the dimension which evil spirits, the legions of Satan, currently inhabit.

Opening the gates of Hell upon the earth means a breaching of—a passing through—the barrier separating the demonic and human realms, so that the presence and influence of demons may enter into and be directly present in the collective human consciousness, and in human affairs.

Are we talking of some wild science fiction fantasy movie or book? Unfortunately not; this is a reality becoming increasingly manifest in human societies across the world, since the countercultures of 1960s and ‘70s America and the United Kingdom, stemming from an event of that time which then steeped in the great cauldron of humankind’s collective consciousness—the world zeitgeist or “spirit of the age”—for around half a century.

How, specifically, is “the barrier separating the demonic and human realms ... breached”? Here we get into the supernatural, that which is above or beyond normal, natural phenomena, which falls to reason as spiritual realities are not observable or measurable, not being part of the physical creation.

And what did the counterculture of the last century do to accomplish this? Albeit unwittingly, it engaged in the ancient craft of *sorcery*, which involves the use of a certain class of drugs, including LSD, mescaline, psilocybin mushrooms, peyote, marijuana and hashish, etc., widely recognized by shamans and spiritualists up through the ages, though it usually functioned in the crawling shadows of the world, forbidden in most societies [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entheogenic\\_use\\_of\\_cannabis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entheogenic_use_of_cannabis). And it was known in ancient Biblical times, in Chaldean Babylon for instance (Isaiah 47:9,12), and both the apostles Paul and John speak of it in their writings (Galatians 5:20-21; Revelation 9:21, 18:23; 21:8; 22:15). What the counterculture newly did was make shamanistic sorcery a world-wide *recreation*, a thing unheard of till the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century its usage is even greater with the appearance of widespread, *legal*, and extremely potent marijuana!

The first place sorcery is spoken of in the Book of Revelation is at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter (verse 21). In the beginning of that chapter we see that one of the visions shown to John on the island of Patmos was a key to the abyss given an angel that fell from heaven, who opened this abyss upon the earth so that it poured forth a great cloud of thick smoke as though from a gigantic furnace, blackening out the sun and the sky. From the smoke came a great army of demonic creatures like a massive swarm of locusts which had power, not upon the plants of earth, but rather to painfully torment those human beings “which have not the seal of God” (verse 4) so they would want to die, yet feared to.

This cameo of a vision, which entails the fifth trumpet judgment of God, is followed by another judgment, the sixth trumpet, in which one third of humankind are killed by four (likely demonic) angels who loose an innumerable host of death-dealing monsters and their riders slaying vast multitudes. These are visions, not photographic depictions, and are symbolic or figurative of spiritual realities. But what do they signify, such as the sky and sun clouded over with darkness, and the unsealed among men tormented? We may understand that the distinct time marker of verse 15—“the four angels were loosed, which were prepared **for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year**, for to slay the third part of men”—involves an actual historic event at a specific, *prophetically set* time rather than a simply figurative, recapitulated dynamic often seen in Revelation. The interpretation of that event and that time—part of what is called “the sixth trumpet”—is directly tied to the fifth trumpet which precedes and is a contributing cause of the sixth.

So it would first be necessary to understand this fifth trumpet, also called a “woe”—the first of three (verse 12)—as to what it means in its application and impact on our times and lives. The question then would be, When did a great spiritual / psychological (or psychic) darkness come directly upon *all* humankind from a demonic source, apart from the fall in the Garden of Eden?

Here is what I posit constitutes an opening the Gates of Hell upon the earth, and a prelude to Armageddon: when the “Woodstock Generation” (and this includes the many others outside that camp, such as the CIA and other intelligence agencies, artists, academics, politicians, intellectuals, students, psychotherapists, singers and musicians, poets and writers, etc etc) opened their awareness on a massive worldwide scale to the spiritual dimension using the agents that have been the staples of shamans and spiritualists for ages, this commenced the pouring into the human collective consciousness the direct presence and influence of those beings who inhabit Hell.

An accompanying ten-page paper, “New Insights in Amillennial Eschatology” <[bit.ly/2MnO9wJ](http://bit.ly/2MnO9wJ)>, explores in detail the connections between Revelation chapter 9 and the counterculture’s darkening of humanity’s spiritual / psychic realm, ushering in “occult happenings that would impact ‘the spirit of the age’ come the 21st century like pounding blows on the body and soul of humankind” (from the Preface to *A Great and Terrible Love: A Visionary Journey from Woodstock’s Sorceries to God’s Paradise*, p. 1).<sup>1</sup>

What I want to briefly look at are these “pounding blows on the body and soul of humankind”, for we are now suffering the impact of superior beings who violently hate humanity with an undying hatred. If this be true, what hope have we?

To look first at the areas of life being affected, then at the one hope and antidote, and, finally, at how this is clearly a prelude to that Armageddon spoken of in John’s *Apocalypse*:

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<sup>1</sup> Print edition at Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Great-Terrible-Love-Visionary-Woodstocks/dp/0983519498/> ; free digital versions, pdf, Mobi, and ePub here: <http://bit.ly/2TUuBQt>

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . .

And he [God] gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (Rev 16:14, 16; *cf.* Rev 20:7-10).

But before that final time of great trial for God’s people—however far off in the future that may be, whether but a few years, or decades, or . . . God only knows. What we are seeing even now in the world is alarming!

To show another cameo, this of the spiritual dynamics and effects of the “sorcery”:

The term “high” that arose from the sixties counterculture (and before that among the beats, and other groups that early used pot and other psychedelics) referred to an *elevated* (i.e., “high”) state of awareness not normally attained by men. In the sixties men had no idea the realm they had entered was the demonic—it was all glory and light for most (though not all, to be sure)—and there was the perception that a spiritual dimension was involved.

When entire vast cultures and subcultures—spoken of above—experienced this phenomenal awareness, and exported it into the nations of the world, this became a major, *global* event.

What this psychic / spiritual event actually accomplished, however, was a new state of mind that went far beyond what the beats and hippies sought. The *ultimate* message of LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, marijuana, peyote, et al was ***truth resides within man and not outside; whatever deity is to be known likewise resides in man and not in some external “God”***. This supposed “wisdom” came into human consciousness ***with power***, for it was experienced by vast multitudes (as the evangelists of this revelation were many, and spoke, wrote, and sang with power), and it eventually became the reigning paradigm of the world, crowding out the exclusivist religions, especially delegitimizing the Christian faith in the eyes of many; it became the new zeitgeist. “Fundamentalist” Hindu, Islamic, and Buddhist religions filled the vacuum with a vengeance, and often with violent oppression of Christians.

