

**THE  
REVELATION  
OF  
JESUS CHRIST**



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# REVELATION, AN INTRODUCTION

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 1:1-22:21

**Introduction:** *“Don’t ever prophesy,”* said one American humorist, *“for if you prophesy wrong, nobody will forget it; and if you prophesy right, nobody will remember it.”*

Over the centuries, prophecies have come and gone; yet the book that the Apostle John compiled near the close of the first century is still with us. I can remember my earlier readings of this book and wondering what it was all about. Even today, with many years of study relating to its matter behind me, I am still fascinated by its message and mysteries.

As introduction to a study of the Book of Revelation, it is important to get a grasp of the whole before dealing with the particulars. Therefore, our text today is the Book of Revelation.

## I. The Book.

- A. Just as Genesis is the Book of Beginnings, so Revelation is the Book of Consummation.
  - 1. In it, the divine program of redemption is brought to completion.
  - 2. Although there are numerous prophecies in the Gospels and Epistles, Revelation is the only New Testament book that focuses primarily on prophetic events.
- B. It’s title means *“unveiling”* or *“disclosure.”*
  - 1. The book is the unveiling of the character and program of God.
  - 2. Penned by John during his exile on the Island of Patmos, off the shore of modern day Turkey, Revelation centers around visions and symbols of the resurrected Christ.
- C. The title of the book in the Greek text is *“The Revelation of St. John the Divine.”*
  - 1. It is also know as *“The Apocalypse,”* a transliteration of the word *APOKOLYPSIS*, meaning *“unveiling,” “disclosure,”* or *“revelation.”*
  - 2. This last book of the Bible has been likened to the unveiling of a great statue.
    - a. Such a statue might be covered over with a veil until the time of its dedication.
      - (1) Until such a time, when people gather around it, they cannot see the statue for the covering or veil over it.
      - (2) Then, at just the right moment a cord is pulled and as the veil falls away revealing the statue beneath.
    - b. This is the picture of the last book of the Bible
      - (1) The time has come for pulling of the cord.
      - (2) The unveiling of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is upon us, in these later days.
    - c. Thus, the book is the unveiling of that which would otherwise be unknown to us in this present age.
  - 3. Because of the unified contents of this book, it should not be referred to as *“the Revelations,”* plural, but **“The Revelation.”**

- D. Rather than taking the title from the Greek text, a far better title comes from the opening verse of the book, **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”** (1:1)
1. In chapters 1-3, Christ is seen as the exalted Priest/King ministering to the churches.
  2. In Revelation 4-5, Christ is observed as the glorified Lamb of God in heaven, reigning on the throne.
  3. In chapters 6-18, He is seen as the Judge of all the earth.
  4. In Revelation 19, He returns to earth as the conquering King of kings.
  5. The book then closes, in chapters 20-22, with the Heavenly Bridegroom ushering His bride (the Church) into the glorious heavenly city.

II. Author.

- A. There seems to be little confusion as to the human writer of this book.
1. The style, symmetry, and plan of Revelation show that it was written by one author, four times named **“John.”** (1:1, 1:4, 1:9, 22:8)
  2. Because of its content, and its address to the seven churches, Revelation quickly circulated and became widely known and accepted in the early Church.
  3. It was frequently mentioned and quoted by second and third century Christian writers and was quickly received as part of the Canon of New Testament books.
- B. From the beginning, Revelation was considered an authentic work of the Apostle John, who also wrote the Gospel and three Epistles.

III. Date.

- A. John’s effective testimony for Christ had led the Roman authorities to exile him to the small desolate island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. (1:9)
1. This island of volcanic rock was one of several places to which the Romans banished criminals and political offenders.
  2. Revelation was written at a time when Roman hostility to Christianity was erupting into overt persecution. (1:9, 2:10, 2:13)
- B. John directed his prophetic word to seven select churches in the Roman province of Asia.
1. The messages to these churches begin with Ephesus and continued in a clockwise direction until Laodicea is reached.
  2. It is likely that this book was initially carried along this same circular route.
  3. While each of these messages had a particular significance for each of the individual churches mentioned, they are also relevant for the Church as a whole (cp. 2:7a, 17a, etc.).
- C. Most evangelical scholars affirm that Revelation was written in A.D. 95 or 96.
1. This is based on accounts of the early church fathers that the Apostle John had been exiled on Patmos during the reign of Domitian who died in A.D. 96.
  2. John was then allowed to return to Ephesus.
  3. John was the only apostle to escape a violent death.

IV. The Christ Of Revelation.

- A. Revelation has much to say about all three Persons of the Godhead, but it is especially clear in its presentation of the awesome resurrected Christ who has received all authority to judge the earth.
- B. References to Jesus Christ.
1. **“Jesus Christ.”** (1:1)
  2. **“The faithful witness.”** (1:5)
  3. **“The first begotten of the dead.”** (1:5)
  4. **“The prince of the kings of the earth.”** (1:5)
  5. **“The first and the last.”** (1:17)
  6. **“He that liveth.”** (1:18)
  7. **“The Son of God.”** (2:18)
  8. **“Holy”** and **“true.”** (3:7)
  9. **“The Amen.”** (3:14)
  10. **“The faithful and true witness.”** (3:14)
  11. **“The beginning of the creation of God.”** (3:14)
  12. **“The Lion of the tribe of Judah.”** (5:5)
  13. **“The Root of David.”** (5:5)
  14. **“A Lamb.”** (5:6)
  15. **“Faithful and True.”** (19:11)
  16. **“The Word of God.”** (19:13)
  17. **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”** (19:16)
  18. **“Alpha and Omega.”** (22:13)
  19. **“The beginning and the end.”** (22:13)
  20. **“The first and the last.”** (22:13)
  21. **“The offspring of David.”** (22:16)
  22. **“The bright and morning star.”** (22:16)
  23. **“Our Lord Jesus Christ.”** (22:21)
- C. This book is indeed **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”** (1:1).
1. It comes from Him and centers on Him.
  2. It begins with a vision of His glory, wisdom, and power. (Chapter 1)
  3. It portrays His authority over the entire Church. (Chapters 2-3)
  4. It declares Him to be the Lamb who was slain and worthy to open the book of judgment. (Chapters 4-5)
  5. It demonstrates His righteous wrath poured out upon the whole earth. (Chapters 6-18)
  6. It celebrates His return in power to judge His enemies and to reign as the Lord over all. (Chapters 19-20)
  7. It introduces His rule forever over the heavenly city in the presence of all who know Him. (Chapters 21-22)
  8. It closes with His great promises to those who would await His coming. (Chapter 22)
- V. Keys To Revelation.
- A. Key Verse: Revelation 1:19, **“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”** (See below)

- B. Key Chapters: Revelation 19-22.
1. In Revelation 19-22, the plans of God from the last days, and for all eternity, are recorded in explicit terms.
  2. Uppermost in the mind and deep in the heart should be guarded the words of Jesus, **“Behold, I come quickly”** (22:7).
  3. When the end of history is fully understood, its impact radically affects the present.
- C. Key Thought: The Revelation of the Coming of Christ.
1. The purposes for which Revelation was written depend to some extent on how the book as a whole is interpreted.
    - a. The literal meaning of Scripture is that it embraces the normal, everyday, common understanding of terms.
      - (1) Words are given the meaning that they normally have in common communication.
      - (2) It is the basic, normal, or plain way of interpreting a passage.
    - b. A literal method of interpreting does not eliminate figures of speech.
      - (1) When the Bible speaks of the eye, arms, or wings of God (Psalm 34:15, Isaiah 51:9, Psalm 91:4), these should not be taken as literally true, for God does not really have these physical features.
      - (2) These are called *“anthropomorphic phrases,”* giving descriptions to God that we would understand.
      - (3) Determining when a passage should be taken figuratively can be difficult, but certain guidelines should help.
        - (a) When it is obviously figurative, as when Jesus said He was a *“door”* in John 10:9.
        - (b) When the text itself authorizes the figurative sense, as when Paul said he was using an allegory in Galatians 4:24.
        - (c) When a literal interpretation would contradict other truths inside or outside the Bible, as when the Bible speaks of the **“four [corners] of the earth”** in Revelation 7:1.
    - c. A literal method of interpretation does not eliminate the use of symbols.
      - (1) The Book of Revelation contains many symbols that represent literal things.
      - (2) For example, Jesus explains that the **“seven stars”** in His right hand are the **“angels of the seven churches”** (1:20).
      - (3) Bowls of incense are said to represent the prayers of the saints (5:8).
    - d. Six reasons for a literal approach to interpretation.
      - (1) It is the normal way to understand all languages.
      - (2) The greater part of the Bible makes sense when taken literally.
      - (3) This approach will allow for a secondary meaning when demanded by the content.
      - (4) It is the only safe check on our subjective imaginations.
      - (5) It is the only approach in line with the nature of inspiration, that is, that the Words of God are *“God-breathed.”*

- (6) It has been said, “*When the plan sense makes good sense, seek no other sense lest you end up with nonsense.*”
2. There are four major views for interpreting Revelation:
- a. The *Symbolic* or *Idealist* view maintains that Revelation is not a predictive prophecy, but a symbolic portrayal of the cosmic conflict of spiritual principles.
    - (1) According to this view, the great themes of the triumph of good over evil, of Christ over Satan, of the vindication of the martyrs, and of the sovereignty of God are played out repeatedly throughout the visions of Revelation, without reference to any single historical event.
    - (2) The significant disadvantage of this view is that the Book of Revelation itself claims to be predicting events “**which must shortly come to pass**” (1:1), giving the impression that some fulfillment, in some particular historical setting, is intended.
  - b. The *Preterist* view maintains that it is a symbolic description of the fall of Jerusalem, Roman persecution of the Church, emperor worship, and the divine judgment of Rome.
    - (1) This view has the advantage of immediate relevance to the original readers, a feature to be expected in any epistle.
    - (2) Yet, if Revelation was written concerning Jerusalem’s destruction, it would seem far more appropriate that the message be sent to the Jews of Palestine, rather than to the churches of Asia, eight hundred miles away.
  - c. The *Historical* view approaches Revelation as an allegorical panorama of the history of the Western Church from the first century to the Second Advent.
    - (1) One of the weaknesses of the Historical approach is seen in the inability of its advocates to agree upon the specific fulfillments of the prophecies.
      - (a) It has been demonstrated that at least fifty different systems of interpretation have arisen from the historical view.
      - (b) While most Historicists see the seven trumpets as pertaining to the Islamic forces attacking the eastern Roman Empire, they disagree among themselves regarding the seven seals as to whether they refer to the defeat of the Western Roman Empire by the Huns and Vandals or to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans
    - (2) If the prophecies’ meanings cannot be identified with certainty, even after their fulfillments, the value of the prophecies to the readers of any period, whether before or following their fulfillments, is called into serious question.
  - d. The *Futurist* view acknowledges the obvious influence that the first-century conflict between Rome and the Church had upon the themes of the book, but accepts the bulk of the book as an inspired look into the time immediately preceding the Second Advent and extending to the creation of the new cosmos.
    - (1) Of the various approaches to Revelation, the *Futurist* is most likely to take a literal interpretation.

- (2) Although Futurists admit to the necessity of recognizing some symbolism in Revelation, the desire to understand Revelation may be the leading factor favoring the adoption of a Futurist view.
- e. Advocates of all four approaches agree that it was written to assure the recipients of the ultimate triumph of Christ over all who rise up against Him and His saints.
  - (1) It was written to challenge complacent Christians to stop compromising with the world.
  - (2) It provides a perspective of end-time events that would have meaning and relevance to the spiritual lives of all succeeding generations of Christians.

VI. Survey Of Revelation. (1:19)

- A. **“The things which thou hast seen . . .”** (1:1-20)
  - 1. Introduction. (1:1-8)
  - 2. Revelation of Christ. (1:9-20)
- B. **“ . . . The things which are . . .”** (2:1-3:22)
  - 1. Message to Ephesus. (2:1-7)
  - 2. Message to Smyrna. (2:8-11)
  - 3. Message to Pergamos. (2:12-17)
  - 4. Message to Thyatira. (2:18-29)
  - 5. Message to Sardis. (3:1-6)
  - 6. Message to Philadelphia. (3:7-13)
  - 7. Message to Laodicea. (3:14-22)
- C. **“ . . . The things which shall be hereafter.”** (4:1-22:21)
  - 1. Person of the Judge. (4:1-5:14)
    - a. The Throne of God. (4:1-11)
    - b. The Sealed Book. (5:1-14)
  - 2. Prophecies of Tribulation. (6:1-19:6)
    - a. Seven Seals of Judgment. (6:1-8:5)
    - b. Seven Trumpets of Judgment. (8:6-11:19)
    - c. Explanatory Prophecies. (12:1-14:20)
    - d. Seven Vials of Judgment. (15:1-19:6)
  - 3. Prophecies of the Second Coming. (19:7-21)
    - a. Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (19:7-10)
    - b. Second Coming of Christ. (19:11-21)
  - 4. Prophecies of the Millennium. (20:1-15)
    - a. Satan is bound for 1,000 years. (20:1-3)
    - b. Saint’s reign for 1,000 years. (20:4-6)
    - c. Satan is loosed and leads to rebellion. (20:7-9)
    - d. Satan is tormented for ever. (20:10)
    - e. Great White Throne Judgment. (20:11-15)
  - 5. Prophecies of the Eternal State. (21:1-22:5)
    - a. New Heaven and Earth are created. (21:1)



- b. New Jerusalem. (21:2-22:5)
- 6. Conclusion. (22:6-21)

Notes

**Conclusion:** Revelation 1:3 tells us, “**Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**” As we begin this study together, may the Lord bless you as you “hear” the words of this prophecy, but more importantly, may you “keep those things which are written therein.”

THE REVELATION				
VERSES	FOCUS	DIVISION	TOPIC	
1:1-1:20	<i>“Things Which Thou Hast Seen”</i>	The Lord Jesus Christ	Vision Of Christ	Theophany
2:1-3:22	<i>“Things Which Are”</i>	Seven Churches		Talks
4:1-5:14	<i>“Things Which Shall Be Here-After”</i>	The Judge	V I S I O N  O f  C O N S U M M A T I O N	Tribulations
6:1-19:6		Tribulation		
19:7-19:21		Second Coming		Trumpets
20:1-20:15		Millennium		
21:1-22:21		Eternal State		



# THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 1:1-20

**Introduction:** First century culture gave little attention to the notion of true prophecy from God. Neither did it think much about who is really in charge of the events of history. Most would have been utterly shocked to discover that the Jesus Christ is truly the King of kings.

Our times are no different. Studying and following the truths of Revelation 1 should change that for you, just as it changed the early Christians. Followers of Christ who want a clear display of who their Lord really is need look no further.

## I. Prologue. (1:1-3)

- A. The opening verse introduces to us the central theme of the Book: Jesus Christ in His present and future glory.

**1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:**

1. Concerning things which **“must shortly come to pass.”**
  - a. Because the Book of Revelation was written in about A.D. 95, some take this phrase to mean these events would occur within a few years after John penned this Book.
  - b. II Peter 3:8 reminds us, though, **“that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”**
  - c. **“Must shortly come to pass”** might better indicate a rapidity of execution after the beginning of these things take place.
2. The channel through which the revelation comes to us is **“by his angel unto his servant John.”**

(II Timothy 3:16, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”**)

  - a. The revelation began with God.
    - (1) God gave it to His Son, **“Jesus Christ.”**
    - (2) His purpose in receiving it was that it might be shown to His **“servants,”** plural.
    - (3) Revelation is not just given to John, but is intended for His servants throughout the ages.
    - (4) It is testified to by an unnamed angel.
    - (5) It is received by the Apostle John.

(II Peter 1:21, **“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”**)
  - b. From first to last, Revelation is part of the whole revelation of the living God – the Bible – that is inspired, inerrant, and infallible.
3. Consider the little word, **“signified”** in verse 1.

- a. If you were to place your finger over the end of the word, leaving but the first four letters to show, you would have the word “*sign*.”
- b. The Book of Revelation is filled with signs and it has been suggested that it is written in “*sign language*,” with each sign being interpreted elsewhere in the Bible.
- 4. The opening verse sets forth five points:
  - a. Its basic scheme – Prophecy.
  - b. Its subject matter – Jesus’ revelation.
  - c. Its purpose – to show unto His servants thing which must shortly come to pass.
  - d. Its channel of communication – an unnamed angel.
  - e. Its human recipient and writer – Apostle John.
- B. John bore record.

**1:2 Who bore record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.**

- 1. John bore record of the Revelation as “**the Word of God.**”
  - a. Jesus said, in John 12:48, “**He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**”
  - b. If you reject the Bible, someday you will be judged by the Bible at the Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20:12, 15)
- 2. John bore record of “**the testimony of Jesus Christ.**”
  - a. Jesus gave a good testimony of Himself before Pontius Pilate. (John 18:36-38a)
  - b. He bore a good testimony before all men, and John should have known, for he had been the closest of the Savior’s disciples. (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20)
- 3. John bore record of “**all things that he saw.**”
  - a. Of the Gospel writers, only Matthew and John had been part of the original twelve Apostles.
    - (1) John writes what he had seen and been an eyewitness of.
    - (2) On many occasions he wrote down names and places that are not cited in the other Gospels.
  - b. This same John further wrote three small epistles and penned the Book of Revelation.
    - (1) In the Book of Revelation, the words “**I saw**” occur 35 times.
    - (2) This is the revelation that John received, bearing record of things he saw.
- C. A three-fold blessing.

**1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**

1. As all would not have a copy of the book, a special blessing attends the one who reads it.
  - a. Those who hear it are also blessed.
  - b. The word **“blessed”** means *“happy.”*
  - c. Here is the secret to happiness – reading, hearing, and obeying the Word of God.
2. For both the reader and the hearer, it’s most important to pay attention to, keep, and observe what is written.
  - a. All three participles are in the present tense, implying continued reading, hearing, and keeping.
  - b. The blessing here pronounced is the first of seven beatitudes in the book. (1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14)
3. This blessing relates to **“this prophecy.”**
  - a. This is the thrust of the book.
  - b. This is not ancient history, but prophecy; history written beforehand.
  - c. The bulk of this book is given over to future events.
4. The importance of the prophecy is emphasized by the phrase, **“for the time is at hand.”**
  - a. Daniel mentions the **“time of the end”** five times. (Daniel 8:17, 11:35, 11:40, 12:4, 12:9)
  - b. The expression **“at hand”** indicates nearness from the standpoint of prophetic revelation, not necessarily that the event will immediately occur.
  - c. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is **“at hand,”** as a **“thief in the night”** (I Thessalonians 5:2).

## II. Salutation. (1:4-8)

- A. John addresses what he writes to **“seven churches”** which are in Asia.

**1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;**

1. These seven churches would be representative of all the churches.
2. The common invocation of **“grace”** and **“peace,”** used by Paul, are here used by John.
  - a. **“Grace”** always precedes **“peace.”**
  - b. **“Grace”** embodies God’s attitude toward the believer coupled with His loving gifts. (Ephesians 2:8, **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”**)
  - c. **“Peace”** speaks of the relationship or experience with God. (Romans 5:1, **“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**)
3. The three-fold concept **“from him which is, and which was, and which is to come,”** corresponds to the three-fold chronological division of the book itself. (Cp. 1:19)

- a. It further speaks of God the Father as the “*first*” Person of the Triune Godhead.
- b. Revelation 4:8 identifies Him as the center of heavenly worship, **“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”**
- c. Chapter 11, verses 16 and 17 tells us, **“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come . . .”**
- 4. The “**seven Spirits**” speak of the Holy Spirit, the “*third*” Person of the Triune Godhead, in His seven-fold perfection as detailed in Isaiah 11:1-2.
  - a. **“The spirit of the LORD.”**
  - b. **“The spirit of wisdom.”**
  - c. **“The spirit of . . . understanding.”**
  - d. **“The spirit of counsel.”**
  - e. **“The spirit of . . . might.”**
  - f. **“The spirit of knowledge.”**
  - g. **“The spirit of . . . the fear of the LORD.”**
- B. The salutation climactically comes from Christ, the “*second*” Person of the Triune Godhead.

**1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,**

- 1. He is described as . . .
  - a. **“The faithful witness.”**
  - b. **“The first begotten of the dead.”**
    - (1) Though others had been raised from the dead before Jesus, they were raised back to physical life only to die again.
    - (2) Jesus was raised from the dead to immortality, never to die again.
  - c. **“The prince of the kings of the earth.”**
    - (1) This is the work of Jesus Christ that the kings of this earth don’t know yet.
    - (2) I Timothy 6:15 speaks of Jesus as **“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”**
- 2. Special emphasis is given to what has already been accomplished for believers.
  - a. Christ is the One who **“loved us,”** and keeps loving us.
  - b. He has **“washed us of our sins,”** once for all, through His own blood.
    - (1) You don’t have to cut yourself, stand barefoot in the snow or lay on a bed of spikes to get saved.

- (2) Jesus did it all.  
(Hebrews 1:3b, “[*and*] **when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.**”)
- (3) The song-writer penned:  
*“Jesus paid it all,  
 All to Him I owe;  
 Sin had left a crimson stain—  
 He washed it white as snow.”*

C. Believers form a priesthood and kingdom.

**1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

1. He “**loved us,**” “**washed us,**” and “**made us.**”
  - a. Salvation is not the end of the story for us.
  - b. Ephesians 2:10 speaks of us as “**his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works . . .**”
2. Many Christians are unaware of the royalty of their inheritance.
  - a. We tend to look with awe at those in high office and see their privileged position and all the benefits they derive from this elevation.
  - b. Peter tells us, “**But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light**” (I Peter 2:9).
3. Christ has made every Christian a king and a priest.  
(Revelation 5:10, “**And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**”)
  - a. In the Old Testament, only the priest had the right of access to God.
  - b. By our new birth in Christ, we now have royal blood and can come directly and boldly unto the throne of Grace.  
(Hebrews 4:16, “**Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**”)

D. An emphatic declaration – “**Behold, he cometh.**”

**1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**

1. Literally, “*Jesus WILL come again.*”  
(John 14:3, “**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**”)
2. As Christ was received by a cloud in His ascension (Acts 1:9), so He will come back in the clouds of heaven.  
(Matthew 24:30, 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62, Luke 21:27, Acts 1:11)
3. Until a few years ago, Bible scholars wondered how it would be possible for “**every eye**” to see the Lord Jesus Christ as He came through the clouds.

- a. From a human standpoint this seemed an impossibility.
  - b. But, then, on Sunday, July 24, 1969, people from all over the world watched Neil Armstrong as he took his first step on the moon.
  - c. Through orbiting satellites **“every eye”** was able to see the exact same occurrence simultaneously.
  - d. Today, through the internet, instantaneous broadcasting of news events has become a regular occurrence.
4. There is no indication that the world will see Christ at the time of the Rapture, but when He comes back to establish His Kingdom all will see Him.
- a. Not only will Israel as a nation behold and recognize Him, but all the tribes of the earth shall mourn.
    - (1) Zechariah 12:10, **“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”**
    - (2) Matthew 24:30, **“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”**
  - b. To this John adds, **“Even so, Amen,”** meaning, *“So be it!”*
- E. Christ’s declarations concerning Himself.

**1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**

- 1. **“I am Alpha and Omega.”**
    - a. *“I am the Alphabet of God!”*
    - b. Recognizing that words are made up of letters, one author writes, *I’m not only the Word of God, I am the verbs of God, the nouns of God, the prepositions of God, the conjunctions of God, the sentences of God. I am the predicate, I am the subject, I am everything. I am the Word of God. I am the Alpha and the Omega.”*
  - 2. **“I am . . . the beginning and the ending.”**
    - a. In response to this declaration, the believer can rest with Paul when he says, **“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**
    - b. In Hebrews 12:2 Jesus is described as **“the Author and Finisher of our faith.”**
  - 3. Jesus Christ is, therefore, the central figure of the first eight verses.
- III. The Vision Of Christ Glorified. (1:9-18)
- A. John was in exile because of his active preaching of the Word of God and his testimony concerning Jesus Christ.



**1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

1. I Peter 4:12-19 teaches the proper response to suffering.
    - a. Suffering should not be seen as a **“strange thing.”** (4:12)
    - b. **“Rejoice, inasmuch as [we] are partakers of Christ’s suffering.”** (4:13)
  2. Shut off from friends and human fellowship, John was given the most extensive revelation of future things shown to any writer of the New Testament.
- B. That he was **“in the Spirit”** refers to his experience of being carried beyond a normal sense into a state where God could reveal supernaturally the contents of this book.

**1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,**

1. Others had similar experiences.
    - a. Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 2:2, 3:12, 3:14, etc.)
    - b. Peter. (Acts 10:10-11, 11:5)
    - c. Paul. (Acts 22:17-21)
  2. The **“Lord’s Day”** – two interpretations:
    - a. The first day of the week. (Ironsides)
    - b. That John was projected forward to the future day of the Lord spoken of in the Old Testament. (Walvoord)
  3. The context seems to suggest that John received the vision while in the Spirit of prayer, on the day of worship – the **“Lord’s Day.”** (Cp. Daniel 9:20-21)
- C. The command to write, found twelve times in the book, indicates that John was to write after seeing each vision.

**1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**

**1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;**

1. The seven **“candlesticks”** he was to write to represent the seven churches, and they signify the churches’ principle function of giving forth light. (Cp. 2:5)
2. Christ stands in the midst of the churches. (1:13a)
3. John would have recognized the **“Son of man”** having spent three years in discipleship with Him.

- D. The description in verses 13-15 is a symbolic representation of the attributes of Christ in special relationship to the events which are portrayed in the Book of Revelation.

**1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.**

**1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;**

**1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.**

1. Using such words as “**as**” and “**like**,” John is doing the best he can in describing what he sees.
2. John’s description:
  - a. In reference to the Old Testament judge and priest, the “**garment**” and “**girdle**” spoken of here alludes to Christ in His role as judge and priest.
  - b. That His head and hair are “**white as snow**” speak of His wisdom and purity.
  - c. His “**eyes [as a] flame of fire**” speak of the penetrating gaze of holiness and divine judgment upon all that is impure.
  - d. The burning “**brass**” represents Christ standing in the midst of the churches on the basis of righteous judgment.
  - e. Possessing “**feet like unto fine brass**” suggests the irresistibility of His coming judgment. (Cp. Revelation 14:19-20).
  - f. The thundering “**voice as the sound of many waters**” speaks of the majesty and power before which all human authority must bow.
    - (1) Jesus said, in John 5:25, “**Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.**”
    - (2) In John 11:43, Jesus then demonstrated the power of His voice by crying out, “**Lazarus, come forth.**”
- E. Seven stars were found in His “**right hand.**”

**1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.**

1. The mystery of the “**seven stars**” is interpreted in verse 20 as the messengers of the seven churches.
2. That Jesus held them in His “**right hand**” speaks of a place of honor.
  - a. These messengers are the ones responsible for the spiritual welfare of these churches – the Pastors.
  - b. As the churches were to emit light as a candlestick, so the leaders of the churches were to project light as stars.
3. The “**sharp two-edged sword**” represents divine judgment.

- a. Hebrews 4:12 speaks of a sword uncovering unbelief.  
(Hebrews 4:12, **“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**)
- b. This sword speaks of devastating judgment.
- 4. That His **“countenance was as the sun”** speaks of the glory of God.
  - a. Our sun is 109 times the diameter of the earth.
  - b. Of all the heavenly bodies, the sun is the most important to us here on earth.
    - (1) The temperature on the surface is about 11,000 degrees Fahrenheit.
    - (2) It takes the sun’s light about 8½ minutes to reach the earth . . . some 93 million miles away.
    - (3) Yet, even from this distance, all of us have experienced the warmth and brilliance of the sun.
    - (4) But its brightness is still so intense, we cannot look at it.
  - c. The **“countenance”** of our Lord is compared to the strength of the sun.

**1:17a And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.**

- F. Those who do not fall down before God at the revelation of His glory and majesty are brought to immediate self-judgment and reverential fear.
  - 1. Gideon. (Judges 6:22-23)
  - 2. Job. (Job 42:5-6)
  - 3. Isaiah. (Isaiah 6:5)
  - 4. Zacharias. (Luke 1:12)
  - 5. Peter. (Luke 5:8)
- G. Jesus is portrayed as the Eternal Sovereign One, who has authority over death and hell. (1:17b-18)

**1:17b And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:**

**1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

- 1. These verses can be of great comfort to those who have lost their Christian loved ones in death.
  - a. Christ Himself has experienced death.
  - b. Through His resurrection, He has emerged the victor over death; and now, as Lord, He has all authority over **“death and hell.”**
- 2. And with His promise, comes His comfort – **“Fear not.”**

- a. That phrase is one of the most oft repeated phrases in all of God's communications to man, being used 69 times throughout the Scriptures.
- b. Fear can be a paralyzing emotion, and inevitably when individuals in the Bible get a glimpse of the glory of God they are terrified.
- c. Yet, with His comfort comes also the touch of His **"right hand,"** the hand of His might and power.
- 3. **"The keys"** represent *"authority."*
  - a. In John 1:4, John testifies, **"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."**
  - b. In John 11:25-26, Jesus said to Martha in regards to the death of Lazarus, **"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. . ."**
  - c. Paul wrote, **"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Romans 8:38-39).
- 4. Jesus holds the **"keys of hell and of death."**

#### IV. John Commissioned To Write. (1:19-20)

##### A. Outline of Revelation.

**1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;**

- 1. **"The things which thou hast seen."** (Revelation 1)
- 2. **"The things which are."** (Revelation 2-3)
- 3. **"The things which shall be hereafter."** (Revelation 4-22)
- B. Although many of the symbols of Revelation are not explained, a great majority of them are interpreted in one way or another in the Word of God.

**1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**

**Conclusion:** Every true portrait of Jesus emphasizes both His complete humanity and His awesome deity. We'll never be able to fully understand Jesus Christ. But we do know that the right response to Him is worship. If Revelation teaches us anything at all, it is that Jesus is worthy of worship.

Jesus is also intimately involved with His churches. The same Person who promised to build His church, in Matthew 16:18, continues to be present with His congregations. All who follow Jesus seriously should be involved in one of His congregations.

## LETTERS TO EPHESUS AND SMYRNA

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 2:1-11

**Introduction:** If you have ever moved into a new community and select a new church home, you know how difficult it can be. Imposing buildings may house dying congregations, while modest structures might belong to living assemblies on march for the Lord. The church we think of as “*rich*” may turn out to be “*poor*” in God’s sight, while the “*poor*” church is actually “*rich*.”

Only the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, can accurately inspect each church and know its true condition, because He alone can see the internals, not simply the externals. Revelation 2 and 3 make up a series of special messages to seven churches. In these messages He gave each assembly an “*x-ray*” of its condition.

In keeping with the three-fold outline of the Book of Revelation, as found in chapter 1, verse 9, we presently enter into that portion of the book that John describes as “**the things which are.**”

Besides the revelations and exhortations to each church, these seven churches have also been shown to represent the chronological development of Church history when viewed spiritually. We should be warned, though, that such prophetic interpretation should not be pressed beyond bounds, as it is a deduction from the content and not from any explicit statement of the passage.

\*\* Preliminaries.

- A. Was the message of Revelation written for only seven churches of Asia?
  1. Scripture relates that there were several churches in Asia at the time of John’s writing.
    - a. Troas. (Acts 20:5, II Corinthians 2:12)
    - b. Miletus. (Acts 20:17)
    - c. Hierapolis. (Colossians 4:12)
    - d. Obviously those other churches that Paul wrote individual epistles to.
  2. The seven churches of Asia were chosen for their particular traits that apply to all of Christendom.
  3. Thus, these seven churches were not only literal, but also representative.
- B. The message to each of the seven churches is consistent, when appropriate, in its unfolding.
  1. Christ is first highlighted.
  2. Next, if there is to be any word of Commendation, it is noted.
  3. In contrast, any Indictment against the church is mentioned next.
  4. After these, words of Council are shared.
  5. Then Warnings are shared, if need be.
  6. Finally, Promises are made.
  7. We intend to add to these outlines each church’s representation during the Church Age.

I. Ephesus: The Church Without Love. (2:1-7)

- A. Ephesus – a large and important city on the west coast of Asia Minor.

1. The most favorable seaport in the province of Asia.
  2. Largest city in the province with over 300,000 people.
  3. Contained a theater that seated 25,000 people.
  4. Home to the Temple of Artemis, or Diana, as the Romans would say.
    - a. Ranked as one of the seven wonders of the Ancient World.
    - b. The Temple was supported by 127 columns, each 60 feet high.
    - c. So influential was Paul's ministry at Ephesus that the silversmith's league feared that the preaching of the Gospel would undermine the Great Temple of Artemis (Acts 19:23-28).
- B. Christ, the Sovereign Judge.

**2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**

1. Christ holds the messengers of these seven churches in His right hand.
    - a. A place of sovereign protection.
    - b. A place of divine authority.
  2. John had already written of the security of the believer in the hands of God in John 10:28-29.
  3. This knowledge that Christ walks amid His congregations (believers) should make all Christians take heart and heed.
- C. Commendation of doctrine and diligence.

**2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**

**2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.**

**2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

1. They abhorred that which was morally bad as well as that which was theologically in error.
2. They continued in patience to bear their proper burdens.
3. Their labor was motivated as works **"for my name's sake."**
4. They hated **"the deeds of the Nicolaitans."**
  - a. There was a party in the church trying to establish a *"priestly order."*
    - (1) This began with a proselyte named Nicolas. (Acts 6:5)
    - (2) He was a Gentile from another region who converted to Judaism before becoming a Christian.
    - (3) The early Church fathers accused him of denying the true faith and founding the sect known as *"Nicolaitans."*

- b. Their object was to establish a “*holy order of men,*” and place them over the laity, which was foreign to the New Testament plan.
- c. These things God hates.
  - (1) Jesus taught, in Matthew 23:9, “**And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.**”
  - (2) Here is the origin of Apostolic Succession.
  - (3) Here is the origin of separation of clergy from laity.
  - (4) This is what the Holy Spirit warned about when He told the Church elders not to be “**lords over God’s heritage, but . . . ensamples to the flock**” (I Peter 5:3).
- d. Many think it is wrong to judge heresy or wickedness.
  - (1) The same Christ who said, “**Judge not, that ye be not judged**” (Matthew 7:1), also declared “**judge righteous judgment**” (John 7:24).
  - (2) A believer is never to judge a person as far as character and motives, however, he should definitely judge when an individual’s doctrine is heretical or his life is filled with wickedness.  
(I John 4:1, “**Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**”)

D. Indictment for lack of devotion.

**2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**

- 1. Though they had not departed completely from their love of God, their love no longer had the fervency, depth, or meaning it once had in the church.
- 2. No amount of works can make up for this.  
(I Corinthians 13:1-3, “**Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**”)
- 3. The spiritual problem of the Ephesian church can best be seen in the perspective of the threefold nature of man’s spiritual poverty:
  - a. They possessed a defect in intellect or theology – some spiritual needs stem from lack of faith so that the individual either falls short of salvation itself, or lacks an abiding dependence on God.
  - b. They possessed a defect in the exercise of the human will – many who have trusted in God have never yielded them-selves completely to God, and as a result have not been filled with the Spirit.
  - c. They possessed a defect in the heart – the fervor the Ephesians once had, had grown cold.
    - (1) Walvoord – “*This cooling of heart which had overtaken them in relationship to God was a dangerous forerunner of spiritual*

*apathy which later was to erase all Christian testimony in this important center of Christian influence.”*

- (2) This cooling of spiritual love has been revealed in the downward trend of Church history:
  - (a) Step #1: A cooling of spiritual love.
  - (b) Step #2: The love of God is replaced by a love for the things of the world.
  - (c) Step #3: Compromise and spiritual corruption.
  - (d) Step #4: Departure from the faith.
  - (e) Step #5: A loss of effective spiritual testimony.
- (3) Like Martha, in Luke 10:42, a church may become so engrossed in religious work that it neglects the **“one thing needed,”** which is love for Christ.

E. The Council.

**2:5a Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;**

1. **“Remember.”**
  - a. This suggests a continual action.
  - b. To correct any departure from God the first step is to go back to the place of departure.
  - c. They were to remember the joys and satisfaction that was theirs in their new found faith.
2. **“Repent.”**
  - a. A decisive act.
  - b. To have a change of mind resulting in a change of conduct.
3. **“Repeat.”**
  - a. **“Do the first works.”**
  - b. The act of continuing on.

F. The Warning.

**2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**

1. Sudden judgment and removal of the **“candlestick.”**
  2. To remove the **“candlestick”** was to remove the testimony of the church.
  3. After the conquest of Mohammadanism, the Church of Ephesus became non-existent.
  4. Do not let this happen to you or your church.
- G. The Promise.



**2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**

1. Hearing emphasizes hearing and performance.
  2. The “*overcomer*” is one who has trusted in the merits of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.  
(I John 5:5, “**Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?**”)
  3. “**The paradise of God**” speaks of the future restoration of fellowship between God and men.
- H. The church of Ephesus represents that period of church history from A.D. 30, when the Church was begun at Pentecost, to A.D. 170.
- II. Smyrna: The Church In Suffering. (2:8-11)
- A. Smyrna’s superb natural harbor made the city an important commercial center.
    1. The city became a center for the cult of emperor worship – a fanatical “*religion*” that later, under such emperors as Nero and Domitian, brought on severe persecution for the early Church.
    2. Known today as Izmir, it is one of the strongest cities in modern day Turkey.
  - B. Christ, the Eternal One.

**2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**

1. Christ relates Himself to time and eternity.
  2. He is not only the Eternal One in relation to time, but He is the resurrected One in relation to life.
  3. To those facing death there could be no more appropriate way for the Savior to appear.
- C. Commendation for faithfulness in trial.

**2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.**

1. In referring to their tribulation, He assures them that He knows of their oppressive enemies and their resulting affliction.
  - a. Their persecutors were not only pagans, who naturally would be offended by the peculiarities of the Christian faith, but also hostile Jews and Satan himself.
  - b. Their extreme poverty can be explained by the fact that they had been robbed of their possessions in the process of their persecution.

(James 2:5, **“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”**)

2. The famous minister of Smyrna in that day was Polycarp, a student of the Apostle John.
  - a. It was the custom once a year for all to give allegiance to Caesar by saying, *“Caesar is Lord.”*
    - (1) Polycarp refused to do this.
    - (2) During the Olympian games in A.D. 155, it was the crowds of Smyrna that cried out for Polycarp.
  - b. When he entered into the arena the Proconsul gave him the choice of cursing the name of Christ and making sacrifice to Caesar, or death.
    - (1) Polycarp’s reply was, *“Eighty and six years have I served Him and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?”*
    - (2) With that statement, Polycarp was burned at the stake by the Romans with the help of the Jews.
- D. No Indictment.
- E. The Council.