This renewed “spirit of the age” affected even those who didn’t use the drugs, as the collective human consciousness is as the air we breathe, psychically speaking. And the manifest nature of this spirit? It resembles the days of Noah, filled with both random individual and mass violence—sexual, verbal, “religious”, ethnic, national, etc—as well as perversion, hatred of authority (much of which is corrupt anyway), with new twists, such as the effacing of natural human identity, biological identifiers no longer accepted, every person being whatever they want to be, in defiance of the Creator’s assignment of

gender. Leapfrogging from abortion, infanticide and euthanasia became the rage. Vulgarity and blatant, vile, immorality are now unashamedly displayed by those on the world stage, including those in the highest echelons of influence—politicians, news-men and -women, actors, actresses, etc. It certainly does appear that a dark spirit has entered into our national life and communications. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NKJV) shows something clearly visible to all who believe God’s word: the manifestation of “...all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason **God will send them strong delusion**, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” [emphasis added]

This gives poignant insight into the words of judgment pronounced upon latter-day Babylon: “**for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived**” (Rev 18:23). From the abyss a great cloud blotted out the sun and sky, indicating a spiritual darkness, unleashed by us—humankind—upon all the earth, the fruit of our indulgence in sorcery. Getting “high”, enhancing the pleasures of the flesh and the mind, with help from the demons, who are now in the driver’s seat.

As this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century draws to its close, before the third commences, we will see new waves of evil overtake this land—political violence and chaos (in this once—“constitutional republic”), civil discourse gone, public indecency, a continual unraveling of the social fabric so that domestic tranquility is no more, killings increasing exponentially—and when the enemies of men come in like a flood to wreak havoc among us, the door opened by us, the sole refuge shall be as written:

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10),

for in this refuge the Spirit of the LORD has lifted up the standard of the might of His power, that is, His word, by which we live (Isaiah 59:19; Matthew 4:4).

And the precincts in which the word of God’s power shall be, and the refuge of His presence, are the houses of His worship and the fellowship of His genuine people—the local churches of Jesus Christ. Even so, these shall be shut down as Armageddon begins to commence, though we shall meet in secret when necessary.

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Malachi 3:16-17).



## A Nation of Witches and Sorcerers

This title sounds like the name of a fantasy movie, but in fact it comes from a spiritual understanding of current events in our United States. The source of this understanding is our Bible, where it speaks of sorcery or witch-craft—*pharmakeia* in the Greek—and a certain class of drugs that enable bypassing the barrier between the demonic world and the individual (or on larger scale, the collective) human consciousness. In our enthrallment with modern wonders, and some ignorance, we have completely overlooked an ancient craft capable of unleashing immense power and destruction.

The drugs mentioned are the psychedelics (mind expanders), euphemistically called entheogens (God manifesting within), such as LSD (a twentieth-century discovery), mescaline, marijuana and its derivative hashish, peyote, and others with like properties. It is necessary to ground this matter in an understanding of Biblical terms. *Pharmakeia* (φαρμακεία) and its cognates are found five times in the New Testament, and more in the Greek Old Testament. In Revelation it means “*drugs that induce magic spells*” (Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, p. 302); it belongs to “a magical tradition of herbs gathered and prepared for spells, and also for **encouraging the presence of spirits** at magical ceremonies” [emphasis added] (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 2, p. 558); and from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates, we have: “**Pharmakeia** means the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs” (pp. 1437, 1438).

In extra-Biblical literature *pharmakon*—drugs—may refer to legitimate medicine, poison, or magic potion, but in Revelation its (and its cognates) only meaning pertains to magic potion, including the deception resulting from these.

The secular culture is increasingly approving both the recreational and medicinal uses of marijuana in various forms of greatly enhanced potency, but the Christian church must beware of allowing it for either of these uses, with some qualifications on the medicinal use (to be noted below).

Sorcery was a known thing in Biblical times, and in ancient Israel marked as a capital crime (Exodus 22:18, etc., from the root קָשַׁף *kāšaph*, a verb meaning to practice magic, to practice sorcery), as it allowed demonic presence and influence into the close-knit holy community. In the New Testament it is forbidden, and on the Day of Judgment unrepentant users will be consigned to the lake of fire (Rev 21:8), forever barred from the City of God (Rev 22:15).

A while ago I saw Todd Friel putting the question to a panel of well-known, respected pastors (including John MacArthur, Mark Dever, Steven Lawson, and Albert Mohler), “Is smoking pot a sin? Yes or no.” They could give their reasons later. (See it here: [y2u.be/4EGAv8p5qxA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2u.be/4EGAv8p5qxA)) And not one gave an answer based on the Biblical prohibition of sorcery. It was asserted that it impairs the mind and judgment, alters consciousness,

diminishes clarity of thought, and therefore goes against the Biblical charge against intoxication, though it is well known that such impairment may not be the case—depending on the individual—and thus the reasons asserted by the panelists (mostly Mohler and MacArthur) would be laughed at and ignored by those who use. For it may make perception and thought *more* acute than they normally would be.

We are taught in God’s word that supernatural powers are real; for us who are Christians, it is by the supernatural power of God we are saved, and are sustained by His power through all the vicissitudes of our lives. He gave us our Scriptures through inspiring its writers by His Spirit, and by His might and wisdom providentially preserving it up through the centuries. He created the world—and sustains it—by His “supernatural” power (Heb. 1:1-3). The Christian faith is a supernatural phenomenon from beginning to end.

Nor are we ignorant of the wiles of our adversary the devil, and *his* supernatural powers directed against God’s children (Eph. 6:10-16), as well unbelievers whose minds he has blinded to the truth (2 Cor. 4:3, 4).

Why then is there silence in the church of Jesus Christ on this topic? The answer is simple: the commentators, linguists, and seminary professors who teach the pastors—most all of them, before their conversions, lived fairly clean lives far from the world of drugs and the circles of those who use them, and have no actual understanding of what Biblical sorcery is, having *no experience or first-hand knowledge* of it. Even many recreational users of marijuana are ignorant of the depths they enter when they get high, not realizing that one aspect of Biblical sorcery is the simple intensifying of sensual pleasure, a heightened awareness of the lusts and joys of the flesh through psychic enhancement, while not *appearing* to have anything “occult” about it. Yet the apostle Paul says in Galatians 5:20 that sorcery—*pharmakeia*—(translated witchcraft in the King James and the NIV) is a work of the flesh on a par with murder and adultery. Paul says in verse 21, “that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”, that is, except they repent of them.

The world is familiar with this, as the online article, “Entheogenic Use of Cannabis” shows — [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entheogenic\\_use\\_of\\_cannabis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entheogenic_use_of_cannabis) — though Christians, many of them living separated from the world and its ways, are unaware of such depths of Satan.

Some believers may protest, “But in Genesis 1:29 God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree...’, so this is God’s gift to us, and perfectly righteous.” The answer to which would be, “Indeed He gave us all herbs and plants, but as the rest of the verse says, ‘to you it shall be for *food*’, even as in the next verse He gave the same for the animals of the earth *to eat*; not for later humans to smoke or ingest to change their consciousness and enter the spirit world. Even so, after the Fall we do not eat all the plants, for some, as poisonous Hemlock, are deadly to eat. We call such adding to the text *eisegesis*. But, as it is written, those who minister before the LORD ‘shall

teach My people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean' (Ezek 44:23).”

Some may still *rightly* ask, “But how do we know that marijuana, or LSD for that matter, is the sorcery or *pharmakeia* the Bible speaks of?” It’s a good question—for God’s people should no longer remain ignorant of such things.

Besides the testimony of the commentators and Greek scholars who exegete the Scripture, showing that these drugs encourage the presence of spirits in trance states and induce magic spells—that is, awareness in the spirit realm, and of the powers therein—pagan spiritualists and shamans (occult practitioners) also know well what these drugs do. For example, among the Hindus in India, Nepal, Sikkim, and Tibet, the ability to send users of marijuana and hashish into the realm of spirits is well known. In Benares, the main Indian city of Shiva worship, cannabis is such an important part of the religion it is sold in government-run shops. Marijuana helps its users make contact with the spirit entities—demons—of its pagan religion. It also has a long history of use in ancient China, Japan, Iran, ancient Europe, and in Africa—mostly for shamanistic purposes—that is, for facilitating communion with spirits or the heightened spiritual states these spirits can produce.

The names of the drugs change from culture to culture, and over time, but their properties remain the same: enabling communion with spirits, and affording heightened states of consciousness through demonic influence, even if the spirits remain concealed. They are recognized by these properties, or characteristics. Those folks who use the drug marijuana recreationally—to enhance the senses of taste, smell, touch, sight, and hearing—may deny any occult experience, yet they still have been transported into the realm of spiritual power and influence, and the spirits now have access into *their* minds and spirits (Eph. 6:12, 16), even though they usually keep their presence secret. They can project thoughts and images, or sounds, feelings, and words, into the perception of the users, who do not know their source, and may think they are merely their own. This is dangerous, and we see the general culture of today filled with demonic content of murderous violence, perversion, hatred of authority, and especially the authority of the Bible and the preaching of the Gospel. And the culture is mostly unaware that the barrier between the demonic world and the collective human consciousness has been done away with through the wide practice of once long-prohibited sorcery from the counter-culture sixties and on, now made commonplace. Here is not the place to expound on this, but there are eschatological aspects to sorcery (cf. Rev. 18:23, and elsewhere). We who follow Jesus Christ should not also go the dangerous ways of the world!

If one is completely unfamiliar with such things it should be sufficient that the LORD has raised up witnesses through the exposition of His word, and the accompanying testimony of those He has rescued from participation in these activities, concerning which *pharmakeia* drugs there are three classes of witnesses:

- 1) The testimony of Scripture: these drugs exist, are used in sorcerous activities, and are condemned by God on pain of spiritual death.
- 2) The testimony of exegetes, linguists, and commentators: who define what sorcery and witchcraft are by indicating the use of drugs to enter demonic realms, and the practicing of their crafts there by said users.
- 3) The testimony of those who have experienced these peculiar drugs, and *they* are of two classes: a) godly men and women who have been delivered from the use and effects of them; and b) ungodly men and women who continue in use of them and clearly tell of their properties, their affect within their beings, and their efficacy in facilitating entrance into the spirit world.

The quality of this legal testimony in the mouths of two or three witnesses (Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16; 2 Cor 13:1) ought to be sufficient for those skeptical to consider, and to heed.

But what of its medicinal use? This is important. For it is very appealing to many folks, of all ages, perhaps especially the more elderly, as we tend to fall apart as we get older! Although younger saints are more active, and may have injuries from sports or other strenuous activity. Plus we all have extended family, where others close to us may be casual users. Medicinal use is a more nuanced topic than the world realizes, not having spiritual discernment. But we who are Christ's *must* have it especially given the times we live in. It is the much-praised medicinal use that opened the door of the culture's reluctance to its recreational use. It is truly a proverbial Trojan Horse, and this one from Hell itself.

It is well known that certain psychedelic drugs—and I am focusing on marijuana at the moment because of its legal availability—have the property of enabling a person to experience a sense of detachment from the bodily source of pain, and thus a decrease in the sensation of its intensity. It *is* an effective analgesic, or pain killer. Still, the very action that detaches from the pain will open one to other aspects of the “high” such as consciousness in a dimension not usually entered in the normal state of mind, the dimension spirits inhabit. Even were I (speaking personally) in extreme pain I would not opt for marijuana relief, as the “cure” would be far worse *for me as a Christian* than the ailment: making myself vulnerable to demonic activity—infiltration, deception, depression, oppression, delusion, attack, etc.

Let me posit a possible situation in an area where grass is legal for medicinal use. What would one think of a pastor, say in New Jersey, New York or other states where medicinal grass is legal under prescription for pain (or those states where it is fully legal), who, having smoked before the service, ministers while high? Or where a number in the church are (legally) high in the service? Would you assert that, if they've done it in moderation (or for pain relief), this is fully in accord with the word of God? Does using a Biblically forbidden substance for pain relief exempt one from obedience to God's word? Did God have a good reason for forbidding *pharmakeia* drugs? (Note: this is *not* forbidding standard analgesics, even medicinal opiates. Psychedelics—*pharmakeia* substances—are a class unto themselves.)

Or if the assistant pastor—who teaches the teens Bible study—has pain from a sports injury, and smokes (with a prescription) beforehand, is that okay? Though surely there will be teenagers—as well as adults—who, knowing their pastors are smoking marijuana (under medical license) for pain relief, will say, “Well, if they can do it for pain—and are okay mentally, and also accepted by the church—why can’t I do it as well for pleasure? We can see it’s not harmful if used reasonably.”