**2:10a Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days:**

1. Smyrna’s persecution was only a forerunner of that which was to come.
  - a. When the devil casts some of them into prison, human eyes will only see his followers doing the deeds.
  - b. It was Satan who was behind Herod’s earlier try to slay the Christ child (Matthew 2:16, Revelation 12:4), but men could only see Herod.
  - c. Satan’s servants may even believe themselves to be serving God and humanity.  
(John 16:2, **“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”**)
  - d. This was the practice of Saul before he became the Apostle Paul.  
(I Timothy 1:13, **“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”**)
2. Two exhortations:
  - a. **“Fear none of those things . . .”**
    - (1) Jesus had previously taught His disciples not to fear those who can **“kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do”** (Luke 12:4).
    - (2) Fearlessness may not necessarily mean the total absence of dread, but rather the refusal to succumb to intimidation, so that threats of harm do not turn a person back from their duty to Christ.
  - b. **“Be thou faithful unto death . . .”**

3. Possible interpretations behind the statement, “**ye shall have tribulations ten days**” in verse 10.
    - a. History has not recorded any period of “**ten days**” that was endured by these Christians.
    - b. It may be in reference to ten actual waves of Roman persecution recorded in the first three centuries of history:
      - (1) Nero, A.D. 54.
      - (2) Domitian, A.D. 81.
      - (3) Trajan, A.D. 98.
      - (4) Adrian [Hadrian], A.D. 117.
      - (5) Septimius Severus, A.D. 193.
      - (6) Maximin, A.D. 235.
      - (7) Decius, A.D. 249.
      - (8) Valerian, A.D. 254.
      - (9) Aurelian, A.D. 270.
      - (10) Diocletian. A.D. 284.
    - \*c. The “**ten days**” may also be in contrast to the much longer time designations in the book and simply suggests that the tribulation for this church will be a relatively short period of time.
  4. The problem of human suffering has occupied the minds of men for centuries.
    - a. It is not difficult to understand why the ungodly suffer.
    - b. But, why should the godly suffer?
      - (1) Discipline.  
(Hebrews 12:6, “**For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** ”)
      - (2) Spiritual growth.  
(Romans 5:3-5, “**And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**”)
      - (3) Keep one useful.  
(II Corinthians 12:7, “**And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.**”)
      - (4) To prepare for future ministry.  
(II Corinthians 1:3-4, “**Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**”)
- F. No Warnings.
- G. The Promise.

**2:10b Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**

**2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**

1. The reward for faithfulness unto death is fittingly a **“crown of life.”**
  - a. The word for **“crown”** is not *DIADEMA*, which refers to a *“regal crown worn by a king,”* but it is *STEPHANOS*, which is *“the victor’s crown.”*
    - (1) The **“crown of life”** speaks of the crown of eternal life.
    - (2) The possession of *“eternal life”* is the crowning glory of the believer.
  - b. James almost sounds as if he is referring to this promise to the Smyrnian church when he writes, **“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him”** (James 1:12).
2. One author writes, *“The world in its rejection of the Christian message can inflict martyrdom and terminate life in this world, but those who are faithful in their opportunity to receive Christ in this life are promised that they will not be overcome with the second death.”*
- H. This period of Church History extends from A.D. 170 to Constantine in A.D. 312.
  1. These people probably suffered the greatest persecutions of all time.
    - a. Church history informs us that five million Christians may have been martyred during this era.
    - b. Their works, faithfully performed in the name of Jesus, brought great tribulation and accompanying poverty.
    - c. However, great riches were laid up for them in heaven. (Matthew 6:19-21, **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”**)
  2. Around A.D. 170, a sect called the Montanists practiced a primitive form of Christianity in opposition to pagan Rome.
    - a. In most church histories the Montanists are classified as heretics (as were all groups that tended to hold doctrines that did not agree with the writers of the history books, most of which were either Catholic or liberal Protestant).
    - b. However, a careful study of their beliefs and practices reveal they were orthodox, and part of our Baptist heritage.
  3. Around A.D. 251, the Novatians further withdrew from the Roman religion because of conflicts regarding baptism and sacrifices to the Roman emperors as gods.

**Conclusion:** The church of Ephesus became a careless church because it was made up of careless believers who neglected their love for Christ. In contrast, the church at Smyrna

became the church in suffering because it stood faithful in trial. How easy it is to bend to the times in which we live, but such should not be the case.

The exhortation is clear, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”** If your devotion for the Lord has turned into a flicker, it might be time to **“remember,” “repent,”** and **“do the first works.”**

*Notes*



# LETTERS TO PERGAMOS AND THYATIRA

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 2:12-19

**Introduction:** In the first century, an Epistle was a well-developed literary style of writing. Christian individuals and congregations had received apostolic epistles long before Revelation was ever written. No church, however, had ever before received a letter directly dictated by the risen Lord. Christ's letters to the seven churches are unique because they are "love letters" to His beloved congregations.

In Revelation 2 and 3, the messages to the seven churches contain divine revelations and exhortations pertaining to the present Church Age. Many of the evils and shortcomings that exist in the Church today are a direct outgrowth of the neglect of the solemn instructions given to these seven churches.

Each church needed a particular message, and the spiritual state of each church corresponded precisely to the exhortation which was given. Having previously look at the churches at Ephesus and Smyrna, we now turn our attention to the churches in Pergamos and Thyatira.

### III. Pergamos: The Church In Compromise. (2:12-17)

- A. Pergamos, or Pergamum, was a wealthy city with many temples devoted to idol worship.
  - 1. It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and the place where the State religion was most thoroughly promoted.
  - 2. It had a large medical center and a library of over 200,000 volumes.
  - 3. It was famous for paper and parchment, which seems to have originated here.
  - 4. Here, among the gods, the deity of medicine, Asklepios (*scalpel*), was honored, often with the sign of a snake.
- B. Christ, The Judge Of Compromise.

**2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;**

- 1. The two-edged sword is used in Hebrews 4:12 for the convicting power of the Word of God.
  - 2. The sword, as the Word of God, separates those who are the vessels of grace from those condemned with the world.
  - 3. The sword further condemns and rejects those who refuse the message of grace.
- C. Commendation for holding fast.

**2:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.**

1. The expression, “**where Satan’s seat is,**” refers to the satanic power of the religious character of the city of Pergamos manifested in the persecution of Christians and depicted in the worship of Asklepios, the serpent god.
  2. In spite of their evil environment, the Pergamos Christians held fast to Jesus and did not deny their faith.
  3. The church as a whole was commended for standing unwaveringly for Christ, even though one of their members, Antipas, had paid the supreme price of martyrdom.
  4. Tradition tells us that Antipas was placed inside a brazen bull and slowly roasted to death.
- D. Indicted for compromise.

**2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**

**2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

1. The reference to Balaam is an allusion to the experience of Balaam recorded in Numbers 22-25.
    - a. Balak, King of Moab had hired Balaam to curse Israel.
    - b. When the Lord would not permit Balaam to curse Israel, Balaam suggested to Balak that the pagan king invite the Israelites to their licentious feast of “*Baal-Peor.*”
    - c. Balaam sold out God’s people.
    - d. He further encouraged the Israelites to marry pagan wives.
  2. Intermarriage with the heathen, and spiritual compromise, were real issues in Pergamos where civil life and religious life became intertwined.
    - a. The Apostle Paul warned about compromise of believers with unbelievers when he wrote, “**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?**” (II Corinthians 6:14-15).
    - b. Where one sin is allowed to thrive (Balaamism), a second is not far behind (Nicolaitanism).
    - c. Referring to the Nicolaitans, that which Ephesus hated, Pergamos allowed.
- E. The Council.

**2:16 Repent . . .**

1. With a most abrupt command, Christ issued a sharp word: “**REPENT!**”
2. Even though many in the church had been faithful, the evil character of those things which were invading the church was so serious in the mind of



Christ that it involved fighting against them with the “**sword of [His] mouth.**”

F. The Warning.

**2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**

1. There is no alternative to continued impurity and compromise than divine judgment.
2. The command is an imperative to change one’s attitude toward sin AND to act from that time on according to this new attitude.
3. The Christian is not to close his mind, heart or ears to God’s warnings.

G. The Promise.

**2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.**

1. The believer is assured that he will have the benefit of eating of “**hidden manna,**” speaking of the benefits of fellowship with Christ and the spiritual strength that is afforded by that experience.
  2. To receive a “**white stone**” would be in reference to acquittal in a court of law, in contrast to a “*black stone*” which would indicate condemnation.
  3. The “**new name**” symbolizes the personal heritage of the glories that are beyond this world and the assurance of eternal life.
- H. Pergamos represents the period of Church History from A.D. 312 to A.D. 606, when Boniface III was crowned “*Universal Bishop.*”
1. This Church period was one of materialism, self-indulgence, and worldliness.
    - a. The name “**Pergamos**” has in it the same root from which we get our English words “*bigamy*” and “*polygamy,*” which give rise to illegitimate relationships.
    - b. Pergamos signifies the mixed marriage of the Church and the World.
  2. Shortly after the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup>-century, Constantine the Great became Emperor of the Roman Empire.
    - a. On October 27, 312, the night before the famed Battle of Milvan Bridge, Constantine saw a vision of a cross in the sky about sunset, and then these words: “*In this sign, conquer.*”
      - (1) He took that to mean that he was to use that sign as a battle cry.
      - (2) The next day, he used the cross, like a good-luck charm, and won the battle.
    - b. He then issued the “*Edict of Toleration*” in 313, granting religious liberty to Christians.

- (1) From then on he did everything he could to help the Christian cause.
  - (2) He determined that Christianity was to become the religion of the Roman Empire.
3. After Constantine's passing, in 378 Theodosius became the king of the Roman Empire.
  - a. He issued a decree that everyone in the Roman Empire must become a Christian.
    - (1) Church membership became compulsory.
    - (2) Eventually, people began to bring their idols and statues to the church to baptize, or "*Christianize*" them and renaming with such names as "*Mary*," "*Joseph*," "*John*" and "*Jesus*."
    - (3) Few of them, though, were ever truly "**born again**" (John 3:3).
  - b. The government took all the pagan temples, removed their pagan priests, and replaced them with "*Christian*" ministers.
    - (1) Nice robes and beautiful garments bedecked with all kinds of gems were given to these ministers who had been living underground.
    - (2) The money found in the treasuries of the pagan temples was given to these supposed "*Christian ministries*."
    - (3) The salaries of the preachers began to be paid for by the government.
    - (4) The entire complexion of church worship was changed, from a simple form of worship in cellars and gravel pits, to pomp, ceremony, pageantry, ritual and vestments.
  - c. During this time many false doctrines began to emerge.
    - (1) The church began to use candles in their worship in 320.
    - (2) The worship of dead saints began in 325.
    - (3) The first record of a worship service resembling the mass was in 394.
    - (4) The veneration of Mary began in 431.
4. The church at Pergamos became part of Satan's worldly establishment.
  - a. Through Constantine, Satan united the Church and State, and offered all kinds of inducements for worldly people to come into the Church.
  - b. Clarence Larkin – "*The 'Balaam Method' that Constantine employed was to give to the bishops of the Church a number of imposing buildings called Basilicas for conversion into churches, for whose decoration he was lavished in the gift of money. He also supplied superb vestments for the clergy, and soon the Bishop found himself clad in costly vestments, seated on a lofty throne in the apse of the Basilica, with a marble altar, adorned with gold and gems, on lower level in front of him. A sensuous form of worship was introduced, the character of the preaching was changed, and the great 'Pagan Festivals' were adopted, with but little alteration, to please the Pagan members of the church, and attract Pagans to the church.*"
  - c. It has been said that since Satan could not drive the Church out of the world by persecution during the Smyrna period, so he attempted to drive the world into the Church in the Pergamos era.

5. Around A.D. 311 the Donatists, who were very similar to the Novations, rebelled against the Roman trappings, holding to the purity of the church, separation of Church and State, scriptural baptism, independence of the local churches, and the freedom of conscience.

IV. Thyatira: The Church Tolerating Apostasy. (2:18-29)

- A. Although never a large city, Thyatira was a thriving manufacturing and commercial center during New Testament times.
  1. It is believed that this city had in it more trade guilds than did any other city in Asia.
  2. Lydia, the “**seller of purple,**” was from Thyatira. (Acts 16:14)
  3. The city was also known for its cloth production and casting of bronze.
- B. Christ, the Holy One.

**2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;**

1. His eyes as a “**flame of fire,**” seeing all the inner workings of the church, speaks of burning indignation and purifying judgment.
  2. His feet as “**fine brass**” speak of Christ as the glorious Judge.
  3. His sovereign judgment deals with all who fail to measure up to His perfect righteousness.
- C. Commendation for meritorious service.

**2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.**

1. Thyatira was known for her good “**works,**” “**love,**” “**service,**” “**faith,**” “**patience**” and last “**works.**”
  2. It is remarkable that this church was first commended for its “**works,**” being even more prominent than its “**charity.**”
  3. They were more religious than Christian.
- D. Indictment for spiritual wickedness.

**2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**

**2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.**

1. The church tolerated a woman named “**Jezebel**” with her teaching and influence which led them to “**commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**”

2. In promoting these wrongs, the woman prophetess, whose real name was probably not Jezebel, was fulfilling the role of the historical Jezebel in the Old Testament. (Cp. I Kings 16-21, II Kings 9)
    - a. Jezebel herself had a most wretched record of evil.
    - b. She was a character that even Elijah the prophet fled from. (I Kings 19:1-3)
    - c. The sin of this self-appointed prophetess was to bring Baalism into Israel as a new religion.
  3. The Jezebel in Thyatira had a similar influence upon the church in her braking down the boundaries of moral separation from the wicked world.
    - a. She is accused of seducing God's servants **"commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."**
    - b. The Jezebel cult would argue that there was no harm in conforming to the outward rituals and ceremonies of this world . . . that by being sensible in these things, we will attract the heathen more easily.
  4. It is not necessary for God's Church to give herself over to spiritual wickedness in order to reach the lost, for God gives even the most wicked the opportunity to repent.  
(II Peter 3:9, **"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."**)
- E. The Warning.

**2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**

**2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.**

1. Without repentance comes judgment.
    - a. This false prophetess, and those who follow her, will be cast into the **"great tribulation."**
    - b. There can be no hiding from Christ of any iniquity, whether overt or covert.
    - c. When God's love is repeatedly spurned and one deliberately follows a course of sin, God's holiness demands judgment.
  2. These words are applicable to anyone who dares to corrupt the purity of the truth of God and spoil the worship of the Lord with idolatrous and heathen practices.
- F. The Council.

**2:24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.**

**2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.**

1. Here, for the first time, a group is singled out within a local church as continuing the true testimony of the Lord.
    - a. A church which is crowded with people and is a dynamo of activity is not automatically a true church.
    - b. Too many of today's churches have become highly successful Christian clubs heaping benefits upon them-selves, rather than dedicated groups of humble servants desiring to win others to Christ.
  2. The church at Pergamos revealed the seat of Satan, while the church at Thyatira reveals the depth of Satan.
    - a. To the godly remnant, Christ gives a limited responsibility to **"hold fast"** to what they have already received.
    - b. The call is to remain faithful in spite of the deterioration of this local church.  
(I Corinthians 15:58, **"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."**)
- G. The Promise.

**2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:**

**2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.**

**2:28 And I will give him the morning star.**

**2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

1. Those that keep His works unto the end will be given a responsible position of judgment over the nations.
  2. Closely following this prediction of the Second Coming, is the first reference in Revelation to the Millennial Reign of Christ.
  3. **"The morning star"** refers to Christ in His role as the returning One who will Rapture the Church before the dark hours preceding the dawn of the Millennial Kingdom.
- H. Thyatira represents the Church Age from A.D. 606 to the Reformation in A.D. 1520.
1. This period of history is often referred to as *"The Dark Ages."*
    - a. This time gave rise to *"monasticism,"* where self-righteous men and women separated from all worldly attainments and established what became known as *"convents"* and *"monasteries."*
    - b. During this same time a man was born by the name of Mohammad, who launched a religion in 622 in revolt against the idolatry of apostate Christianity.
    - c. It was during these days that the Christian church launched what became known as *"The Crusades."*
  2. In 1229, the Catholic Church launched what is known as *"The Inquisition."*
    - a. This was to exterminate by force anyone who did not believe what the church taught.

- b. The wayward were given opportunity to recant as they were slowly tortured to death.
  - c. If you recanted, the torture would cease and then you would be received again as a good member of the church.
3. During this period the Church became corrupt as it sought to combine Christianity with pagan philosophy and heathen religious rites.
- a. By the time the Roman Empire fell in A.D. 450, it had shifted its power from the Emperors to the Popes.
  - b. In A.D. 1200, Pope Innocent III declared, *“As the Vicar of Christ, all power is given to me in heaven and earth.”*
  - c. As Jezebel caused Israel to worship the mother goddess Ashtaroth (called the *“Queen of Heaven”* in Jeremiah 44:17-18, 25), so the Church in the Middle Ages introduced the worship of Mary, the *“Queen of Heaven.”*
  - d. The participation in idol worship and the eating of things offered to idols – the Roman Mass – foreshadows the departure from the Scriptural doctrine of the finished sacrifice of Christ. (Hebrews 10:11-12, **“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man [Jesus Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”**)
4. During this period, other false teachings developed.
- a. The doctrine of purgatory began to be developed during this age.
  - b. People began kissing the pope’s toe in 709.
  - c. The practical use of *“holy water”* began in 850.
  - d. Joseph began to be worshiped as a saint in 890.
  - e. Celibacy of the clergy was instituted as a doctrine of the church in 1074.
  - f. During these times, the use of beads to help people pray and the seven sacraments was developed.
5. During this time period, there was also a remnant that remained true.
- a. The Paulicians became prominent in the seventh-century, accepting the Bible as their sole rule of faith and practice, recognizing only believers baptism by immersion, rejecting ceremonialism and penance, having no hierarchy or clerical office, were strong Trinitarians, opposed all image worship, and believed in holy living.
  - b. In the tenth-century, the Waldenses regarded the whole Bible literally as authoritative, rejected Rome’s claim to be the *“true”* church, and believed preaching should be the right of every Christian.
  - c. The Anabaptists, the forerunners of modern day Baptists, came to prominence during the sixteenth-century, although the idea of re-baptizing was nothing new at that time.

**Conclusion:** The risen Christ fully knows all the strengths and weaknesses of each of His congregations. The Church is Christ’s Church. In Matthew 16:18 He said, **“I will build My church.”** It belongs to Him, and He holds it accountable to Himself.

Each of the four churches found in Revelation 2 has characteristics not found in the others, and Christ is fully aware of them all. The same Christ has fully knows each of His congregations throughout that ages.

Suppose Christ came to your church. What compliments would He give? What indictments would He share? And, what council would He suggest?

But to make this even more personal, suppose Christ exposed your own personal heart. What compliments might He give? What indictments might He have? And, what council might He suggest?

*Notes*





## THE LETTERS TO SARDIS, PHILADELPHIA AND LAODICEA

**Text:** Revelation 3:1-22

**Introduction:** Revelation 3 continues the sequence of letters from Revelation 2. In the three letters that are the focus of this chapter, the first and last churches (Sardis and Laodicea) are severely criticized and face imminent judgment. In contrast, the middle congregation (Philadelphia) faces only high praise. Thus, the assemblies of Revelation 3 are studies in the extremes of congregational life.

Studying and following the teachings of Revelation 2 and 3 should persuade any student that churches today are remarkably like those early years. We must take seriously Christ's concluding remarks to each of these seven letters, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches**" (Revelation 2:7a, 11a, 17a, 29, 3:6, 13, 22).

- I. Sardis: The Church That Was Dead. (3:1-6)
  - A. In ancient times, Sardis was a well fortified and easily defended city.
    1. During its days as a Roman city, it became an important Christian center.
    2. The church at Sardis was also affected by the complacency of the city and its reliance on past glory.
    3. The city's thriving, healthy appearance masked its inner decay.
    4. The most impressive building of ancient Sardis was its magnificent Temple of Artemis, built in the fourth century B.C., of which some of it remains still stand today.
  - B. Christ, the Possessor of the Spirit.

**3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.**

1. "**Seven Spirits**" portray those qualities of Christ which insure the righteous judgment of the wicked. (Cp. 1:4, Isaiah 11:1-2)
2. The "**seven stars**" suggest authority over the messengers to the churches, and points us back to 1:20.
- C. No commendation.
  1. G. Campbell Morgan observes that there is a change in approach beginning with this letter: "*There is a marked change in our Lord's method of address to the church at Sardis. Hitherto He has commenced with words of commendation. Here, He commenced with words of condemnation. In the other churches, evil had not been the habit, but rather the exception, and therefore it was possible first to commend. Here the case is reversed, and no word of commendation is addressed to the church as a church.*"
  2. Part of the reason for the sad condition in Sardis possibly could have been that they were surrounded by the grossest forms of idolatry.

3. Andrew Tait states, *“The people of Sardis were idolaters – they worshipped the mother goddess, Cybele. Her worship was of the most debasing character. Sins of the foulest and darkest impurity were committed [at the festivals held in her honour]. When we think of a small community of Christians rescued from such abominable idolatry, living in the midst of scenes of the grossest depravity, with early associations, and companionships, and connections, all exerting a force in the direction of heathenism, it may be wondered that the few members of the church in Sardis were not drawn away altogether, and swallowed up in the great vortex.”*
- D. Indictment for formalism.

**3:1b I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.**

**3:2b For I have not found thy works perfect before God.**

1. The church at Sardis evidently had a reputation among the churches in the area and was considered a spiritual church with an effective ministry and testimony for God.
  2. From the Divine standpoint, it is considered as a church that had only a name of being alive and was actually **“dead”** as far as spiritual life and power were concerned.
    - a. Its character did not match its reputation.
    - b. The Spirit’s piercing look saw the inward deadness of this church despite its outward busyness.
    - c. Christ holding the seven stars reminds us that it is He who yet controls the true ministry of this busy, but inwardly, dead church.
  3. William Barclay observes that a church *“is in danger of death when it begins to worship its own past . . . when it is more concerned with forms than with life . . . when it loves systems more than it loves Jesus Christ . . . when it is more concerned with material than spiritual things.”*
    - a. Warning: once a church has a good reputation in the public eye, it is possible to mechanically continue in the same activities but lose the original motivation that made it great.
    - b. The incentive to good works can shift from a desire to serve and please God to simply a desire to maintain the good public face that the church has come to enjoy.
  4. The works of the church at Sardis are declared to be **“not perfect.”**
    - a. What makes their works imperfect is not specified.
    - b. Perhaps their motivation lacked love (I Cor. 13:1-3), or they were not works springing from faith (Galatians 5:6).
- E. The Council.

**3:2a Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.**

**3:3a Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.**

1. The deadness of verse 1 describes a condition that is essentially true, but the final death has not yet come.
    - a. It is as if in verse 1 a physician tells a person bitten by a cobra, "You're as good as dead . . .," and then in verse 2, he adds, ". . . that is, unless you take this anti-venom which can save your life."
    - b. Not all is yet dead; some things remain, but these too are ready to die.
  2. Five chemical components to the antidote include:
    - a. **"Be watchful,"** or **"alert."**  
(1 Peter 5:8, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."**)
    - b. **"Strengthen the things which remain."**
      - (1) There is still a slight pulse.
      - (2) There is still some hope.
    - c. **"Remember"** the truth.
      - (1) Remember where you came from.  
(Isaiah 51:1, **"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."**)
      - (2) Remember the truth that redeemed you.  
(Colossians 1:23, **". . . be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard . . ."**)
    - d. **"Hold fast"** to the truth. (Cp. 2:25)
    - e. **"Repent"** from any defection from the truth.
      - (1) Here is repentance on the part of the entire church.
      - (2) Some people think repentance involves tears, but there is a great deal more than tears when a church is ordered to repent.
      - (3) God is looking for an active response.
- F. The Warning.

**3:3b If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.**

1. If they refuse the exhortations, Christ promises that He will come upon them **"as a thief."**
  2. This is the same description used of Christ's coming.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:2, **"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."**)
  3. In the context, the warning is given to the all but dead church.
- G. The Promise.

**3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.**

**3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.**

1. Though the church is dead, there is still a remnant, a **“few names . . . which have not defiled their garments.”**
  2. To those who overcome, the promise is given that they **“shall be clothed in white raiment.”**
    - a. This raiment is a token of their acceptability to God.
    - b. Here is the Divine recognition of their office and ministry as the priests of God.
  3. There names will also not be blotted out of **“the book of life.”**
    - a. John Walwood suggests that the **“book of life”** may be a roll of all humanity who have ever lived.
    - b. Revelation 17:8 speaks of those, **“whose names were . . . written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.”**
    - c. As one comes to maturity and is faced with the responsibility of accepting or rejecting Christ, their names are blotted out if they fail to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.
    - d. Those who do accept Christ as Savior are confirmed in their position in the Book of Life, and their names are confessed before the Father and the heavenly angels.
- H. The church at Sardis is a picture of the Church from the time of the Protestant Reformation beginning in 1520 to around 1750.
1. The Western Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches had many works, but they no longer reached people for Christ.
  2. The Reformation sought to **“strengthen the things which remain.”**
    - a. The *“Protestant Reformation”* began with those who protested the way of the Roman Catholic Church.
    - b. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 thesis on to the door of the church at Wittenberg, Germany, finding fault in the teachings of the church, sparking the flame of the Reformation.
    - c. In Switzerland his counterparts were John Zwingli and John Calvin, opposing the doctrines of purgatory, the confessional, the sacraments, and the blasphemous doctrine of the mass.
    - d. In Scotland, the reformer was John Knox.
    - e. Can I recommend to you Halley’s Bible Handbook for a brief overview of these matters that pertain to church history?
- II. Philadelphia: The Church Faithful To Christ. (3:7-13)
- A. Philadelphia, a center of wine industry, was named for its founder Attalus II.
1. Attalus II was the Greek King of Pergamum.
    - a. He lived in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Century B.C., and because of his loyalty to his brother, Eumenes, he received the title, *“Philadelphos.”*
    - b. Our modern day city of Philadelphia is known as *“The City of Brotherly Love.”*
  2. Philadelphia’s chief deity was Dionysus, the Greek mythological god of wine.

B. Christ, the holy and sovereign God.

Notes

**3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;**

1. Christ is here titled “**holy**” and “**true.**”
    - a. Such is one to call the Church to true holiness.  
(I Peter 1:15, “**But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.**”)
    - b. Right doctrine and right living go hand-in-hand.
  2. Christ’s Messianic authority is depicted as “**the key of David.**”
    - a. Isaiah 22:22 tells us, “**And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.**”
    - b. The Christ who possesses the power to open and close doors according to His sovereign will has set before this church “**an open door,**” verse 8.
      - (1) An “**open door**” speaks of opportunity.
        - (a) Jesus expects His church to take advantage of the opportunities that are set before her.
        - (b) Paul declares, in I Corinthians 16:9, “**For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.**”
      - (2) The day will come when the doors will be closed.
      - (3) Jesus warned, in John 9:4, “**I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.**”
- C. Commendation of works.

**3:8b For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**

1. The message addressed to the church at Philadelphia has the unusual characteristic of being almost entirely praise.
2. A three-fold commendation:
  - a. “**Thou hast a little strength.**”
    - (1) Possibly the church itself was small.
    - (2) This isn’t to be viewed as a weakness, but in relation to the religious world about them, they were small in number.
    - (3) It calls to remembrance the words of Jesus Christ when He taught, “**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat**” (Matthew 7:13).
  - b. “**Thou . . . hast kept my word.**”
    - (1) They have not departed from the truth.

- (2) They read the Word, studied the Word, memorized the Word, meditated on the Word, but most important, DID the Word.
- c. **“Thou . . . hast not denied my name.”**
  - (1) This speaks of their loyalty to Christ.
  - (2) **“Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”**  
(Matthew 16:24).
- D. No indictment.
- E. The Council.

**3:8a I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:**

- 1. Their works stand in stark contrast to those of Sardis.
  - a. In Sardis, their works were dead.
  - b. In Philadelphia, their words reflected their faith.  
(James 2:18, **“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”**)
- 2. **“I have set before thee an open door.”**
  - a. Jesus set before the Philadelphians this important opportunity because they had shown themselves to be faithful.
  - b. The testimony of this church continued for centuries in evident fulfillment of Christ’s promise that they would have an **“open door.”**
- F. The Warning.

**3:11b Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.**

- 1. **“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,”** does not speak of salvation, but rewards.
  - a. You cannot lose your salvation, because you didn’t do anything to gain it, but you can lose you crown, because you work for it.
  - b. II John 1:8 says it differently, **“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”**
  - c. Those rewards, bonuses, prizes, and crowns that you work for, that you earn from the time of your salvation until you see Jesus face-to-face can be lost.
  - d. I Corinthians 3:13-15 speaks of the day when **“every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”**)

2. God is ultimate Author of all of our strength, yet in the Bible there is always the dual presence of God's part and Man's part.
  - a. The weak ones are to **"hold fast."**
  - b. The Mighty One will hold open the door. (3:7)
- G. The Promise. (3:9-11a, 12-13)

**3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.**

**3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**

**3:11a Behold, I come quickly . . .**

**3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.**

**3:13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

1. Those of the synagogue of Satan will worship before these saints.
  - a. **"The synagogue of Satan"** refers to those who say that they follow the one true God, but reject Jesus Christ.
  - b. As a result of the Philadelphian's faithfulness in witness, Christ promises that their adversaries will be forced to acknowledge that they were true servants of God.
  - c. That their persecutors will one day be forced to **"come and worship before thy feet,"** does not mean that the believers will be worshiped as deities, but they will be sitting enthroned with Christ (3:21), before whom, someday ever knee shall bow (Philippians 2:10).
2. They will be kept **"from the hour of temptation,"** meaning that they will be delivered from the Tribulation Period which shall come upon all the earth.
  - a. This is one of the great verses that assert that the church will not go through any part of the coming Tribulation.
  - b. Here are six reasons to believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture.
    - (1) The event spoken of here is a definite time period – **"the hour."**
    - (2) It is a time of trial – **"of temptation."**
    - (3) It was future in John's day.
      - (a) Roman persecution had already put John on Patmos.
      - (b) Peter and Paul had already been killed by Nero.
    - (4) The words **"kept"** and **"keep,"** in verse 10, mean *"guard."*
      - (a) **"I also will keep [guard] thee from the hour of temptation."**
      - (b) This is the same period that we'll read about in Revelation 7:14, **"These are they which came out of great**

**tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”**

- (5) The promise is to **“keep them from [or, “out of”] the hour of temptation.”**
- (6) It was to be a world-wide time of trial – **“upon all the world.”**
- c. As far as the Philadelphian church was concerned, the Rapture of the Church was presented to them as an imminent hope. (3:11a)
- 3. The promise of security is threefold:
  - a. **“I will write upon him the name of my God”** – depicting ownership.
  - b. **“I will write upon him . . . the name of the city of my God”** – showing citizenship.
  - c. **“I will write upon him . . . my new name”** – portraying kinship.
- H. The Philadelphia Period covers the time between A.D. 1750 and sometime before the Rapture of the Church.
  - 1. This was the time of the Great Awakenings and Revivals.
    - a. Jonathan Edwards. (1703-1758)
    - b. John and Charles Wesley. (1703-1791, 1707-1788)
    - c. George Whitefield. (1714-1770)
    - d. Charles Finney. (1792-1875)
    - e. Charles Spurgeon. (1834-1892)
    - f. Dwight L. Moody. (1837-1899)
    - g. Reuben Archer Torrey. (1856-1928)
    - h. Billy Graham. (1918-2018)
  - 2. Times of great Missionary Endeavors.
    - a. William Carey – India. (1761-1834)
    - b. Adoniram Judson – Burma. (1788-1850)
    - c. David Livingston – Africa. (1813-1873)
    - d. Hudson Taylor – China. (1832-1905)
  - 3. This is the age of the **“open door,”** when the humble Church, with **“little strength,”** has taken the *“Good News”* to the ends of the earth.
- III. Laodicea: The Church With Unconscious Need. (3:14-22)
  - A. The city of Laodicea was one of economic prosperity and social prominence.
    - 1. Medicine, wool manufacturing, and banking brought fame to Laodicea.
    - 2. When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60, it refused aid from Rome for rebuilding.
    - 3. This same self-sufficient attitude carried over into the church.
  - B. Christ, the Eternal and Faithful Witness.

**3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;**

- 1. **“Amen”** means *“It is so.”*



- a. It is the Hebrew way of saying, *“faithful and true.”*
  - b. We end our prayers with this expression because Jesus Christ is **“faithful and true.”**
  - c. Jesus is giving witness to these things.
2. Christ is called **“the faithful and true witness”** in contrast to the church in Laodicea which was neither faithful nor true.
- a. Their testimony was only half-faithful and half-truthful.
  - b. He shows them His credentials before He gives His report.
  - c. As the Laodiceans had relied on their material riches, so Christ reminds them that all things come from Him who is the Creator. (Colossians 1:15-18, **“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”**)
- C. No Commendation.
- 1. Paul had previously sent word to the church’s pastor, Archippus, warning, **“Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it”** (Colossians 4:16-17).
    - a. This letter was not written to the church **“in”** Laodicea, but **“unto the angel”** of the church **“of the Laodiceans.”**
    - b. Jesus may have again be saying, **“Take heed to the ministry.”**
  - 2. Christ was not part of this church, but is pictured in verse 20 as standing outside, knocking to gain entrance.
- D. Indictment for lukewarmness.

**3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.**

**3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.**

**3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:**

- 1. **“I know thy works.”**
  - a. Jesus is saying, *“I know your works, whether good of bad.”*
    - (1) In this church there seems to have been more bad works than good works.
    - (2) Their self-satisfaction led them to self-deception.
  - b. Christ nowhere suggests false teaching here.
    - (1) No reference is made to them denying His name.
    - (2) Walvoord – *“It is remarkable, however, that in the indictment of the church in Laodicea none of the sins mentioned in the preceding churches are itemized. On the one hand there are*

*no works which are commended, but on the other hand there is no citation of departure in doctrine or morals.”*

2. The difficulty seems to be that the church was “**lukewarm**” rather than “**cold**” or “**hot**.”
  - a. Those who zealously oppose Christ (“**cold**”), and those who zealously serve Him (“**hot**”) have one thing in common: they both take Him seriously.
  - b. The one who neither opposes, nor serves Christ, offers Him the ultimate insult – affirming His existence, but not taking Him seriously.
3. Though cold water can quench a thirst, and hot water can cook a meal, warm water is good for little.
  - a. The Laodiceans could hardly be classified with “*the worldly*” who are totally unconcerned about the things of Christ.
  - b. Yet, they are also not to be classified with those who unmistakably bear a true testimony for the Lord.
4. The intermediate state of lukewarmness is the occasion for the extreme statement which Christ makes.
  - a. There is no one farther from the truth in Christ than those who make an idle profession without real faith.  
(Matthew 7:21-23, “**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**”)
  - b. No one has been harder to reach for Christ than the self-sufficient religionist.
  - c. The Laodiceans estimation of their own condition is found in the beginning of verse 17, but God’s estimation is found in the end of verse 17.
5. Notice the five conditions of “*lukewarmness*” detailed:
  - a. They were “**wretched**” – spiritually afflicted or lacking.
  - b. They were “**miserable**” – self-sufficient, but missing out on the presence of Christ.
  - c. They were “**poor**” – although materially rich, they were spiritually lacking.
    - (1) Never before in the history of the Christian church has the church had as much money as today.
    - (2) Never before have we had such elaborate buildings or spent so many millions on “*church campuses*.”
  - d. They were “**blind**.”
    - (1) They were unable to see beyond the natural (money, ability, self-effort).
    - (2) They walked by “*sight*” and not by “*faith*.”
    - (3) They were totally unaware of their true spiritual needs.
  - e. “**Naked**.”
    - (1) Their nakedness is visible to God.

- (2) Good deeds alone leaves one falling short of being robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

E. The Council.

**3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.**

**3:19b Be zealous therefore, and repent.**

1. Buy “**gold tried in the fire,**” speaks of righteous acts.  
(I Corinthians 3:12-13, “**Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.**”)
2. Buy “**white raiment,**” indicates a holiness that must be put on a person through “*justification.*”  
(Ephesians 4:24, “**And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**”)
3. Buy “**eye salve,**” commands them to be spiritually anointed so that they might see the love which they should have for Christ and hatred they should have for sin.
  - a. It has been said, “*There is none so blind as those who will not see.*”
  - b. Such was the status of the Pharisees in Jesus’ day.
4. “**Be zealous . . . and repent.**”

F. The Warning of Judgment.

**3:19a As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten:**

1. Hebrews 12:5b-6 warns, “. . . **My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**”
2. Therefore, “**be zealous,**” or “*get hot*” and “**repent**” of your lukewarmness.

G. The Promise.

**3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**

**3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.**

**3:22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

1. The invitation becomes a personal call to all who will hear the words of warning.
2. The attitude throughout this present age is one of Christ knocking at the door, waiting for men to receive Him, and churches to welcome Him.

- H. Laodicea typifies the Church in the last days.
1. The church of Laodicea takes us from the period of Revivals and Missions to the Rapture.
  2. Are we there yet?
- I. Ten characteristics of a *“Lukewarm Church”*:
1. Half-committed to Christ.  
(Romans 12:1, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”**)
  2. Half-committed to teaching God’s Word.  
(II Timothy 4:2-4, **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”**)
  3. Half-committed to holy living.  
(II Corinthians 6:17-18, **“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”**)
  4. Half-committed to self-denial and sacrifice.  
(Luke 9:23, **“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”**)
  5. Half-committed to the church.  
(Hebrews 10:25, **“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”**)
  6. Half-committed to supporting the church.  
(I Corinthians 16:2, **“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”**)
  7. Half-committed to witnessing.  
(I Peter 3:15, **“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meek-ness and fear.”**)
  8. Half-committed to missions.  
(Acts 1:8, **“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”**)
  9. Half-committed to Bible study.  
(II Timothy 2:15, **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**)
  10. Half-committed to prayer.  
(I Thessalonians 5:17, **“Pray without ceasing.”**)

IV. Summary Of The Seven Churches Of Asia.

- A. Ephesus represents the danger of losing our first love.
- B. Smyrna typifies the danger of the fear of suffering.

- C. Pergamos illustrates the danger of doctrinal compromise.
- D. Thyatira is a monument to the danger of moral compromise.
- E. Sardis is a warning against the danger of spiritual deadness.
- F. Philadelphia cautions of the danger of not holding fast.
- G. Laodicea exhibits the danger of lukewarmness.

**Conclusion:** In Revelation 4:20 we read, **“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”**

This verse has often been used as an evangelist invitation, although its context suggest Jesus standing at the door and knocking for entry into His church.

The picture before us, though, is that of a loving father seeking a renewed relationship with the children he has just scolded. The image is of the selfish children inside a house having supper while their father has been locked outside. They suppose the menu they have provided for themselves – stale bread and lukewarm water – is a feast.

How much better it would be for both the sinner and the saint to invite the Father in to the dining room?