Besides the corruption of morals of others, minors included, let me say what the *Scripture* view of this would be. A pastor has smoked his grass (ostensibly for pain) and expanded his consciousness by opening himself to the spiritual realm—much as the Hindus do to contact their spirit entities—and he is now open to energies and influences or thoughts that come to him from he-knows-not-where. But they seem to be godly and in accord with the Bible, and he has a new depth of feeling for the subject he is speaking on, and sharp insight, and he powerfully feels what he believes to be the presence and love of God. Has this man increased his godliness and anointing through the drug? *Scripture* says he has taken a drug (*pharmakon*) . . . *known to induce magic spells, and to encourage the presence of spirits at magical ceremonies*. Well, one wouldn’t call a church service a “magical ceremony” someone might respond! Unfortunately, using a sorcerous drug of the *pharmakeia*-class would turn that church service into a magic ceremony, replete with demonic agency operating through the minister intoxicated by it.

Let me share concerning a New York State Supreme Court Justice, the late Gustin L. Reichbach. He made headlines, while a *sitting* judge, that is, still practicing in the Court, by writing an op-ed piece for *The New York Times* in which he acknowledged smoking marijuana to ease the side effects of his treatment for stage 3 pancreatic cancer. Without it he couldn’t eat or sleep. He wrote this in May of 2012, and died 60 days later. His plea for the legalization of its medicinal use was both courageous and heart-wrenching. To a non-Christian it might seem almost a no-brainer.

However, I am a Christian—and I am speaking to those of you who also are—and must spiritually consider, what is the cost of doing as the judge did? I do not believe Justice Reichbach was a disciple of Christ, but for a disciple what would the issue be? It would be opening the heart and mind to demonic activity. Let me put myself in his place: without some grass—*inhaled or ingested*—I cannot eat (my appetite has failed), and cannot sleep, both of which I need to sustain my life. But with it, I could do both. The pain of the cancer—if I tried to steer clear of the opioids which might make me groggy—could also be diminished by smoking the grass. Would it be worth it to me? To the world this dilemma would be false, delusional, and *inhumane!* To the spiritual man or woman it is vital and actual: would I allow my communion with Christ and communion with other disciples to be open to influence or infiltration by demonic beings? Just for the ability to eat something, or sleep, or to relieve pain? No, God giving me strength I would retain my integrity of being before Him and my friends. I would refuse to smoke or ingest the “medicinal” marijuana for

the sake of keeping my *spiritual* health and integrity. *Especially* if I were in terrible pain with advanced, terminal cancer, I would not use marijuana for relief. I would rather have morphine or the like. Would anyone in their right mind, when on the very brink of death and entrance into eternity, open their hearts and minds to demonic influence? That would be sheer destructive madness!

The only exception of marijuana use for healing—in which its medical benefits are legitimate and actually good—pertain to medicinal marijuana with THC in lotions and creams that *do not enter the blood-stream or get one high*, or to the non-psychoactive (i.e., does not get one high) ingredient CBD, which is used for preventing seizures in children and other legitimate uses, such as pain relief. ***Any use of marijuana that gets one high is participating in sorcery.***

As it stands, the laws of men say medical marijuana is allowed, just as same-sex marriage and abortion of babies are allowed. Paul addresses the difference between the natural man and the spiritual:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:12-14).

**And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers ... says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:5)**

## New Insights in Amillennial Eschatology

*“Does God give only academicians and seminarians insight and understanding? May He not use even wilderness-trained men?”*

I will argue in this paper that a lack of understanding concerning the word “sorceries” (Greek, *pharmakeia*, *φαρμακεία*) and its cognates in *The Book of Revelation* have led to overlooking key elements in some of its prophecies, and thus inability to appreciate their import and relevance to the times. It is accepted that the “eclectic” or “modified idealist” view (Beale)<sup>1</sup> allows *some* departure from the idealist, though as to where the line is drawn there is no clear consensus. Beale himself says, “...certainly there are prophecies of the future in Revelation. The crucial yet problematic task of the interpreter is to identify through careful exegesis and against the historical background those texts which pertain respectively to past present and future.”<sup>2</sup> Please note this is not an academic presentation, but aimed rather at a popular audience *as well as* academics, so don’t hold it to the precise standards of strict academic formatting.

Basically my view is this: the *pharmakeia* of Revelation 18:23 and 9:21 (a variant in the latter reading *φαρμακον pharmakon* – drugs – does not affect translation) are the very drugs used and heralded by the sixties and seventies counterculture that were exported into most of the world and which – in retrospect – are seen to constitute a prophesied event clearly depicted in Scripture. The Greek *pharmakeia* is generally translated “sorceries” in the New Testament. Geerhardus Vos, although speaking of discerning the Antichrist, enunciated a *principle* applicable here,

“[It] belongs among the many prophecies, whose best and final exegete will be the eschatological fulfillment, and in regard to which it behooves the saints to exercise a peculiar kind of eschatological patience.” (*The Pauline Eschatology*, p. 133)

O.T. Allis in his book, *Prophecy and the Church*, expressed the same sentiment:

“The usual view on this subject [‘the intelligibility of prophecy’] has been that prophecy is not intended to be fully understood before its fulfillment, that it is only when God ‘establishes the word of his servants and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,’ that the meaning and import of their words become fully manifest.” (p 25)

Stuart Olyott in his, *Dare to Stand Alone: Daniel Simply Explained*, thinks likewise:

“We must realize that some of the Bible’s teachings relating to the very last days will not be understood until we are *in* those days. That is why it is both unwise and dangerous to draw up detailed timetables of future events. Some parts of the Word of

God will not become obvious in their meaning until the days of which they speak have dawned.” (p 166)

[These three men are all of the Amillennial school of eschatological interpretation.] The reason this has not been widely recognized is that those who live godly have no notion what the dark practice of sorcery entails, a practice that astonishingly became a national and even global *recreation* of sorts, and for many also having a spiritual or psychic aspect. In short, what was Biblically termed sorcery became widespread and accepted. In 2016 one of these substances, marijuana, is quickly gaining legal and cultural approval across the United States (and elsewhere in the world as well).

The sorcerous drugs and potions of our day are *exclusively* the psychedelic substances LSD, mescaline, peyote, marijuana, hashish (a derivative of marijuana), psilocybin mushrooms, and all drugs with their unique properties. This does *not* include the opiates, various analgesics, and other legitimate medicinal pharmaceuticals. (A discussion regarding the medicinal use of marijuana, and the resurgence of LSD and the like for therapeutic purposes may be found in the paper published below, “The Fate of Babylon, a study in determining the identity and demise of Babylon in John’s Apocalypse”.)

To cite but three brief quotes from commentators on what the linguistic and Biblical meanings of *pharmakeia* are: in Revelation it means “*drugs that induce magic spells*” (Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, p. 302); it belongs to “a magical tradition of herbs gathered and prepared for spells, and also for **encouraging the presence of spirits** at magical ceremonies” [emphasis added] (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 2, p. 558); from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates, we have: “**Pharmakeia** means the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs” (pp. 1437, 1438). In the Septuagint or LXX (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) the words *witch* or *sorcerer* / *witchcraft* or *sorcery* from the root קַשָּׁפָה *kāšaph* [a verb meaning to practice magic, to practice sorcery] are translated *pharmakeia* just as the Greek New Testament has it. It was a known thing in Biblical times, and in ancient Israel shunned as a capital crime, as it allowed potent demonic influence into the close-knit holy community. In the New Testament it is forbidden and unrepentant users consigned to the lake of fire (Rev 21:8), forever barred from the City of God (Rev 22:15). In extra-Biblical literature *pharmakon* – drugs – may refer to legitimate medicine, poison, or magic potion, but in Revelation its (and its cognates) only meaning pertains to magic potion.

I should mention that Joseph Thayer (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4th Edition) additionally notes a metaphorical use – that is, deception – for *pharmakeia* /sorcery in Revelation, as some others also hold. To show why the use of “sorceries” in the Rev 18:23 passage refers to activities involving certain kinds of drugs rather than figuratively for mere deceptive practices, consider the classes of transgressors in Rev 21:8 who are consigned to the lake of fire: “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and



whoremongers, and **sorcerers**, and idolaters, and all liars”. Sorcerers (from *pharmakeus*) here specifically means one who administers or uses a certain class of drugs to “enchant”, to cast a psychic spell upon by use of these drugs and accompanying demonic power. It doesn’t mean a deceiver – a liar – generally or even figuratively, but specifically one who uses sorcerous potions. Liars / deceivers are *already* classed separately in this listing. (The same with poisoners / murderers.) Likewise in Rev 22:15 where a similar Greek word, *pharmakos*, is used for sorcerer, with the same meaning as *pharmakeus* in 21:8, again with liars / deceivers and murderers named separately in *that* list. In these verses the usage clearly refers to drug-using-and-promoting people, so it is clear *pharmakeia* / sorceries in Revelation 18:23 – “by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” – refers to drug-related activity and not deceptive practices. On the other hand there is no doubt that Thayer’s, “the deceptions and seductions of idolatry” **are a result of and part of** Babylon’s sorceries, but the sorceries themselves are distinctly *pharmakeia* / **sorcery** (i.e. drug) activity.

There is even a new name for this and the other psychedelics:

***Entheogen***: “An entheogen (‘God inside us,’ εν εν- ‘in, within,’ θεο θεος- ‘god, divine,’ -γεν γενος ‘creates, generates’), in the strict sense, is a psychoactive substance used in a religious, psychotherapeutic, recreational, shamanic, or spiritual context.”  
(Wiki)

The reason we can identify the present-day drugs with those spoken of in Scripture is that while the names may differ or be unknown, the properties are exactly the same: encouraging the presence of spirits and inducing magic spells and trance states. The world is very familiar with this, as the online article, [The Spiritual Use of Cannabis](http://bit.ly/2PSckVd) shows <<http://bit.ly/2PSckVd>>. The “spiritual / occult” use of LSD and other like drugs may also be easily found in a Google search. [This discussion](https://www.erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis_spirit6.shtml) on marijuana between a spiritual teacher and an inquirer <[https://www.erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis\\_spirit6.shtml](https://www.erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis_spirit6.shtml)> reveals what the world is all too familiar with, but many Christians, alas, not. It really doesn’t matter if a person does not use marijuana for such “psychic/spiritual” reasons, but only for pain relief, sensory enhancement, artistic acuity, recreation, or other things. It remains that the properties inherent in the chemical so affect the nervous system and consequently the soul, that the latter becomes open to a realm of spiritual consciousness despite the user not perceiving it for what it is. Deception is a major element in this realm of awareness, and when a user enters it unaware its influences are operative upon that person’s heart and mind nonetheless. For example, when someone gets “high” on marijuana just for fun, to enhance and amplify the senses for emotional and sensory pleasure, this is still “sorcery” – albeit low grade – and the user likewise open to covert demonic infiltration of the thought-life and heart. Note: marijuana is sometimes focused on here because it is the one psychedelic substance that is increasingly legal and available in the U.S. and around the world. The other drugs in this class operate similarly.

In short, this is what “sorcery” is: entering this realm of psychic awareness whatever the intent may be.

## **What happened**

To start this section I would like to give a literary and visual image of this overlooked “prophesied event clearly depicted in Scripture” to help clarify and simplify the concept I want to convey.

The large-scale aspect of this event started in Woodstock – Woodstock as a symbol for the counterculture generation of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s – though one could trace the event’s inception way further back. What happened in the Woodstock generation was a disaster of biblical proportions that slipped by unseen. It is *still* unseen yet the havoc wrought by it is felt everywhere, and multitudes sense something is so off in our *present* world as to be unnatural, though many would not go so far as to say *supernatural*.

Woodstock is usually known / remembered for its drugs; well, a lot of other things too, but the drugs were basic, and at the heart of what happened. It was commonly understood then they opened one up to a spiritual – note, *not* a “religious” – consciousness, and we saw sacred things, in ourselves, in others, and in the world we were in. We were convinced this new consciousness had the power to change the world for the better, so it was natural we would seek to export it everywhere.

And we did. But this “spiritual consciousness” had a depth to it we were initially unaware of. It did transport us to a new state of consciousness – awareness – which was familiar to a certain class of seers, but we were novices, babes in the woods. A lot of what we saw and experienced purported to be light and glory, sacred and of exquisite human depth, and in a sense it was – for there *is* light and glory and sacredness in the human heart and body, and we tasted deeply of these things. But in the human heart there are also self-centeredness, self-aggrandizing, and self-love – often at the expense of others’ well-being; there are also non-human things, for there is a “gateway” in the depths of our hearts that opens into spirit-worlds, and not all in these realms is safe or sane. That is, not all mean us well. And when we open ourselves to such realms unprepared or in forbidden ways we may come under the influence of beings capable of exploiting our faults and destructive qualities without our even knowing it, as these are beings capable of interfering with our thought-processes and hearts undetected.