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF THE REVELATION

(Revelation 2-3)

	<b>EPHESUS</b> <i>(2:1-7)</i>	<b>SMYRNA</b> <i>(2:8-11)</i>	<b>PERGAMOS</b> <i>(2:12-17)</i>	<b>THYATIRA</b> <i>(2:18-29)</i>	<b>SARDIS</b> <i>(3:1-6)</i>	<b>PHILADELPHIA</b> <i>(3:7-13)</i>	<b>LAODICEA</b> <i>(3:14-22)</i>
<b>CHRIST</b>	(2:1) The Sovereign Judge	(2:8) The Eternal One	(2:12) The Judge Of Compromise	(2:18) The Holy One	(3:1) The Possessor Of The Spirit	(3:7) The Holy God	(3:14) The Eternal And Faithful Witness
<b>COMMENDED</b>	(2:2-3, 6) Doctrine And Diligence	(2:9) Faithfulness In Trial	(2:13) Holding Fast	(2:19) Meritorious Service	<i>NONE</i>	(3:8b) Kept My Word, Not Denied My Name	<i>NONE</i>
<b>INDICTMENT</b>	(2:4) Lack Of Devotion	<i>NONE</i>	(2:14-15) Compromise	(2:20-21) Spiritual Wickedness	(3:1b, 2b) Formalism	<i>NONE</i>	(3:15-17) Lukewarmness
<b>COUNCIL</b>	(2:5a) Remember, Repent, Repeat	(2:10a) Fear Not, Be Faithful	(2:16a) Repent!	(2:24-25) Hold Fast	(3:2a, 3a) Watchful, Strengthen, Remember,	(3:8) An Open Door	(3:18, 19b) Buy, Be Zealous, Repent
<b>WARNING</b>	(2:5b) Removal Of Candlestick	<i>NONE</i>	(2:16b) Judgement Of The Lord	(2:22-23) Great Tribulation	(3:3b) Surprise Visit Of The Lord	(3:11b) Hold Fast	(3:19a) Rebuke
<b>PROMISE</b>	(2:7) Eat Of The Tree Of Life	(2:10b-11) A Crown Of Life	(2:17) Hidden Manna, New Name	(2:26-29) Future Responsibility/ Opportunity	(3:4-6) White Raiment	(3:9-11a, 12-13) Security	(3:20-22) A Throne
<b>CHURCH AGE</b>	A.D. 30 to A.D. 170	A.D. 170 to A.D. 312	A.D. 312 to A.D. 606	A.D. 606 to A.D. 1520	A.D. 1520 to A.D. 1750	A.D. 1750 to Sometime Prior to The Rapture	The Church in The Last Days

## THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 4:1-11

**Introduction:** In the first century, the Roman emperors grasped the power of their throne greedily. Domitian wanted all his subjects to acknowledge him as “*Lord and God.*” While, today, we do not live in a time dominated by kings and emperors, yet political and military leaders strive to be in more control than ever. But, in Revelation 4, we are reminded that no matter what may happen on earth, God is still on His throne and is in complete control.

- I. The Invitation From Heaven. (4:1)
  - A. Chapter 4 begins the third major division of the Book of Revelation – “**the things which shall be hereafter**” (1:19).
    1. The divisions of the Book do not overlap.
    2. The word translated in verse 1 could be better translated “*after these things.*”
      - a. These are the things which shall immediately follow the completion of the “*Church Age*” (Revelation 2-3).
      - b. The Church disappears from view, with the close of the third chapter, and is not heard of again until the nineteenth chapter, where her marriage to the Lamb is announced.
  - B. The removal of the Church opens the way for God to renew His dealings with Israel.
    1. Some Bible experts call Daniel 9:24-27 the four most important prophetic verses in the whole of the Bible.
      - a. These verses span more than 2,500 years of human history.
      - b. They predict the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the date of the First Coming of Christ, His death, the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem, facts about the Antichrist and Tribulation Period, and much more.
      - c. Daniel writes, “<sup>(24)</sup>**Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the trans-gression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.** <sup>(25)</sup>**Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.** <sup>(26)</sup>**And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.** <sup>(27)</sup>**And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate”** (Daniel 9:24-27).

2. As Gabriel told Daniel that **“seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city”** (verse 24), a number of questions arise:
- a. How long is **“seventy weeks?”**
    - (1) The Hebrew word translated **“weeks”** is SHAVUAH, meaning *“sevens.”*
      - (a) In the Hebrew, the phrase **“seventy weeks”** literally means *“seventy-sevens.”*
      - (b) It is possible to have seventy-sevens of minutes, seventy-sevens of weeks, seventy-sevens of years, or seventy-sevens of some other time span.
    - (2) However, because Daniel was reading Jeremiah’s prophecy (Daniel 9:2) about Judah spending 70 years of captivity in Babylon when he started praying, it is reasonable to conclude that Gabriel is talking about seventy *“sevens”* of years.
      - (a) Therefore, **“seventy weeks”** would mean *“seventy weeks of years,”* or 490 years.
      - (b) Daniel’s whole prophecy concerns itself with 490 years.
  - b. How long is *“one week?”*
    - (1) In Genesis 29:21-30, we read that Jacob served Laban seven years for Rachel and was then tricked into marrying Leah.
    - (2) He then had to fulfill Rachel’s **“week”** by serving Laban seven more years.
    - (3) Genesis 29:27 says, **“Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.”**
    - (4) In Ezekiel 4:4-6 and Leviticus 25:8 we find further evidence that one week is seven years.
  - c. How many days are in *“one week?”*
    - (1) In Matthew 24:15, Jesus told the Jews to flee into the mountains when they **“see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.”**
      - (a) This we know will happen at the middle of the Tribulation Period when the Antichrist breaks the **“covenant.”** (Daniel 9:27).
      - (b) Revelation 12:6 says that they will flee into the mountains, **“a thousand two hundred and threescore days,”** or 1,260 days.
    - (2) How many days are in a year?
      - (a) At the mid-point of the Tribulation Period, there will be 3½ years, or 42 months left until the end of the Tribulation.
      - (b) 1,260 days divided by 42 months = 30 day months.
      - (c) One year, therefore, equals 360 days = the Jewish calendar.
3. Sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, are detailed.
- a. Here Gabriel revealed to Daniel that God would start keeping time on the **“seventy weeks”** (490 years) when a certain decree was issued.



- (1) Over the next few years there would be several decrees concerning the Jews going back to Israel and rebuilding the Temple and Jerusalem, but there would be only one decree that would fulfill all the words of this passage.
    - (a) Cyrus issued a decree in 538 B.C. to release the Jews (Ezra 1:1-4), but it did not fit this prophecy because it made no mention of rebuilding Jerusalem.
    - (b) Darius issued a decree in 519 B.C. (Ezra 6:1-12), but all it did was repeat the decree of Cyrus with the exception that it allowed the Jews to rebuild the Temple.
    - (c) Artaxerxes issued a decree in 519 B.C. (Ezra 7:11-26), but it did not fit because it made no mention of rebuilding Jerusalem.
  - (2) But, Artaxerxes issued a second decree on March 14, 445 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8), that fulfills the words of this prophecy, and that is when the rebuilding of Jerusalem began.
- b. Daniel 9:25 further mentions two very important events:
- (1) The rebuilding of Jerusalem.
  - (2) The coming Messiah (Jesus).
- c. This verse also gives two important time periods:
- (1) Remember, one week = 7 years.
    - (a) **“Seven weeks,”** or  $7 \times 7$  years = 49 years.
    - (b) **“Threescore and two weeks,”** or  $62 \times 7$  years = 434 years.
  - (2) The first time period (49 years) relates to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which began with the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 B.C.
  - (3) The second time period (434 years) relates to the coming of the Messiah.
- d. When totaled together, these 49 years and 434 years, leave us seven years short, one week, of the 490 total.
- (1) Sir Robert Anderson, a highly respected English lawyer and former head of Scotland Yard, determined, in his book, The Coming Prince, that from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the Triumphal Entry of Christ in Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11) was exactly 483 years.
    - (a) Concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem, it took 49 years to accomplish that.
    - (b) Concerning the coming of the Messiah, an additional 434 years would pass, for a total of 483 years.
    - (c) So we find that exactly 483 years passed between the second decree of Artaxerxes and the First Coming (Triumphal Entry) of Jesus.
  - (2) Notice the words of Jesus as He approached Jerusalem on that day: **“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee,**

**and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”** (Luke 19:41-44).

- (a) It is obvious that Jesus expected the Jews of His day to know and understand this prophecy.
  - (b) When He made His Triumphal Entry, He made it plain that He expected them to know that this was their day and the **“time of [their] visitation.”**
  - (c) Their failure to know and understand this is why they are blinded today, and why God allowed the Romans to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70.
- e. Following the 483 years has been a gap in God’s calendar, a break we know as *“The Church Age.”*
4. A gap in God’s calendar is mentioned – this present age.
- a. Four things will happen after the period of **“threescore and two weeks.”**
    - (1) Jesus would be killed. (A.D. 32)
    - (2) Jerusalem would be destroyed. (A.D. 70)
    - (3) The Temple would be destroyed. (A.D. 70)
    - (4) Jerusalem and the Temple would be desolate unto the *“Time of the End.”*
  - b. The period of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks has to do with Church, the body of Christ.
    - (1) The Church was a mystery God had hidden in Old Testament times and didn’t reveal until the time of Christ and His apostles.
    - (2) Paul speaks of **“the dispensation of the grace of God . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men”** (Ephesians 3:2, 5).
    - (3) Daniel was never told that the rejection and death of the Messiah would bring about a new thing, a spiritual body that would include both Jews and Gentiles.
  - c. The **“prince that shall come,”** spoken of in verse 26, is the Antichrist.
    - (1) This reference identifies the group of nations he will come out of – **“the people of the prince.”**
    - (2) The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70, so the Romans are the people of the **“prince that shall come.”**
    - (3) This tells us that when the Antichrist comes he will come out of the nations that made up the Old Roman Empire during the earthly life of Jesus.
  - d. The Antichrist’s end will come with an outpouring of God’s wrath – **“with a flood.”**
    - (1) The Antichrist will wage war against God and God’s people until his judgment at the Second Coming of Christ at **“the end”** of the 490 years.
    - (2) Israel will experience great trouble until the Second Coming of the Messiah.

- e. Gabriel followed that discomfoting prospect with another reminder of God's sovereignty: **"desolations are determined."**
  - (1) The reason for war, even to the end of the 490 years, is that God has already determined, irrevocably, the extent of desolations necessary to bring Israel back to Himself through the Messiah, Jesus.
  - (2) Following the gap of the Church Age, there is yet one more week (7 years) to fulfill the 490 weeks of Gabriel's declaration.
- f. Commentators call these seven years *"The Tribulation Period."*
- 5. Revelation 4 and 5 are the introduction and background of the tremendous sweep of prophetic events to be predicted in the rest of the book.

## II. "Come Up Hither."

**4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter**

- A. The chapter opens with **"after this,"** meaning *"after the things of the previous chapters."*
  - 1. The last word in chapter 3 is **"churches."**
  - 2. Having been mentioned 19 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, the Church is not again mentioned until Revelation 22:16, emphasizing the absence of the Church from the earth during the judgments of Revelation 6-18.
  - 3. In chapter 19, the Bride of Christ (the Church) is referred to in reference to **"the Marriage of the Lamb."**
  - 4. It is obvious that the material in Revelation **"after this"** point will be fulfilled after the Church is gone.
- B. John sees a door open into the throne-room of God in heaven.
  - 1. Not the atmospheric heaven.
  - 2. Nor the starry heavens.
  - 3. This is the immediate presence into the throne room of God.
  - 4. Paul calls this **"the third heaven."**  
(II Corinthians 12:2, **"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven."**)
- C. The same voice heard in Revelation 1:10-11 is again heard.
  - 1. This trumpet like voice is the voice of Jesus Christ.
  - 2. As soon as we read the end of verse 1, we go back to the end of 1:19 and read, **"and the things which shall be hereafter."**
  - 3. So it is obvious that the beginning of **"the things which shall be hereafter"** commences with 4:1.
- D. The invitation to **"Come up hither"** is similar to that which the Church anticipates at the Rapture.
  - 1. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, **"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with**

**the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord”** (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

2. He further wrote to the church at Corinth, **“Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”** (I Corinthians 15:51-52).
- E. Four historical views regarding the *“Rapture.”*
1. Post-Tribulation Rapture: The Church will be Raptured after the seven-year Tribulation, prior to the Millennium.
  2. Mid-Tribulation Rapture: The Church will be Raptured in the midst of the seven-year Tribulation.
  3. Pre-Wrath Rapture: The Church will be Raptured sometime within the second half of the seven-year Tribulation.
  4. \* Pre-Tribulation Rapture: The Church will be Raptured before the seven-year Tribulation.
- F. Although it is clear from the context that this is not an explicit reference to the Rapture of the Church, there does seem to be a typical representation in the order of events in Revelation.
1. The Church Age. (Revelation 2-3)
  2. The Rapture. (Revelation 4:1)
  3. The Church in Heaven. (Revelation 4-5)
  4. The Tribulation on the Earth. (Revelation 6-18)
  5. The Church again. (Revelation 19)

### III. The Viewing Of God’s Throne.

**4:2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.**

**4:3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.**

- A. Though actually on the Isle of Patmos, John is experiencing being in the presence of God and seeing these glorious visions.
1. By being caught up to heaven, and seeing the throne of God, John is treated to a vision comparable to that which is recorded in Ezekiel 1.
  2. Both prophets are seeing the coming disasters as having come from God, who sits enthroned on a throne of sovereignty and of judgment.
- B. This is the **“throne . . . in heaven.”**
1. The one upon the throne is God Himself, before whom all others bow.
    - a. The Lamb, Jesus Christ, in Revelation 5:6-7, takes a seven sealed book from this One on the throne.
    - b. The Holy Spirit is pictured before the throne in verse 5.
  2. This throne serves as a reminder of the glory and sovereignty of God.

- a. What an encouragement that would be to the suffering saints in John's day and of every age in history.
  - b. God is far removed from the petty struggles of earthly government.
  - c. His wrath is about to be poured out in fury upon a rebellious world. (Revelation 6:17, **"For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"**)
- C. The meaning of the *"precious stones."*
- 1. According to the Old Testament, these stones had a relationship to the Tribes of Israel.
  - 2. Each tribe had a representative stone, and the high priest had stones representing each of the twelve tribes on his breast when he functioned in his priestly office before the altar.
    - a. This symbolized the fact that he was, as the high priest, representing all twelve tribes before the throne of God.
    - b. In Exodus 28:17-21, the **"jasper"** and **"sardine stone"** are the first and last of these twelve stones.
  - 3. Thus we see God seated in relation to His people.
- D. **"And there was a rainbow round about the throne."**
- 1. This **"rainbow"** was a complete circle, not merely an arc, for in heaven all things are completed.
    - a. The **"rainbow"** reminds us of God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:11-17), symbolic of His promise that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood.
    - b. The **"rainbow"** is also an emblem of the peace of God.
    - c. Usually, a **"rainbow"** appears after the storm; but here, we see it before the storm.
  - 2. Judgment is about to fall, but the **"rainbow"** reminds us that God is merciful, even when He judges. (Habakkuk 3:2, **"O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."**)
    - a. The appearance of the **"rainbow round about the throne,"** then, is an emblem of the mercy of God, and of the peace that was to permeate the world as the result of the events that are to be disclosed.
    - b. Revelation 7 will show us that multitudes will turn to Christ during this judgment era.
  - 3. There is, by contrast, no **"rainbow"** around the Great White Throne of Revelation 20:11-15.
    - a. Before that throne of God the unrepentant will, without exception, be cast into the **"Lake of Fire."**
    - b. There will be no peace with God on that day.
    - c. **"This is the second death"** (Revelation 20:14).

#### IV. The Twenty-Four Elders.

**4:4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.**

- A. Who are these **“four and twenty elders?”**
1. Opinions vary and they differ drastically.
  2. It is unlikely that they are angels.
    - a. Angels are described as **“innumerable”** in Hebrews 12:22.
    - b. In Revelation 7:11, **“all the angels”** are distinguished separately from these **“elders.”**
  3. These **“elders”** might represent the people of God in heaven, enthroned and rewarded.
    - a. There were twenty-four courses of priests in the Old Testament Temple. (I Chronicles 24:3-5, 18)
    - b. When Daniel saw these same thrones in heaven **“cast down”** (Daniel 7:9), literally *“placed into position,”* they were empty; but when John saw them, they had been filled.
- B. The **“elders”** are described as being **“clothed in white raiment.”**
1. This means that they are clothed in the purity and holiness of God and Christ.
  2. Their **“white”** clothes speak of victory.
- C. They are also described as having on their **“heads crowns of gold.”**
1. Two kinds of crowns are mentioned in the Book of Revelation.
    - a. The Greek word DIADEMA is used as a crown of a ruler or a sovereign. (Revelation 12:3, 13:1, 19:12)
    - b. The Greek word STEPHANOS denotes a victor’s crown, or that of a public honor such as a military honor, an honor for distinguished service or a triumph in competitive games. (Revelation 2:10, 3:11, 4:4, 4:10, 6:2, 9:7, 12:1, 14:14)
  2. The word used here is STEPHANOS, the crown of a victor rather than that of a sovereign.
  3. These are the victorious *“overcomers”* who, because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, find themselves worshipping around the throne of God. (I John 5:4-5, **“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”**)
- D. These **“four and twenty elders,”** therefore, are New Testament saints who had been Raptured into heaven back in verse 1.
1. They are priests (**“clothed in white raiment”**) and they are Kings (*“crowned in gold”*); they are the royal priesthood before the throne.
  2. Their presence before the throne of God, prior to the unleashing of the terrible tribulation judgments, is seen as further proof of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture.

V. The Seven Spirits Of God.

**4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.**

- A. The **“lightnings and thunderings and voices”** are prophetic of the righteous judgment of God upon a sinful world.
  1. These are indications of a coming storm and reminders of God’s awesome power.
  2. These *“storm signals”* will be repeated throughout the Book of Revelation.
  3. God has indeed prepared His throne for judgment.
- B. Our world doesn’t like to think of God as a God of judgment.
  1. They prefer to look at the rainbow around the throne and ignore the **“lightnings and thunderings and voices”** out of the throne.
  2. God is a God of grace, but His grace reigns through righteousness. (Romans 5:21, **“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”**)
- C. The **“seven lamps of fire”** portray the perfection of the Holy Spirit.
  1. It is the Holy Spirit Who witnesses against the sin of the world and to the righteousness of the wrath about to be unloosed.
  2. The Church has been Raptured and the Spirit of God lives within the Church, therefore the Spirit has also been removed from the earth and is again active as in Old Testament times.

VI. The Four Living Creatures. (4:6-8)

**4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.**

**4:7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.**

**4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.**

- A. John speaks of the **“sea of glass”** in the language of appearance, describing what he saw in terms which he has experienced.
  1. The elders of Israel saw a similar sight. (Exodus 24:10, **“And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.”**)
  2. Ezekiel himself saw something of the same resemblance. (Ezekiel 1:22, 26, **“And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the color of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above . . . and above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a**

**sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.”)**

- B. Three possible interpretations as to the identify of these “beasts.”
1. The “**four beasts**” are heavenly beings, cherubim and seraphim, whose function is to bring honor and glory to God.
  2. They speak of God in relation to national Israel.
    - a. Ancient rabbinical writers declared that the tribes of Israel pitched their tents and standards on the four sides of the Tabernacle in this same order. (Cp. Numbers 2:2)
      - (1) The Tribe of Judah (a lion)
      - (2) The Tribe of Ephraim (an ox)
      - (3) The Tribe of Reuben (a man)
      - (4) The Tribe of Dan (an eagle).
    - b. This interpretation would lend itself to the “**elders**” as being representatives of the Church.
  3. They represent the Four Gospels which present Christ in four major aspects of His Person.
    - a. As a “**lion**,” He is the lion of the Tribe of Judah, represented as the King of Matthew.
    - b. As a “**calf**,” He is the Servant of Jehovah, the Faithful One of Mark.
    - c. As a “**man**,” He is the human Jesus, presented in the Gospel of Luke.
    - d. As an “**eagle**,” He is the divine Son of God, presented in the Gospel of John.
  4. They represent the attributes of God as presented to John as living entities.
    - a. Just as the Holy Spirit is represented by seven lamps (4:5), and Jesus Christ is represented by the Lamb (5:6), so the attributes of God are represented by these “**four [living] beasts**.”
    - b. The fact that the creatures are “**full of eyes before and behind**,” is taken as significant of the omniscience and omnipresence of God.
    - c. The “**four beasts**” speak of different aspects of Divine majesty.
      - (1) Lion – Majesty and omnipotence.
      - (2) Calf – Patience and continuous labor.
      - (3) Man – Intelligence and rational power.
      - (4) Eagle – Sovereignty and supremacy.
- C. The ministry of these living creatures is designed to emphasize the holiness of God and His eternity.  
 (Colossians 1:12-18, “**Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**”)



1. In verse 8 we see essentially the same vision as that of Isaiah 6:2-3, **“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”**
2. These beasts are the eternal proclaimers of God’s glory.
3. Note how well the declaration of God’s holiness fits this prelude to the Tribulation to come, when God’s wrath is to fall upon unrepentant sinners.

#### VII. The Worship Of The Living Creatures And The Elders.

**4:9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,**

**4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,**

**4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

- A. The emphasis of the **“glory and honor and thanks”** of the four beasts is on the Divine attributes and worthiness of God.
- B. The twenty-four elders recognized not only the attributes of God, but also His works.
  1. In casting **“their crowns before the throne”** they testify that had it not been for God’s grace, salvation, and goodness, they could not have had victory over sin and death.
  2. The Bible speaks of at least five crowns that Christians may share in.
    - a. A Crown of Incorruption, for mastery over the old nature. (I Corinthians 9:24-25, **“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”**)
    - b. A Crown of Righteousness, for living in anticipation of Christ’s coming. (II Timothy 4:8, **“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”**)
    - c. A Crown of Glory, for faithfulness in being an under-shepherd. (I Peter 5:4, **“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”**)
    - d. A Crown of Rejoicing, for being involved in soul-winning. (I Thessalonians 2:19, **“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”**)
    - e. A Crown of Life, for enduring temptation, even unto death. (James 1:12, **“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:**

**for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”** Cp. Revelation 2:10)

3. Here the creation honors the Creator, and accepts the fact that man must necessarily be subject to his Creator.
  - a. One of the important aims of the Book of Revelation is to trace the Divine movement of history toward the goal of universal recognition of God.  
(Philippians 2:9-11, **“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**)
  - b. The worthiness of God to receive such praise is related to His sovereign right to rule as the one who sits upon the throne.

**Conclusion:** Ultimately, earth knows only two kinds of people: those who have enthroned Christ in their lives and those who have enthroned self. As this chapter in Revelation has demonstrated, God is absolutely secure on the throne of the universe. His plan WILL BE perfectly fulfilled. The issue we must face is, *“Who is on the throne of my life today?”*

# THE LAMB AND THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 5:1-14

**Introduction:** Where is the future heading? In the ancient world, astrology and fortune-telling thrived as people desperately looked for meaning in their personal lives. Christians, of course, are forbidden to use such devices. Today, though, the situation is not much different. Revelation 5 provides a huge encouragement for Christians, both then and now. God has a detailed plan for the future when evil will be judged and the people that the Lamb purchased by His death will reign on the earth.

Until then, the Lamb is being worshiped perfectly by the angels in heaven – and our prayers are present there. Further, we are called on to believe that all the creatures of the universe, willingly and unwillingly, will one day lift up the eternal praises of God and the Lamb. Revelation 5 gives us a glimpse of this worship.

- I. A Seven-Sealed Book In The Right Hand Of God. (5:1-4)
  - A. John is introduced to a **“book,”** literally a scroll, which contains the prophecy of impending events to be unfolded in the Book of Revelation.

**5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.**

1. The **“book”** is given prominence by the fact that it is in **“the right hand of him [God] that sat on the throne.”**
2. The document is made impressive by **“seven seals,”** apparently fixed on the edges in such a way that the seals must be successively broken if the scroll is to be unrolled and read.
3. What is this *“seven-sealed book?”*
  - a. This is nothing less than the *“title deed”* to the earth itself.
    - (1) Roman Law required a will to be sealed seven times as illustrated in the wills of the Roman emperors, Augustus and Vespasian, for their successors.
    - (2) Under Jewish law, real estate that had been forfeited by a man could be redeemed (bought back) by any near **“kinsman”** (Leviticus 25:25).
  - b. The mighty judgments of the Tribulation that are about to be unleashed by the opening of the scroll are all part of God reclaiming for Himself the control of the earth, which was forfeited to Satan by the fall of Adam long ago.
    - (1) To redeem the earth, the Redeemer must be a **“kinsman”** (hence, a man) and must come forward with the purchase price in hand – something that no one else in the universe could do except Jesus.  
(1 Peter 1:18-19, **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”**)

- (2) The “**redemption of the purchased possession**” (Ephesians 1:4) is about to be accompanied by the long overdue punishments upon the usurpers who have “[**destroyed**] **the earth**” (Revelation 11:18).
4. Such a “**book**” is typically “*sealed*” with a device made of wax and having an imprint pushed upon it – which forbade the unauthorized from opening it.
- Once broken, a seal was impossible to repair without leaving a tell-tale trace.
  - Thus, here we are certain that this “**book**,” with its woes for the earth, has never been opened.
  - The opening is set to start the time Bible scholars often referred to as “*The Tribulation Period*.”
- B. John’s attention is directed toward this “**book**” by the pronounce-ment of a “**strong angel**.”

**5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?**

- The proclamation itself is given with a “**loud voice**,” literally, a “*loud sound*.”
  - The importance of this dramatic presentation is to impress upon John the importance of its contents.
- C. John records that no one was found able to “**open the book**.”

**5:3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.**

**5:4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.**

- Since the opening of this “**book**” brings speedy judgment to rebellious man, the question of opening the “**book**” was basically the question: “*Who is worthy to cast the strenuous plagues contained in the book upon the earth?*”
    - Neither Satan, nor sinful man, is worthy of opening the “**book**.”
    - When the woman was taken in the act of adultery, during His earthly ministry, Jesus had said, “**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her**” (John 8:7).
  - Quite honestly, there is only One capable of bringing such righteous judgment upon the earth.
- II. The Lamb Declared Worthy To Receive The Book. (5:5-7)
- A. The allusion to “**the Lion of the tribe of Juda**” is a reference to Genesis 49:9-10.

**5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.**

1. Genesis refers to the Messiah who will take **“the scepter,”** the symbol of the right to govern, from Judah.
2. Being of the Davidic royal lineage, the Messiah was to sit on David’s throne, the line of the kings of Judah.
3. The **“root of David”** stems from the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1, **“and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”**
  - a. Jesus is often called *“the Son of Man,”* in reference to His entitlement to the earth and the world.
  - b. He’s called *“the Son of David,”* in reference to His right to sit upon the throne.
  - c. He’s called *“the Son of Abraham,”* in reference His title deed to the Land of Israel.
  - d. He’s called *“the Son of God,”* in reference to His right as heir of all things.
4. He **“hath prevailed.”**
  - a. His victory is such that He has the right to not only take the **“book,”** but to open it and loose the seven seals.
  - b. Christ is completely worthy, and has full authority, in respect to the contents of the seven-sealed **“book.”**
5. With this introduction, John fixes his gaze upon the One portrayed as a **“Lamb”** standing in the midst of the throne.
  - a. This is the only place in the Bible where Jesus is referred to as a **“Lion,”** in contrast to the many times He is identified as the **“Lamb.”**
    - (1) At His first advent, Christ came meekly, as the **“Lamb”** to die a sacrificial death so that all who would trust Him might be saved from the just penalty of their sin.
    - (2) As His second advent, He will come again as a strong **“Lion”** to judge the ungodly.
  - b. Jesus is thus seen as both **“the Lamb”** and **“the Lion.”**

<b>LAMB</b>	<b>LION</b>
First Coming	Second Coming
His Meekness	His Majesty
His is Savior	He is Sovereign
He is Judged	He is Judge
Speaks of the Grace of God	Speaks of the Government of God

**5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.**

- B. **“A Lamb . . . having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”**
1. A Jew would connect the thought of power with the **“horns.”**
    - a. **“Seven”** speaks of perfection.
    - b. Christ comes with **“seven horns”** (omnipotent power), and **“seven eyes”** (omniscient knowledge) to receive the **“book.”**
  2. Perfect power belongs to the Lamb of God.

**5:7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.**

- C. In the act of receiving the **“book”** from God the Father, it is made evident that judgment and power over the earth are committed to Christ, the Son of God. (Daniel 7:13-14, **“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”**)

### III. The Living Creatures And The Elders Worship The Lamb. (5:8-10)

- A. The **“beasts”** and the **“elders”** have harps which are symbols and instruments of divine worship.

**5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.**

1. The same **“Lamb”** of God, who suffered the abuse of the soldiers, the scoffing of the crowd, and the agony of the Cross, is here being given His rightful worship.
2. Apart from the trumpet, the **“harp”** is the only instrument mentioned in heavenly worship.
  - a. This does not suggest that musical instruments should be excluded from church worship, as some believe.
  - b. Not does this support the fancy that the redeemed will do nothing throughout all eternity except play harps while sitting on clouds.
  - c. What I would point out here is that there is sweet music in heaven.
3. The **“golden vials,”** or *“golden bowls,”* are filled with the sacred perfume of the **“prayers of saints.”**
  - a. This scene in heaven infers the importance of our prayers on earth.

- b. Our prayers are preserved by God – as is seen here in the “vials” – until His time for their answering.
  - c. The symbolism of the “**prayers of saints**” is reflected in Psalm 141:2, “**Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**”
- B. They sing a “**new song**,” in which Christ is declared to be “**worthy to take the book**,” because of His work of redemption and His transformation of men into “**kings and priests.**”

**5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;**

**5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**

1. Notice the seven-fold partition of this “**new song.**”
  - a. “**Thou art worthy.**”
    - (1) The question was raised by the “**strong angel**” back in verse 2, “**Who is worthy?**”
    - (2) The answer now is before us, “**Thou art worthy.**”
    - (3) Jesus Christ alone is worthy, because back in verse 5 it says that He “**hath prevailed.**”
  - b. “**For thou wast slain.**”
    - (1) He is “**the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**” (Revelation 13:8).
    - (2) In Acts 2:23, Peter preached of Jesus being taken “**by wicked hands**” and “**crucified and slain.**”
    - (3) The Bible makes it clear that because we are all sinners, Christ died for us all. (I Corinthians 15:3, “**For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.**”)
    - (4) And again, Paul wrote, “**For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly**” (Romans 5:6).
  - c. “**Thou . . . hast redeemed us.**”
    - (1) Everyone knows what it means to go into a pawn shop to retrieve and pawned watch.
      - (a) You don’t just go in and say, “*I want it back.*”
      - (b) There is a redemption price involved in the exchange.
    - (2) Galatians 3:13 tells us that “**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . .**”)
  - d. “**Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.**”
    - (1) The song-writer put it this way:
 

*“O! Precious is the flow,  
That makes me white as snow;*

*No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."*

- (2) I Peter 1:18-19 reminds us, **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."**
- e. **"Thou . . . hast redeemed us . . . out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."**
- (1) That means there is going to be a lot of people in heaven from everywhere.
- (2) No racial barriers here!
- (3) This will be the reversal of the *"Tower of Babel"* (Genesis 11) when God confused the languages and scattered the people.
- (4) Americans, Canadians, Europeans, Africans, Latinos, Orientals, Chinese, Russians, Iranians, Australians, Indians, men and women from **"every kindred," "tongue," "people" and "nation."**
- (5) This will be a new race of people, far different for those who occupy the earth today.
- f. **"Thou . . . hast made us . . . kings and priests."**
- (1) These will be given the gift of royalty, as **"kings."**
- (2) These will be given the privilege of serving in our Lord's presence, as **"priests."**
- g. **"We shall reign on the earth."**
- (1) This refers to our participation in the Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth, following the Tribulation.
- (2) Yet, those who will **"reign"** are only those who have been **"redeemed"** by the blood of the eternal Son of God.
2. Here is Jesus being declared to have the right to rule, not simply by virtue of His deity, but by His victory over sin and death and by His act of redemption.
- a. In Colossians 1:13-14, Paul wrote of God, **"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."**
- b. Jesus' right to the **"book"** has been secured by Him conquering death and providing a complete sacrifice for sin.

#### IV. The Worship Of The Angels. (5:11-12)

**5:11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;**

- A. Walwood – *"In concentric circles with the Lamb in the center surrounded by the living creatures and the twenty-four elders, the angelic hosts are seen on every side numbering ten thousand times ten thousands, an innumerable throng on one mighty symphony of praise."*



1. You'll notice in the Bible that the words "**angel[s]**" and "**sing**" are never found together."
2. Compare Isaiah 6:3 where the seraphims are said to have "**cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy . . .**"
3. Only we who have experienced the redemptive grace of God can truly sing. (Ex. – "*Amazing Grace.*")

**5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.**

- B. The seven-fold attributes ascribed to the "**Lamb**" sum up the worship and adoration of this innumerable host of angels.
1. "**Power.**"
    - a. The original word for power is *DUNAMIS*, from which we get our English word "*dynamite.*"
      - (1) It suggests a force so strong that it is unrestricted, unhindered, nor unmatched in might.
      - (2) No mortal has ever been qualified to hold such power because, as it has been said, "*Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*"
    - b. We are reminded of what Satan offered Jesus in the Wilderness.
      - (1) The devil took Him up into a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.
      - (2) And the devil said to Him, "**All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it**" (Luke 4:6).
      - (3) The offer of the "**kingdoms,**" the "**power,**" and the "**glory**" was a mockery on the actual claims of Christ as He cited the Lord's Prayer – "**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen**" (Matthew 6:13).
    - c. When Jesus comes back, He's not only going to have the authority to rule this world, but He is also going to have the "**power**" to rule this world.
  2. "**Riches.**"
    - a. The resources of this world have never really been fairly divided.
      - (1) Neither colonialism, communism, nor even capitalism has given the poor a fair deal.
      - (2) Under each system there has always been the elite, the privileged, the rich, and then there are the poor.
    - b. Jesus understands the plight of the poor.
      - (1) He was born in a borrowed manger.
      - (2) He preached from a borrowed boat.
      - (3) He feed the hungry with a borrowed lunch.
      - (4) He fulfilled prophecy by riding a borrowed donkey.
      - (5) He ate His last supper in a borrowed room.
      - (6) When He died, He used another man's cross.

- (7) And, when He was buried, He was laid in a borrowed tomb.
- c. Yes, Jesus knows what it is to be poor.  
(II Corinthians 8:9, “**For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.**”)
- d. However, when Jesus comes back the wealth of the world will be placed into His hands.
3. **“Wisdom.”**
- a. In Colossians 2:3, Paul reminds us that in Him “**are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**”
- (1) When Jesus lived on this earth, He was forever opening His treasury to give people glimpses of the riches of His wisdom.
- (2) John Phillips writes, “*His parables were miracles in words just as His miracles were parables in deeds.*”
- b. Today’s world has little use for the wisdom of Jesus.
- (1) Teachers can teach every law known to science except the law of sin and death.
- (2) They can teach that we evolved from apes and then wonder why our kids act like animals.
- (3) They will replace God’s design for a man and a woman to live together in holy matrimony with a Heinz 57 variety of gender confusion.
- (4) In many regards, they have replaced morality with pornography.
- (5) Our legacy for banning the Bible from our class-rooms is that we have plenty of knowledge, but no wisdom.
- c. When Jesus comes back, He will confound the reasoning of this world with His “**wisdom.**”
4. **“Strength.”**
- a. One of the great titles of the Lord in the Old Testament is “**LORD of hosts**” (Psalm 24:10).
- (1) The Old Testament rings with the noise of battle.
- (2) We live in a world that is an armed camp, a planet under siege, and in the iron grip of a terrible foe.
- b. God’s plan for redemption not only includes our “*persons,*” but also His “*property.*”  
(Romans 8:22, “**For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.**”)
- (1) At Calvary, Jesus not only redeemed us, but He also secured the “*title deed*” to this planet we now occupy.
- (2) When He comes again He will put down every foe who has ever opposed Him with a demonstration of His great “**strength.**”
5. **“Honor.”**
- a. There is little honor ascribed to Jesus today.
- b. People use His name as a curse word and link it to the foulest words in human speech.
- c. But the day is coming when all will be forced to honor Him.
- (1) To the One who wore a crown of thorns, shall be brought forth the royal diadem and crowned Lord of all.

- (2) To Him whose hands were pierced with cruel nails, shall be given the scepter of universal dominion.
  - (3) To the One whose feet were torn by the iron bolts of Rome, all the world will be placed at His feet.
  - d. Philippians 2:9-11 speaks of God highly exalting His Son, and **“[giving] him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**
6. **“Glory.”**
- a. Once, down here on earth, people spat in His face.
    - (1) Once, they blindfolded Him and smote Him.
    - (2) Once, they nailed Him to a Cross of wood and lifted Him up between heaven and earth.
    - (3) But then Sunday came!
  - b. On one occasion, referring to Solomon’s glory, Jesus spoke of the differences of glory.  
(Luke 12:27, **“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”**)
    - (1) Solomon’s glory was put on him from the outside.
    - (2) The glory of the lily grows from within.
  - c. Thus it is with Jesus.
    - (1) His is inherent glory, from within.
    - (2) And when, at last, it is fully revealed, it will compel the reverence of the world.
  - d. The psalmist cried out, **“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”**  
(Psalm 29:2).
7. **“Blessing.”**
- a. If there is one thing this world needs, it’s the blessing of God.
  - b. Today we live in a world full of tears and woes; of wars and rumors of war, of famines, pestilence, and disasters, and of persecutions and holocausts.
  - c. But when Jesus comes back, all of this will be changed.
- C. This great chorus of praise is a prelude to the mighty scenes yet to follow.

V. The Worship Of All Creation. (5:13-14)

**5:13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.**

**5:14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.**

- A. To the angelic chorus is added the majestic praise of every creature **“in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea.”**
1. The refrain, **“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,”** is once again repeated.
  2. The focus of their worship is **“him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”**
- B. The beauty and wonder of the scene in Revelation 5 stands in stark contrast to the dark clouds of divine judgment that are about to follow.
1. The same Lord and Redeemer, Who is the object of worship and praise on the part of the saints, will also be the righteous Judge of the wicked earth, and by Whose authority the terrible events of the Tribulation unfold beginning in Revelation 6.
  2. When you read how the Bible predicts such great events before hand, how tragic it would be to miss out on that **“which God hath prepared for them that love him”** (I Corinthians 2:9).
  3. Any person with a rational mind would want to go to Heaven after they die.
  4. To know your destination for certain, Jesus said, **“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”** (John 10:9).

**Conclusion:** Friend, have you met the **“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29)? Will you be joining in on the worship around the throne of heaven, singing a **“new song?”** Or would you take your chances at standing before the **“Lion of the Tribe of Judah”** as your Judge?

## THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD'S WRATH

**Text:** Revelation 6:1-17

**Introduction:** Christians under attack by hostile cultures and governments want a divine answer to the questions, “*Will it always be this way?*” and “*How long will it last?*” Revelation 6 answers these questions through the image of six seals being broken. The Lamb of God is to unfold the final judgments contained in God’s Judgment Scroll. This solemn chapter should encourage us, as it did the first-century Christians, to be faithful, even until death.

\*\* Transition.

- A. In Revelation 5, John introduced the seven-sealed book in the hand of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.
1. In Revelation 6, the first six seals are opened with the result of tremendous events occurring on the earth.
  2. There is a similarity between Revelation 6 and the descriptions given by our Lord of the end of the age in Matthew 24 and 25.

<b>MATTHEW &amp; REVELATION IN PARALLEL PROGRESSION</b>			
<b>Order</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Revelation</b>
1	War	24:6-7	6:3-4
2	Famine	24:7	6:5-6
3	Death	24:7-9	6:7-8
4	Martyrdom	24:9-10, 16-22	6:9-11
5	Sun Darkened, Moon Darkened, Stars Falling	24:29	6:12-14
6	Time Of Divine Judgment	24:32-25:26	6:15-17

- B. The picture before us is God’s revelation of dramatic and terrible judgments which will climax the present age.
1. The revelation seems to indicate a succession of events.

RELATIONSHIPS OF THE JUDGMENTS IN REVELATION		
<b>Seal Judgments</b>		
1	6:1-2	
2	6:3-4	
3	6:5-6	
4	6:7-8	
5	6:9-11	
6	6:12-17	
7	8:1-16:21	<b>Trumpet Judgments</b>
	1	8:7
	2	8:8-9
	3	8:10-11
	4	8:12-13
	5	9:1-11
	6	9:13-21
	7	11:15-16:21
		<b>Vial Judgments</b>
	1	16:2
	2	16:3
	3	16:4-7
	4	16:8-9
	5	16:10-11
	6	16:12-16
	7	16:17-21

2. In looking at the seven-sealed book, the seventh seal encompasses the seven trumpet judgments and the seventh trumpet embraces the seven vial judgments.
  3. The seven-sealed book, therefore, is the comprehensive program of God culminating in the Second Coming of Christ.
  4. When the seven seals are broken, and all the subsequent events have occurred, the "title deed" will be fully unrolled for all to give witness to.
- C. The time frame which the opening of the seals covers is called, in Jeremiah 30:7, **"the time of Jacob's trouble."**
1. It will be the time of God pouring out His wrath, the most terrible time that the earth and its inhabitants will ever experience.

(Matthew 24:21, **“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”**)

- a. There will be volcanic eruptions, meteoric blasts, plagues, famines and so on.
- b. Such events, in years past, have only been mere shadows of trouble as compared to this terrible time.
2. Not only is the Tribulation Period given for earth’s cleansing and redemption, it is also a time prepared for those who have rejected Jesus as Messiah.
3. This terrible time will fall upon all of those left behind at the *“catching away”* of the true Church. (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)

I. The First Seal: Peace. (6:1-2)

**6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.**

**6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.**

- A. The **“noise of thunder”** is a symbolic token of the coming storm.
  1. On a warm summer day one can hear thunder in the distance even though the sun may still be shining overhead.
  2. The approaching clouds and the roar of thunder foreshadow the violent nature of the coming storm.
- B. The **“white horse.”**
  1. The rider is the **“prince that shall come,”** spoken of in Daniel 9:26 as *“the Antichrist.”*
    - a. He is the **“little horn”** that rises from among the nations, spoken of in Daniel 7:8.
    - b. He is the **“mouth speaking great things and blasphemies”** in Revelation 13:5.
    - c. He is the ruler of the end-time political world, according to Revelation 17:12.
    - d. He is Satan’s masterpiece and counterfeit of all that Christ is or claims to be.
  2. He is cast in Revelation 6 in the role of a conqueror.
    - a. He will represent the devil’s cunning scheme to bring in a mock millennium without Christ.
    - b. He is identified, in Revelation 13, with the **“beast . . . out of the sea.”**
- C. Symbols – **“a bow; and a crown.”**
  1. The Antichrist is seen as having a **“bow,”** but no arrows.
    - a. The picture is that of a conqueror who subdues by means of peace, as symbolized by the white horse and the empty bow.
    - b. He will come to power through strategic diplomacy.
    - c. Through flattery, as an arch manipulator, he will gain the trust of the world’s political leaders.

2. Presenting himself as a man of peace, the Antichrist will be promoted as head of the one-world government, thus a **“crown was given unto him.”**
    - a. Because of what he promises, the peoples of the world will think that they are entering into the Millennium, when in fact, they will be entering into a time of great tribulation.
    - b. He will continue to appear as a man of peace until he establishes complete control over the world governments.
    - c. The ecumenical church will also fall for his program and will later be destroyed by his cunning.
  3. Although he is, in fact, destined to be a world ruler, the emphasis is on the temporary victory which is his.
- D. From the beginning, the Antichrist’s goal will be that of self-exaltation.
1. Underneath his dazzling brilliance for good will be a heart of anarchy.
  2. His lawless heart will make way for the most evil, demonic activity since the expulsion of angels from Heaven and the fall of Lucifer.
- E. The Apostle Paul mentions the rise of this *“lawless”* one and the appalling condition of the church world immediately prior to the *“catching away”* of the Church.
- (II Thessalonians 2:3-9, **“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”**)
1. The presence of the true Church is the force holding back the present day onslaught of Satan.
  2. This is due to the inner presence of the Holy Spirit.
  3. The world may try to wipe out all true believers, but, historically, such martyrdom has only enhanced the popularity of Christianity.
  4. It will take the removal of Christians by Christ Himself (I Thessalonians 4:16) before the Tribulation Period can begin and the Antichrist be revealed.
- F. The breaking of this first seal is in alignment with Jesus’ prophecy found in Matthew 24:4-5, **“Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”**

II. The Second Seal: War. (6:3-4)

**6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.**

**6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.**



- A. Everything will be peaceful as the Antichrist subtly secures his position of leadership.
  - 1. However, other political and religious powers on Earth will soon challenge this New World Order.
  - 2. The one-world, long awaited for “*utopia*,” will be in danger due to these opposing forces.
  - 3. The natural outgrowth of a false peace is “**war.**”
- B. The “**red**” horse.
  - 1. Though the color “**red**” has been associated with the sacrificial death of Christ (Acts 20:28), here it is used in relation to the death of those left on earth after the Rapture of the Church.
  - 2. It is the symbol of the shed blood of many under the direction of the Antichrist and his new government.
  - 3. Adding to this understanding is that this second rider was also given “**a great sword,**” an additional symbol of war.
- C. Notice that power was given to the rider of the red horse “**to take peace from the earth.**”
  - 1. This tactic is yet another stepping stone toward the personal and complete world dominance of the Antichrist.
  - 2. War is characteristic of his movement, although his claim will be that it is for the ultimate “*good*” of a New World Order.
- D. Jesus added to the warning of this seal, when He said, “**And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom . . .**” (Matthew 24:6-7a).

### III. The Third Seal: Famine. (6:5-6)

**6:5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.**

**6:6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.**

- A. The “**black horse**” signifies famine.
  - 1. War automatically means that many industries will prosper, but the farming industry will suffer as acres of farmland are destroyed.
  - 2. The result will be a shortage of food supplies and famine.
- B. A day’s wage at the time of John’s writing was a “**penny,**” or “*denarius.*”
  - 1. Jesus told the story of a farmer who went out one morning to hire “**laborers**” to work in his fields. (Matt. 20:1-16)
    - a. He then agreed with the laborers to work for “**a penny a day**” (20:2).
    - b. Returning to Revelation, for such a coin, one “**measure of wheat**” or “**three measures of barley**” could be purchased with the coming of the “**black horse.**”

2. That the rider **“had a pair of balances in his hand,”** suggest the measuring out of the stockpile one’s daily portions of **“wheat”** and/or **“barley.”**
    - a. If he used his **“penny”** to buy **“barley,”** a cheaper grain, he would have enough from an entire day’s wages to buy three meals of barley.
    - b. Whether buying **“wheat”** or **“barley,”** there would be no money left over to buy other essentials.
  3. The symbolism indicates a time of severe famine when life will be reduced to the barest necessities.
- C. **“Hurt not the oil and the wine.”**
1. Oil and wine symbolize abundance, indicating that those of wealth and political power will not be affected by the famine.
    - a. They, or course, will be protected by *“The System.”*
    - b. Although most people will be poverty-stricken during the Tribulation Period, the rich will still protect their plenty.
  2. Even today we see how the rich seem to still prosper in days of high inflation, recession, and panic buying.
- D. In addition to what Jesus had previously spoken, He warned, **“and there shall be famines . . .”** (Matthew 24:7b)
1. How should Christians respond in light of these future events?
  2. Jesus said, in Luke 21:28, **“And when these things BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”**

#### IV. The Fourth Seal: Death. (6:7-8)

**6:7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.**

**6:8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.**

- A. The **“pale horse.”**
1. The color is actually a pale green or yellow-green.
  2. The Greek word here is *CHLOROS*, which is the root of our modern word *“chlorophyll.”*
  3. This is the ghastly hue of sick and dying tissue, and it aptly conveys the image of death.
- B. Jesus said of Himself, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”** (John 14:6).
1. Jesus further referred to Himself as **“the Bread of Life”** (John 6:35, 48), the **“Light of Life”** (John 8:12), and the **“Resurrection and the Life”** (John 11:25).
  2. The list could go on and on revealing that Jesus is the *“Life.”*
- C. It would only stand to reason that the Antichrist is the opposite of life – death.
1. He is the symbol and representation of all things associated with death.

2. The true nature of the Antichrist is seen in the breaking of this fourth seal.
- D. After a devastating war, followed by famine, during which the dead are left unburied, a pestilence [infectious, epidemic diseases] is sure to follow.
1. Unknown – *“This is a judgment of wholesale death.”*
  2. One-fourth of the world’s population is destroyed in the judgment of the fourth seal.
  3. Treated geographically, it would be the equivalent to the destruction of more than the entire population of Europe and South America.
  4. Because of the current world population being so great, one fourth of the inhabitants would represent a number larger than those destroyed in Noah’s day.
- E. Since the soul never dies, it is said that **“Hell”** immediately follows **“Death.”**
1. Just as **“Death”** takes the body, so **“Hell”** lays claim to the souls of the unregenerate.
  2. When a Christian experiences physical death, his body is placed in the grave, but his soul and spirit go immediately to be with the Lord.
    - a. II Corinthians 5:8, **“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”**
    - b. Philippians 1:21-24, **“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”**
- F. With the opening of these first four seals, the record is that these things will happen.
1. The Christian has every motivation to give thanks to God, for we will first be caught up to Heaven before all these events.
    - a. Nothing in chapters 6 through 18 will happen until chapters 4 and 5 have taken place.
    - b. Those previous chapters testify of the Church being first caught away to Heaven.
  2. For those who have rejected Jesus Christ when the Lord comes for His Church, they will get a taste of **“Hell”** on earth before they ever arrive in **“hell.”**
- G. In His continuing discourse in Matthew 24:7b-8, Jesus adds, **“ . . . and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”**
- V. The Fifth Seal: The Martyred Souls In Heaven. (6:9-11)

**6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:**

**6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**

**6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**

- A. In the fifth seal, the scene shifts from earth to heaven.
1. Amid the turmoil on the world scene the ungodly will continue to grow in their hatred toward Christ.
  2. Instead of deploring sin as the cause of their trouble, their anger will be kindled at those who turn to Christ and who will no longer cooperate with their humanistic endeavors.
  3. The world presently already displays a growing animosity towards the Bible and Christians.
- B. John sees a vision of those who will be martyred for their faith in Christ during the first part of the Tribulation.
1. These are those who, after the “*catching away*” of the Rapture, come to believe the Word of God.
  2. In the fact that these martyrs ask for judgment upon those that dwell on the earth, it is apparent that their persecutors are still living.
  3. Their cry for righteous judgment is in the same spirit as the Psalmist’s cry to God to vindicate His holiness and righteousness in dealing with the injustice and oppression which characterize the human race.  
(Compare Psalms 35, 52, 58, 59, 69, 83, 109, 137, 140)
- C. The reasons for the death of these martyrs are plainly set forth.
1. They were “**slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held**” (6:9).
  2. Hebrews 12:1 reminds us, “**Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.**”
  3. Christ has commanded all of us to be witnesses.
- D. During the Tribulation, it will be most difficult to declare one’s faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. It may be safe to say, that the majority of those who trust in Christ as Savior, will be put to death.
  2. Martyrdom in those days will be as common as it is uncommon today.
  3. This is confirmed in chapter 7, where another picture of the martyred dead of the Tribulation is given, and in chapter 13, where death is inflicted on all who will not worship the beast.
- E. The “**white robes**” given to every one of the martyrs are symbolic of God’s righteousness.
1. Revelation 19:8 speaks of the Church being “**arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteous-ness of saints.**”
  2. Paul told the Ephesians to “**put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness**” (Ephesians 4:24).
- F. The martyrs are told to “**rest yet for a little season . . .**”
1. This gives rise to the question, “*Why does God allow evil to continue?*”
  2. All we can do is commit these things to the sovereignty of God, and to His righteous purposes, for He can be absolutely trusted to do what is right.  
(Genesis 18:25, “**. . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**”)
- G. Seal five is a testimonial to the character of the one-world government, with the Antichrist dominating the decisions.

1. At this point, he has not yet set himself up as God in the Temple, but is well on his way to achieving world dominance.
  2. He will not achieve complete control until midway through the Tribulation Period.
- H. Jesus' treatment of this fifth seal is recorded in Matthew 24:9-13, **"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."**

VI. The Sixth Seal: The Day Of Divine Wrath. (6:12-16)

**6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;**

**6:13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.**

**6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.**

**6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;**

**6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**

- A. When Christ opens the sixth seal, great physical changes will take place directly related to the earth, its atmosphere, and the universe.
1. The opening of seals one through five have had to do with humanity.
  2. The breaking of the sixth seal spawns astronomical events such as have not occurred since God spoke the universe into existence.
- B. All the elements of a great catastrophic judgment of God are now in view.
1. **"Great earthquake."**
    - a. Today earthquakes and tsunamies are not uncommon.
    - b. This earthquake, however is described as **"great,"** reaching an intensity and power beyond any earthquake presently known.
  2. The sun becomes **"black as sackcloth . . ."**
  3. The moon becomes **"as blood."**
  4. The stars of heaven fall **"as a fig tree . . ."**
    - a. The **"great earthquake,"** will result in the appearance of these great cataclysmic events.
    - b. This might be what Carl Sagan dubbed a *"nuclear winter."*
    - c. Joel 2:30-31 speaks of these wonders, **"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."**

5. The heaven departing “**as a scroll . . .**”
  6. Every mountain and island move.
- C. Beginning with the sixth seal, God is undertaking a direct intervention into human affairs.
1. The judgments of war, famine, death and martyrdom have largely originated in human decision.
  2. The judgment described here originates with God as a divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world.
  3. Each judgment is calculated to strike terror into the hearts of men living on the earth.
- D. When the sixth seal is opened, it has its affect on all the world and on every class of people – from kings to paupers.
1. Seven categories of men will be affected by these catastrophes.
    - a. “**Kings.**”
    - b. “**Great men,**” or “*princes and noblemen.*”
    - c. “**Rich men.**”
    - d. “**Chief captains,**” or “*military chiefs and generals.*”
    - e. “**Mighty men,**” or “*strong.*”
    - f. “**Bondmen,**” or “*enslaved.*”
    - g. “**Free men.**”
  2. Every person on earth will be aware that God had something to do with these calamities.
    - a. The events are of such character that all are impressed with the fact that the “**day of [the] wrath**” of the Lord has come and their judgment is now about to take place.
    - b. This judgment serves as a wake-up call; a last chance for repentance before the trumpeters appear to announce the wrath of God for the last half of the Tribulation.
    - c. Hebrews 3:15 beckons, “**To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.**”
  3. As is often the case with desperate men, instead of availing themselves of the grace of God, they seek to hide from the wrath of the Lamb through death.
    - a. However, their hope is futile, for death is not an escape route, but merely a change from one state to another.
    - b. Those who escape through death from the immediate judgment of God are destined for eternal judgment at the Great White Throne judgment. (Revelation 20:15, 21:8)
- E. Seal six ushers in the second half of the Tribulation known as the “*Great Tribulation*” period.
1. This will be a time when greater judgments than even these will be unleashed upon the Earth and its inhabitants.
  2. Jesus gives additional commentary on this sixth seal judgment in Matthew 24 and 25.

## VII. A Piercing Question. (6:17)

- A. The Book of Revelation discredits those who hold that God is so loving and kind that He will never judge people who have not received His Son.
1. The chapter closes with the question, **“Who shall be able to stand?”** or *“Who shall be able to stand in the great day of the Lord’s wrath?”*
  2. The answer is simple: *“Those who avail themselves of the grace of God today.”*
  3. Paul wrote, **“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (II Corinthians 6:2).
  4. Peter adds, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”** (II Peter 3:9).
- B. The **“day of the Lord will come,” “the heavens shall pass away,”** and **“the earth . . . shall be burned up,”** but presently, the Lord calls men and women to **“repentance.”**

**Conclusion:** Friends, these things are going to happen. Before they can happen, though, Jesus will come and take His Church home via the Rapture. That event can happen at any moment. When it does, every saved person will be translated to *“Glory,”* to Heaven. No matter what church you may belong to, the question is not about religion, but *“Do you know Jesus?”*

The character spoken of in verse 2, the Antichrist, may very well be alive today, just waiting for the fulfillment of the next great prophetic event to reveal himself. Jesus solemnly warned, in Matthew 24:44, **“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”**





# THE SAINTS OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 7:1-17

**Introduction:** Changing our perspective sometimes does us a world of good. Revelation 7 concerns two different perspectives on the people of God that will live in the last times. On the one hand, they are a specific group chosen and marked by God before the last judgments unfold. On the other hand, they are a victorious group that, having come out of the Great Tribulation, will be blessed in heaven forever.

If John's generation was to be the last generation before Christ's return, they needed this dual perspective. If our generation is the final one, how much more do we need the strengthening of this before and after perspective.

- I. Introductory Thoughts To Chapter 7.
  - A. Question: *"In what sense will the Holy Spirit be removed from the earth during the Tribulation?"*
    1. As a member of the Godhead, we must always remember that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent; that is, He is present every-where.  
(Psalm 139:7, **"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"**)
    2. Though omnipresent, we must distinguish between His presence and His residency.
      - a. In the Old Testament, Christ, as Jehovah, was present; however He became resident on earth at His Incarnation.  
(John 1:14, **"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."**)
      - b. Although the residence of the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth during His earthly ministry, there came that time when He announced that He was going to change His residence.  
(John 16:7, **"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."**)
    3. As Christ ascended to the Father, the Holy Spirit came to earth to take up His residence in the life of every believer.
      - a. Christ had assured His disciples that the Holy Spirit, who had been *with* them, would now be *in* them.  
(John 14:17, **"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."**)
      - b. The Holy Spirit was present during the Old Testament, but on the Day of Pentecost He took up residence in the lives of the believers.
    4. Because the Holy Spirit resides in believers, His residence will again change at the Rapture, for when the believers are taken out of the world, He will also be taken with them.
      - a. But, while the Holy Spirit is taken from the earth at the Rapture, because He is God, He will still be ever-present to convict of sin and bring others to salvation during the Tribulation.

- b. During the Tribulation there will be a great ingathering of souls because of the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, although the multitudes in general will still reject the Son of God.
  - c. II Thessalonians 2:11 further suggests that few, if any, who had the opportunity to believe prior to the Rapture will be saved after the Rapture.  
(II Thessalonians 2:11, “**And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.**”)
- B. Some other considerations.
1. Chapter 7 does not advance the chronological sequence of the Book, but interjects a parentheses between seals six and seven.
    - a. The events of this chapter are not restricted to just the time between these two seals, but only begin here.
    - b. The final seal judgment will again pick up the progression chronologically in chapter eight.
  2. What chapter 7 does do is call attention to two major groups of saints in the Tribulation Period.
    - a. The 144,000 represents a godly remnant of Israel. (7:1-8)
    - b. The “**great multitude**” represents the martyred Tribulation saints in heaven. (7:9-17)
  3. Here we also see the grace of God in the midst of judgment.
    - a. Even in wrath, God remembers mercy.
    - b. The scene of judgment beginning in Revelation 6 is being temporarily interrupted by this scene of mercy.
- II. The Sealing Of 144,00 On Earth. (7:1-8)
- A. The vision of “**four angels.**”

**7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.**

**7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,**

**7:3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.**

1. The effects of the cosmic calamities from chapter six must be calmed before the events of chapter 7 can commence.
  - a. Thus, after seeing the first six seals opened and the subsequent occurrences, John sees “**four angels standing on the four corners of the earth.**”
    - (1) This expression does not suggest that the earth is flat, but it is an idiom meaning North, South, East and West.
    - (2) The phrase John is using simply means “*every point on the compass.*”

- b. The “**four angels**” are seen holding the winds so that there is no movement in the atmosphere.
    - (1) Sometimes you wonder how God regulates the wind so that it only blows here and doesn’t there.
    - (2) Remember how the Savior said in John 3:8, “**The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.**”
    - (3) The fact is God is in control of all things, even in His usage of angels to control the wind.
  - c. At this point a dead stillness falls upon the Earth prior to the sealing of 144,000 Israelites.
2. John then beholds “**another angel ascending from the east.**”
- a. The angel “**from the east**” is typified by a man with an inkhorn in Ezekiel 8 and 9.
    - (1) Ezekiel saw in a vision the officials of Israel who were worshiping Baal in secret observances.
    - (2) Ezekiel also saw a company of Israelites who were greatly grieved because of that abomination.
  - b. God then commanded a man with an inkhorn to go through the city and mark in the forehead those who were grieving over such idolatry.
    - (1) Those who were marked (sealed) were spared the great slaying that followed.
    - (2) In like manner, the 144,000 with the “**seal of the living God**” will be protected from the events of the Great Tribulation which are soon to proceed.
3. The angel from the east instructs the previous four angels not to act until “**the servants of our God**” have been sealed.
- a. In the New Testament, a “*seal*” speaks of ownership.
    - (1) We might use the word “*receipt*,” as our proof of ownership when we purchase something in a marketplace.
    - (2) To the Ephesians, Paul wrote, “**In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were SEALED with that holy Spirit of promise**” (Ephesians 1:13).
    - (3) Every time a sinner gets “*saved*,” God seals him with His Holy Spirit as proof of ownership that he belongs to God.
  - b. Here, in Revelation 7, there is apparently also some mark, visible to the spirit world placed upon these people’s “**foreheads.**”
4. The implication is that the judgment of God is impending and that prior to its infliction upon the earth, God wants to set apart and protect His own servants.
- a. Compare Noah. (Genesis 6:8-22)
  - b. Compare Rahab. (Joshua 2:1-21)
- B. The sealing of the twelve tribes.

**7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.**

**7:5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.**

**7:6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.**

**7:7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.**

**7:8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.**

1. There is a remarkable difference in the twelve tribes of Israel listed in Genesis as compared to this list in Revelation 7.
  - a. After the Egyptian bondage, the tribe of Joseph was honored through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasses, while the tribe of Levi was not to be numbered among the tribes.
    - (1) They were exclusively set apart for tabernacle duties.
    - (2) They also did not receive any territorial inheritances because of their duties.
    - (3) Considering the recognition of Joseph through his two sons, thus subtracting the name Joseph, and setting apart the tribe of Levi for tabernacle duties, Manasses and Ephraim would make up the eleventh and twelfth tribes.
  - b. However, both the tribes of Ephraim and Dan are omitted in chapter 7.
    - (1) They are respectively replaced by Joseph and Levi.
    - (2) Deuteronomy 29:18-21 suggests the reason behind this replacement, **“Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, OR TRIBE, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations . . . The LORD will not spare him, but . . . the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the TRIBES of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.”**
  - c. It was the tribes of Dan and Ephraim that allowed Jeroboam to set up **“two calves of gold”** for worship after the dividing of the nation into Judah and Israel. (1 Kings 12:25-30)
    - (1) This idolatry resulted in their names being blotted out of mention in Revelation 7.
    - (2) Due to this blotting out, the descendants of Dan and Ephraim, if there are any, will go through the Tribulation Period unprotected.
2. There is presently a religious sect that once claimed to be the 144,000.
  - a. Unfortunately, as their denomination began to grow beyond that number they had to come up with some other explanation in their theology.
  - b. Of course, present day followers of this group are not aware of what was once taught because they revise their stuff all the time.

- c. Note that the whole thing is ridiculous, for those spoken of here are clearly Jewish, and not Gentiles.
- 3. The idea that the Church today is true Israel is not sustained by any explicit reference.
  - a. The word “*Israel*” is never used of Gentiles, but refers only to those who are racially descendants of Israel and Jacob.
  - b. These 144,000 are Israelites who receive Christ as their personal Savior after the Tribulation begins
  - c. Had they been saved prior to the Tribulation, they would have been part of the “*Body of Christ*” and caught up in the Rapture.
- 4. Does the “**twelve thousand**” in each tribe literally mean 12,000?
  - a. There seems to be an indication that more than 12,000 from each tribe actually will be saved.
  - b. Walvoord – “*The point of this Scripture is that in any event 12,000 in each tribe are made secure. There will be other Israelites saved besides these 144,000, but many of these will die martyrs’ deaths and give up their lives for their faith. The 144,000 are those who are delivered from their persecutors and brought to safety through this terrible time of tribulation. In chapter 14 they are seen triumphant at the end of the tribulation when Christ returns.*”
- C. God is going to do a wonderful work with the 144,000 Jews He is going to save.
  - 1. He is going to use them to evangelize the whole world during the Tribulation Period.
    - a. The Bible no where teaches a world-wide revival this side of the Rapture, but it does teach one on the other side.
    - b. The 144,000 will go everywhere spreading the Gospel.
    - c. You get 144,000 people like the Apostle Paul preaching and you can just imagine what will happen.
  - 2. Jesus taught of this when He said, “**And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come**” (Matthew 24:14).
  - 3. The results of this great work is an innumerable multitude of Gentiles being saved, as set forth in the remainder of this chapter.

### III. The Great Multitude In Heaven. (7:9-17)

- A. The martyred dead of the Great Tribulation seen in heaven.

**7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;**

**7:10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.**

- 1. In his vision John sees a great multitude from all nations, kindred, people, and tongues.
- 2. In contrast to those coming from the twelve tribes as pictured earlier, this throng is from all nations.

- a. Their **“white robes,”** again, are symbolic of righteousness. (Cp. 6:11, 19:8)
  - (1) God has only one way of salvation – through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9:22, “ . . . **without shedding of blood is no remission.**”)
  - (2) These martyrs are seen as having **“washed their robes . . . in the blood of the Lamb”** which has made their robes **“white.”**
- b. The fact that they had **“palms in their hands”** indicates triumph.
  - (1) The only other time **“palms”** are mentioned in the New Testament is during Christ’s Triumphant Entry into the city of Jerusalem.
  - (2) John records that **“On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord”** (John 12:12-13).
- 3. This **“great multitude”** is heard by John in a great symphony of praise as they ascribe salvation to God.
  - a. The fact that these who offer such praise are martyrs, coming out of the Great Tribulation, is stated in verses 13-14.
    - (1) Here we see a preview of victory even though these respondents were killed.
    - (2) These are part of the brethren slain, and seen under the altar of seal number 5. (Revelation 6:9)
  - b. As the Raptured Church, these also will live and reign with Christ during the Millennial.
- 4. Notice the contrast between the Church and the martyrs of Revelation 7.

CHURCH	MARTYRS
Kept out of Tribulation. (3:10)	Come out of Great Tribulation. (7:14)
Represented by the 24 Elders sitting around the throne. (4:4)	Standing before the Throne. (7:9)
Wearing crowns. (4:4)	No mention of crowns.
Having harps and vials with which to praise the Lord. (5:8)	Palms in their hands. (7:9)
Singing a new song. (5:9)	Crying with a loud voice, <b>“Salvation to our God . . .”</b> (7:10)

Made kings and priests who will reign with Christ. (5:10)	Serving before the throne day and night in the Temple. (7:15)
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B. The praise of the heavenly host.

**7:11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,**

**7:12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanks-giving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

1. Joining the multitude of saints in praise are all the heavenly hosts.
  - a. They praise God with “ **blessing** ” – they acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from God.
  - b. They praise God with “ **glory** ” – God’s glory outshines even that of the sun.
  - c. They praise God with “ **wisdom** ” – as omniscient, God is the Supreme and Majestic Intelligence of the universe.
  - d. They praise God with “ **thanksgiving** ” – there is so much to be thankful for.
  - e. They praise God with “ **honor** ” – there is none like God.
  - f. They praise God with “ **power** ” – He is the One that created all things, and sustains all things.
  - g. They praise God with “ **might** ” – there is no weakness in Him at all.
  - h. They praise God Who is worthy of these praises “ **for ever and ever.** ”
2. Their worship before the throne of God is similar to that of Revelation 5:11-12.
  - a. Here we have a wonderful portrait of true worship.
  - b. Included here is adoration of God, thanksgiving, and prayer.
  - c. Each of us should meditate from time to time on the praises and attributes of God.

C. The martyred dead identified as Tribulation saints.

**7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?**

**7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

1. One of the elders asked about the origin of those who stood in “ **white robes.** ”
  - a. It is clear that the “ **elders** ” are representative of a different group from those who are here pictured as “ **a great multitude.** ”
  - b. Since we found in Revelation 4:4 that the “ **elders** ” represent the Church, this “ **great multitude** ” represents a different body of saints.

2. John does not recognize this group.
    - a. These are the Tribulation saints who have **“washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb.”**
    - b. This explains why John, who recognized the Church in heaven, is in a fog concerning these individuals.
    - c. These are new *“brothers and sisters”* in Christ, though not presently known by John.
      - (1) They have been saved in a different period of time, a time when he and the Church were already in heaven.
      - (2) The Church was not on earth to make their acquaintance.
  3. Though not suited to the sophistication of twenty-first century aesthetics, the blood of Christ is exceedingly precious in the sight of the Lord and is the only cleansing agent for sin.
 

(I Peter 1:18-19, **“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”**)

    - a. The **“blood of the Lamb”** is the assurance of cleansing and forgiveness for those who have been martyred for their faith in Christ.
    - b. Even their own sacrificial deaths could not atone for their sins.
- D. The heavenly bliss of the martyred saints.

**7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.**

**7:16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.**

**7:17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**

1. The wonderful blessing of the martyred saints in the presence of the Lord is spelled out in these verses.
  - a. Heaven is not only a place of rest from earthly toil, but it is also a place of privileged service.
  - b. Their service is said to occur in the **“temple”** of God, a reference to the immediate presence of the Lord, and not to any earthly temple.
2. They will be delivered from all the afflictions of life, such as, hunger, thirst, and the heat of the sun.
  - a. The **“Lamb of God,”** Himself, **“shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”**
  - b. God shall **“wipe away all tears”** resulting from their suffering on the earth.

**Conclusion:** Revelation 7 serves as a review of the situation described in the previous chapter and emphasizes two things. First, God is going to judge Israel in a period of great trial, but 12,000 from each tribe will be protected and sealed from the judgments which will fall upon the world in general.



Second, a great multitude of Gentiles will also be saved, even though many of these will be martyred. This multitude of the martyred dead will be found in heaven rejoicing in the presence of the Lamb and representing every tongue and nation.

From these two general observations we learn that even in the tragic closing hours just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, countless souls will find Christ as their Savior and be saved by grace. How much better it would be for individuals to find grace during this present age, rather than having to wait until the time of great tribulation?

*Notes*



# THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE BEGINNING OF THE TRUMPETS

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 8:1-13

**Introduction:** First-century believers knew their Bibles, per say. They had read in Exodus about the plagues on Egypt, how God had brought Pharaoh to his knees, and how He delivered His people by a mighty salvation.

They were familiar with the use of a trumpet as a military signal. Perhaps they were also aware of Jesus' usage of the trumpet image as part of the Second Coming. Thus, they had a basis for interpreting the combination "*plague plus trumpet*" sequence as part of the end-time judgments of God on a wicked world.

We today are less familiar with these images. Still we need to know that God's powerful end-time judgments are real, that all of nature will be affected, and that even those hostile to God will be given a last opportunity to repent before the final doomsday arrives.

## I. The Opening Of The Seventh Seal. (8:1)

**8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**

- A. The openings of the first six Seal Judgments have revealed a number of things.
  - 1. Including:
    - a. The rise of the Antichrist.
    - b. War against those nations which oppose the authority of the one-world government.
    - c. Great famines following the destructive wars.
    - d. Death resulting from the famines and wars.
    - e. And, the souls from under the heavenly altar crying out for vengeance.
  - 2. Seal Six then concludes as a wake-up call to repentance before the great and terrible "*Day of the Lord.*"
- B. With the opening of the Seventh Seal the narrative picks up from the close of chapter 6.
  - 1. The opening of the Seventh Seal is not conclusive in itself.
    - a. It contains seven Trumpet Judgments, seven thunders (10:3-4), seven vials, and the events resulting from their implementations.
    - b. Theodore Epp – "*Whereas the first six seals revealed judgments as a result of man's unrestrained wrath, the first six trumpets reveal Satan's unrestrained activity. Of course, Satan can only function as God allows him to. But God has granted Satan power over certain natural forces and almost unrestrained liberty.*"
    - c. The seven Trumpet Judgments will take us down through the end of chapter 11, before the narrative turns toward another parenthetical thought.

2. Chapter 8 covers only the first four of the seven Trumpet Judgments.
  - a. These four judgments prompt the opening of the last half of the Tribulation Period.
  - b. The Opener of the seventh seal is, again, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.
  - c. Contained in the seventh seal are all the subsequent developments leading to the Second Coming of Christ.
- C. Revelation 8 begins to reveal God's most severe wrath, and when all of heaven gets a glimpse of what is coming, there is a hush before the storm.
  1. The silence for about the space of "**half an hour**" is a fitting recognition of the important character of this seal.
    - a. Do you recall from your school days when suddenly the teacher stopped talking . . . and there was silence?
    - b. Those who were inattentive or talking suddenly stopped their activity and looked up, awaiting perhaps the anger or wrath of the teacher.
  2. Walvoord shares, "*Though thirty minutes is not ordinarily considered a long time, when it is a time of absolute silence portending such ominous developments ahead it is an indication that something tremendous is about to take place. It may be compared to the silence before the foreman of a jury reports a verdict; for a moment there is perfect silence and everyone awaits that which will follow.*"
  3. Keith Harris writes, "*Every created being in Heaven is silent: the angels, the four beasts, and the elders. It is a silence of awe, a gasp before the exhaling, the anticipation of what is about to follow. No doubt the anticipation made the short time-span seem as though it lasted for hours.*"
  4. This silence marks a transition from the "*Grace of God*" to the "*Judgment of God.*"
  5. Although God has "**no pleasure in the death of the wicked**" (Ezekiel 33:11, cp. Ezekiel 18:32), He has no other alternative but to bring judgment on those who deliberately continue in their rebellion.

## II. Introduction Of The Seven Angels. (8:2-6)

- A. During this "*silence in heaven,*" John sees seven angels standing before the throne of God.

### **8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.**

1. These seven angels are appointed to direct a series of judgments symbolized by the sounding of seven trumpets.
  - a. These angels are to be distinguished from those who will pour out the seven "**Vial (Bowl) Judgments**" in chapters 15 and 16, and are not to be confused with "**the seven Spirits of God**" in Revelation 5:6.
  - b. The fact that these angels stand before God indicates a place of prominence such as is given to the angel Gabriel. (Cp. Luke 1:19)
2. The use of trumpets has considerable background in the Scriptures.
  - a. They were sounded on the occasion of the giving of the Mosaic Law. (Exodus 19:19)

- b. They were used to signal important events on the calendar. (Leviticus 25:9)
  - c. They were sounded at times of public assembly. (Numbers 10:2-10)
  - d. They were used to direct soldiers in war. (Judges 7:17-18, Joshua 6:4-5)
3. The sound of the trumpet will even precede the Rapture.
- a. I Thessalonians 4:16, **“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”**
  - b. I Corinthians 15:51-52, **“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”**
  - c. Revelation 4:1, **“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”**
- B. **“Another”** angelic personage is introduced as standing before **“the altar, having a golden censer,”** presenting **“much incense”** and the **“prayers”** of the saints before the throne.

**8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.**

**8:4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.**

1. A **“censer”** is thought to be a ladle or shovel-like instrument used for carrying live coals of fire from off the altar on which incense was to be burned.
  - a. In the Old Testament, priests would burn incense on the altar of incense with the smoke filling the Temple, or the Tabernacle, as its sweet odor would ascend up to heaven.
  - b. Incense has always been identified with worship and prayer.
  - c. Here, **“the prayers of the saints”** are seen as ascending up before God, and being offered with **“much incense”** makes them pleasant and acceptable to God.
2. The preponderance of opinion among many Bible teachers seems to identify the **“angel”** spoken of here as Christ Him-self, as our great High Priest involving Himself in intercessory prayer.
  - a. This is the Lord’s present ministry in Heaven. (John 17:9, **“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”**)
  - b. The Lord is seen as praying for His own, taking care of our affairs.
3. During the first half of the Tribulation we saw the martyrs under the altar praying to God to avenge their blood on those who dwell on the earth. (Revelation 6:9-11)

- a. Their prayers do not go unanswered, for they were told to wait **“until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled”** (Revelation 6:11).
  - b. The time has now come, in Revelation 8, for judgment to come from the throne of God on those who have rejected His Son and persecuted His saints.
  - c. The prayers of the saints of Revelation 6 are about to be answered, beginning in Revelation 8.
- C. Attention is again directed to the **“censer.”**

**8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**

- 1. In the Old Testament, the censer was used to carry fire from off the altar to the Holy of Holies where the incense was added.
  - a. It was used in the purification ritual on the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:12-14)
  - b. The prophet Isaiah experienced similar cleansing when a **“seraphim . . . having a live coal . . . which he had taken . . . from off the altar . . . laid it upon [his] mouth”** and purged his sins. (Isaiah 6:6-7)
- 2. Here, the angel is said to take the **“golden censer”** filled with fire and **“cast it into the earth.”**
  - a. The clear implication is that the **“censer”** is being used as a symbol of judgment, in response to the intercession and prayers of the suffering saints in the midst of the Tribulation.
    - (1) How many Christians have suffered, even been tortured, at the hands of those who hate Christ?
    - (2) How many have prayed that the day would come when God would vindicate His people and His holy name?
    - (3) The proper response to present day persecution is found in Romans 12:19-21, **“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”**
  - b. God is about to send the coming Trumpet Judgments upon the earth in answer to the accumulated prayers of His people.
- 3. The incident is followed by **“voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”**
  - a. This is the *“silence breaker”* for all of Heaven.
  - b. The **“voices”** reveal God’s intelligent direction in the affairs at this time.
    - (1) Today people talk about nature and science almost to the exclusion of God.
    - (2) At this time, God is going to clearly demonstrate that He is above nature and science.

- c. **“Thunderings”** are symbolic in announcing a coming storm – in this case it is the storm of God’s wrath.
  - d. **“Lightnings”** speak of God’s wrath.
    - (1) Normally, thunder follows lightning because sound travels slower than light.
    - (2) The order is reversed here because the thunderings of the approaching storm are heard before God strikes in His fury.
  - e. The **“earthquake”** speaks of the earth’s response to the severe violence that is placed on it.
- D. With verse 6, the focus returns to **“the seven angels which had the seven trumpets.”**

**8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.**

- 1. Turning back to Leviticus 23:23-25, the Hebrew **“Feast of Trumpets”** was a large part of the celebration of the Passover.
  - a. During this feast of remembrance, the blood was to be drained from the sacrificial animal for Passover, and all leaven was to be purged from the bread offered to God.
  - b. Those who failed to observe this feast, which commemorated the haste by which Israel left Egypt, were to be severely punished.
- 2. In like fashion, the sounding of these seven trumpets typifies the **“Feast of Trumpets.”**
  - a. The blowing of the trumpets give witness that the Messiah, Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, has been rejected.
  - b. Therefore, the earthly penalty for discarding the ultimate sacrifice (Jesus’s death on the Cross) is the Tribulation Period.
  - c. It will take such a severe time of tribulation for Israel to finally accept Jesus as Messiah.
- 3. Therefore, with the opening of the seventh seal, the first of seven trumpets sound.

III. The First Trumpet. (8:7)

**8:7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.**

- A. Up to this point, the 144,000 witnesses, having previously been sealed (7:1-3), are now spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom.
  - 1. Earlier, four angels were assigned to hold back the winds from the four corners of the Earth until the sealing of these witnesses is completed.
    - a. The angels from chapter 7 are now no longer restrained from hurting the Earth.
    - b. With the blowing of the first trumpet, God’s full wrath begins to fall.