Looking at this from a *visual* angle: an apt image of the collective consciousness of humankind is a vast reservoir with the varied cultures of the world as swirling waters contained therein. At the bottom of this reservoir is not hard rock or land, but an *almost* impermeable membrane of sorts, on the other side of which is another realm – or dimension –

which harbors spirit entities hostile to humans. It's also called the spirit world, or a realm thereof. It's all about us, we are just not normally aware of it.

This near impervious partition between the two species is sometimes breached through the use of substances which fall into the category of *sorcery*, an unusual class of drugs which allow the barrier “membrane” – figuratively speaking – to become fully permeable so that denizens from either side may pass over into the other's realm. Though few would knowingly enter from the human to the *other* region, so filled with horror and madness it is!

God must be brought into the picture to make things clear. He's the one who erected this barrier for the safety of humankind, to protect them from far more powerful adversaries they had become vulnerable to when they lost their strength in an earlier incident with them (the history goes far back).

Sorcery, the use of drugs and potions to open the barrier, has been the endeavor of witches, shamans, wizards, pagan worshippers, and the like for untold ages, to the end of gaining psychic influence over other humans through the demonic power they become channels of (though some falsely claim these powers are *for* other humans and are benign). Due to this immensely destructive force such activity and its practitioners have been outlawed in many societies, though some have allowed it, to their great detriment.

Returning to Woodstock: the LSD, marijuana, psilocybin mushrooms, mescaline and other “psychedelics” – substances of ancient standing (save the synthetics, most notably LSD which was only produced in 1938 and its sorcerous properties partially recognized in 1943) – became widely used in the U.S. and U.K., and the resulting *direct and widespread* entrance of the demonic realm into the human commenced what would come to have an *enormous* impact over the ensuing decades. Demonic influence has always been in the world, affecting the thought-life of humans, but its *direct and unimpeded* access to the human heart and life on a large scale was a new development. Those humans without a specific and deliberately active guard against such influence are *all* vulnerable to the strong delusion they relentlessly promote. When LSD, marijuana et al were exported into the wide world through the exciting new Woodstock spirit, the opening of the human world to the demonic created thereby was *global* in scale, and the havoc they began wreaking would eventually swell to catastrophes of immense magnitude – earthshaking and shattering, precipitating great destruction and suffering!

A pertinent excerpt from the essay, *The Fate of Babylon*:

“The explosion of these drugs onto the world scene was an *event* (the term now used for military-scale biological, chemical, or nuclear *events*) that befell nations around the globe through the drug-energized sixties generation in America, as this potent counterculture permeated these nations through its music and musicians, literature, art, film, and other culture-bearing media and vehicles, as well as spiritual teachers and

gurus (think Timothy Leary and Baba Ram Dass / Richard Alpert, both Harvard professors). The nations and cultures of the world were leavened from within by the exciting new consciousness of the sixties and the Woodstock spirit exported into them, but it was a Trojan Horse filled with the denizens of Hell. Its impact was, in the psychic realm, the equivalent of a massive nuclear detonation. . . . The damage done is irreversible.”

The darkening *zeitgeist* of the world (“spirit of the age”) that we live in now – 2015 – is the direct result of this massive demonic incursion into our midst beginning half a century ago. What they hate most are Christ and God, then humankind, and after that peaceful societal order – domestic tranquility – enforced by law and government, as the holy, human, and orderly go against both their nature and their goal for the planet.

They now are able to enter the *unprotected* human heart and mind either directly (affecting the passions and perceptions) or through ideas (affecting thought-life and perception) and the results in various areas will more and more manifest. Some notable ones are: hatred of authority (the targeting of police will spread); exaltation and normalizing of various kinds of depravity will bloom in full; anti-Christian hatred and persecution will increase; dissenters will be dealt with violently.

Even those who never took drugs are impacted by the new *zeitgeist* – this ever-evolving cultural norm – and humankind filled with this new “spirit” will be one in which the saying shall be realized (to quote Dostoevsky in his *Brothers Karamazov*), “If there is no God, everything is permitted.” In other words, with no absolute standard, anything goes. And this increasingly is the world we are in now; it will become a place where reasoned discussion is disdained, and impassioned feeling will emerge as that which trumps what was once considered sane and decent.

This new year will open some eyes within the precincts of the holy people. William Hendriksen, respected New Testament commentator, discussing Rev 20:7-10, wrote,

“. . . the era during which the church as a mighty missionary organization shall be able to spread the gospel everywhere is not going to last forever; not even until the moment of Christ’s second coming. Observe what is happening in certain countries even today. ***Are certain regions of this earth already entering Satan’s little season?***” [emphasis added] (*More Than Conquerors*, pp 194-195)

Note that he wrote this around 1962! *Were he writing today he would no doubt express himself far more strongly.* We are being slaughtered in so many countries around the globe, and the “civilized” West appears to be gearing up for a massive dealing of the “problem of Christians” and their “witness” – which many can see, though it has been slow coming. It may well be speeding up.

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I want to juxtapose two images to see the connections that may be made. First, we have the one shown above of “a vast reservoir with the varied cultures of the world as swirling waters contained therein” and at the bottom of the reservoir not land or rock but a barrier likened to a membrane which can be penetrated – made permeable – by the use of certain means. On the other side of the barrier are hosts of demonic beings who, at a certain definite point in history, were enabled by human actions (engaging in sorcery on a global scale) to enter the collective consciousness of humanity and wreak, first, psychological and spiritual havoc, and then, secondly, provoke murderous bloodshed between men. This is image one.