2. In response to the sounding of the first trumpet, a scene of desolation is spread across the earth caused by **“hail and fire mingled with blood.”**
    - a. In turning away from God, man has so turned to nature that he almost worships it.
    - b. Paul describes the ungodly, who **“when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts . . .”** (Romans 1:21-24).
  3. This judgment is directed toward the earth’s vegetation, with a third part of the trees and all the green grass being burned away.
    - a. With such a massive loss of vegetation will also come soil erosion, floods, and mud slides.
    - b. The remaining vegetation will be unable to adequately absorb the hydrocarbons from all the smoke that fills the atmosphere.
    - c. Ecology will be thrown chaotically out of balance.
    - d. Those environmentalists who cry, **“GO GREEN!”** will have lost the battle.
- B. A similar judgment was used by Moses in Egypt. (Exodus 9:18-26)
1. The hail of Exodus 9:19 and 25 was of such character that it destroyed, not only vegetation, but also men and beasts who were caught in it.
    - a. The purpose of that judgment was that Pharaoh might **“know how that the earth is the LORD’S”** (Exodus 9:29).
    - b. As it has happened before, so will it happen again.
  2. In the judgment of the trumpets, the Lord Jesus Christ brings judgment on nature so that man will see God above all.

#### IV. The Second Trumpet. (8:8-9)

**8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;**

**8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.**

- A. At the sound of the trumpet held by the second angel, another great judgment falls on the earth, this time dealing with the seas.
1. John sees a large object compared to a **“great mountain burning with fire”** cast into the sea.
  2. The text does not say an actual mountain, but *“something like a great mountain.”*
  3. Result:
    - a. One-third of the sea becomes blood.
    - b. One-third of the creatures of the sea die.
    - c. One-third of the ships of the sea are destroyed.



- B. It is earlier indicated in the sixth seal that the stars from heaven will fall and that there will be various disturbances of this character during this period.
  - 1. It may be that this **“great mountain”** is actually a large object falling from the heavens – possibly something like an *“International Space Station.”*
  - 2. We can all give witness to the Columbia Space Shuttle tragedy on February 1, 2003, as it streaked across the sky to its ultimate destruction.
- C. Just as the River Nile, and all the other bodies of water in Egypt, were turned to blood when Aaron stretched out his rod over the waters, so this object apparently has a similar effect upon the sea.
  - 1. The probability is that all life and all ships are destroyed in the area nearest to the impact of the great burning mountain.
  - 2. Though all questions cannot be answered, the unmistakable implication of these judgments is that God is dealing in righteous wrath with the wicked earth.

V. The Third Trumpet. (8:10-11)

**8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;**

**8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.**

- A. John witnesses a **“great star . . . burning as it were a lamp,”** falling upon rivers and fountains of water, bringing death to one-third of humanity.
  - 1. Whereas the second trumpet judgment seems to find its focus on the great bodies of sea water on the Earth – the oceans and seas – this third judgment appears to center on the great rivers and fresh bodies of water.
  - 2. The Greek word, *ASTER*, translated **“star,”** refers to a heavenly light-emitting body, and anything fitting the description could be meant.
    - a. The passage seems to be describing a falling meteor.
    - b. The precise nature of the star, however, is not revealed beyond this visual account.
  - 3. As this great star enters the earth’s atmosphere, it is possible that it disintegrates and becomes like dust that poisons the great bodies of fresh water.
    - a. This flaming torch produces toxic gases which pollute the rivers as it explodes, spreads, and falls to the Earth.
    - b. The fountains of underground waters are also poisoned as the star’s material seeps below the surface of the Earth.
- B. The star is named **“Wormwood,”** causing the waters to become bitter, and resulting in the death of many.
  - 1. This third Trumpet Judgment is the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken of in Jeremiah 9:13-15, **“And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: therefore**

**thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.”**

- a. In Jeremiah 9:12, God asked a simple, thought provoking question: *“Am I justified in executing justice on all the wicked of the earth?”*
  - b. The obvious answer is that God does execute justice on the wicked and those who have **“not obeyed [His] voice.”**
  - c. Therefore, **“[God] will feed them, even [His] people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink”** (9:13).
2. The reference to **“wormwood”** also draws a parallel to the experience of the Children of Israel at the waters of Marah. (Exodus 15:23-25, **“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet . . .”**)
- a. In **“Marah,”** the tree cast into the bitter waters made them sweet.
  - b. Here the **“wormwood”** cast into the sweet waters makes them bitter.
  - c. Such is the contrast between Christ on the Cross atoning for sin, and making that which is bitter sweet; and Christ as Judge, turning vain hopes and ambitions of the wicked into bitterness and despair.

#### VI. The Fourth Trumpet. (8:12-13)

- A. The fourth trumpet relates to the heavens themselves.

**8:12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.**

1. John sees a third part of the sun, a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars darkened.
  - a. This occurrence might be an eclipse that extends to a third part of the day and a third part of the night.
  - b. It might also be a one-third reduction of light resulting from the previous judgments of **“hail and fire,”** the **“great burning mountain,”** and the **“great star from heaven.”**
2. The God who created the heavens and the earth might also intend to suspend the normal operations of His creation, turning a 24-hour day into 16 hours.
  - a. It’s His creation. (Cp. Joshua 10:12-13, II Kings 20:9-11)
  - b. Jesus reference in Matthew 24:22, might well find its fulfillment in this judgment, **“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”**
  - c. The safe assumption might be that we just leave it as **“a third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars . . .”**
3. Imagine, if today the sun was darkened for one-third of the day.

- a. With such darkness, one would experience extreme cold for one-third of the day; and then when the sun would shine, its heat might feel all the more intense.
- b. All this would also have a devastating effect on crops, the food supply, and everything else involved in everyday living.
- 4. This judgment, as an extended disruption of light from heaven, serves as a solemn warning of other judgments which are yet to come.
- B. The first four trumpets are not only judgments in themselves, but they serve as solemn warnings of things still to come, which are far greater in intensity.

**8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!**

- 1. The first four trumpets are directed toward the earth, but the last three, described as **“woes,”** are directed toward the inhabitants of the earth.
- 2. The Trumpet Judgments, which begin in this chapter, confirm the predictions of Christ and the Old Testament prophets of a time of Tribulation far worse than anything experienced before.
- 3. So dramatic are these judgments, and so unmistakably an evidence of the power and sovereignty of God, that blaspheming men on earth can no longer ignore the fact that God is dealing with them.
- C. This last book of the Bible gives us a preview of coming events.
  - 1. There is no indication in the Scriptures that we are headed for an end-time, world-wide revival.
    - a. It is not true that, day-by-day, in every way, the world is getting better and better.
    - b. We might be living in nicer houses and driving finer cars, but material wealth does not equate to spiritual riches.
  - 2. The truth is, day-by-day, in every way, the world is getting worse and worse.
    - a. Today, we have more immorality, more wickedness, and more insanity than ever before.
    - b. II Timothy 3:13 states, **“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”**
    - c. II Timothy 3:1 adds, **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”**
  - 3. Though we may never *“convert this world to Christ,”* we are still called to *“evangelize it.”*
    - a. Just as the 144,000 will preach the Gospel during the Tribulation, so we are called in this Church Age to **“Go . . . into all the world and preach the Gospel”** (Mark 16:15).
    - b. It is then up to the individual, under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit of God, whether man or woman, boy or girl, to make a right response to the message.
  - 4. The simple question is, *“Have you been ‘Born Again?’”*
    - a. I’m not asking you about your church affiliation, but about your personal relationship with God Almighty?

- b. Have you by faith, received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord?
- c. If not, you can, right now!

*Notes*

**Conclusion:** The picture is clear. God has had enough. Therefore, the words of the Apostle Peter are all the more relevant, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (II Peter 3:9).

Today is a Day of Grace, but there IS coming a Day of Judgment. The Bible says, **“To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts . . .”** (Hebrews 3:15).  
Won't you come to Jesus today?

## THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS: THE FIRST AND SECOND WOES

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 9:1-21

**Introduction:** Invasions disrupt everything. People of the first century – including Christians – had experienced two major kinds of invasions. First was an invasion of nature, such as a locust plague that devoured all plant life. Second, there was an invasion of humans, such as an enemy army sweeping over the Euphrates River.

The Christians in John's day would be encouraged to stay faithful by learning about two supernatural invasions described in this chapter. These divine judgments will sweep over the whole ungodly world during the Great Tribulation. Chapter 8, verse 13 describes this as a very grievous time.

- I. The Fifth Trumpet. (9:1-11)
  - A. The fallen “**star**.”

**9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.**

1. John records that he sees a “**star**” fall from heaven, “**and to HIM was given the key of the bottomless pit.**”
  - a. The word “**star**” is used figuratively to represent “**him**,” a literal person.
  - b. He is seen as a person acting with intelligence.
  - c. Verse 11 identifies this person as “**Abaddon**” or “**Apollyon**.”
2. The “**key of the bottomless pit**” is given to this personage.
  - a. This “**key**” really belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (1) In Revelation 1:18, Christ says, “**I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever-more, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**”
    - (2) In Revelation 20:1-3, Jesus, identified as “**an angel**,” is seen in possession once again of the “**key**” as He lays hold of the Devil and casts him into the “**bottomless pit**” for a thousand years.
  - b. We must remember that at the present, Satan is not yet confined to the realm of Hell or the Lake of Fire.
    - (1) He presently has access to the throne room of God as “**the accuser of our brethren**” (Revelation 12:10).
    - (2) Paul refers to him currently as the “**god of this world**” (II Corinthians 4:4), and the “**prince and power of the air**” (Ephesians 2:2).
    - (3) At this moment in time, Satan continues walking about as a roaring lion, “**seeking whom he may devour**” (I Peter 5:8).
  - c. To this adversary, a “**key**” is given.
    - (1) That a “**key**” is given to him is a reminder that whatever power the devil may have, it is “*restricted authority.*”

- (2) The Lord Jesus Christ continues to possess all final authority.
3. In the Greek, the word used to describe the star's "fall," is in a tense which indicates that the action has already been completed.
- a. Again, it seems accurate to interpret this "star" as Satan himself.
    - (1) The "star" has already fallen.
    - (2) The "star" acts with intelligence.
    - (3) The "star" has been given authority.
  - b. Isaiah 14:12-17 records the fall of "**Lucifer, son of the morning.**"
    - (1) In Luke 10:18, Jesus told His disciples, "**I beheld (past tense) Satan as lightning fall from heaven.**"
    - (2) In II Corinthians 11:14, Satan is spoken of as "**an angel of light.**"
  - c. In Revelation 12:7-12, Satan will be "**cast out into the earth.**"
    - (1) This act of God, probably at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, terminates the ability of Satan to further accuse the brethren in heaven as he has been doing down through the ages. (Job 1:6-11)
    - (2) Satan, originally a creation of great authority, has fallen.
4. What about this "**bottomless pit**"?
- a. A literal translation of this phrase is "*the pit of the abyss.*"
  - b. In other words, it might be seen as an opening to a great shaft, like a well to the abyss.
5. It is probable that the abyss refers to *HADES*.
- a. *HADES* is the place spoken of in the Old Testament as *SHEOL*.
    - (1) It is also referred to in the New Testament as *TARTAROS* or *GEHENNA*.
    - (2) These terms are all translated in our English Bible as "**hell.**"
  - b. Before the ascension of Christ, *SHEOL* was the place where the wicked dead were separated from the righteous dead by a great gulf.
    - (1) Jesus referred to this place when He spoke of a "**certain rich man . . . and Lazarus,**" in Luke 16:26, "**And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.**")
    - (2) We know that Jesus, after His death, descended into *SHEOL* before ascending into Heaven. (Acts 2:24-27, Ephesians 4:8-10, I Peter 3:18-20)
    - (3) However, in His ascension Christ declared victory to those in *SHEOL*, and took the spirits of the believing dead to heaven to be with Him. (Ephesians 4:8-10, "**Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)**")
    - (4) But the spirits of the wicked dead still abide in *SHEOL*, where they are in torment, as seen in the account of the rich man in Luke 16.

- (5) Isaiah 5:14 speaks of the time when **“hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure,”** absorbing the place previously reserved for the righteous dead.
- c. *TARTAROS*, as only found in II Peter 2:4, speaks of the lowest abyss of **“hell.”**
- (1) Peter informs us that this is where the fallen angels are kept.
    - (a) These fallen angels are those of the spirit world (demons) who were cast out Heaven with Satan’s fall. (Revelation 12:4, Jude 6)
    - (b) They are evidently locked in this abyss and restrained from roaming the higher elevations of *HADES*.
    - (c) When Christ cast the demons out of the man at Gadarene, the demons besought Him not to cast them **“into the deep,”** into *TARTAROS*, into **“hell.”** (Luke 8:26-36).
  - (2) This lowest abyss is no doubt **“the bottomless pit.”**
    - (a) It is called **“bottomless,”** simply because it has no bottom.
    - (b) If you could descend to the very center of the Earth at some point you would begin to again ascend.
    - (c) There is no *“bottom.”*
    - (d) The very title **“bottomless”** gives reference to the downward direction of this place.
- d. *GEHENNA* will be the eternal abode of those dead who are judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. (Matthew 23:33, Revelation 20:11-15)
- (1) Revelation 20:14 tells us, **“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”**
  - (2) *GEHENNA* will be the eternal dwelling place of Satan, his demons, and all those who have rejected God’s plan of escape.
  - (3) Hebrews 2:3 asks, **“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”**
  - (4) As the Great White Throne Judgment does not occur until after the Millennial Reign of Christ, this eternal state of **“hell”** has not yet begun.
6. As to **“the bottomless pit,”** Satan is given the **“key”** to it in this chapter, but in 20:1-3, he will be cast into it while Christ reigns on the earth.
- B. The opening of the abyss.

**9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.**

1. Satan is presented as having the **“key of the bottomless pit”** with power to release those who are confined there.
2. The rising smoke portrays the spiritual corruption which will be caused by the demons of *TARTAROS* being released from their confinement.
3. It identifies the character of the judgment involved in the fifth trumpet as that of demonic and Satanic oppression.

**9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.**

**9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.**

**9:5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.**

**9:6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.**

1. In the Old Testament, locusts were a greatly feared plague because they could strip a country of every green leaf and sprout, leaving man and beast alike to die for lack of food.
2. The **“locusts,”** while given this title because of their similar function to that of a locust, represents another divine judgment on this wicked world.
  - a. These are not natural locusts, but a visual representation of the hordes of demons loosed upon the earth.
    - (1) For the first time in history all those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior will come under demonic possession and affliction.
      - (a) Consider the condition of the lunatic boy Jesus healed in Luke 9:37-42, when a demon **“teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him, and . . . the devil threw him down, and tare him.”**
      - (b) Imagine such conditions multiplied literally millions of times of the unregenerate!
    - (2) The most awful torments for soul and body will become a general thing.
3. These locusts are described as having the capacity to sting as **“the scorpions of the earth.”**
  - a. The entire human race is open to their activity, except those sealed by God in Revelation 7.
  - b. The graphic description of the torment is compared to that of a scorpion striking a man.
4. The torment is said to extend for **“five months.”**
  - a. The locusts are commanded only to torment, not to kill.
  - b. The torment will be so bad that men will **“seek death . . . and not find it.”**
    - (1) For **“five months”** there will be no funerals.
    - (2) For **“five months”** there will be no successful suicides.
  - c. That men would lose their ability of choice and be found in such agony of body and soul, is such a horrible picture of demonic domination.



- (1) Even the hope of death to deliver them from their present troubles is taken away from them in that dark hour.
- (2) They are left to face their trial and affliction without any way of escape.

D. The locusts described.

**9:7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.**

**9:8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.**

**9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.**

**9:10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.**

**9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.**

1. The features of John's vision find similarity to the description of the prophetic locust plague in Joel 2:4-11, **"The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: and the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?"**
  - a. The picture is that of demonic creatures, for horses do not run upon walls, climb on houses, or enter windows.
  - b. Neither do horses fall on swords and escape harm.
2. John's description of the locusts makes it clear that they are not ordinary locusts and are so named because of their function as a judgment and plague from the Lord.
  - a. John uses the language of comparison, often using the words **"like"** and **"as."**
    - (1) Since John had never seen anything like this before, he describes it in terms of what they looked like by his understanding.

- (2) They were **“like horses,”** but not really horses; **“as crowns,”** but not necessarily crowns; etc.
- b. The awesome combination of the qualities of beasts and men depicts the utterly fearful character of these instruments of divine judgment.
- (1) Their shapes **“were like unto horses prepared unto battle”** – posed and ready for attack.
- (2) **“On their heads were as it were crowns like gold.”**
- (a) Crowns speak of authority.
- (b) Gold implies achievement.
- (c) They were successful in their attacks.
- (3) **“Their faces were as the faces of men”** – symbolizing intelligence and determination.
- (4) **“They had hair as the hair of women”** – with beauty to seduce and ensnare.
- (5) **“Their teeth were as the teeth of lions”** – ferocious, fierce, devouring, and cruel.
- (6) **“They had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron”** – indestructible.
- (7) **“The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle”** – frightening and overwhelming.
- (8) **“They had tails like unto scorpions”** – demonic torture.
- c. Could these qualities be descriptive of modern, mechanized warfare?
- (1) Might these be descriptions of tanks, helicopters, or other forms of modern weaponry?
- (2) Could their tails, being like **“scorpions,”** be *“stinger missiles”* or such like?
- (3) Remember, John is using descriptive terms to describe things he has never seen before.
- d. The qualities described here are in keeping with the general character of the Book of Revelation as an unmasking of the true nature of Satan and evil.
3. The locusts’ king is named in both Hebrew and Greek.
- a. **“ABADDON”** – Hebrew.
- (1) Although found only once in our English Bible, it is found six times in the Hebrew Bible.  
(Job 26:6, 28:22, 31:12, Psalm 88:11, Proverbs 15:11, 27:20)
- (2) Means *“destroyer,”* or *“destruction.”*
- b. **“APOLLYON”** – Greek form, also meaning *“destroyer.”*
- c. These titles most certainly describe Satan.
- (1) Ephesians 2:2 refers to Satan as the **“prince of the power of the air.”**
- (2) John 14:30 refers to him as the **“prince of this world.”**
- (3) Isaiah 14:15-17 sees him as a destroyer, **“Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness,**

**and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"**

- d. Here is the enemy of God and man, Satan.
- 4. It must be remembered that the Book of Revelation is, first and foremost about Jesus Christ, and He is giving warning of what lies ahead so that every man might prepare himself.  
(Hebrews 2:1-3, **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward [or punishment]; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.”**)

II. Announcement Of Two More Woes. (9:12)

**9:12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.**

- A. **“One woe”** is past, but there are still two more to go.
  - 1. As the first four trumpets sounded, the fifth reaches a greater intensity.
  - 2. Woes two and three are still to come.
- B. The Tribulation Period both unmasks human wickedness and demonstrates the true character of Satan.
  - 1. In the Great Tribulation, and especially in the time of the fifth trumpet with the release of the confined demons, the full character of Satan will be starkly manifest.
  - 2. In our modern day, while Satanic forces are still limited, it’s easy to forget that a great conflict is raging between the forces of God and the forces of Satan.  
(Ephesians 6:12, **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”**)
- C. Presently, we must be aware of the weapons of our warfare.

<b>THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE</b>	
W	The <b>Word</b> of God. (Hebrews 4:12)
E	Effectual fervent prayer. (James 5:16)
A	The Whole <b>Armor</b> of God. (Ephesians 6:11-18)
P	<b>Praising</b> the Lord. (Philippians 4:6-7)
O	<b>Obedience</b> toward God. (I Peter 1:13-16)
N	Lifting up the <b>Name</b> of the Christ. (Acts 4:11-12)
S	Filled with the <b>Holy Spirit</b> . (Ephesians 5:18)

III. The Sixth Trumpet. (9:13-21)

A. A voice from the “**golden altar.**”

*Notes*

**9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,**

1. John hears a voice coming from the “**four horns of the golden altar**” before God.
    - a. In Revelation 8:3, this altar is the scene of the offering of incense with the prayers of the saints.
    - b. The inference is that this judgment, like those preceding it, is partially in answer to the prayers of the persecuted saints on earth.
  2. The “**four horns**” seem to indicate that this altar is similar to the design of the altar used in the Tabernacle and Temple.
    - a. The horns placed at the four corners of the altar brings to mind the demand of shed blood for the remission of sin.
      - (1) The Old Testament priests would sprinkle the blood of an unblemished animal on the altar to signify that an impurity had been recognized and cleansed.
      - (2) This shedding of innocent blood was the requirement for the cleansing of man’s sinful heart.
      - (3) The altar, therefore, highlights the judicial demand of God to judge sin.
    - b. John’s attention to also drawn to the “**golden altar**” in recognition of the next major event to follow.
- B. The loosing of “**four angels**” declared to be “**bound in the great river Euphrates.**”

**9:14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.**

**9:15 And 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.**

1. The importance of the “**great river Euphrates**” is seen in the prominence of this geographical location throughout the Scriptures.
  - a. The Garden of Eden was located in this area, thus, it is where the sin of man began. (Genesis 2:14-15, 3:6-7)
  - b. The first murder was committed in this area, for it was here that Cain murdered his brother Abel. (Genesis 4:8)
  - c. It was in this area that Nimrod lived and began his religion. (Genesis 10-11)
  - d. The Tower of Babel, which brought God’s judgment upon all through the confusion of language and the dispersion of the peoples, was built in this area. (Genesis 11:1-9)
  - e. The city located on the Euphrates was called Babylon, which later became the center of the Babylonian Empire.

- f. It was also to Babylon, on the Euphrates, that the Children of Israel were taken captive for 70 years when Nebuchadnezzar ruled the Babylonian Empire.
  - g. This very place where Satan's empire among men began so long ago, will have the final judgment of God poured out upon it in the Tribulation.
2. The **"four angels"** bound in the Euphrates River are not *"good angels,"* for good angels are never bound.
    - a. These are four *"demonic spirits"* whose vengeance will spread throughout the entire world during the Tribulation Period, to the north, south, east, and west.
    - b. The character of these **"four angels"** is seen in that they are prepared for the specific hour, day, month and year for their particular task.
  3. Many of today's world governments have fallen under the sway of demonic activity.
    - a. When the Bible tells us that **"God is not the author of confusion"** (1 Corinthians 4:33), there can be no other explanation to the world events that surround us.
    - b. The secular world sees only the visible human agents involved: powerful potentates, ruthless dictators, and other tyrants of history.
    - c. But Paul warned of the spiritual trappings behind world scenes, when he penned, **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Ephesians 6:12).
    - d. Just as God has holy angels who do His bidding, on this occasion He loosens **"four angels,"** or *"four demonic spirits,"* He has prepared to **"slay the third part of men."**
  4. This judgment is one of the most devastating mentioned anywhere in the Book of Revelation.
    - a. Earlier, in the fourth seal (6:7-8), a fourth part of the earth's population is killed.
      - (1) Here an additional third is marked for slaughter.
      - (2) Over one-half of the world's population has been destroyed by just these two judgments alone.
      - (3) For comparison's sake, the total resulting deaths of WWII, both militarily and civil, totaled about 3% of the world population at the time.
    - b. Never since the days of Noah has such a substantial proportion of the earth's population come under God's righteous cause.
      - (1) The loss of human life is almost indescribable.
      - (2) One preacher portrayed this war as **"wholesale,"** while all other wars **"have been retail."**
- C. An army of 200 million.

**9:16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.**

1. This will be the largest military might ever assembled.
  - a. In World War II, all the Allied forces combined numbered about 5 million.
  - b. During the Gulf War (1991), the combined might of the thirty-nine nation coalition formed to fight against Saddam Hussein's forces, only amounted to about 1 million persons in uniform.
2. Many Bible scholars associate this 200 million man army with Red China and her oriental allies by tying this text together with the sixth Vial Judgment, described in Revelation 16:12, **“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”**
  - a. Remember, China's total population exceeds 1.4 billion.
    - (1) In 2021, China's active military numbered about 2.2 million personnel, with another 1.3 in reserve.
    - (2) India's active military exceeded 1.4 million, with another 1.1 million in reserve.
    - (3) A two-hundred million man army would dwarf China's and India's combined strength, even if they were doubled.
  - b. The thing to take note of in chapter 16 is that there is no reference to a 200 million man army, but only **“the kings of the east.”**
  - c. A better understanding here might be that this army is a supernaturally demonic one in light of its description in the next three verses.
- D. Having declared that the purpose of this army is **“to slay the third part of men,”** John now gives the details.

**9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.**

**9:18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.**

**9:19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.**

1. The apostle paints an awesome picture of an irresistible military force destroying all that opposes it.
  - a. The demons who are released are colorfully described as riders on war horses.
    - (1) The riders are not the actual killers themselves.
    - (2) It is the horse-like creatures who do the killing with the power that is in their mouths and tails.
  - b. The picture is again very descriptive of modern warfare with tanks, missiles, etc.
2. This is not the Battle of Armageddon.
  - a. Armageddon will be fought on the plains of Megiddo, about 30 miles South-East of Haifa, Israel, and 130 miles North-West of Jerusalem.
  - b. This war in Revelation 9 may rightfully be called a *“World War,”* for it involves the whole earth.

E. Man still remains unrepentant.

Notes

**9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:**

**9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.**

1. In spite of all the dramatic judgment inflicted by this invading force, those who somehow survive up to this point are still unrepentant.
  - a. Such is the hardness of the human heart, even though they have faced world-wide destruction, the divine judgment of God, and the clear testimony of the Almighty's power to deal with every human soul.
  - b. Though men can be made to fear God by demonstration of Divine Might, they are not brought to salvation apart from faith in Christ and divine grace.
2. The last two verses of Revelation 9 show that this time period is an outgrowth of the last days mentioned in I Timothy 4:1-3, **"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."**
3. Consider the descriptions mentioned here:
  - a. Demonism, *"devil worship,"* and *"idol worship,"* is on the rise in our day, and will spread like a virus throughout the earth during the Tribulation.
  - b. **"Murders"** are not only increasing as a criminal problem, but abortion clinics are increasing as a social problem.
  - c. **"Sorceries,"** from the Greek word *PHARMAKIA*, suggest that the rampant use of drugs we see in our day will be no less so during the Tribulation.
  - d. *"Sexual immoralities,"* such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, and all the rest of the alphabet in kind, continues to be on the rise today, as the insatiable appetites of wicked men are left unsatisfied.
  - e. **"Thefts"** will become more dominate in order to satisfy the needs and wants of depraved, unrepentant hearts.

**Conclusion:** The close of Revelation 9 brings us to a question raised in Romans 2:4, **"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and for-bearing and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"**

Chapter 9 reveals the astounding picture of human depravity. Because of the Fall, man's nature has been hopelessly corrupted, but God is patiently today allowing one last opportunity for each of us to respond to His unmerited grace.

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, He comes into our lives and gives us a new nature that desires to please him. As a result, II Corinthians 5:17 reminds us,

**“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”** Do you know Jesus Christ today?

*Notes*



# THE MIGHTY ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 10:1-11

**Introduction:** After the first six seals were broken in Revelation 6, we would expect to immediately move on to the seventh seal. Instead, we are held up by a two-part interlude recorded in Revelation 7. The first interlude concerned itself with the sealing of 144,000 Jewish missionaries on the earth during the Great Tribulation, and the second focused on a great multitude of martyred saints in heaven during the same time period.

In Revelation 10 and 11, the pattern repeats itself. Revelation 10 gives attention to the prophetic Word of God in the first century. Then, Revelation 11 focuses on the prophetic Word of God during the final tribulation.

- I. The Mighty Angel And Seven Thunders. (10:1-4)
  - A. Chapter 10:1 through chapter 11:14 form an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets.
    1. Between the sixth and seventh seals, there is an break as two groups are redeemed and sealed during the Tribulation.
    2. Here we have a further interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets.
  - B. **“Another Mighty Angel.”**

**10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:**

1. If you go through the Book of Revelation and count the number of times that angels are present, you'll discover that no other book in the New Testament has so many.
  - a. Besides in this book, they are mentioned in 33 other books of the Bible.
    - (1) Hebrews 12:22 speaks of them as an **“innumerable company of angels.”**
    - (2) Psalms 68:17 tells us that **“the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.”**
  - b. Regarding their creation, Psalm 148:5 teaches, **“Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.”** just like everything else in the universe.
    - (1) Though we are not exactly sure of the *“when”* of their creation, Job 38:1, 4, and 7 suggests it being sometime prior to the creation of the earth.
      - (a) Their number, once completed at their creation, was forever fixed.
      - (b) This is assumed, because we never read of God creating more of them, and Jesus said in Matthew 22:30 that they do not reproduce.

- (2) We are furthermore told that they never cease to exist (Luke 20:36), hence they never decrease in number.
- c. Regarding their early existence, H. L. Willmington writes, *“It is believed that all angels were originally created without fault and, like Adam in the Garden, placed on a probation of some sort. They were theologically, during this time, posse non peccare (able not to sin). But the probation period ended when heaven’s chief angel, Lucifer by name, instigated a great revolt against Jehovah God Himself. (See Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-19.) It is suggested in Revelation 12:3, 4 that he was able to persuade one third of heaven’s angels to side with him in this terrible rebellion. The ones who did so thus became non posse non peccare (not able not to sin), while the remaining two thirds were pronounced non posse peccare (not able to sin).*
- From that point on the faithful angels are referred to as holy and elect angels (Mk. 8:38; I Tim. 5:21), while the fallen angels are known as the devil’s angels (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:9).*
- d. Hebrews 1:14 presently speaks of God’s faithful angels as **“ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”**
2. Some suggest that the **“mighty angel”** spoken of in Revelation 10 might be the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, though the evidence is non-conclusive.
- a. In the Old Testament, the Son of God is frequently referred to as **“the angel of the LORD.”**
- (1) Hagar. (Genesis 16:7-11)
  - (2) Abraham. (Genesis 22:11-15)
  - (3) Moses. (Exodus 3:2)
  - (4) Balaam. (Numbers 22:22-35)
  - (5) Elijah. (II Kings 1:3, 15)
  - (6) David. (II Chronicles 21:15-30)
- b. Yet, after His incarnation, Jesus is never again referred to in angelic terms.
- (1) When He came in His humanity, He was not an angel, but a man.
  - (2) After His resurrection, Stephen, **“ . . . being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”** (Acts 7:55-56).
- c. Throughout the Book of Revelation the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in His glorified state – not as an angel.
3. The word **“another”** suggests that this angel is another of the same kind.
- a. In Revelation 5:2, a **“strong angel”** is seen looking for someone worthy of opening the seven-sealed book.
- (1) In 7:2-3, **“another angel”** holds back the tides of judgment for a special hour of grace.
  - (2) In 8:3-5, **“another angel”** stands as the messenger of the covenant, pouring out the fire of judgment upon the earth.

- b. Here, **“another strong angel,”** of this same type, appears, serving as a special envoy of Christ, bearing all the credentials of His exalted position.
- (1) He is seen as coming **“down from heaven.”**
  - (2) It should be noted that since His ascension, Christ is never seen coming down from heaven until the end of the Tribulation Period. (Revelation 19:14)
    - (a) Before his martyrdom Stephen, **“being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God”** (Acts 7:55).
    - (b) The Pharisee Saul, was on his journey to Damascus, when **“suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven,”** from which he heard the voice of the Lord, saying, **“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”** (Acts 9:3-4)
- C. The description of this **“mighty angel.”**
1. **“Clothed with a cloud.”**
    - a. After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus ascended to His Father in heaven **“and a cloud received him out of their sight”** (Acts 1:9).
    - b. Two men in white clothing assured the disciples that Jesus would return **“in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”** (Acts 1:11).
    - c. Matthew 24:30 reveals that the coming of the Son of Man will be **“in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”**
    - d. We see that clouds play a very significant role in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in glory.
    - e. Here, the **“mighty angel”** is seen as **“clothed with a cloud.”**
  2. **“A rainbow was upon his head.”**
    - a. God originally set the rainbow in the clouds as a token of His covenant with Noah that He would never again destroy humanity with a flood. (Genesis 9:11-13)
    - b. Thus, the rainbow emphasizes the mercy of God.
    - c. Though severe judgment comes on the earth during the tribulation, God is still seen as the God of mercy.
  3. **“His face was as it were the sun.”**
    - a. This is a badge of his identification with the God of heaven.
      - (1) Moses’ face shone after he had been in the presence of God. (Exodus 34:29)
      - (2) At the Transfiguration of the Lord, it is said that **“his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light”** (Matthew 17:2).
    - b. So the angel of Revelation 10 has been in the presence of God.
  4. **“His feet as pillars of fire.”**
    - a. This is still part of his uniform.
    - b. Fire is frequently used in the Scriptures to symbolize coming judgment.

5. All of these features of identification are his credentials and connect him to the power of Christ as His special envoy.
    - a. The Lord Jesus is running everything at this point.
    - b. He is the Judge of all the earth.
- II. The Little Book And Seven Thunders. (10:2-4)

**10:2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,**

**10:3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.**

**10:4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.**

- A. This special angel has in His hand **“a little book”** which is opened.
  1. In Revelation 5, the Lamb has in His hands a seven-sealed book which in successive chapters is unrolled, unfolding the judgments symbolized by the seals.
  2. This book, in contrast, is already opened and specifically called **“a little book,”** referring to its small size.
- B. The content of this **“little book”** has been variously interpreted.
  1. Some think it contains a message for the believing church as detailed in chapter 11.
  2. Others believe that the book stands for the Old Testament prophecies relating specifically to Israel during the time of the great Tribulation.
  3. Still others, who say that the seventh sealed scroll of the fifth chapter was *“the title deed to the earth,”* suggests that this smaller book may be a *“little title deed,”* representing that portion of Christ’s inheritance which is to be awarded to His joint heirs (believers).
- C. Though the content of this **“little book”** is nowhere revealed, the context seems to suggest that it represents the written authority of Christ to fulfill His mission.
  1. Theodore Epp writes, *“This book . . . contains the judgments by which Christ uses His power and authority to take over the earth. He wrests the control away from the earthly rulers and usurpers of authority and takes possession for Himself as the rightful Heir. The judgments of the Tribulation form the process by which Christ gains control.”*
  2. After creation, God placed the first man and his bride in a garden and gave them dominion over all He had created. (Genesis 1:26)
    - a. Then in rebellion against their Creator, they sold out to Satan and ceded their scepter of dominion to him, result-ing in the devil becoming the **“god of this world”** (II Corinthians 4:4) and the **“prince of the power of that air”** (Ephesians 2:2).
    - b. The devil has been in charge of this place ever since.
  3. But God’s plan has not been thwarted.
    - a. The second man, the last Adam (Jesus) and His bride (the Church), are going to reign over this earth for a thousand years, known as the *“Millennial Reign of Christ.”* (Revelation 20:1-7)

- b. A thousand years of warless history will become this earth's "golden age."
  - 4. In the mean time, Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand of His Holy Father, as a Prince and Savior, who will at a moment known only to His Father, will arise from His exalted position and make a request.
    - a. The context of that request is set forth in Psalm 2:6-7, "**Yet have I [the Father] set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree [a divine fiat]: the LORD [God, the Father] hath said unto me [Jesus], Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.**"
    - b. In verse 8, the Father next invites His Son to make His request, "**Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.**"
    - c. Up to the present day we have no record of Jesus having ever made such a request . . .
  - 5. . . . Until Now!
    - a. The scene before us is a picture of the "When" and "How" He will do it.
    - b. The time is ripe.
- D. The angel's posture suggests that of a conqueror.
1. Back in Joshua 1:1-3 we read, "**Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.**"
  2. In 1492, Christopher Columbus "*sailed the ocean blue*" and discovered the New World where upon its shores he raised a national flag in honor of his earthly sovereigns, so this angel has set "**his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,**" claiming all for the Lord.
- E. As Revelation unfolds, the Antichrist will soon complete his conquest and force the whole world to submit to his control, but not before the Savior rightfully claims the whole world for Himself.
1. He created it all.
  2. John 1:3 reminds us, "**All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.**"
  3. Paul continues, in Colossians 1:16, "**For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.**"
- F. The angel "**cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth . . .**"
1. This is the cry of the Lion of the tribe of Judah.
    - a. Joel 3:16 reads, "**The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake . . .**"
    - b. Hosea 11:10 adds, "**He shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble . . .**"
  2. This cry is a further warning of impending danger.

- G. **“Seven thunders”** contain a further revelation consisting of some articulate voice which John could understand.
1. The number **“seven”** shows that there is here another complete cycle of judgments awaiting the wicked.
  2. Since **“thunders”** are portraits of divine judgments in the Revelation, we can be certain that when these come to pass their effects will be fierce and devastating.
    - a. God sent thunder when Samuel called upon Him during the dry wheat harvest. (I Samuel 12:17-18)
    - b. The seventh plague upon Egypt revealed thunder as Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven. (Exodus 9:23-34)
    - c. The Lord sent thunder when giving the Law at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:26, 2018)
    - d. David’s victory over the Philistines was acknowledged by thunder. (II Samuel 22:14-15)
  3. These few examples reveal that **“thunder”** is *“a sound of confirmation exclaiming God’s powerful and overwhelming presence.”*
- H. When John was about to write what he had heard, he was instructed not to do so.
1. Though the principle purpose of the vision given to John was to enable him to write the Book of Revelation, and thus pass on divine revelation to the Church, in this instance the revelation is for John’s ears and eyes only, and he is not permitted to reveal what he heard.
  2. While God has revealed much, there are some secrets which He has not seen fit to reveal to man at this time.
  3. This lines up with the long-standing Christian belief that the Bible is sufficient revelation for salvation and life, but it is not exhaustive revelation.

### III. Announcement Of The End Of The Age. (10:5-6)

**10:5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,**

**10:6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:**

- A. Attention is called to the special character of the authority of God over the earth as the One who lives forever and as the One who created all things in heaven and earth.
1. Brushed aside is the foolishness of men who try to create a universe out of resident forces apart from God.
    - a. As the Creator, God is the sovereign Ruler who can declare that *“time shall be no more.”*
    - b. The expression, **“that there should be time no longer,”** refers to the fact that time has run out, and that there will be no further delay.
    - c. God has had enough!
  2. One thing we can learn about God over the course of a period of time is that He is in no hurry.

- a. God has a clock and a calendar that does not work like ours.
  - b. It says in II Peter 3:8, **“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”**
    - (1) A thousand years goes by rather slowly down here, but such is not the case there.
    - (2) It has been approximately 2,000 years since the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but according to God’s schedule its only been a couple of days.
  - c. That gives us some idea of what eternity is like.
    - (1) Some would say, *“My father or mother, or my husband or wife has been dead for many years.”*
    - (2) Yet, from their heavenly perspective, it’s only been a few minutes.
    - (3) Things are figured differently there than here.
- B. The *“Mighty Angel’s”* great announcement is confirmed by an oath.
- 1. This is not the kind of oath which binds one under penalty, for such a practice is forbidden. (Matthew 5:34-37)
    - a. The oath declared here is a statement of fact attested to be witnesses (as the **“seven thunders”**).
    - b. An example of such an oath is found in Hebrews 6:13-14, **“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.”**
  - 2. This is exactly what the **“mighty angel”** does in verse 6.
    - a. Because he could swear by no greater, He swore by **“him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven . . . and the earth . . . and the sea.”**
    - b. His statement is testified to by John, the hosts of Heaven, and the **“seven thunders.”**

#### IV. The Mystery Of God. (10:7)

**10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.**

- A. Verse 7 declares that the sounding of the seventh trumpet brings about the completion of **“the mystery of God,”** as declared to His servants the prophets.
  - 1. One author identifies **“the mystery of God,”** as *“the secret of His allowing Satan to have his own way, and man too . . .”*
    - a. We have difficulty understanding God’s program today, not only because of our finite minds, but because of our selfish outlook.
    - b. Many have wondered why God has allowed sin to continue in this world if He has the power to stop it.
  - 2. We must remember that God has a program which will ultimately bring glory to Himself.

- a. Although I do not know the answer to many of the mysteries of life, I know the One who does.
  - b. I don't have the answers to all my questions, so I put my hand in His, and He says to me, *"Walk with Me through the dark. It's going to be all right. We're going to come into the light, and then you'll understand."*
- B. What we do know for certain is that no man will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment and arrogantly boast, *"God, it's not fair for You to condemn me to hell."*
- 1. There will not be a single word of defense as many will stand mute knowing that they are receiving exactly what they deserve.
    - a. It would seem to me that if I were not *"saved,"* to hear that God has my record, not only of everything I have done, but also everything I have thought, that would be enough to drive me to Him.
    - b. No one else may know your record, but God does.
  - 2. Here is the further **"mystery of God."**
    - a. Do you know that the record that stands against you in heaven – that will condemn you for eternity – can be obliterated?
    - b. God has provided a way for you to have all your sins forgiven, wiped clean, paid in full!
    - c. He then takes your record and nails it to Jesus' account at the Cross. (II Corinthians 5:21, **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."**)
    - d. This is what happens when you are **"born again"** (John 3:3).
  - 3. In Romans 16:25, Paul speaks of the power of the gospel, **"and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."**
- C. The ignorance of God, and the disregard of His majestic Person which characterizes the ages will no longer exist when Christ returns and manifests Himself in glory to the entire earth.
- 1. II Peter 3:10-13, **"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."**
  - 2. In Romans 8:18-22, we find, **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."**



**10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.**

**10:9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.**

**10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.**

**10:11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.**

- A. At this point, John is told to take the book and **“eat it up.”**
1. This he does.
    - a. To *“eat a book”* is a metaphor for consuming its contents.
    - b. This verse pictures John assimilating its message through study and personal application.
  2. The incident might be compared to similar experiences of two Old Testament prophets.
    - a. Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 2:9-10, 3:1-4, 14)
    - b. Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 15:16-18)
- B. The meaning behind John's eating.
1. The book itself symbolizes the Word of God as it is delivered to men.
    - a. John partakes of its contents.
    - b. In his act of obedience, he appropriates the statements, promises, and affirmations contained in the book.
    - c. The testimony to which John is called to is to faithfully deliver the Word of God as it has been committed to him.
  2. Such a commission, with obedience to it, has precisely the two-fold effect mentioned.
    - a. To John, the Word of God is sweet, in that it is a word of promise, a word of grace, and a revelation of the love of God.
    - b. The Word, which is sweet, has its bitter aspect to it, in that it reveals the divine judgments which will be poured out on the earth as God deals in wrath with the wicked world.
  3. As with the present gospel message, the message is both sweet and bitter.
    - a. It is sweet in that it speaks of the way made for each of us to enter into heaven.  
(John 3:36a, **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life . . .”**)
    - b. It is bitter in that those who reject God's way will reap everlasting punishment.  
(John 3:36b, **“ . . . and he that believeth not the Son shall no see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”**)

**Conclusion:** Having seen and heard God declared by the angelic to John, the command is ever before us to continue preaching both the bitter and sweet message of the Word of God. Ezekiel was told, in Ezekiel 3:17, “**Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.**” So the same truth is ever before us.

*Notes*

## THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 11:1-19

**Introduction:** The first century witness of the Church was both powerful and yet, for the most part, rejected. The might of Rome was opposing the tiny churches. In the second and third centuries many would give their lives for the sake of Christ. These early Christians perhaps wondered whether it would ever be any different.

The two powerful prophecies of Revelation 11 show that, just as has been true throughout Church history, in the days right before Christ's return, the witness of the churches will be utterly rejected by a hostile world.

I. The Measuring Rod Of God. (11:1-2)

**11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.**

**11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**

- A. Chapter 11 continues the parenthetical section begun in chapter 10 and extending through chapter 14.
1. In Revelation 11-13 are repeated references to a period of time variously designated as **“forty and two months”** (11:2, 13:5), **“a thousand two hundred and threescore days,”** or *“twelve hundred sixty days”* (11:3, 12:6), and **“a time, and times, and half a time”** (12:14).
    - a. These are three different ways of referring to the same time period of *“three and a half years.”*
      - (1) It is said that the Gentiles will trample the outer court of the Temple and the holy city for this period. (11:2)
      - (2) It is also the duration of the testimony of the two witnesses (11:3), of the preservation of the woman pursued by the dragon (12:6), and of the continuing blasphemies of the beast. (13:5)
    - b. Though the seven-year time period of Revelation 4 through 19 is often referred to as *“the Tribulation,”* the latter three and a half years are spoken of as *“the Great Tribulation.”*
  2. This chapter takes us back to Old Testament ground.
    - a. The Temple, the dealing with time periods, and the distinction made between Jew and Gentiles all indicate that we are again under the Old Testament economy.
    - b. Chronologically, the seventh trumpet brings us to the return of Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation Period.
- B. In preview of chapter 11, the Bible speaks of four Temples in Jerusalem.
1. The construction of the first Temple, known as Solomon's Temple, was completed in 960 B.C.
    - a. The purpose of the Temple was to provide a permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant and for the worship of the Lord. (Exodus 25:2)

- (1) Because King David was a man of war, he was not allowed to build a Temple, but he was allowed to gather the materials for it and organize the project. (I Chronicles 22:1-19)
- (2) Solomon's Temple, following the dimensions of the Wilderness Tabernacle was about 3,500 square feet and built on a ten-foot-high platform with ten steps leading to the entrance.
- b. Three main objects were situated in the Temple's inner courtyard:
  - (1) The Molten Sea that held water for ritual washings. (I Kings 7:23-26)
  - (2) The Bronze Altar used for burnt offerings. (I Kings 8:22, 64, 9:25)
  - (3) Twelve Bronze Oxen, in four groups of three facing outward toward the four points of the compass, with the Molten Sea resting on their backs. (I Kings 7:25)
- c. Entering into the first room of the Temple proper, was the Holy Place.
  - (1) There was housed the Golden Altar of Incense, the Table of Showbread, five pairs of Lampstands, and various implements used in the priestly service.
  - (2) Windows near the ceiling provided additional light.
- d. Passing through the Holy Place, beyond an embroidered veil, lay the Holy of Holies.
  - (1) Access to this room was forbidden to all except the high priest, who entered only once a year on the Day of Atonement to make the annual sacrifice for sin.
  - (2) In this room stood two wooden cherubim, each ten feet tall, with outstretched wings.
  - (3) Two of their wings met above the Ark of the Covenant and two of them touched the north and south walls of the room. (I Kings 6:27)
  - (4) God's presence became manifested throughout the Holy of Holies as a cloud. (I Kings 8:10-11)
- e. At the dedication of this Temple, it is said that Solomon "**offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep**" (I Kings 8:3a).
  - (1) Veterinarians tell us that the amount of blood in proportion to the live body weight of any animal is 9%.
    - (a) Based on this figure, an average sheep possesses 60 milliliters of blood per kilogram (0.9 ounces per pound) and a cow 55 milliliters per kilogram (0.84 ounces per pound).
    - (b) Thus, a sheep weighing 150 pounds will have about 2.1 gallons of blood, and a 1,500 pound ox will have about 19.7 gallons of blood.
  - (2) This would mean that Solomon's dedication sacrifice resulted in approximately 436,000 gallons of blood being spilt out.
    - (a) To gain some perspective, a typical 48 foot long commercial tanker truck holds roughly 9,000 gallons of fluid.

- (b) The total quantity of blood in I Kings 8:63 would fill 48 of these vehicles.
      - (c) Parked bumper to bumper, the caravan would stretch for more than 1.3 miles.
    - (3) The Temple and its sacrifices were obviously a significant part of Israel's worship.
  - f. Because of the nation's sins, Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar and his armies plundered Jerusalem. (II Kings 25:8-9, II Chronicles 36:18-19)
2. After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, a remnant of about 50,000 people returned to Israel around 538 B.C. under the leadership of Zerubbabel.
- a. The Persian king Cyrus, as prophesied in Isaiah 44:28, had given permission for the rebuilding of a second Temple, which was completed in 515 B.C.
    - (1) The Book of Ezra describes Israel's efforts to rebuild the Temple.
    - (2) This second Temple was originally a modest edifice when compared with Solomon's.
  - b. Beginning in 20 B.C., Herod the Great greatly enlarged and remodeled the second Temple, resulting in it sometimes being referred to as "*Herod's Temple*."
    - (1) It was this reconstruction work that was going on during the time of Christ.
    - (2) It is believed that Herod's improvements enabled it to exceed in the beauty and greatness Solomon's earlier Temple.
  - c. An insurrection against Rome by Jewish Zealots in A.D. 66 led to a prolonged period of fighting between Israel and Rome.
    - (1) By A.D. 70, only Jerusalem and the outpost of Masada remained defiant.
    - (2) Finally, on the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av, in A.D. 70, the city and the Temple were burned, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies in Luke 21:6, "**As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**" (Cp. Matthew 24:2)
    - (3) This was, in fact, the very same day of the month that Solomon's Temple was destroyed.
3. A third Temple, still in the future is referred to in Revelation 11, that will be in existence at least by the midpoint of Tribulation Period.
- a. Daniel 9:27 predicts that the Antichrist will corrupt this Temple at the Tribulation's halfway point.
  - b. Grant Jeffrey writes:
    - (1) *"[The] Third Temple will be built on what is the most passionately contested piece of real estate on earth. Not only is this rebuilding prophesied in Scripture, but today rabbis, researchers, archaeologists, and other interested parties are drawing up detailed architectural plans, recreating precious vessels to be used in Temple worship, and searching for the lost treasures of the ancient Temple. Incredible progress has been made recently in locating, gathering, and in some cases*

*recreating the necessary vessels, utensils, and other sacred objects that will be necessary to reinstate sacred worship and animal sacrifice.”*

- (2) Jeffrey continues, *“Researchers for the Temple Institute and the religious leadership in Israel have made astounding progress in their preparations to rebuild the Temple. With plans moving forward to resume the sacred worship rituals in a rebuilt Temple, a major prophetic signpost is in place pointing to the fact that the Messiah’s return is at hand. This is consistent with numerous prophecies that indicate the Third Temple will be built before Satan’s coming dictator, the Antichrist, appears and takes political control of the ten nations of the revived Roman Empire and then the nations of the world.”*
- c. This Temple has also been called *“Antichrist’s Temple,”* because he will defile it when he sets up his image in the Holy of Holies during the Tribulation time.
- d. In Matthew 24:15-16, Jesus mentions this as **“the abomination of desolation . . . standing in the holy place.”**
4. A fourth Temple spoken of in Ezekiel 40-48, is the Millennial Temple.
- a. This Temple is destined to be the most beautiful and magnificent building in human history.
- b. This will be Israel’s final Temple, the focal point of the 1000-year reign of the Messiah.
- c. The Millennium will be a wondrous time for the nation.
- (1) Rebellion and unbelief will cease.
- (2) Tribulation will have passed.
- (3) The Glory of the Lord will return.
- (4) The worship of the Messiah will be reestablished. (Ezekiel 43:1-5)
- (5) God will again dwell in the midst of His people. (Ezekiel 37:26-28)
- C. In Revelation 11, John is instructed to measure this third **“temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.”** (11:1)
1. For measuring, John is given a **“reed like unto a rod.”**
- a. A **“reed”** is a unit of measure, equal to about nine feet in length.
- b. Ezekiel 29:6 suggests that a **“reed”** and a **“rod”** are interchangeable references as far as measurement is concerned.
- c. In light of this, we must consider the **“rod”** and why this **“reed”** is likened unto it.
2. A **“rod”** is also a stick, a staff, or a pole.
- a. It was often used in the Bible as a weapon. (Exodus 21:20, I Samuel 14:27, Psalm 23:4)
- b. It was further used as an instrument of punishment. (II Samuel 7:14, I Corinthians 4:21)
- c. In addition, it became a symbol of authority, such as a scepter, like that of Moses’ rod (Exodus 4:20) and Aaron’s rod. (Numbers 17:2-10)

3. The “**reed,**” therefore, given to John goes beyond that of a simple tool of measurement, but is likened to a “**rod**” of chastisement by an authority figure.
  - a. Examples of such chastening can be found in II Samuel 7:14, Psalm 2:9, and Isaiah 11:4.  
(Isaiah 11:4, “**But with righteousness shall he [the Messiah] judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.**”)
  - b. Thus, the measurements are not given that a temple may be built, but rather for the destruction of a temple which already exists.
4. The temple, the altar, and the worshipers will be measured in the same manner as Belshazzar’s kingdom was weighed in the balances. (Daniel 5:22-31)
  - a. Belshazzar, at a great feast, was polluting the holy vessels of the Lord, when the handwriting upon the wall spelled out his doom.
  - b. Belshazzar and his kingdom had been weighed in the balance and found wanting.
  - c. This resulted in the defeat and takeover of his kingdom by the Medes and Persians.
  - d. Likewise, the temple, the altar, and the worshipers will come under the chastening rod of the Lord.
  - e. They are measured and found wanting.
- D. John is commanded to not measure the court outside the Temple. (11:2)
  1. The explanation given is that this is given to the Gentiles and that the outer court, as well as the entire holy city, will be under Gentile dominion for another forty-two months.  
(Luke 21:24, “**And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jeru-salem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.**”)
  2. Since much of Revelation is again dealing with Israel, it is not necessary to measure the outer court which was already considered “*profane*” by the Jews.
  3. The reference to “**forty and two months**” places the timing of John’s measuring ministry at the beginning of the time of Great Tribulation, or the last half of the Tribulation Period.

## II. The Prophecy Of The Two Witnesses. (11:3-6)

**11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**

**11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.**

**11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.**

**11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.**

Notes

A. In regard to verse 3, Theodore Epp writes,

*“There are some significant observations that can be made from this verse. It emphasizes to us that God is never left without a witness. The witness may be just one Elijah, but no matter how dark the hour, God has His witness. Revelation 11:3 also emphasizes that God never strikes in judgment until He has given fair warning. He does not sneak up on the wicked and bring judgment upon them without warning. His ways are not ways of deceit. His tactics are not like the Devil’s. God does not delight in judgment but where there is disobedience, judgment must come.*

*In one sense, the Book of Revelation must be a heartache to God because it depicts the judgment which He is forced to pour out against the disobedient because of His hatred for sin. In another sense, this Book must be a great delight to God because it is a vindication of the heartache which He has had because men have rejected Jesus Christ as Savior. Imagine the heartache of God in giving His only Son to die on the cross and then have millions reject Him as Savior. After much warning, during the Tribulation God will strike in judgment and will reclaim the world for His own through His Son Jesus Christ.*

*The two witnesses show how God is able to provide a witness even during times when it is practically impossible for a Christian to stay alive. . . . But no matter how difficult the times become, God has those who are witnesses for Him.”*

B. There are many suggestions as to the identity of these two witnesses.

1. Some have suggested that these represent two companies of people.
  - a. Israel and the Church.
  - b. Israel and the Word of God, as the two principle instruments of witness in the world.
  - c. Possibly differing denominational entities.
  - d. Etc.
2. Moses and Elijah.  
(There is a similarity of judgment inflicted to those pronounced by Elijah and Moses, namely fire from heaven, the turning of water into blood, and the smiting of the earth with plagues.)
3. Enoch and Elijah.  
(The fact that Enoch and Elijah did not die, but were translated has been seized upon by some as a violation of the general rule of Hebrews 9:27.)
4. Rather than speculate, it seems far more preferable to regard these two witnesses as two prophets who will be raised up from among those who turn to Christ in the time following the Rapture.

C. Their unusual character as prophets of doom is symbolized by the fact that they are clothed in sackcloth.

1. In the likeness of Hezekiah (Isaiah 37:1-3) and Daniel (Daniel 9:3), their dress shows them to be prophets in an evil age calling for repentance and judgment.
2. The span of their ministry is clearly delineated as 3½ years, though the exact timing of their ministry is not specified.



- D. They are described as “**two olive trees**” and “**two candlesticks,**” or lampstands.
1. This seems to be a reference to Zechariah 4:3, 14, “**And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. . . . Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.**”
  2. The two witnesses of this period of Israel’s history were Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, of the royal line of David.
  3. Just as these two witnesses were raised up to be lampstands, or witnesses for God, and were empowered by olive oil, representing the power of the Holy Spirit, so the two witnesses of Revelation 11 will likewise execute their prophetic offices in the power of God.
- E. The miraculous powers given to these two men.
1. Anyone who attempts to hurt them will be destroyed by fire proceeding out of their mouths.
  2. They will have the power to shut up the heavens that it cannot rain.
  3. They have the power to turn water into blood and to bring plagues upon the earth.

### III. The Death Of The Two Witnesses. (11:7-10)

- A. God permits His two witnesses to be slain only when their appointed ministry is finished.

**11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.**

1. What a lesson for us here.
2. Paul said, at the end of his life, “**For I am now ready to be offered [his ministry was complete], and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing**” (II Timothy 4:6-8).
3. This is the first of 36 references in Revelation to the Beast.  
(Further discussion will follow in chapters 13 and 17)

**11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.**

- B. “**The great city**” is unquestionably Jerusalem.
1. It is identified as the place where “**our Lord was crucified.**”
  2. It is spiritually and prophetically called “**Sodom**” due to the resemblance of the inhabitants’ character being that of Sodom in the days of Lot.  
(Genesis 19:4-5)

- a. Our English word, “*sodomy*,” meaning “*any form of unnatural sexual intercourse*,” finds its root in the ungodly practices of the inhabitants of the ancient city of Sodom.
- b. Sodomy was prohibited by law (Deuteronomy 23:17) and condemned by God through the writings of Paul (Romans 1:27, I Corinthians 6:9).
- 3. Jerusalem is spiritually and prophetically called “**Egypt**” because of the conduct of Israel while in that land. (Exodus 32:3-4, 8, 19)
  - a. It was in Egypt that Israel was first initiated into the worship of false gods.
  - b. Remember the golden calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai?
  - c. Jerusalem, at the time of the Tribulation Period, will be a harbor for false religion, especially for that of the false prophet and counterpart heresies.
- 4. Verse 8 further reaffirms that the two witnesses cannot be two covenants, dispensations, or denominations, for they would be completely out of character concerning the death and resurrection.
- C. Instead of receiving a proper burial, the two witnesses’ bodies are left lying in the street for three and one-half days contrary to all reasonable laws of humanity.

**11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.**

- 1. By means of modern media and satellite technology, the transmission of pictures throughout the world will graphically display the dead bodies of the two witnesses.
  - a. This will be a symbolic victory for the beast and those who oppose God.
  - b. They will rejoice, certain that their fear of God’s wrath is no longer justified.
- 2. As is the case of many great prophets of God, when their ministry was complete, God permitted their enemies to overcome them. (II Timothy 4:6-7, “**For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.**”)
- D. Their death is the occasion of great rejoicing.

**11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.**

- 1. Some have called this “*The Devil’s Christmas*.”
  - a. Sinners the world over rejoice with unbridled joy to see the two who condemned the practice of their every evil desire, now dead.
  - b. Gifts are given in celebration – perhaps by decree or by the suggestion of the Antichrist.

- c. How happy the world would be today if all Bible-believing and practicing Christians would somehow just disappear!
- 2. A righteous prophet is always a torment to a wicked generation.
  - a. While it may be possible to silence a witness to the truth by death, such action does not destroy the truth that has been proclaimed.
  - b. The power of God will ultimately be revealed.

IV. The Two Witnesses Restored To Life And Caught Up To Heaven. (11:11-12)

**11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.**

**11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.**

- A. Here, amidst the derision of the wicked and the boasts of the Antichrist, a wonderful miracle occurs.
  - 1. The scene is not difficult to imagine.
    - a. A crowd will be standing around or filing past their bodies lying in the street.
    - b. Then, as the breath of life returns to them, the two climb to their feet and the world stands by gawking in hushed amazement.
    - c. The heavenly voice then calls out to them and they ascend into heaven!
  - 2. The parallel here is to the ascension of Christ, when the disciples beheld Him ascending into heaven and received in a cloud.
- B. This is the greatest testimony of the careers of these two witnesses.

V. Announcement Of The Third Woe. (11:13-14)

**11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.**

**11:14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.**

- A. Within the same hour of their ascension, a tenth part of the city of Jerusalem falls under a catastrophic earthquake and seven thousand men are killed.
  - 1. These dramatic events bring great fear to those who remain.
  - 2. Even though they recognize the power of the God, it does not seem to indicate that they have come to the point of true repentance and faith.
- B. With this event, the second woe is brought to its completion and is regarded as the final phase of the sixth trumpet.
  - 1. The Fifth Trumpet was the **“first woe”** – the five-month locust plague described in 9:1-11.
  - 2. The Sixth Trumpet was the **“second woe”** – the two hundred million horsemen of 9:12-21.

3. Then came the parenthetical visions of chapter 10 and 11.
4. Now is announced that the **“third woe [is] coming quickly.”**

VI. The Seventh Trumpet Sounds. (11:15)

**11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.**

- A. In Revelation 11:15, there is a great symphony of voices chanting the triumph of Christ.
  1. These voices clue us in on the events of the seventh trumpet sounding with the opening of the seventh seal, resulting with the seven vial judgments (Revelation 16).
  2. Once again we have a preview of the Second Coming of Christ.
- B. The voices proclaim that the **“kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”**
  1. Herein lies the redemption of all the earth back to Himself.
  2. The fact that earthly rule will pass into the hands of God is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. (Ezekiel 21:26-27, Daniel 2:35, 2:44, 4:3, 6:26, 7:14, 7:26-27, Zechariah 14:9)
- C. The sounding of this trumpet again reinforces the time when Christ says, *“No more delay!”* (Revelation 10:6)
  1. The finishing acts of the Revelation of Christ are beginning to unfold.
  2. The next few chapters will give further details as to these closing events.
- D. Christ is declared to **“reign forever and ever.”**
  1. Daniel 7:13-14 reads, **“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days [God the Father], and they brought him [Jesus] near before him [the Father]. And there was given him [Jesus] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”**
  2. Herein lies the glory of Handel’s *“Hallelujah Chorus.”*

VII. The Worship Of The Twenty-Four Elders. (11:16)

**11:16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,**

- A. When the seventh trumpet is blown the heavenly citizens, knowing that it contains the final decisive judgments, shout for joy.
  1. The twenty-four elders give thanks to God as the eternal One.
    - a. We know from chapters 4 and 5 that these 24 elders represent the saints of God in heaven.

- b. Heaven is where the saints of God have been during the Tribulation.
- 2. The event for which these give their thanks is the fulfillment of Psalm 2:9, **“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”**
- B. God’s power is here demonstrated in the sense of authority as well as in the sense of ability to accomplish His will.
  - 1. With the blowing of the seventh trumpet, God is clearly now the Conqueror.
  - 2. The Lord Jesus Christ is claiming ownership over all.

VIII. The Prayer Of The Elders. (11:17-18)

**11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.**

**11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.**

- A. Verse 18 is an overview of everything that will happen at the Second Coming of Christ at the close of the Tribulation, the things that will happen during the Millennium which follows the Tribulation, and the things that will unfold at the conclusion of the Millennium.
  - 1. Here we see the wrath of man as impotent, but the wrath of God as omnipotent; the wrath of man is seen in its wickedness, but the wrath of God is observed in its holiness.
  - 2. The whole of these verses are anticipative, looking forward to the closing chapters of Revelation.
- B. The prayer of the saints is sevenfold:
  - 1. That God would assert Himself – **“Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power.”**
  - 2. That Christ would rule and reign – **“and hast reigned.”**
  - 3. That rebellion will end – **“the nations were angry.”**
  - 4. That judgment will come – **“Thy wrath is come.”**
  - 5. That the unsaved will be condemned – **“the time of the dead, that they should be judged.”**
  - 6. That the righteous would be rewarded – **“that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great.”**
  - 7. That the ledger books will finally be balanced – **“and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”**

IX. The Opening Of The Temple Of God In Heaven. (11:19)

**11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.**

- A. The opening of the Temple of God in heaven seems to be related to the revelation given in chapter 12, rather than to the seventh trumpet specifically.
  - 1. There may be a contrast between the **“temple of God”** in heaven (11:19) and the Temple of God in Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation (11:1-2).
  - 2. Though the earthly Temple may have been desecrated by the Beast, its counterpart in heaven reflects the righteousness and majesty of Almighty God.
- B. The heavenly **“ark of his testament,”** which in its earthly equivalent contained the Law, speaks of God’s righteousness.
  - 1. The appearance of the ark assures us of God’s ultimate triumph.
  - 2. It further reminds us that He has not forgotten His covenant promises.
- C. Apart from the outpourings of the vials, which occur in rapid succession in chapter 16, there is little chronological movement from this point on until chapter 19 and the Second Coming of Christ.
  - 1. Events and situations are now introduced which are concurrent with the seals and trumpets.
  - 2. These serve to emphasize the dramatic climax of the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion:** What John adds in Revelation 11 is that the entire end-time scenario is wrapped up in the blowing of the last trumpet. And when it blows, Christ’s visible rule begins, God’s wrath will be fully poured out against sin, and the time for the judgment of the dead will have come. This is the awesome reality of the Biblical revelation. This is why the witness of the Church is so needful today.

# THE CONFLICT IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 12:1-17

**Introduction:** One author writes, *“In Revelation 12, John describes the beginning of a theatrical presentation he saw in the sky and on the earth. The protagonists is a sun-clothed woman (God’s people); the antagonist is a dragon (the devil); [and] the hero is the woman’s child (the Messiah). Other players move on and off the stage, all showing that throughout the ages the devil has been in combat against Christ and His people.”*

## I. The Woman Clothed With The Sun – Israel. (12:1-2)

**12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:**

**12:2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.**

- A. Theodore Epp writes, *“The Book of Revelation does not speak of origin but of consummation. However, it is imperative to the proper understanding of the Book that we be able to trace each subject of prophecy from the first reference to its consummation. Revelation 12 is possibly the most important chapter in the Book. Knowing and understanding its significance brings the confusing issues of history and prophecy into proper focus. Only a small part of the chapter fits into the sequence of events during the Tribulation. The chapter is really an inset providing necessary information about the past, present and future events concerning Christ, Israel and Satan. One cannot understand the entire Book of the Revelation unless he understands the twelfth chapter.”*
1. The opening of the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1) marked the middle of the Tribulation.
  2. The events of the last three and a half years, known as *“The Great Tribulation,”* are now being revealed.
    - a. By the time we reach the end of chapter 11, the two witnesses have finished their testimonies, been killed, and caught up to heaven.
    - b. The Antichrist has broken his covenant with Israel, as prophesied in Daniel 9:27.
    - c. The war against the saints by the Antichrist is just ahead in chapter 13.
- B. In chapters 12 through 14, the great actors of the Tribulation are introduced in a parenthetical section.
1. The woman – representing Israel.
  2. The red dragon – representing Satan.
  3. The man-child – representing Christ.
  4. Michael – representing the angels.
  5. Israel – representing the remnant of the seed of the woman.
  6. The beast out of the sea – representing the world dictator.
  7. The beast out of the earth – representing the false prophet as the world religious leader.

- C. The first of the seven personages to be introduced is described as **“a great wonder in heaven.”**
1. The phrase might better be translated, *“a great sign in heaven.”*
    - a. What John is beholding is a symbol of important truth rather than merely a wonder.
    - b. Six other signs or miracles are mentioned in Revelation. (12:3, 13:13, 13:14, 15:1, 16:14, 19:20)
  2. Though the sign is seen in heaven, it apparently portrays a reality on the earth, for subsequently the woman is pictured as being persecuted by Satan on earth during the Great Tribulation.
    - a. She is described as **“clothed with the sun,”** having the **“moon under her feet,”** and on **“her head a crown of twelve stars.”**
    - b. She is with child and waiting for the imminent birth of her son.
  3. The description of the woman as **“clothed with the sun, and the moon”** is an allusion to Genesis 37:9-11, where these heavenly bodies represent Jacob and Rachel, thereby identifying the woman with the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.
    - a. The twelve stars (eleven plus Joseph) would, therefore, refer to the twelve tribes.
    - b. This woman is Israel, from which Christ comes.
  4. Verse 2 is a reference to the sufferings of Israel as a nation rather than to the historical birth of Christ.

II. The Great Red Dragon – Satan. (12:3-4)

**12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.**

- A. This second **“wonder”** reveals the true character of Satan with all his wrappings removed.
1. Satan is called by many names, such as:
    - a. **“The prince of the power of the air.”** (Ephesians 2:2)
    - b. **“The god of this age.”** (II Corinthians 4:4)
    - c. **“The power of death.”** (Hebrews 2:14)
    - d. **“The prince of this world.”** (John 12:31)
    - e. **“The dragon.”** (Revelation 12:7)
    - f. **“Beelzebub”** (Matthew 12:24)
    - g. **“The wicked one.”** (Matthew 13:38)
    - h. **“The tempter.”** (I Thessalonians 3:5)
    - i. **“The accuser of our brethren.”** (Revelation 12:10)
    - j. **“An angel of light.”** (II Corinthians 11:14)
    - k. **“A murderer.”** (John 8:44)
    - l. **“A liar.”** (John 8:44)
    - m. **“That old serpent.”** (Revelation 20:2)
    - n. **“The enemy.”** (Matthew 13:39)



- o. **“Your adversary.”** (I Peter 5:8)
- 2. Here, in Revelation 12:3, he is called **“a great red dragon.”**
  - a. He is called **“great”** because of the vastness of his power.
    - (1) Worship of himself has always been Satan’s ultimate goal. (Isaiah 14:13-14)
    - (2) During his temptation of Jesus, he offered the kingdoms of the world to the Lord if only He would fall down and worship him. (Matthew 4:8-9)
    - (3) Worship of self was Satan’s first scheme against man. (Genesis 3:5)
  - b. He is called **“red”** because of the fact that **“he was a murderer from the beginning.”** (John 8:44)
    - (1) He has no regard for human life.
    - (2) In the present context, his intent is to devour the life of the very Son of God.
  - c. He is called a **“dragon”** because of the viciousness of his character.
    - (1) He was originally created **“Lucifer, son of the morning”** and **“the anointed cherub.”** (Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:12-19)
    - (2) He is now the epitome of evil and the depth of degradation.
    - (3) He is the most dangerous being in all of God’s creation.
  - d. Although he is powerful, we should never lose sight of I John 4:4, **“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [false prophets]: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”**
- B. Satan is also identified as the spiritual force behind the coming one-world government and the one-world religion, as illustrated in chapters 13 and 17.
  - 1. The **“seven heads”** of the red dragon refers to the seven world empires through which he has attempted, and will attempt, to control the world.
  - 2. The **“ten horns”** indicate the final division of his ultimate empire, often referred to as *“The Revived Roman Empire.”*
  - 3. The **“seven crowns”** represent delegated authority from Satan.
  - 4. More will be said about these as we look at chapters 13 and 17.
- C. Verse 4 begins an outline of the ongoing warfare between God and Satan.

**12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.**

- 1. The first half of the verse refers to Satan’s expulsion from heaven, God’s dwelling place.
  - a. **“The third part of the stars of heaven”** indicates the vast extent of the rebellion in heaven when one-third of the angelic host followed Satan to their own destruction.
  - b. John has already described for us the unfallen angels around the throne when he said their number was **“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands”** (Revelation 5:11).

- c. Since the number of the unfallen angels would add up into the billions, it indicates that a tremendous army of angels followed Satan when a **“third part of the stars of heaven”** were drawn away by him.
- 2. The second half of verse 14 then refers to Satan’s appearance thousands of years later, during the days of the Roman Empire.
  - a. That is when God became **“flesh, and dwelt among us”** (John 1:14), in the second Person of God’s three-fold nature, Christ Jesus.
  - b. The dragon is seen awaiting the birth of the **“child”** with the intent to destroy Him as soon as He is born.
  - c. The allusion given here is unmistakably to the circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ in Bethlehem and the attempts of Herod to destroy the Baby Jesus. (Matthew 2:6)
- 3. Later in this chapter, we find another appearance of Satan during the Tribulation Period.
  - a. It will be approximately 2,000 years following the time of the first Roman rule.
  - b. It will be during the time of the revived Roman Empire.
  - c. This does not discount Satan’s ever-present onslaught, during our present age, as **“the prince of the power of the air”** (Ephesians 2:2).
- D. Satan knows that he must destroy Christ or be destroyed himself.
  - 1. The conflict began in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15, **“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”**)
  - 2. To bring judgment upon Satan was one of the main purposes of Christ’s coming to earth to die on the Cross.
    - a. Hebrews 2:14, **“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”**
    - b. I John 3:8, **“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”**
  - 3. Because Satan knew of his coming judgment from the very beginning, it is no wonder that he stood before the woman to devour the **“child as soon as it was born.”**
    - a. Though the doom of Satan is certain (Revelation 20:10), John sees him as standing before the woman to devour her child.
    - b. He still believes that he **“will ascend into heaven, [that he] will exalt [his] throne above the stars of God: [that he] will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: [that he] will ascend above the heights of the clouds; [and that he will] be like the most High.”** (Isaiah 14:13-14)

### III. The Man Child – Christ. (12:5-6)

**12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.**

- A. **“She brought forth a man child.”**
1. Here He is identified, being the only Man ever to be so destined.
  2. He shall **“rule all nations,”** the United Nations, the un-United Nations, the free nations, the captive nations, the United States, Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, Argentina, Equador, Australia, Poland, Seneca, North and South Korea – **“all nations.”**
- B. He is destined to **“rule all nations”** with a **“rod of iron.”**
1. Psalm 2:9, **“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”**
  2. Revelation 19:15, **“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”**
- C. There is no good reason for not identifying the man-child as Christ and interpreting the drama of verse 5 as the panorama of His birth, life and ascension.
1. In the Gospels the emphasis is on the death of Christ.
  2. In the Epistles the emphasis is on the resurrection of Christ.
  3. In the Book of Revelation, the emphasis is upon His ascension, and ultimately His return.
- D. It is obvious, by the Child’s ascension to heaven, that Satan was defeated in his plan.
1. Christ’s ascension marks the proof of Satan’s failure.
  2. Attention is then directed again to the mother of the child – Israel.
  3. Here she is seen in a time of Great Tribulation as fleeing into the **“wilderness”** to a place prepared of God where for 1,260 days (3½ years) she is cared for.
- E. In ritualistic churches across the world today there are those who teach that God’s kingdom has already come and that Jesus is reigning.
1. If you were to ask the embarrassing question, *“Where?”* they would answer, *“Everywhere!”*
    - a. If that be true, then He’s not doing a very good job.
    - b. This is man’s day.
    - c. The Kingdom has not yet come.
    - d. Jesus is not reigning at all in the present.
  2. **“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”** (Matthew 6:10), is not a reality today.
    - a. Man is running the show today.
    - b. But the day is coming, as we saw back in chapter 11:15, when **“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”**

**12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**

- F. There is an obvious time lapse between verses 5 and 6.
1. The time element in verse 5 ends with the ascension of Christ.

2. Verse 6 describes the nation of Israel as fleeing from the presence of the Antichrist.
3. The time element between verses 5 and 6 spans the time between the First and Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Inasmuch as Israel is in comparative tranquility and safety in the first three and one-half years of Daniel's seventieth week (Daniel 9:27), this reference must be to a portion of the nation of Israel brought through the second half of the Great Tribulation to await the Second Coming of Christ.

#### IV. Satan Cast Out Of Heaven. (12:7-9)

**12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,**

**12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.**

**12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

- A. Though the conflict of the end of the age is primarily on earth, attention is directed in this section to the war which will be waged in heaven.
  1. The description of Satan is, again, quite significant.
    - a. He is described as **"the great dragon,"** a term which also applies to the empire which he dominates in the end time.
    - b. He is referred to as **"that old serpent,"** a reference to the Garden of Eden and the temptation of Eve.
    - c. He is called **"the Devil,"** a name meaning *"slanderer or accuser."* (Cp. Revelation 12:10)
    - d. He is named **"Satan,"** which means *"adversary."* (I Peter 5:8, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."**)
  2. He is further described as the one who **"deceiveth the whole world."**
    - a. Today he deceives the world only partially. (II Corinthians 4:3-4, **"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."**)
    - b. During the Great Tribulation, Satan will be able to deceive the world totally. (II Thessalonians 2:11, **"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."**)
  3. **"Michael and his angels"** fight against the dragon and the wicked angels associated with him, with the result that Satan and his host are cast out of heaven.
    - a. This war no doubt works in concert with the upheavals in the atmosphere during the sounding of trumpet judgments one through five.

- b. This casting out causes rejoicing in heaven, but great woes upon the earth.
  - B. Beginning as this point, Satan and his hosts are excluded from the third heaven, though their temporary dominion over the first and second heavens continues.
    - 1. Satan's defeat in heaven is the occasion for him to be cast into the earth and explains the particular fatality of the Great Tribulation time.
    - 2. A major step is taken here in the ultimate defeat of Satan.
    - 3. The saint of this day can rest assured of the ultimate downfall of Satan and the cessation of his ability to afflict the saints of God.
- V. The Announcement Of The Coming Day Of Satan's Wrath. (12:10)

**12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**

- A. Satan, being cast out of heaven, opens the way for four great heavenly freedoms.
  - 1. **"Salvation"** is consummated.
    - a. Our salvation will not be fully accomplished until we stand in the presence of Almighty God.
    - b. The salvation mentioned here does not refer to our salvation from the guilt of sin, but our deliverance from sin and the completion of God's divine program.  
(1 John 3:2, **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."**)
  - 2. **"Strength"** speaks of *"power."*
    - a. Some nations have been able to make war and have spread across other nations, destroying cities and killing people.
    - b. The nations have often abused their power.
    - c. It will be wonderful when Christ takes the strength, or power, and controls the earth.
  - 3. **"And the kingdom of our God"** is going to be established on the earth.
    - a. Not until then will there be peace, righteousness and liberty on this earth.
    - b. In this land of *"the free and home of the brave,"* there are many questions being placed on our freedoms and what is considered brave.
    - c. It will be wonderful when His kingdom comes to reign on this earth.
  - 4. **"And the power of his Christ"** shows that Christ has not yet taken over the governmental authority of this world.
    - a. Presently He is not building His kingdom.
      - (1) Today He is building His Church.  
(Matthew 16:18, **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."**)
      - (2) While there is a relationship between the Church and the Kingdom, they are not the same.

- b. All of the judgments spoken of in Revelation are in preparation for His return to this earth, giving men a warning and an opportunity to turn to him – and multitudes will do so.
  - c. When He comes, His Kingdom will be with power and authority.
- B. Once again, the “**accuser of our brethren**” is mentioned as being “**cast down.**”
- 1. The awfulness of the present hour is attributed to the fact that the devil knows his hour of confinement is near.
  - 2. Yet, though “**salvation**” and “**power**” have come, and though Satan has been defeated in the heavenlies, the fighting is not over.
- C. As the Scriptures declare, the devil deceives the whole world.
- 1. He will deceive you into thinking you’re going to heaven when, in reality, you’re not.
  - 2. He will betray you into thinking that you’re on the right road, and you might be on the right road but heading in the wrong direction, which is just as bad.
  - 3. The devil will say you’re alright, you’re an American, Canadian, or whatever; a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent; a Baptist, a Pentecostal or something else.
  - 4. In whatever direction you are headed, you need to turn to God, repent, and get saved if you have not already done so.
  - 5. The truth is, you’ll never get to heaven unless you have been “**born again.**” (John 3:3, “**Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus], Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”)

VI. The Announcement Of The Ultimate Victory Of The Saints. (12:11-12)

**12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.**

**12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.**

- A. Victory for the accused saints, whether in the present or during the Tribulation, comes through three avenues:
- 1. “**The blood of the Lamb.**”
    - a. The song says, “*There is wonder-working power in the blood of the Lamb.*”
    - b. The many references to the blood of the Lamb necessitate its being on display in heaven.
      - (1) This is not a crude conception.
      - (2) The crudity is found in our sins which made it necessary for Him to shed His blood.
    - c. If you and I get any victory, it will be because He shed His blood for us.
  - 2. “**The word of their testimony.**”
    - a. Those who are Christ’s cannot deny Him. (Matthew 10:32-33, “**Whosoever therefore shall confess me before**

**men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”)**

- b. There is something strengthening in giving a testimony.
  - (1) The place to give a testimony is not just in a nice, well-fed church banquet where all the saints say “*Amen*” to everything that you say.
  - (2) The place to give your testimony is out in the world, when you are up against the godless, blaspheming crowd.
- 3. Having **“loved not their lives unto the death.”**
  - a. This is not an exalted plane to come to, where you and I make the Lord Jesus the first love in our lives and put love of self down in second, third, fourth, or some other place.
    - (1) Surely we ought to have respect for ourselves, and there ought to be a dignity about us, but we ought to put Him first.
    - (2) When we put Jesus first in our life, we have no problem living here.
  - b. Love for Him is the very basis for service.  
(John 21:15-17, **“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”**)
- B. Again, there are two radical reactions to the casting out of Satan from heaven.
  - 1. There is rejoicing in heaven.
  - 2. There is **“woe”** on earth.