The second image is from the Bible, primarily the Book of Revelation, though other parts of Scripture witness the same things. In Rev 9, in the beginning of the chapter we see a star fall from heaven, which most commentators agree is likely an angel (they disagree whether it is holy or evil) though a very few hold it is Christ. This angel opens the “bottomless pit” or “abyss” – the ability and authority to do this given by God – and out of the opening thus created poured such a cloud of thick, black smoke – as though from a huge furnace – that the sun and the air were made dark by it. And this heavy smoke belched forth demonic beings resembling a swarm of locusts that covered the whole earth, though not real locusts, as they were commanded not to hurt the earth and its greenery as locusts do, but to torment men for a set, limited period of time, and to torment them so badly they would want to die, but couldn’t bring themselves to do it. This influx of the demonic into the human realm is common to both images.<sup>3</sup>

The second part of chapter 9 has a new and more intense invasion of demonic beings from a symbolic “Euphrates river” – an ancient image of the boundary where enemies would issue from to attack and destroy, whether the target was Israel or Rome. In the Revelation vision (which is shown from different angles in different passages) this boundary was “dried up” to allow them to pass over (Rev 16:12ff.), and from another angle (9:14ff.) four evil angels were loosed (four is usually a symbol in Rev for worldwide or universal) to commence the new, and now *lethal* havoc to be wrought upon men, the which would kill one third of humankind. It is interesting and instructive to note (according to my thesis) that the progress of the great deception took around 50 years – half a century – from its beginning to its turning into an accelerated wave of killing.

At the end of chapter nine’s *second* vision of the results of demonic invasion upon humanity is the saying (9:20-21) that those who survived this globe-wide destruction refused to turn from their evil and to God, but preferred to continue in their idolatry (worship and love of *things* instead of God), and murders, sexual immorality, stealing, and *sorceries*. This is the first mention of sorceries in Revelation.

What is common to each of these juxtaposed images, is the realm of humankind invaded by demons from Hell who have been let in by the opening of an entrance of some kind. In the first image it was a result of sorcerous drugs. It will be argued here that in the image (the Biblical vision) from Revelation the cause of the opening of Hell to invade humankind was also – initially – from sorcerous drugs.

The point I want to make is the correspondence between the literary and visual image of the reservoir of human consciousness invaded by the demonic and the Biblical image of humankind invaded by same, and in the Biblical image we also see that sorcery is one of the primary causes of the judgments that fell on men in the latter days of Babylon. There is a startling correspondence between the literary and the Biblical images, which will be further examined in Rev 18:23.

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But first I'd like to make some general comments on the unusual correspondence between the passages Revelation 9:1, 2; 16:12-14; and 20:1-3, 7-9. (To note in passing, it's understood by Amillennial scholars that visions which are sequential in the text are not of necessity *chronologically* sequential, but simply as seen and recorded in the vision narratives by the apostle John.)

In Rev 20:1-3 we see an angel come down from heaven and bind Satan from deceiving the nations *qua nations* for “a thousand years”, and after this period, in Rev 20:7-9, he is loosed again, whereupon he gathers the nations from “the four quarters of the earth” in an attempt to destroy “the camp of the saints”.

In Rev 16:12-14, 16, as the sixth angel poured out his vial (or bowl) on “the great river Euphrates” it was dried up allowing devils to go forth to “the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty . . . into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”.

And in Rev 9, with the fifth and sixth trumpets, we see (as we have above) deception and destruction ravage humankind through an opening of Hell which loosed hordes of devils upon the world to deceive and destroy.

Stephen Smalley remarks on this,

Beale (507) notes that the reference to the river Euphrates in verse 14 [of Rev 9] anticipates the battle of the sixth bowl in 16.12-16 (the ‘great River’ features in verse 12); indeed, the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl seem to depict the same event from different points of view (cf. 9.19). . . . God’s judgement, like his sovereignty, is universal and eternal, but **it is discovered historically at particular moments**, and it derives from exact and human circumstances. See also on verse 15.<sup>4</sup> [emphasis added]

Now at Rev 9 verse 15, and “the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind”, we see with regard to **the timing of the events** spoken of, **they are particular and historic**, not – in this case – the age-long recapitulated dynamics of “pure” idealist understanding (as other “eclectic” or “modified idealist” commentators likewise note). Smalley continues,

The torment of the first woe is followed up by the widespread killing in the second. The four angel-winds, chained up at the river Euphrates until this moment (see on verse 14), are now ‘released’ to destroy one-third of the human race. . . . These agents ‘had been in readiness’ for the action to follow; and the perfect tense of the verb... *hētoimasmēnoi*, lit. ‘had been prepared’, ‘had been made ready’ . . . , intensifies the notion that the angel-winds were poised to attack at a particular moment in history (cf. Matt 25.34, 41).

They were in readiness for this ‘very hour and day and month and year’. . . . [highlighting] the double truth that God is responsible not only for this judgement but also for its precise timing (see also on verse 14).<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the particular timing of the sixth trumpet, Beale says,

John hears the voice say that the time has now come. The angels are released according to God’s sovereign Timetable. The time that these angels are to be released is specified down to the hour to emphasize that “all the forces of history are under the sovereign control of God. He is the Almighty One (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 19:15; etc.)”

The last quote by Beale is from Robert H. Mounce’s, *The Book of Revelation (Revised)*. Immediately before this quoted sentence Mounce says,

At the exact moment decreed by God the angels of destruction and their demonic horde will be released upon the human race. (p 195; NICNT edition)

Again, this makes clear that in Rev 9:15 we are dealing with events in time that may be discerned, and if already past in hindsight as historical realities.

Beale says of the nature of the deception,

In contrast to the fifth trumpet, the sixth includes death together with deception. ***Therefore, the sixth trumpet intensifies and develops further the woe of the fifth.*** . . . [emphasis added]

The deception manifests itself partly through the false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians (cf., e.g., 2:6, 14-15, 20, 21). The

harm of deception is also seen as a judgment in the OT and NT generally (e.g., Isa. 6:10-12; 29:9-14; 63:17; Pss. 115:8; 135:18; Rom. 1:18-27; 2 Thess. 2:9-12); the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus 4–14 is a well-known example. The deceptive facet of the sixth trumpet is implied by its parallels with the sixth bowl, especially the judgment of deception and the manner in which it comes: the pouring out of the bowl on “the great river, the Euphrates,” results in the coming of “the kings from the east,” and of “three unclean spirits like frogs” coming “out of the mouth” . . . of the dragon, of the beast, and of the false prophet to gather together “the kings of the earth” for battle (16:12-14; so also 17:17; 20:8; cf. 17:8). ***The equation of the sixth trumpet with the sixth bowl is a natural one***, since elsewhere in the Exodus plague tradition the frogs are paralleled with serpents and scorpions as instruments of judgment . . .<sup>6</sup> [emphasis added]

Beale supports the view, commonly held among amils, that in the sixth bowl and sixth trumpet, intimately connected, we approach the end of the last days.