#### VII. The Persecution of Israel In The Great Tribulation. (12:13-16)

- A. The immediate aftermath of Satan being cast out of heaven is his persecution of the woman which brought forth the man-child.

**12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.**

**12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.**

- 1. The persecution of Israel is a part of the Satanic program to thwart and hinder the work of God.
- 2. Israel is so hated by Satan, not because of any of her own characteristics, but because she is the chosen of God and essential to the overall purpose of God for time and eternity.

3. This is the time of **“Jacob’s Trouble.”**  
(Jeremiah 30:7, **“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”**)
- B. **“Two wings of a great eagle”** speaks of God’s strength as illustrated in God’s past dealings in His faithful care for Israel.
  1. Exodus 19:4, **“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.”**
  2. Deuteronomy 32:11-12, **“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”**
- C. Some feel that the **“wilderness”** description refers to a specific place such as Petra.
  1. Petra is the ancient city of Esau, who is also called **“Edom.”** (Genesis 36:8)
  2. It would seem feasible for Petra to be the city of refuge for Israel during the last half of the Tribulation Period, because Edom, the land, according to Daniel 11:41, will escape out of the hand of the Antichrist.
- D. The flood cast after Israel is the total effort of Satan to exterminate the nation, and the resistance of the earth is the natural difficulty in executing such a massive program.

**12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.**

**12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.**

1. God had delivered Israel out of the water, both at the beginning of the wilderness march at the Red Sea and then again at the end of the wilderness march at the Jordan River.
  - a. However, the floods of water spoken of here could be armies flowing like a river upon Israel.
  - b. This figure of speech was used by Isaiah to describe the armies of the king of Assyria.  
(Isaiah 8:7-8, **“Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.”**)
  - c. Psalm 69:2 and 15 paint overwhelming troubles as a flood.
2. Satan will use every means to destroy the people.
  - a. No nation is there to stop him.
  - b. But God is there, and He will destroy him with natural forces when he invades Palestine.  
(Ezekiel 38:22-23, **“And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify**



myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.”)

Notes

VIII. The Persecution Of The Godly Remnant Of Israel. (12:17)

**12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

- A. While the program of Satan is against the Jewish race, anti-Semitism as a whole will reach its peak against Jewish believers during this period.
  - 1. No doubt, as it was in the days of the Nazi's, a reward will be given to those who expose the whereabouts of a Jew.
  - 2. This will be a terrible time for all Jews and Gentiles alike who hold to the Messiah, Jesus, and refuse the reigning government and its head.
- B. J. Vernon McGee – *“All anti-Semitism is Satan inspired and will finally culminate in Satan's making a supreme effort to destroy the nation of Israel. From the brickyards of Pharaoh's Egypt, Haman's gallows, Herod's cruel edict, through Hitler's purge, and to the world of the Great Tribulation, Satan has led the attack against these people because of the man child – Jesus Christ.”*

**Conclusion:** In the days being discussed in this passage, those Israelites devoted to Christ will remain true to Him even when such devotion means death.

Consider the people of God today. Look at our church. How many of us would be faithful to Christ if we faced with the same situation? Are we more concerned with self, rather than service; with pleasure, rather than prayer?



# THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 13:1-18

**Introduction:** Jewish legends about Leviathan from the sea and Behemoth from the land were well known in John's day. With the advanced scientific understanding we have today we might scoff at such tales, all the while knowing that there are still unsolved mysteries. The Loch Ness monster and Bigfoot still capture the popular imagination. Such monsters serve as a springboard for understanding what is truly monstrous: a political power joined with religious power suppressing the truth and persecuting the people of God.

John's original readers, and Christians today, need to know that these twin evils will be incarnated in Satan's last and greatest deception of the human race.

- I. The Emergence Of The Political Monster. (13:1-10)
  - A. The final two personages of the Great Tribulation are presented to us in this chapter.
    1. An "*unholy trinity*" is introduced.
      - a. The First Person of the Godhead, the Father, is imitated by Satan himself. (Revelation 12:9)
      - b. The Second Person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, is imitated by the first beast of Revelation 13, who is the Antichrist.
      - c. The Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is imitated by the second beast of Revelation 13, who is known as "*the False Prophet*."
    2. In this unholy, counterfeit trinity, we see Satan's last and greatest effort to deceive the people of the earth.  
(II Thessalonians 2:6-10, "**And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**")
  - B. The Beast out of the sea.

**13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.**

1. The fact that the beast rises out of the "sea" suggests that he comes from the great mass of humanity.  
(Revelation 17:15, "**And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.**")
  - a. To many commentators the "sea" is also taken symbolically of the disordered and confused life of the Gentile nations of the world.

- b. During the Tribulation, when the “sea” of people, or nations, is in great turmoil, Satan takes the opportunity to put his man in the place of rulership.
2. In turning back to Daniel 7 we find a similar picture, only in Daniel 7 there are four beasts arising from the “sea.”  
(Daniel 7:3, “**And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.**”)
- a. The Beast of Revelation 13 is the fourth beast of Daniel 7.  
(Daniel 7:4-6 reads, “**The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.**”)
- b. A “lion,” a “bear,” and a “leopard” are spoken of, but we are most interested in the fourth beast found in Daniel 7:7, “**After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.**”
- c. This fourth beast is the same one John described in Revelation 13:1.
3. Chapter 13 describes these four beasts in reverse order to Daniel.
- a. Daniel’s fourth beast is listed without description as “**dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly.**”
- b. In a study of Daniel it can be found that these four creatures describe four kingdoms: the empires of the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans.
4. As John watches the scene, he sees the beast coming up out of the sea as “**having seven heads and ten horns.**”
- a. Tim LaHaye writes, “*The seven heads refer to the seven world kingdoms that have existed from Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the end-time government of Antichrist made up of the ‘ten horns.’*”
- b. We will speak more on these matters when we get to Revelation 17.
5. Daniel 7:7 further speaks of his fourth beast “**with ten horns.**”
- a. Daniel 7:17 tells us that “**these great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.**”
- b. Daniel 7:23 then adds, “**The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.**”
- c. The principle that is set fourth here is that each of these beasts represent both a king and a kingdom, both an emperor and an empire.
- (1) To speak of Nero is to speak of the Roman Empire.
  - (2) Likewise, to speak of the Antichrist will be to speak of the Revived Roman Empire.

6. As John watches the scene, he further details that upon the “**ten horns**” are “**ten crowns,**” and upon the “**seven heads**” are written “**the name of blasphemy.**”
- a. Blasphemy indicates opposition to God and to Christ.
  - b. Blasphemy manifests itself in two ways:
    - (1) Making oneself equal with God, that is, usurping His place.
    - (2) Slandering and taking God’s name in vain.
  - c. The Emperors of Rome were guilty of making themselves equal with God in their Emperor Worship.
  - d. By ascribing the Works of Jesus Christ to the devil, the Pharisees were guilty of the latter.  
(Matthew 12:24, 31-32, “**But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. . . . Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**”)
  - e. The Beast, here, is guilty of both usurping God’s position and slandering His name.
- C. The Beast further described.

**13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.**

1. He is further described as comparable to a “**leopard**” with the “**feet of a bear**” and a “**mouth of a lion,**” and as having received his power, throne, and authority from the dragon, that is, from Satan.
  - a. It has the Babylonian “**mouth of a lion,**” with its lust to consume victims with great power. (Daniel 7:4)
  - b. It has the Persian “**feet of a bear,**” with great armies capable of crushing all forms of rebellion. (Daniel 7:5)
  - c. It has the Greek body of a “**leopard,**” with agility, swiftness and a capacity for military mobility and the speed to strike. (Daniel 7:7)
  - d. The future Beast will have all these qualities.  
(Daniel 7:7, “**After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.**”)
2. To this Beast Satan offers “**great authority.**”
  - a. Christ rejected the kingdoms Satan offered to Him. (Matthew 4:8-10)
  - b. The Antichrist will gladly accept the rulership offered to him.
  - c. During the Tribulation, “**the god of this world,**” will have complete rule through this man.

D. The deadly wound of the Beast.

Notes

**13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.**

1. Many prophecy teachers believe this refers to the Antichrist suffering a mortal head wound and then somehow being healed by Satan.
    - a. It must be remembered that Satan is the greatest master of deceit and his greatest plan for deception is about to unfold.
      - (1) Notice the three little words in verse 3, **“as it were . . .”**
      - (2) In keeping with this thought, verse 12 clarifies things a bit in its reference to **“the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed,”** with the emphasis on the word **“wound.”**
    - b. John F. Walvoord explains: *“The final world ruler receives a wound which normally would be fatal but is miraculously healed by Satan. While the resurrection of a dead person seems to be beyond Satan’s power, the healing of a wound would be possible for Satan . . . The important point is that the final world ruler comes into power obviously supported by a supernatural and miraculous deliverance by Satan himself.”*
    - c. Might we suggest that all that is involved in this wounding and healing is Satan’s strategy to imitate Christ’s death and resurrection.
    - d. This supernatural event would seem to be a contributing factor to people worshipping the Antichrist in verse 4, for many will believe that this involves a godlike recovery.
  2. Question: Does Satan have the ability to perform miracles?
    - a. It is critical that Christians realize that Satan has vast experience in tricking humans and bringing them down.
      - (1) In fact, his experience is far greater than that of any human being.
      - (2) By simply his longevity of existence, Satan has acquired a breadth of experience that easily eclipses the limited knowledge of man.
      - (3) He has observed people firsthand in every conceivable situation, so he can predict with accuracy how they will respond to differing circumstances.
      - (4) So, although Satan is not omniscient, his wide experience gives him knowledge that is far superior to anything any human could have.
    - b. Because of his vast experience, Satan has learned many wiles and tricks regarding how to deceive human beings.
      - (1) Some of his deceits, no doubt, relate to the counterfeit miracles he inspires.
      - (2) It is for these reasons that Christians are urged to beware, **“lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices”** (II Corinthians 2:11).
- E. The worship of the Beast by all the world.

**13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?**

1. Notice the personal pronoun **“him.”**
  - a. The **“dragon”** receives worship through the recognition of the great political machine.
  - b. Persons, and even nations, will recognize the great power and control possessed by this one-world entity.
  - c. It will be a greater power than all other empires of world history combined.
2. This final form of apostasy is not simply the worship of some pagan deity, but the worship of Satan himself, who in his whole program seeks to be **“like God”** (Isaiah 14:14).
  - a. This is the devil’s supreme moment.
  - b. The whole world is about to worship him.
3. Because all the world wonders after the Beast, they will ask, **“Who is like unto the beast?”**
  - a. He is seemingly invincible, invulnerable, and he is powerful.
  - b. This is dictatorship with phenomenal power, diabolical power, absolute power, and supernatural power.
4. People might ask, *“What has Christ done that the Antichrist hasn’t been able to do?”*
  - F. The blasphemous character of the Beast as world ruler.

**13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.**

1. As the world wonders at the great one-world political machine and boasts of its greatness, the Antichrist, as the mouth of the Beast, will begin to proclaim great things and blasphemies
  - a. Up to this point, the world will have been operating under some form of democratic or socialistic rule, but this eminent manipulator will gain the support of the great political machines leading to his complete takeover.
  - b. He does not immediately assume power, but here we see him being given *“authority”* to speak **“great things”** with complete world dominance.
2. The evil character of this world ruler is shown in his boasting and blasphemy. (Cp. Daniel 7:8, 11, 25)
  - a. He is going to be a smooth talker.
  - b. He will be able to talk himself into the good graces of a Christ-rejecting world.
3. Now all can see the true nature of the Antichrist.
  - a. The mask of **“an angel of light”** has been torn off!
  - b. He now boldly curses God and all heavenly powers.

G. The universal blasphemy of the Beast.

Notes

**13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.**

1. Four fold in character:
    - a. He blasphememes “**against God,**” but God is untouchable.
    - b. He blasphememes the “**name**” of God, but the name of God is the deadliest weapon the Antichrist has to face.
    - c. He blasphememes the “**tabernacle**” of God, but God is not deterred by the blasphemy, though many of the world will agree with this sacrilege and believe that the Antichrist is really the greatest of all.
    - d. He blasphememes “**them that dwell in heaven,**” but to no avail.
  2. The Antichrist defies everything that is in any way connected with his greatest enemy – the Lord Jesus Christ.
- H. The universal dominion of the Beast.

**13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.**

1. The Great Tribulation will be the hardest time of persecution ever known for God’s people.
    - a. The Beast’s war is identified with the dragon’s war against the woman and the rest of her offspring in 12:17.
    - b. This “*Big Brother-Like*” dictator, no doubt through the latest technologies available, will be able to monitor every human being on earth, seeking to identify every noncompliant citizen.
  2. The dream of countless rulers in the past, of conquering the entire world, is finally achieved by this last Gentile ruler.
  3. Satan’s counterfeit of Christ’s Millennial kingdom is the final display of his evil onslaughts and humanity’s wickedness.
- I. The universal worship of the Beast.

**13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

1. Just as the entire world is under the political domination of the Beast, so all the world, except the saints, will worship him.
  - a. This will be the darkest hour in world history.
  - b. The Church, thank God, will not be here.
  - c. I am not looking for the Antichrist; I’m looking for the risen Christ.
2. A description of the “**book of life**” is given as belonging to the “**Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**”



- a. From Revelation 3:5 and 22:19, we learn that this **“book of life”** records the names of all born in the world, and those who do not trust in Christ are blotted from it, leaving only those who are saved.
  - b. The reference to **“the beginning of the world”** indicates the beginning of the *“cosmos,”* that is, the ordered events which pre-date human history.
  - c. Charles Hadden Spurgeon once said, *“I am glad that my name was written in the Lamb’s Book of Life before I got here, because if God had waited until I got here, He never would have chosen me.”*
- J. Exhortation to hear.

**13:9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.**

**13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**

- 1. The invitation emphasizes the preceding as a matter of great importance to which all should give attention to.
    - a. The great question that must be answered by all, *“Is your name written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life?”*
    - b. You may be a member of some church somewhere, or a citizen of some great nation, but if your name is absent from God’s Book, you are without hope.
    - c. My friend, why don’t you receive the Savior today and make certain that your name is written down.
  - 2. Reinforcing these things is a warning of the ultimate sovereign justice of God which will be brought to bear upon this scene of wickedness.
    - a. Those who persecute the saints, and lead them into captivity, must in turn suffer the righteous wrath of God.
    - b. In this ultimate triumph and judgment upon wicked men lies **“the patience and the faith of the saints”** in their hour of trial.
- II. The Emergence Of the Religious Monster. (13:11-18)
- A. In contrast to the first Beast, which comes **“up out of the sea,”** the second Beast is said to **“come up out of the earth.”**

**13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.**

**13:12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.**

- 1. He is of a similar nature as the first Beast.
  - a. In being described as **“a lamb”** seems to indicate that he has a religious character.
  - b. Being **“like a lamb”** also suggests his imitation of Christ.

2. Let's consider the rise of the first Beast in contrast to the rise of the second Beast.
    - a. The first Beast **“shall be given a crown.”**
      - (1) Thus, the Antichrist will come into power after the governmental aspect of the first Beast is already in place.
      - (2) He will not construct the one-world political system, but rise up from within it.
      - (3) This reveals not only that the Antichrist will rise to power, but that the office will be created for him.
    - b. In contrast, the position of the second Beast has been established for at least some 1,500 years.
      - (1) During that time, the office has remained virtually unchanged.
      - (2) The second Beast was not given a mouth as was the first Beast, but, true to its character, it automatically begins to speak **“as a dragon.”**
  3. Having **“two horns”** represents the dual nature of the False Prophet.
    - a. One horn represents his religious, or *“Christian,”* characteristics, while the other speaks of his dragon-like, or Satanic, qualities.
    - b. Thus, the two horns represent the mixture of Christian and pagan principles as seen represented by the Church at Thyatira. (Revelation 2:20-22)
      - (1) Remember that Thyatira represents the papal church.
      - (2) It's doctrine and practice is represented by Jezebel, the seductress of idolatry.
      - (3) It is the False Prophet who will glorify the political system and its leader.
      - (4) He will seduce the world to adhere to the demands of a utopian government, thus, seducing the world to accept the system of the Antichrist.
  4. The identification of the second Beast as the head of the apostate church is indicated throughout the Book of Revelation.
    - a. He is associated with the first Beast in a religious way in that his miracles and activities tend to cause men to worship the image of the first Beast. (vss. 13-17)
      - (1) He directs worship to the first Beast just as the Holy Spirit directs worship to Christ.
      - (2) He shares prominence and leadership with the first Beast throughout the Great Tribulation.
    - b. Both will be cast alive into the **“lake of fire”** at the close of the Tribulation. (Revelation 19:20)
  5. Because the second Beast is the counterfeit Holy Spirit, he is called **“the False Prophet”** (Revelation 19:20).
- B. The deceptive miracles of the False Prophet.

**13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,**

**13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.**

1. The Scriptures indicate that the devil does have power to do some miracles and that by their usage he deceives people into worshipping the Beast.
    - a. II Thessalonians 2:9 refers to these **“great wonders”** as **“lying wonders.”**
    - b. As rehearsed in the duel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, this time the False Prophet, in bringing **“fire . . . down from heaven,”** will be able to do what the former prophets could not do.
    - c. The False Prophet will play with fire until he is finally cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 19:20)
    - d. The world is taken in by his deception, with the exception of God’s elect.
  2. The False Prophet shows his hand by causing an image of the man of sin to be erected.
    - a. Nebuchadnezzar caused such an image to be erected unto himself in Daniel’s days. (Daniel 3:1-7)
      - (1) In like manner, the Babylonian king required that all worship him when certain music from the palace sounded. (Daniel 3:5)
      - (2) In response, certain of God’s people, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to bow to the pagan worship and found themselves fellow shipping with the **“Son of God”** in the king’s **“fiery furnace.”** (Daniel 3:8-25)
    - b. The False Prophet’s big production is a likeness of the first Beast that emphasizes the wound of death that was healed.
      - (1) It is interesting to note that the Lord Jesus did not permit anything connected with His physical appearance to survive.
      - (2) But the likeness of the Antichrist will evidently be placed in the Temple of Jerusalem.
    - c. Walvoord – *“The image [of the beast] is the center of the false worship and the focal point of the final state of apostasy, and acme of the idolatry which has been the false religion of so many generations.”*
- C. All are required to worship the Beast.

**13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.**

1. The image of the Beast has the appearance of life manifested in breathing, but actually it may be nothing more than the *“Artificial Intelligence”* of a computer.
2. The absolute authority of both the first and second Beasts is such that those who will not worship the image of the first Beast are sentenced to be killed.

- a. Failure to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image resulted in being cast into **"a burning fiery furnace"** (Daniel 3:5-6).
  - b. Failure to worship the Emperor of Rome resulted in martyrdom before the lions.
  - c. Presently, failure to worship before Allah and his prophet results in persecution.
  - d. Those who would fail to **"worship the image of the beast [will] be killed."**
3. Here is the wedding of religion and commerce.
- a. The present attempts to unify all ecclesiastical and political powers are merely a preparation for the end time when these powers will be united.
  - b. Patriotism will give way to one-worldism, and freedom of religion will give way to freedom of *"our"* religion.
  - c. *"Get on board or face the consequences!"*
- D. All are required to receive his **"mark."**

**13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:**

**13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**

- 1. A regulation is issued that all classes of people who worship the Beast are to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads, and that possession of this identification is necessary to **"buy or sell."**
  - a. Many see in this passage a cash-less, worldwide economy in which credit-debit numbers, or something similar, are assigned to individuals that will replace the use of actual currency.
    - (1) Modern innovations in the banking industry are already leading in this direction.
    - (2) Eventually, this number could be placed on or in the body of its possessor, possibly as an implant or a tattoo, in order to eliminate the possibility of theft or credit card fraud.
    - (3) Without this **"mark"** it will become impossible for anyone to do business, placing all under intense economic pressure to conform.
  - b. This **"mark"** will further become a device to force all people to worship the Beast.
    - (1) Those who choose to *"boycott"* the **"mark"** will face certain death.
    - (2) Those who do conform will face worse consequences, for they **"shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God"** and be **"tormented with fire and brimstone . . . for ever and ever"** (Revelation 14:10-11).
  - c. The **"mark,"** furthermore, is a mimicry of the seal of the Holy Spirit on the true believer. (Ephesians 1:13-14, **"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also**

**after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”)**

2. All classes of people are included in receiving the “**mark**.”
  - a. The “**small and great**” refers to status.
  - b. The “**rich and poor**” refers to possessions.
  - c. The “**free and bond**” refers to state in society.
- E. The number of the Beast is “666.”

**13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.**

1. The meaning of the Beast’s number has been debated for many years, yet unsuccessfully.
  - a. One popular opinion is that it proves that the Antichrist will be the reincarnation of Nero or Judas Iscariot.
  - b. The names of many modern historical figures have been shown, by ingenious calculations, to conform to a diabolical cipher.
  - c. So many identifications have been made of “666” with characters of history as to make them all unreliable and our message questionable. (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)
  - d. It might best be concluded that the visible number of the Beast and its meaning await the day of manifestation.
2. What might be said about the “**mark**” is that it signifies the culmination of man’s day and his defiance of God under Satan’s power.
  - a. This number emphasizes man’s inability to solve his own problems.
    - (1) Any student of Numerology will tell you that seven is God’s number of completeness.
    - (2) Such a study also reveals that six is the number of man, which comes up short of completeness.
  - b. Whatever may be the deeper meaning of the number, it implies that the Beast, Satan’s masterpiece, is limited to man’s level, which is far short of the deity of Jesus Christ.
    - (1) The Beast comes short of being what God is.
    - (2) The unholy trinity may deceive the world, but it cannot measure up to the standards of God.

**Conclusion:** In light of the truths revealed in Revelation 13, the child of God is urged to heed the warning of Jeremiah 17:5-10, “**Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.**

**Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.**

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”**

*Notes*

# THE VICTORY OF THE LAMB AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 14:1-20

**Introduction:** There are times in our lives when we wonder what else can happen to turn simple bumps in the road of life into huge impassable barriers along the way. Troubles seem to just continue piling up. No matter how confident we may be, we sometimes need assurance that a brighter day is coming.

Revelation 14 occupies a unique place in the structure of the book, in that it has no organic connection with the chapters immediately preceding it or with those following it. Its parenthetical material consists of a series of short visions which are really commentaries on various aspects of the book. These seven assurances are not intended to describe a series of actions in chronological order, but are glimpses of various phases of victory for the Lamb and His followers within the conflict of the Tribulation.

- I. Assurance One: The Lamb And The 144,000 On Mount Zion. (14:1-5)
  - A. Chapter 14 brings to a conclusion the material found in chapters 12 through 14.
    1. Chapter 12 deals with the important characters of the period.
    2. Chapter 13 deals with the wicked rulers of the period.
    3. Chapter 14 deals with the ultimate triumph of Christ at the end of the period.
  - B. This chapter serves as a “*Table of Contents*” for the rest of the Book of Revelation.
    1. Some of the subjects covered are:
      - a. The Lamb (Christ) and the 144,000 on Mount Zion.
      - b. An angel with “**The Everlasting Gospel.**”
      - c. The fall of Babylon.
      - d. Judgment on the Beast worshipers.
      - e. The blessing on those who die in the Lord.
      - f. A preview of Armageddon.
    2. The time element of chapter 14 looks back to the beginning of the Tribulation, forward to the end of the Tribulation, and on into the Millennium.
  - C. The chapter opens with a prophetic vision of the ultimate triumph of the Lamb following His second coming.

**14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.**

1. The evidence seems to indicate that this is a heavenly scene which John is seeing “**in the Spirit**” while his body is still on the earth. (Cp. Revelation 1:10 and 4:2 for “**in the Spirit.**”)
2. Here the “**Lamb**” is joined by the 144,000 mentioned in chapter 7, on Mount Zion (Jerusalem) at the beginning of His millennial reign.
  - a. As previously mentioned, the 144,000 are seen at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

- b. In this second observance, they are seen still intact, preserved by God through the fearful days of persecution and standing triumphantly with the Lamb on Mount Zion at the beginning of the Millennial reign.
  - 3. No text in Scripture more clearly teaches the security of the true believer's salvation than comparing the two passages in Revelation which present the 144,000.
    - a. If God will keep safe the tribulation believers that must endure the most furious satanic onslaughts of all time, then surely He can keep safe His people that have followed Him during less desperate days.
    - b. I Peter 1:5 reminds us that we are **"kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."**
  - 4. Whereas Revelation 7 revealed little regarding the 144,000 beyond their number and their nationality, this description emphasizes their character.
    - a. In deliberate contrast to those at the end of the previous chapter, who had the number of the Beast on their foreheads, this company is seen with God's name **"written in their foreheads."**
    - b. Revelation 22:4 further anticipates the day when all the servants of the living God **"shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."**
- D. John records the hearing of **"a voice from heaven."**

**14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:**

**14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.**

- 1. The voice is described in majestic terms, **"as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder."**
  - 2. John also hears the sound of **"harpers."**
    - a. In chapter five, we found that the four beasts and the 24 elders all have harps.
    - b. However, the harpers here are those redeemed out of the Tribulation Period who have gotten victory over the Beast, his image, and his mark.
  - 3. The **"harpers"** are described as singing a **"new song before the throne"** and before the four living creatures and the elders.
    - a. Presently we sing, *"Amazing Grace,"* which the angels cannot sing experientially for they have never experienced the grace of God in salvation.
    - b. Following the Tribulation, these saints will have a new song of testimony for the Lord, having come out of the time of Great Tribulation.
- E. The 144,000 are described as being **"not defiled with women, for they are virgins."**



**14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.**

1. They have kept themselves pure in a world situation which is morally filthy.
  - a. Israel is referred to as **“the virgin the daughter of Zion,”** in II Kings 19:21, Isaiah 37:22; the **“virgin daughter of Zion”** in Lamentations 2:1; and as the **“virgin of Israel”** in Jeremiah 18:13, 31:4, and Amos 5:2.
  - b. In the New Testament, the term **“virgin”** is used of both men and women in reference to the Church as the Bride of Christ. (II Corinthians 11:2, **“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”**)
2. The possibility of their spiritual purity is indicated in the next statement describing them **“which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”**
- F. The description of the 144,000 closes with the statement that they are without **“guile”** and without **“fault.”**

**14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.**

1. There is no falsehood or false religion in them.
2. All this is based entirely on them having been purchased by God through the Lamb’s death.
3. They are described in contrast to those apostates mentioned in II Peter 2:9-15, **“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”**
4. Christians of this present age are exhorted to be:
  - a. **“Holy and without blame before Him.”** (Ephesians 1:4)
  - b. **“Not have spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but . . . holy and without blemish.”** (Ephesians 5:27)
  - c. **“Unblameable and unreprouable.”** (Colossians 1:22)
  - d. **“Faultless.”** (Jude 24)

**14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,**

- A. “**The Everlasting Gospel**” is “*everlasting*” in the sense of agelessness, rather than for a specific period of time.
1. Paul warned, in Galatians 1:8, “**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**”
    - a. For those living during the current Church Age, the message emphasizes the need to receive Christ as Savior and to be prepared for eternity and heaven.
    - b. For those living during the Tribulation, the message will emphasize that the King is coming and men need to be prepared to enter into His Kingdom.
  2. One thing always is emphasized throughout the various presentations of the Gospel: the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ when He paid for sin on the Cross.
  3. Ironside writes, “*This everlasting gospel is not to be distinguished from the gospel that has been proclaimed throughout the centuries. In truth, the very fact that it is called ‘everlasting’ shows that it is identical with the gospel proclaimed from the beginning . . . that God is sovereign, and man’s happiness consists in recognizing His authority.*”
- B. The content of the message is “**fear God, and give glory to him . . . and worship him.**”

**14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**

1. Proverbs 9:10 reminds us that “**the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.**”
    - a. Reverential fear of God involves repentance and turning to Him.
    - b. It is respectful trust in God which then results in giving glory to God.
    - c. This trust acknowledges Him as the Creator, the Life-Giver, and the Sustainer of this world.
  2. The saints of the ages have been waiting for the righteousness and holiness of God to show itself in judgment.
    - a. Now the time has come.
    - b. Here is one of the last calls for earth’s people to repent.
- C. The burden of the angel preaching “**the everlasting gospel**” is that “**the hour of his judgment is come.**”
1. The emphasis is that men need to turn to God because of the impending judgment.

2. This passage points to the final judgments at the end of the Tribulation Period and that God will ultimately be victorious over all.

### III. Assurance Three: Prophecy Of The Coming Fall Of Babylon. (14:8)

**14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.**

- A. From another angel we learn of the impending judgment to be unleashed on religious and political Babylon.
  1. Prophetically, the term **“Babylon”** is used in three different ways.
    - a. The word frequently is used of the literal city on the Euphrates River.
    - b. The word is used in reference to a world religious system. (Revelation 17)
    - c. The word is used in reference to a political system. (Revelation 18)
  2. The double emphasis, **“is fallen, is fallen,”** concerns the fall of both the religious and the political systems during the Tribulation.
    - a. The repetition of the phrase further emphasizes the certainty of the utter destruction of Babylon.
    - b. This is all anticipatory since Babylon’s actual fall is connected with the outpouring of the seventh vial (bowl) judgment still to come.
- B. The portrayal before us typifies a one-world church united to a one-world political system using every type of corruption imaginable to promote herself into prominence at the end time.
  1. Babylon represents the final apostate civilization, the symbol of human society organized politically, economically, and religiously in opposition to and in defiance of God.
  2. The idolatry of Babylon is a divine intoxication which will fascinate the entire world.
  3. Jack Van Impe warns, *“The present ecumenical effort, attempting to unite all religions under a so-called ‘banner of brotherhood’ regardless of doctrinal differences, is the forerunner of a monstrous fornicator who makes all nations drink of the wine of her wrath.”*
- C. Just as the 144,000 were symbolized as sexual virgins, so this opposite group is symbolized by **“her fornication.”**

### IV. Assurance Four: The Doom Of The Worshipers Of The Beast. (14:9-12)

**14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,**

**14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:**

- A. A third angel adds immediately to the pronouncement of the previous angels by proclaiming with a great voice the sad doom of those who worship the Beast.

1. As they drank of the wine of spiritual fornication, so shall they also **“drink of the wine of the wrath of God.”**
  - a. Usually wine was poured into a cup after being diluted with water.
  - b. Here, the wine is poured out without mixing.
  - c. The symbolism is of drinking unmixed wine, that is, wine untempered by the mercy and grace of God.
  - d. Today we might say, *“God’s wrath is like forcing straight whiskey down someone’s throat.”*
2. God has been long-suffering, but now He no longer holds back His wrath.
- B. The description of God’s wrath is threefold:
  1. It is **“poured out without mixture.”**
  2. It is **“with fire and brimstone.”**
  3. It is without **“rest day and night.”**
- C. Punishment on the Beast’s people is described as **“with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”**
  1. The horse demons of Revelation 9 had tormented and killed a third of humanity by **“fire and smoke and brimstone”** (9:17).
  2. Now the same torment is poured out **“for ever and ever”** on all unrepentant humanity.
- D. The language of **“fire and brimstone,”** or *“burning sulfur,”* is based on God’s punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah and was the strongest possible way for John to describe this ghastly agony. (Genesis 19:24)
  1. When sulfur burns, it produces sulfur dioxide, a gas that burns the eyes as well as the lungs.
  2. What will be even worse is that they must endure this **“in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”**
  3. Jesus, in telling His story of the rich man and Lazarus, said, **“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame”** (Luke 16:22-24).
    - a. Not only did the rich man suffer the confines of his judgment, but he also witnessed the comfort of Lazarus in contrast to his torment.
    - b. Alas, it was too late for the rich man.
  4. Kendall Easley raises the question, *“Who can imagine how terrible it will be to suffer knowing that God is watching throughout eternity?”*
  5. Whatever torment the souls of the damned will experience, it will be much more than simply physical pain.
- E. Their torment is not a momentary one.

**14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

**14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**

Notes

1. The phrase, **“for ever and ever,”** is the strongest expression of eternity that can be found anywhere in the Greek language.
    - a. The duration of the torment is further emphasized in the words, **“they have no rest day nor night.”**
    - b. As much as some would want to think that the damnation of the wicked will ultimately lead to annihilation, the language here does not permit it.
    - c. **“For ever and ever”** is pretty clear.
  2. Those who have chosen to follow the Beast will have all eternity to regret it.
- F. The stern warning addressed to all the worshipers of the Beast is also an encouragement to those who put their trust in Christ during the Great Tribulation.
1. These are not Church saints, for the Church was Raptured in Chapter 4, prior to the Tribulation.
  2. These are believers who have received Christ as their Savior during the Tribulation.
  3. These are described as those who **“keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”**
  4. Here the Tribulation saints, indeed all saints, are assured that justice will be executed.

V. Assurance Five: The Blessing Of The Saints. (14:13)

**14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**

- A. The reference to the blessing of those who **“die in the Lord from henceforth”** is not a general reference to all saints who die, though such an application might be legit, but here it is in specific reference to those who are going to die during this period of Tribulation.
1. In contrast to the followers of the Beast, who will never ever rest, these will **“rest from their labors.”**
  2. It is far better to be dead at the hand of the Beast than to find favor as his worshiper.
  3. The significance of the statement, **“their works do follow them,”** finds meaning in II Corinthians 5:10, **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”**
- B. To those facing the ultimate test of loyalty to Christ, the words of Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 16:24-26 are relevant: **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”**

1. To deny one's self does not mean to deny things, but to give one's self wholly to Christ and share in His shame and death.  
(Galatians 2:20, "**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**")
  2. To take up your cross does not mean to carry a certain burden, but to identify with Christ in His shame, suffering, and death.  
(Philippians 1:21, "**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**")
- C. Note this about suffering: it always leads to glory.
1. Those who would worship the Beast will find some level of glory before ultimate suffering.
  2. Those who worship the Savior will find suffering before glory.  
(II Timothy 3:12, "**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**")

VI. Assurance Six: The Judgment Of The Son Of Man. (14:14-16)

**14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.**

**14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.**

**14:16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.**

- A. The One described "**like unto the Son of man,**" is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, participating in the divine judgments of God upon a wicked world.
1. Clouds in the Bible often represent the majesty of God's presence.  
(Psalm 104:3, "**Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.**")
  2. In wearing a "**golden crown**" we are reminded that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Hero of the Book of Revelation.
  3. That He has a "**sharp sickle**" in His hand indicates that the time of harvest has come, referring to the climactic judgments to come preceding His Second Coming.
  4. The expression, "**for the harvest of the earth is ripe,**" implies that judgment is long overdue.
- B. The imagery is that of the ancient Palestinian farmer who first gathers together his ripe grapes into the winepress, and then smashes them with his bare feet in order to release their red juice.
1. The winepress of God – the place where He will smash the unbelieving armies – is the great Armageddon Pass.
  2. The red juice of the ancient Palestinian grapes well represents visually the blood of the wicked which will there be shed.
  3. The rotten, moral condition of the world is to be dealt with by a "**sharp sickle.**"

4. This divine judgment is a fulfillment of Psalm 2:7-9, **“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”**
- C. Many interpreters have puzzled over verse 15.
1. If the figure in verse 14 is Christ, why would He take orders from **“another angel?”**
  2. The answer is found by noting that this angel **“came out of the temple”** in heaven, as a messenger from the very presence of God.
    - a. During the time of His earthly ministry, Jesus affirmed that He did not know the hour of His return.  
(Mark 13:32, **“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”**)
    - b. Now, at last, the Heavenly Father declares from His heavenly temple, **“IT’S TIME!”**
  3. The messenger angel then **“came out of the temple”** to spread the word, not only so that Christ would hear, but that the angelic couriers (and John) heard as well.

VII. Assurance Seven: The Angel With Another Sharp Sickle. (14:17-20)

**14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.**

**14:18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.**

**14:19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.**

**14:20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.**

- A. Before reckoning with **“another angel,”** consider the teaching of our Lord found in two other passages of Scripture as relating to our present time.
1. John 4:35, **“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”**
  2. Luke 10:2, **“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”**
- B. While the winning of lost souls to Christ is sometimes pictured as a harvest, so also does it portray God’s judgment.
1. The use of angels to assist in the harvest of judgment is stated.
  2. This passage speaks prophetically of that which will chronologically follow the Return of Christ to the earth.

3. All of this is in keeping with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25: 31-34, 41, **"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."**
- C. The **"vine"** spoken of here is in reference to the Antichrist.
1. The **"clusters"** represent all those who follow him and his system.
    - a. Notice that the vine and the grapes are cast into **"the great winepress of the wrath of God."**
    - b. So great will be the slaughter that blood will stream for about 200 miles.
  2. Jesus' Parable of the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30) sheds further light on these events, **"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."**

**Conclusion:** Through the scenes contained in this chapter, John has written for us images both glorious and terrible. For the righteous, there will be glory and honor. For the wicked, there will be shame and torment as the winepress of God's fury will bring it to pass.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is going to come back and take away all saved people from the earth before the time called *"The Tribulation Period."* The next great event on God's prophetic calendar is The Rapture, when **"the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"** (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). Those not caught up will be left behind to endure the indescribable horrors of that great Tribulation. But today, is still a day of salvation. Won't you come to Christ, confess your sin and receive Him as your personal Savior. To receive Him is to have life everlasting. To reject Him is to accept the coming judgment upon this earth, if not sooner. Believe on Jesus Christ today!



## THE SONG OF THE LAMB

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 15:1-8

**Introduction:** No doubt it was hard to be a singing Christian in the days that John wrote Revelation. New waves of persecution were making more martyrs. Many thought the horrible beasts of the Great Tribulation were at hand. But the vision of victorious saints singing **“the song of the Lamb”** after God defeated the Beast would encourage the Church not to give up the struggle now.

When the readers realized the similarities between their situation and the ancient Israelites who sang **“the song of Moses,”** they would be encouraged to *“keep on keeping on,”* even in the face of great difficulties.