In line with what Beale says regarding false teachers, there are actually some Christians in positions to teach who approve the use of marijuana for other believers, whether from sheer naiveté, the seductions of worldly culture, or, as is likely, deception arising from both.

These “teachers”—*some even in the Reformed churches!*—look at the identification of the psychedelic drugs as the *pharmakeia* / sorcery agents condemned and forbidden in the Scripture as being an “idiosyncratic interpretation”. It matters not to them that lexicographers and commentators affirm this identification, nor does it trouble them that they themselves are unable to give an alternative interpretation of what the ***lethal*** sin of using *pharmakeia* agents is, if continued in without repentance (some do assert it is abortifacients, but this is poison and ***murder***, already covered in the lists of Rev 21:8 and 22:15). Neither does it matter to them that the drug-using world is fully cognizant of the properties of the psychedelics, including shamans and other occult mystics and practitioners—instead they simply deny what is obvious to so many. The most terrible thing of this denial is they tacitly allow their entrance into the precincts of God's temple, thinking it adiaphora—a matter of indifference. This calls to mind what Beale said above about deception being a judgment—even upon the churches—during the fifth and sixth trumpet woes of Revelation:

“The deception manifests itself partly through the false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians...”

***There is no worse form of idolatry than that which deifies the demonic presence, “worshipping” God in it.***

Nor is it just marijuana that's on the horizon for us. When the media start to talk of the ***medicinal benefits*** of psychedelic drugs, there is a logic to this, and it goes: “If a substance can be used medically, and we can observe the benign properties of it in case studies, then it



goes to show that, contrary to previous reports, it is not harmful if used responsibly.” This is perhaps the prime modus operandi toward legalizing recreational marijuana: if it relieves pain along with other wonderful benefits it ought to be available to all. And so it is going with LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, and other substances with like properties. Babylon’s NYTimes—that bastion of Western sanity—has been slowly pushing the idea, along with the legalizing of marijuana:

LSD’s Long Strange Trip [a 5/2016 video lauding its benefits]:

<<http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004406557/llds-long-strange-trip.html?>>

An article: “Can Mushrooms Treat Depression?”

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/30/opinion/sunday/can-mushrooms-treat-depression.html?src=xps>>

Another article: “Hallucinogens Have Doctors Tuning In Again”

<[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/12/science/12psychedelics.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/12/science/12psychedelics.html?_r=1)>. LSD is once again being used (under special license) by the therapeutic community, there being a resurgence now of this supposed “therapeutic” use, per (among other sources) the NY Times of Apr 11, 2010.

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To begin tying all this together: Revelation 9:1, 2, 16:12-14, and 20:1-3, 7 **all** reveal a loosing of either Satan or his demons to attack humankind, whether directly or by means of humans deceived by them, and not only is the assault upon humankind in general but a special emphasis is on destroying God’s people. All of these revelations of Hell opened and the demonic loosed to torment, deceive, and destroy parallel the initial “sorcery-opening” of the demonic realm for a massive influx of spirits into the realm of humanity. Of course, even during the earlier part of the age-long “millennial period” satanic influence was operative throughout the world upon individuals, and God’s power through the preached Gospel of Christ across the nations enabled the elect of God to receive Him, throw off the chains of satanic enslavement, and to enter His kingdom, but near the very end of the age the Gospel would be hindered from open proclamation and the darkness of satanic power would once again hold the entire world in its thrall, save those whom God had protectively sealed by His Spirit.

The opening of the bottomless pit, or abyss, in Rev 9 and Rev 20 finds a minute correspondence in the commencement of the sorcery which allowed the incursion of the demonic into the collective human consciousness half a century ago. Looking at the world now, it appears that the killing phase of the sixth trumpet is slowly coming into its own.

But I wish to draw attention to a passage we have not considered yet, and that is Revelation 18:23. This will bring to the fore a new and vital aspect of discerning the prophecies in John’s *Apocalypse*.

We have already touched upon the world being “leavened” within by demonic influence resulting from the importation of the Woodstock spirit and its drugs. When we read in Revelation 18:23 the words spoken by Heaven to the entity called Babylon, “for by thy *sorceries* were all nations deceived”, we may understand that for this, along with other sins and crimes against both God and humanity, she would be judged with “plagues” (horrific catastrophes) that would *utterly* destroy her. In Rev 18 we are given a vision of this destruction, as well in Isaiah 47 and Jeremiah 50 and 51.

Babylon in the New Testament refers generally to world culture (in all its global variety) in opposition to God, but specifically to the *headquarters* nation that is the heart of world culture with its economy and commerce, politics, law, education, arts, entertainments, technological prowess, and military strength. In ancient Chaldean times it was the vast fortified city of Babylon, from which its respective emperors reigned over the empire; in Roman times the city of Rome was the heart of the empire. Neither Chaldean Babylon nor Rome were destroyed when the days of their power had passed. And yet in the Old Testament prophecies it is said they would be destroyed. Why the apparent discrepancy? Richard Bauckham in his, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, introduces the concept of “eschatological excess”, wherein the lack of complete fulfillment of OT prophecies was so they would “transcend their immediate relevance to the prophet’s contemporaries and to continue to direct later readers to God’s purpose for their future” (p 152), which “excess” John utilized in depicting its final and full realization. Bauckham remarks, “in this excess of promise over fulfillment lay the roots of much apocalyptic eschatology” (p 154). This applies greatly to the idea of “Babylon” at the end of the last days.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century a case could be made the United States of America is the headquarters of the final Babylonian empire. To follow that thread one might consult the chapter, “The Fate of Babylon, a study in determining the identity and demise of Babylon in John’s Apocalypse”, in the larger work, *A Great and Terrible Love: A Visionary Journey from Woodstock’s Sorceries to God’s Paradise* [free digital versions:] <<http://bit.ly/2TUuBQt>>, even though I do not wish to pursue that in this shorter paper. Nonetheless, it is the major practical implication this paper points to.

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<sup>1</sup> G.K. Beale, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Revelation* (Eerdmans 1999), pp 48, 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 49.

<sup>3</sup> At one point the analogy fails, for the water / air blackened is throughout, while in the collective consciousness those individuals resistant to (protected against) the demonic leavening are identified and ejected from the mass as alien, that is to say, persecuted, and expelled from their human communities.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*; IVP 2005), p 237

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp 237, 238

<sup>6</sup> Beale; Op. Cit., p 513



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