- I. Will The Church Go Through The Tribulation? (*Twelve Answers*)
  - A. The Great Tribulation is a visitation of the wrath of God upon those who dwell on the earth and on Israel who rejected Christ.  
(Jeremiah 30:6-7, **“Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”** cp. Zechariah 13:8-9)
  - B. The Scriptures dealing with the Tribulation have particular reference to the Jews.  
(Mark 13:14, **“But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.”** cp. Matthew 24:1-31)
  - C. The Tribulation is characterized by gross darkness and a lack of faith.  
(Luke 18:8, **“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”** cp. Colossians 1:13)
  - D. Satan’s persecution is targeted at the **“woman”** (Israel) during the Tribulation.  
(Revelation 12)
  - E. The nature and character of the Church forbids her from going into the Tribulation, since the Tribulation is a day of judgment upon the Christ-rejecting world.  
(Ephesians 1:3, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”** cp. Ephesians 2:6)
  - F. The Church is promised deliverance from wrath.  
(Revelation 3:10, **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”**)
  - G. Since all those who do not worship the Antichrist during the Tribulation are subject to death, few believers would be **“alive and remain”** if the Church should go through the Great Tribulation.  
(1 Thessalonians 4:15, **“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”**)
  - H. The Scriptures urge an attitude of constant expectation of Christ’s Second Coming.  
(Romans 8:23, **“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the**

**firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”)**

- I. God has always protected His people before judgment fell.  
(II Peter 2:6-8, “**And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.”)**)
- J. The Church is instructed to pray for those in authority (I Timothy 2:2), while those slain during the Tribulation are seen praying for the destruction of those in authority.  
(Revelation 6:10, “**And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”)**)
- K. The inspired division of Revelation – “**the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter**” – indicates the removal of the Church. (Revelation 1:19)
- L. The Church is seen in Revelation 4 as already in heaven, represented by the twenty-four elders.  
(Revelation 4:4, “**And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.”)**)

II. The Sign Of The Seven Angels With The Plagues. (15:1-2)

**15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.**

**15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.**

- A. Chapters 15 and 16 bring to a culmination the chronological order of events leading up to the Second Coming of Christ described in chapter 19.
  - 1. Here we leave the assurances of the previous chapter and resume our study of the events of “**Jacob’s trouble.**”
  - 2. The final series of seven last plagues is introduced by the vision in which John sees “**another sign in heaven.**”
- B. The word “**another**” refers to the two preceding signs in chapter 12.
  - 1. The woman who appeared as “**a great wonder in heaven.**” (Revelation 12:1)
  - 2. The “**great red dragon.**” (Revelation 12:3)
- C. Central in this vision is another group of “**seven angels,**” not to be confused with any other group previously mentioned.
  - 1. This group of angels is described as having “**the seven last plagues.**”
  - 2. That they are described in relation to the last plagues shows that they introduce the final judgments preceding the Second Coming of Christ.

- D. The seven plagues are further described as acts of judgment which **“fill up the wrath of God.”**
1. The concept means *“to bring to conclusion or to an ultimate goal.”*
  2. God is about to fulfill His divine purpose.
- E. The scene in heaven is described **“as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire.”**
1. The sea is designed to reflect the glory of God.
    - a. In chapter 4, its description, **“like unto crystal,”** speaks of the holiness of God.
    - b. Here, the **“sea . . . mingled with fire”** speaks of divine judgment proceeding from God’s holiness.
  2. The fact that the saints are able to **“stand on the sea of glass”** reflects the faithfulness of God in upholding His own in keeping with His divine character.
- F. They that had **“gotten the victory over the beast”** are the Tribulation saints who have come through the fires of persecution on the earth and yet have not lost their song.
1. Walvoord writes, *“The harpers’ privileged position before the throne contributing to the heavenly harmony of the chorus of the redeemed is their reward for refusing to worship the beast, receive his mark, bow to his image, or be identified with his number.”*
  2. They have the **“harps of God,”** and in the next couple of verses we will see that they are able to sing, and they do sing.
- G. We are not in the Great Tribulation now, and never will be, but do we presently find it difficult to sing in the midst of trouble?
1. Hebrews 12:15 warns us about the destructive force of a little root of bitterness.  
(Hebrews 12:15, **“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”**)
    - a. There are many Christian people who have allowed a **“root of bitterness”** to take hold and caused them to deteriorate in their Christian life and testimony.
    - b. We need to pray, in the face of life’s circumstances, that there will be no **“root of bitterness”** found within us.
  2. It is remarkable to see that these Tribulation saints, who have lived through the horror of the Great Tribulation, have kept their song!
  3. We need to be alert in prayer that we not fall into the trap of Satan and lose the joy of our salvation.

### III. The Song Of Moses And The Song Of The Lamb. (15:3-4)

**15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.**

**15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**

- A. The fact that the word “**song**” is used twice, with the definite article “**the**” in both cases, suggests that two songs are in view here. (15:3a)
- B. The “**song of Moses**” is recorded in Exodus 15:1-18.
1. The original song was sung to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian armies, following the crossing of the Red Sea.
    - a. Moses and the Israelites were flooded with the joy of their deliverance, and their hearts overflowed with a spirit of rejoicing and praise to God.
    - b. Evidence suggests that first-century Jews regularly sang this song on Sabbath evenings in their synagogues.
    - c. The LORD is the focus of the praise.
    - d. The song addresses God ten times as “*JEHOVAH*” or “*YAHWEH*” (15:1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 16, 17, 18), and once as “*ADONAI*” (15:17).
  2. The song can be divided into three stanzas:
    - a. A song of God’s praise.  
(Exodus 15:1-2, “**Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.**”)  
      - (1) Two reasons are given for Israel’s breaking out in song.
        - (a) The LORD had gloriously triumphed on behalf of His people.
        - (b) The LORD had delivered His people from their enemies.
      - (2) Notice how personal the LORD was to the Israelite believers during these moments:
        - (a) The LORD is “**my strength.**”
        - (b) The LORD is “**my song.**”
        - (c) The LORD is “**my salvation.**”
        - (d) The LORD is “**my God.**”
        - (e) The LORD is “**my Father’s God.**”
    - b. A song of God’s great deliverance.
      - (1) God delivered His people by His name.  
(Exodus 15:3-5, “**The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.**”)
      - (2) God delivered His people by His right hand of power.  
(Exodus 15:6, “**Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.**”)
      - (3) God delivered His people by the greatness of His majesty.  
(Exodus 15:7, “**And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.**”)
      - (4) God delivered His people by His control over nature.  
(Exodus 15:8, “**And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters**

- were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.”)
- (5) God delivered His people by His glorious triumph.  
(Exodus 15:9-10, **“The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”**)
  - (6) God delivered His people by His matchless Personage.  
(Exodus 15:11-12, **“Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.”**)
- c. A song of God’s glorious purpose.
- (1) The source of God’s great purpose is His mercy.  
(Exodus 15:13, **“Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.”**)
  - (2) The impact of God’s leadership and guidance are clearly seen.
    - (a) The impact on Israel’s enemies.  
(Exodus 15:14-16a, **“The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone . . .”**)
      - i) Nations will hear and tremble.
      - ii) Enemies will be in anguish.
      - iii) Leaders will be terrified.
      - iv) Opponents will melt away.
      - v) People will be gripped in fear.
    - (b) The impact on God’s people, Israel.  
(Exodus 15:17-18, **“Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.”**)
      - i) Herein lies their confidence in God’s continued triumph and joyous anticipation of the future.
      - ii) Not only has the LORD brought them out, but He will **“bring them in and plant them in the mountain of [their] inheritance.”**
3. The present context recounts the faithfulness of God to Israel in recognition of the large number of Israelites that are among the martyred dead.
- C. The second song, **“song of the Lamb,”** echoes the first song.

1. This song powerfully reminds us that the mighty acts of God in saving His people in the Old Testament are not different in kind from His acts of saving His New Testament people.
    - a. Although Moses was a servant, and Jesus is the Son, they stand together, not in opposition.
    - b. The **“song of the Lamb”** speaks of redemption from sin made possible by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.
  2. We must remember that the Book of Revelation is Christo-centric, that is, Christ-centered.
    - a. In this book we have the unveiling of Jesus Christ.
    - b. He is in charge; He is the Lord; and He is the One opening the seven-sealed book that contains the judgments of Revelation.
    - c. J. Vernon McGee writes, *“He is the One who can put His hand in the hand of God and who can put His other hand in the hand of man and bring them together. He can do this because He is God.”*
- D. John records at least part of **“the song of the Lamb.”** (15:3b)

**15:3b . . . Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.**

1. The praise ascribed to God begins with the statement, **“Great and marvellous are thy works.”**
  - a. Although these saints have come through the fiery persecution of the Beast, they celebrate God’s ways as altogether right.
  - b. In both His attributes and actions, God’s perfections will be praised by His people forever.
2. They ascribe their song to **“Lord God Almighty.”**
  - a. This expression is parallel to the familiar Old Testament expression, *“Jehovah, God of hosts.”*
  - b. The union of these designations gives impressiveness to the ascription of praise.
    - (1) He is **“Lord”** – JEHOVAH – the uncreated and eternal One.
    - (2) He is **“God”** – the Creator, upholder, and sovereign of all things.
    - (3) He is **“Almighty”** – having all power in all worlds; not just mighty, He is **“Almighty!”**
3. God is also seen as **“just and true”** in all His ways.
  - a. This is particularly significant in view of the judgments that have already been poured out on the earth.
    - (1) Satan has been turned loose for a short period of time and men have been allowed to do as they please.
    - (2) But now the martyrs see God in all His holiness as He comes with final judgment.
  - b. In light of all this, the verdict of the martyrs is that God is **“just and true.”**
4. The martyrs also give attribution to the Lord Jesus Christ as the **“King of saints.”**

- a. The word “**saints**” literally means “*nations.*”
  - b. He is the King of all nations and the King of all ages.
  - c. Today the world is shunning His supremacy.
    - (1) They do not want Him to be King.
    - (2) But in the end of the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth, put an end to all Gentile rule, and become the “*King of all nations.*”
5. The worship continues in verse 4 with a rhetorical question. (15:4)

**15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**

- a. Proverbs 1:7 teaches us, “**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**”
    - (1) Proverbs 9:10 continues, “**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**”
    - (2) To these Proverbs 8:13 adds, “**The fear of the LORD is to hate evil . . .**”
    - (3) People have long forgotten that the reason God put us on the earth is to glorify and enjoy Him. (Ecclesiastes 12:13, “**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**”)
  - b. The present question is in direct opposition to the worship offered to Antichrist and his followers. (Revelation 13:4, “**. . . And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?**”)
    - (1) Answer: the “**Lord God Almighty!**”
    - (2) The flying angel of Revelation 14:6-7 had combined the commands to “**fear God**” and “**give [Him] glory.**”
    - (3) What the angel had commanded will in fact be done among the nations. (Isaiah 59:19, “**So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.**”)
6. The “**song of the Lamb**” concludes with three reasons for bringing glory to the name of the “**Lord God Almighty.**”
- a. “**For thou only art holy.**”
    - (1) The word for “**holy**” here means “*perfect moral purity.*”
    - (2) Because of God’s perfect holiness throughout all eternity, He is to be worshiped.
    - (3) Although Antichrist may appear to be holy to some, he will be, in fact, blasphemously impure.
  - b. “**For all nations shall come and worship before thee.**”

- (1) The Antichrist monster appeared to have succeeded in his self-worship, but his attempt was destined to fail.
  - (2) Revelation 21:24-26 describes the occasion when all nations will come to acknowledge God.
  - (3) This is a cause for God's people, even now, to worship Him.
- c. **“For thy judgments are made manifest.”**
- (1) God's righteous judgments stand in stark contrast to Antichrist's wickedness.
  - (2) With these words, the present worship concludes.

#### IV. The Tabernacle Of The Testimony In Heaven Opened. (15:5-6)

**15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:**

**15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.**

- A. Another vision is now introduced as a later development that constitutes the introduction of the vial judgments in Chapter 16.
  1. The reason that **“the temple”** is opened is to reveal seven angels.
  2. As John looks on the scene, the **“temple of the tabernacle”** is opened, that is, the curtain is parted, and the angels are seen coming out of the sanctuary.
- B. Each of these angels is carrying a vial containing one of the last **“seven plagues”** and is described as **“clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.”**
  1. Their pure white linen clothing symbolizes the holiness of Heaven.
  2. The royal appearance of their sashes matches the risen Lord as He first appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos.  
(Revelation 1:13, **“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”**)
- C. The angels coming out of the heavenly sanctuary indicate that the coming judgments stem from the very holiness of God Himself.
  1. Therefore, the judgments are just, for God is righteous and **“we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things”** (Romans 2:2).
    - a. This emphasizes the fact that the judgments of God are not vindictive, but vindicative.
    - b. They are intended to vindicate His holiness.
  2. Many today, even Christians, do not fully recognize God's holiness.
    - a. This is evident from the way we live.
    - b. Paul taught, in Ephesians 4:22-24, **“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”**



- c. God is holy, and even Christians will answer to Him for sin in their lives.  
(Galatians 6:7, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”**)

V. Seven Golden Vials Given To The Angels. (15:7-8)

**15:7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.**

- A. The extent of the judgment still to come is indicated by the word **“full,”** indicating the devastating character of this divine judgment.
1. That these bowl like **“vials”** have no lids denote that they will be poured out and nothing will be able to stop them.
  2. They are the completion of the plagues of the Tribulation Period.
  3. The fact that **“one of the four beasts”** gave these **“vials of . . . wrath”** to the seven angels shows that the holiness of God demands that great sin will be met with great punishments.
  4. Salem Kirban writes, *“The Bowls of Wrath convey to us the image of God’s wrath against sin being stored up in bowls, higher and higher, until they are at last full and overflowing with judgment. I think that the picture which we ought to here see is not that of large angels pouring out seven little thimbles of judgment upon the corrupted earth, but rather seven angels pouring out gigantic bowls – much larger than the angels themselves – filled with boiling and smoking acid-wrath against the rebel sinners who will not come to Christ for forgiveness, but who rather curse God and rejoice in their iniquities.”*
- B. The temple is seen as **“filled with smoke.”**

**15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.**

1. When Moses finished the tabernacle and when Solomon had finished the Temple, there was a cloud, the *“Shekinah Glory of God,”* but no smoke.
  2. Smoke means *“judgment.”*
  3. The Temple is seen opened and full of smoke to reveal the **“glory”** and **“power”** of God in judgment.
- C. The solemn reminder that God lives **“for ever and ever”** gives a solemn cast to the wrath that is to be poured out, which is to be inflicted **“for ever and ever”** upon those who perish.

VI. One Last Consideration.

- A. In going back to chapter 14, verse 10, notice the words, **“the wrath of God.”**
1. Then underscore the same words in verse 19, **“the wrath of God.”**
  2. Chapter 15, verse 1, opens the chapter by speaking of **“the wrath of God.”**

3. Then, again in verse 7, “**the wrath of God.**”
  4. Chapter 16, verse 1 mentions, “**the wrath of God.**”
  5. Finally, verse 19 refers to “**the fierceness of his wrath.**”
- B. Romans 2:5, along with John 3:36, declare that the wrath of God is being treasured up, built up in the great reservoirs of God against all Christ-rejecting humanity.
1. The longer a person lives rejecting Christ, the more they are treasuring up this horrible wrath and when the day of wrath comes, and they are cut off, it will be too late.
  2. God’s longsuffering enables Him to temporarily put up with those who blaspheme and take His name in vain, but the day of His patience will come to an end.
  3. Today the door is still open for salvation.
  4. Will you receive Him as your Savior right now, while there is still an opportunity?

**Conclusion:** Stepping back in conclusion, the heart of Revelation 15 is found in the “**song of the Lamb.**” We live in a music-driven era. If advertisers know the power of melody and harmony, how much more important must music and singing be when it is put into the worship of God?

Far from being a pie-in-the-sky, floating-on-clouds, playing-harps-after-we-die chapter, this passage ought to encourage us to be a people of worship and singing today. We are victors through Christ. When we look back at ancient Israel, and ahead to the victorious saints in heaven, we should realize that we have the privilege of standing in the unbroken line of people who worship God in song. After all, He is “**Lord God Almighty!**”

# THE VIALS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 16:1-21

**Introduction:** Even in the first century it may have been hard to think of the end of the world as something that would really happen. Christians had then, perhaps, an even greater sense of history than we do. The persecuted believers of Asia were part of a civilization that had already endured for hundreds of years longer than America. Like us, perhaps they needed the vivid images to help persuade them not only that the end of the world is real, but that God will end it with a decisive out-pouring of His judgment on sin.

## I. The Command To Pour Out The Vials. (16:1)

**16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.**

- A. J. B. Smith calls Revelation 16, *“The great chapter of the Bible.”*
  - 1. The voice of God is described as **“a great voice.”** (16:1, 17)
  - 2. **“Great heat.”** (16:9)
  - 3. **“Great river Euphrates.”** (16:12)
  - 4. **“That great day of God Almighty.”** (16:14)
  - 5. **“A great earthquake.”** (16:18)
  - 6. **“The great city.”** (16:19)
  - 7. **“Great Babylon.”** (16:19)
  - 8. **“A great hail.”** (16:21)
  - 9. The **“exceeding great”** plague. (16:21)
- B. Although God is long-suffering, ultimately God must pour out His great wrath against sin.
  - 1. Because God is holy and righteous, He cannot condone sin in any degree. (Habakkuk 1:13, **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity . . .”**)
  - 2. In Revelation 16, we see the wrath of God being expressed in seven **“vials,”** or *“bowls,”* judgments being poured out.
- C. A careful study of the seven vials, as compared to the seven trumpets, will reveal numerous differences.
  - 1. Some have been led to believe that they are only different descriptions of the same thing.
  - 2. The first four trumpet judgments deal only with one-third of the earth, while the vial judgments seem to be universal in their application and great intensity.
  - 3. The vial judgments are subsequent to the trumpet judgments and proceed out of, and constitute, the seventh trumpet. (See chart on page 76.)
  - 4. The trumpet judgments are the result of God allowing Satan to bring about various plagues, while the vial judgments come directly from God at the close of the Tribulation and bring us to the point of Christ’s return to the earth.

- D. The command, which is described as coming “**out of the Temple,**” is undoubtedly the voice of God.
1. The “**voice**” is necessary for our sakes, so that we will understand that these things come from God.
  2. At Creation, in Genesis 1, no voice was necessary, but for our sakes God spoke a command . . . and it was done.
  3. John 11:41-42 further illustrates this, as Christ openly declared that the reason that He prayed out loud before raising Lazarus was “**because of the people**” which were watching – that all people might understand that this raising originated with the Father and was performed through the mediation of the Son.
- E. The Great Tribulation is the “*Great Tribulation*” because it is a combination of three kinds of wrath.
1. In Revelation 6:16-17 mentions “**the wrath of the Lamb.**”
  2. Revelation 12:12 speaks of the wrath of the devil.
  3. Here, in 16:1, we read of “**the wrath of God upon the earth.**”
  4. With this three-fold combination, the Great Tribulation will be unparalleled in the history of the world.
  5. While many people claim that things are getting better and better, the fact is things are getting worse and worse, and will continue to do so until the day of judgment breaks upon this Christ-less, God-rejecting world.

## II. The First Vial. (16:2)

**16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.**

- A. The first vial judgment is in the form of a physical affliction of unusual severity bringing widespread suffering.
1. The judgment is described as a “**noisome and grievous sore,**” or “*malignant ulcer.*”
  2. These sores are either open to the surface of the body or to a natural cavity and accompanied by the disintegration of tissue and the formation of pus.
  3. They are often referred to as “*boils.*”
- B. One of the questions that arises when we read the Book of Revelation is, is this judgment figurative or literal?
1. One of the things we have to guide us in answer to this question is, have like past judgments been figurative or literal?
  2. Look back at Exodus 9:8-10, “**And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.**”

3. In turning back to Exodus 9, the sixth plague upon Egypt was a literal plague, so there is no reason to doubt that the plagues of the Tribulation Period will also be literal.
- C. Confirmation that the vial judgments occur late in the Great Tribulation is the fact that the first vial judgment is specifically directed toward a particular group of men, namely, the beast worshipers who have received the **“mark of the beast.”**
1. In chapter 13:13-17, we learned that in the middle of the Tribulation the Beast – that terrible character who will be dominating the world politically, militarily, and economically – will demand that all receive his mark either in their forehead or right hand, in order to buy or sell.
    - a. Then a statue is erected and those who refuse to worship the statue will be executed.
    - b. We know that these things will take place during the middle of the Tribulation.
    - c. Therefore, these judgments, commencing with the *“boil”* judgment take place in the later half of the Tribulation, for this first judgment is upon those who have received the **“mark.”**
  2. The only ones who will escape this judgment are those who have refused to obey the edict of the **“beast.”**
    - a. The sores inflicted by this plague are apparently incurable since the victims of the plague are still languishing in torment when the fifth vial is poured out. (16:11).
    - b. Here lies a scene of unnecessary suffering and desolation.

### III. The Second Vial. (16:3)

**16:3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.**

- A. The second vial results in every soul in the sea dying after its waters are turned to blood.
1. Whereas the second trumpet is limited to one-third of the sea, this judgment is universal.
  2. The reference to the sea may be limited to the Mediterranean – the sea of the Bible world – but the same word could be used of all the world’s great bodies of water.
- B. Using the language of appearance, the text does not demand the reddened sea be actually turned from H<sub>2</sub>O into complex blood molecules, although it could be.
1. The statement is, **“and it became as the blood . . .”**
  2. Ray Stedman writes, *“We have already seen foreshadows of this phenomenon in the so-called ‘red tide’ which scientists have occasionally observed in the Caribbean and other seas sheltered by land masses. There is a micro-organism which, given the right set of conditions, multiplies precipitously, turning the water a deep scarlet. All sea life in the affected area dies.”*
  3. Since the next vial (16:4-7) is the turning of the rivers and fountains into blood, a literal approach to this judgment is probable.

4. Exodus 7:20-25 shows that the turning of the Nile into blood at the touch of Moses' rod was an actual event, and, therefore, there is no reason not to believe that this too could literally take place.

IV. The Third Vial. (16:4-7)

**16:4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.**

**16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.**

**16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.**

**16:7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.**

- A. The third in the series of judgments extends to the turning of the water of the rivers and fountains into blood.
1. Vial number 3 repeats the first Egyptian plague in Exodus 7:19-24.
  2. Again, the third trumpet judgment revealed that one-third of the rivers were polluted by a great meteoric mass which hit the earth.
  3. Here, the vial spreads to include the remainder of all living life upon the waters.
- B. At this point, John hears one described as **“the angel of the waters”** deliver God's justification for this judgment.
1. Since men have demonstrated their bloodthirsty character in the shedding of the innocent blood of saints and prophets who prophesied against them, God is righteous in judging them in kind by giving them blood to drink.
  2. Even as the saints are worthy of rest and reward, so the wicked are worthy of divine chastening and judgment.
- C. The gloomy assessment of the growing body count seems justified.
1. The ongoing bloodletting not only includes the martyred saints, who became the Beast's victims (13:7, 10), but, additionally, an almost infinitely larger number of the world's general population.
    - a. One-quarter of the earth's population are killed, in Revelation 6:8, followed by the violent deaths of another third of the remainder of mankind, in Revelation 9:15.
    - b. These two passages alone reduce the total world population by 50 percent.
  2. With the present world population quickly approaching eight billion people, the deaths of nearly four billion people over so short a period of time would be without parallel in the history of the human race.
- D. The statement of the **“angel of the waters”** is confirmed by another voice out of the altar, who declares that God, who is **“Almighty, true and righteous,”** manifests these attributes in His judgments.

V. The Fourth Vial. (16:8-9)

**16:8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.**

**16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.**

- A. The fourth vial is a judgment which affects the starry heavens, specifically the sun.
1. In the fourth trumpet (8:12), the heavenly bodies were afflicted, and one-third of the sun was darkened, presumably causing a cooling to take place.
  2. Here, the heat from the sun is intensified, causing men to literally burn. (Global Warming?)
  3. Stedman again writes, *“Every now and then great flares of nuclear fire burst outward from the surface of the sun, interacting with the earth’s magnetic field and causing disruption in radio communication. Apparently a solar flare of immense magnitude creates intense heat upon the earth. Given the reported depletion of protective ozone that is now taking place in the earth’s upper atmosphere, this heat may be accompanied by an increase in ultraviolet radiation from the sun which would produce severe sunburns.”*
  4. Hal Lindsey suggests, *“I believe that in a full-scale nuclear exchange the balance of the atmosphere will be radically upset, and this could be one of the things that is implied here.”*
- B. Men, down through the ages, have tended to worship the sun, that which has been created, rather than the Creator.
1. It was true in Ezekiel’s day. (Ezekiel 8:16, **“And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east.”**)
  2. Romans 1:18-23 tells us, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”**
  3. Today, when scientists lecture us on the effects of solar heat and photosynthesis, the sun, rather than God, is recognized and worshiped as the giver of everything.
  4. With this plague, God shows the Antichrist and his followers, that He, not the sun, is the Sustainer of the earth. (Colossians 1:16-17, **“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were**

**created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”)**

- C. Unless someone has been in extremely oppressive heat, they cannot appreciate what they take for granted – WATER!
1. Water is necessary to sustain LIFE and is symbolic of LIFE.
  2. Yet, we have just seen in the third vial judgment that the water of the earth has become blood-red with death.
- D. The divine judgments thus inflicted do not bring men to repentance, but only increases their blasphemy, even though they recognize that the plague comes from God.  
(Consider Pharaoh in Exodus 9:34-35, **“And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.”**)

VI. The Fifth Vial. (16:10-11)

**16:10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,**

**16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.**

- A. The fifth judgment is directed toward **“the seat [or the throne] of the beast”** and his subjects.
1. The Beast is the king, and this judgment is upon his throne **“and his kingdom was full of darkness.”**
  2. Is this real darkness, or some spiritualized implication?
    - a. In Exodus 10:21-23a, we find, **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days . . .”**
    - b. In His teaching regarding the slothful servant, in Matthew 25:30, Jesus said, **“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**
  3. It might be said that **“outer darkness”** is the kind of darkness that can be felt.
    - a. In a detailed description of apostates, that is, lost souls, Jude 13 describes them as **“Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”**
    - b. That is why, in Luke 16, the man in hell didn’t want his five brothers to come to such a place.
    - c. Being unable to even see them, he wouldn’t even be able to enjoy them in such agony as **“outer darkness.”**



- d. Folks who joke about Hell have no idea what it is really like.
- B. There is no other place in the Bible where you read the expression found in Revelation 16:10, **“and they gnawed their tongues for pain.”**
1. They who used their God given tongues to curse and blaspheme Him are now suitably punished.
  2. The sores inflicted in the first vial are, in this judgment, further aggravated.
  3. The result of this fifth vial judgment is darkness, pain, and the accumulated effects of the preceding judgments when sores were initially inflicted in the first vial.
  4. This judgment is the repeat of the ninth Egyptian plague recorded in Exodus 10:21-23.
- C. The Scriptures plainly refute the notion that wicked men will quickly repent when faced with catastrophic warnings of judgment.
1. It will not be easier for men to repent during the Tribulation when they are under the severe judgments of God.
  2. It is evident that those who receive the mark of the Beast, and worship his image, will have no desire to return to God, but will continue to curse His name.  
(Romans 2:4-5, **“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”**)

#### VII. The Sixth Vial. (16:12-16)

**16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.**

**16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.**

**16:14 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.**

**16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

**16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.**

- A. As the sixth vial is poured out, its particular objective is the **“great river Euphrates,”** which flows 1,700 miles southeast into the Persian Gulf.
1. As mentioned in chapter 9, the **“river Euphrates”** is one of the prominent rivers in the world.
    - a. It is one of the four rivers mentioned as flowing out from the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:14)
    - b. It is the prophesied eastern border of the land which God promised to the seed of Abraham.  
(Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 1:7-8, 11:24, Joshua 1:4)

2. The Euphrates is one of the most historically important rivers of Western Asia.
    - a. Together with the Tigris, it defined ancient Mesopotamia.
      - (1) Originating in Turkey, it flows through Syria and Iraq to join the Tigris before emptying out into the Persian Gulf.
      - (2) It formed the eastern limit of the Roman Empire, and thus was the barrier between the East and the West.
    - b. Since WWI, a series of agreements between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq provided for the construction of a series of dams, potentially harnessing the power of the mighty river.
      - (1) On April 15, 2014, Turkey began to reduce the flow of the Euphrates into Syria and Iraq.
      - (2) The flow was cut off completely on May 16, effectively resulting in the Euphrates being terminated at the Turkish/Syrian border.
      - (3) With the *“flip of a switch,”* as such, it is presently possible to stop its flow.
  3. As a result of this judgment, the water of the river is dried up and the way of the kings of the East is prepared.
- B. This is the second time in the Revelation that we have had the Euphrates River mentioned.
1. It was mentioned in connection with the sixth Trumpet judgment in 9:13-21.
  2. There, in verse 16, an army of 200 million is spoken of.
- C. The purpose of the drying up of the Euphrates, presently, is indicated as a preparation for **“the way of the kings of the east.”**
1. The Bible teaches that in the last days there will be an invasion of the land of Palestine by all the nations of the world, from the north, south, east, and west.
  2. The rising powers of the Orient today are the countries of China and India, as well as a host of lesser nations, making such an invasion a reasonable prediction.
  3. These Oriental rulers will descend upon the Middle East in connection with the final world conflict described in a few verses.
  4. Preparations are being made here for the **“kings of the east.”**
- D. **“Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon . . . the beast, and . . . the false prophet.”**
1. These three spirits are identified as **“unclean spirits.”**
    - a. They are declared to work miracles (13:12-15) and are commissioned to seduce the kings of the entire earth to **“the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”**
    - b. This is a prelude to the military engagement climaxing in the Second Coming of Christ.
  2. At that time, the armies of the entire world, contending for honors on the battlefield, will turn and combine their efforts against Christ and His armies from heaven.
    - a. This will be the final challenge to Divine sovereignty and power as the armed forces of the world will be engaged in a fight on the very day that Christ returns.  
(Zechariah 14:1-3, **“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy**

**spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.”)**

- b. In that battle, the omnipotence of Almighty God will be fully demonstrated.
- E. The pronouncement, **“Behold, I come as a thief,”** is apparently a direct quotation from Christ Himself.
1. The expression is used of a sudden, unexpected coming which will result in judgment, or loss, on the part of the unexpected person overtaken.
  2. In Matthew 24:43 and Luke 12:39, the Second Coming of Christ is compared to the coming of a thief who will overtake those who do not watch. (Cp. Revelation 3:3, II Peter 3:10, I Thessalonians 5:2, 4)
- F. The unifying factor in all these passages is that the Coming of Christ in view results in loss for those who are not ready.
1. The gathering of the nations in the Valley of Megiddo will be a sign to the believers of the Tribulation Period to hold fast to their profession, even in the midst of their extensive peril.  
(Luke 12:37, **“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”**)
  2. The contrast between those who are overtaken by the Lord at His coming, and those who are prepared by faith in Christ, is expressed in the statement, **“Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”**
  3. Though the Second Coming of Christ is at the end of the Tribulation Period, are you watching and waiting for Christ’s Rapture?  
(Titus 2:11-13, **“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; look-ing for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”**)
- G. The conclusion of the combined action of the sixth vial, and the enticement of the demons, is that the armies of the earth are gathered in the Middle East, to a place described as **“Armageddon.”**
1. Geographically, this place relates to the mount of Megiddo, located adjacent to the plain of Megiddo to the west and the large plain of Esdraelon to the northeast.
    - a. *“Megiddo”* is the Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek word translated **“Armageddon.”**
    - b. Sufficient space would be found in this region to deploy the armies of this world more than 200 miles north and south from this central location.
  2. This same area has been the scene of many great Old Testament battles.
    - a. Barak and the Canaanites fought here in Judges 4.
    - b. The victory of Gideon over the Midianites was here won in Judges 7.
    - c. Here also occurred the death of Saul.

- d. Napoleon Bonaparte once commented that this area would make an ideal battleground for all the armies of the world.
3. The Scriptures indicate that this area is the central point for the military conflict which ensues.  
(Joel 3:2, 9-14, **“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. . . . Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.”**)

VIII. The Seventh Vial. (16:17-21)

**16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.**

**16:18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.**

**16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.**

**16:20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.**

**16:21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.**

- A. The vial of the seventh angel is declared to be poured out into the air and the resulting action is *“CAT-A-STRO-PHIC.”*
1. Vial number seven repeats the seventh Egyptian plague. (Exodus 9:13-35)
  2. This is the last of the series.
- B. The great voice out of the Temple states emphatically, **“It is done!”**
1. In the Greek, the statement is one word, *GEGONEN*, in the perfect tense, indicating action accomplished.
    - a. On the cross, Jesus cried, **“It is finished,”** and at that point in history redemption was wrought and salvation was completed – **“finished”** – for man.
    - b. For those who have refused God’s grace in salvation, there is nothing they can do to escape the judgment of God, for at this point in history, **“It is done!”**
  2. This is the final act of God preceding the Second Coming of Christ.

- C. The Seven Seal-Trumpet-Vial cycles of judgment have now been completed, and Armageddon is ahead!
1. The lightnings and thunders, God’s ancient signs of displeasure and judgment of sin, here abound.  
(Exodus 19:16, “**And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.**”)
  2. Verse 19 declares that “**the great city**” is split into “**three parts**” and that the other cities of the Gentile world fall.
    - a. There may be many great cities in the end-times, but from chapter 18 it is clear that this one alone is “**the great city.**”
    - b. The fact that the judgment is an earthquake indicates, again, that a literal, rebuilt city of Babylon is in view, and that the judgment results in its physical destruction.
    - c. More will be said about Babylon in chapters 17 and 18.
  3. Every city of the world comes under terrible judgment leaving all the monuments of men’s ingenuity in shambles.
- D. Not only is Antichrist’s capital devastated, but here we see that every “**island**” and “**mountain**” is affected.
1. There are great changes in the topography of the entire world.
    - a. Salem Kirban writes, “*The whole world is convulsed by an indignant and righteous God because the world has harkened willingly to the iniquitous man of sin and his satanic end-time system.*”
    - b. John Walvoord adds, “*The utter perversity of human nature, which will reject the sovereignty of God in the face of such overwhelming evidence, confirms that even the lake of fire will not produce repentance on the part of those who have hardened their hearts against the grace of God.*”
  2. Chronologically, the next event prophesied in Revelation is found in chapter 19, verse 11, “**And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.**”
- E. Verse 21 concludes, “**And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.**”
1. The “*Law*” required that a “*blasphemer*” should be stoned to death. (Leviticus 24:16)
  2. These huge stones from heaven, at the end of the Great Tribulation, will be the fulfillment of that law.
  3. Even after the raining of the great hail stones, these men will cleave to rejecting God.

**Conclusion:** While differing interpretations of the details of this chapter may be argued, the general thrust cannot be denied. John meant to convey in an overwhelming way that God’s wrath will someday fall – not just on the world of nature, but on the human world that has opposed Him. Thus, we are left with a choice: to believe that God’s future judgment is real and to order our lives accordingly, or to deny it and risk experiencing the judgments described for us.



# THE DESTRUCTION OF ECCLESIASTICAL BABYLON

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 17:1-18

**Introduction:** It must be remembered that from John's point of view all of the events of the Book of Revelation were future. Beginning in Revelation 17, John describes the Lamb's step-by-step victory over "*the Beast*" and his kingdom, just as Revelation 16:19 has already shown briefly. In Chapter 17, the religious system is judged, and in Revelation 18, the political system falls victim. Finally, the Lord Him-self returns to the earth, judges Satan, and establishes His Kingdom.

- I. The Invitation To View The Judgment Of The Great Harlot. (17:1-2)
  - A. Chapters 17 and 18 are parenthetical in the chronological unfolding drama of Revelation.
    1. Though the fall of Babylon has been announced in 14:8, and described in 16:19, this section tells the story more thoroughly.
    2. These chapters reveal the destruction of Babylon as a precursor to the Marriage of the Lamb in chapter 19.

**17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**

**17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.**

- B. The wicked city of Babylon is depicted as a "**great whore**" in contrast to the coming "*chaste bride*" of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  1. Here, the ugly word is used to describe the foulest religious system the devil has ever spewed out on the face of the earth.
    - a. This woman is called "**the great whore.**"
    - b. The Church of the living God is called a "**wife**" (19:7) and "**bride**" (21:2, 9), but the counterfeit is called a "**whore**" (17:1) and "**harlot**" (17:5)
  2. Who, then, is this "**great whore?**"
    - a. She is the one of whom John spoke in the letters sent to the seven churches.
      - (1) This is the seductive system of religion represented by the Thyatira church in chapter two.
      - (2) She represents that form of faith which descended from the tower of Babel and was expanded to appear compatible with Christianity by Constantine.
    - b. She is "**Jezebel,**" the papal system which was cast into a bed in order that the kings of the Earth should commit fornication with her (2:20-22).
- C. The "**great whore**" is seen sitting upon many waters.
  1. The interpretation of "**many waters**" is found in verse 15, as the great masses of people and nations influenced by Babylon.

2. Here we discover that this worldwide religious system holds both earth's leaders and people within its grasp.
- D. The woman is further described as having committed fornication with **“the kings of the earth.”**
1. Remember, fornication, spiritually speaking, has to do with idolatry, including all its evil connotations and associations.
    - a. Walvoord writes, *“The picture of the woman as utterly evil signifies spiritual adultery, portraying those who outwardly and religiously seem to be joined to the true God but who are untrue in this relationship.”*
    - b. The symbolism of spiritual adultery is always used of people who outwardly carry the name of God while actually worshiping and serving other gods.
    - c. In the Old Testament, when Israel departed from Jehovah, the Bible says she **“went a whoring after other gods”** (Judges 2:17).
  2. Presently, the **“fornication”** committed between these worldly leaders and the Church began with the Roman Emperor Constantine in 312 A.D.
    - a. In order to appease the Babylonians, whose armies he had defeated, Constantine took their religious relics, or idols, and *“Christianized”* them in Christian terminology, resulting in the mixture of pagan religion and Christianity.
    - b. During the Tribulation, this vast international religious system – **“the great whore”** – creates impure alignments with kings, rulers, and presidents in an unprecedented way.
  3. Her control is so overwhelming that humanity becomes stupefied as they are made drunk with the intoxicating brew of religious and political alliances.
    - a. The great reverence given her by the multitudes will earn her respect from the Beast – the Antichrist – on which she rides.
    - b. *“The alliance of the apostate church with the political powers of the world during this future period of time not only debauches the true spiritual character of the church and compromises her testimony in every way but has the devastating effect of inducing religious drunkenness on the part of the inhabitants of the earth.”*
    - c. False religion is always the worst enemy of true religion. (II Timothy 3:13, **“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”**)
    - d. Moral wickedness involved in the union of the Church with the world imposes a puzzling drunkenness on the part of the inhabitants of the earth.
  4. Spiritual fornication also has to do with Christianity embracing the world – leaping out of Christ's arms into those of another lover.
    - a. II Corinthians 6:17 clearly instructs true Christians to be separated from the world. (I John 2:15 adds, **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”**)
    - b. Those who disregard these commands are spiritual adulterers or fornicators. (James 4:4, **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the**



**friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”)**

5. The concept presented here is that the apostate Church has eagerly sought the adulterous relationship with the world political powers and therefore is primarily to be blamed.

II. The Vision Of The Woman On The Beast. (17:3-4)

- A. The woman is seen seated on a scarlet-colored Beast which is **“full of names of blasphemy”** and which has **“seven heads and ten horns.”**

**17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.**

1. By comparing Revelation 13:1 we find that the description of this Beast shows it to be the Antichrist and his wicked end-time system.
  - a. The fact that the woman is riding the Beast, and is not the Beast itself, signifies that she represents ecclesiastical power as distinct from the Beast which is political in power.
  - b. Her position indicates that, on the one hand, she is supported by the political power, and on the other hand, she at least outwardly appears to control and direct the Beast.
2. While such a relationship has many parallels in the past history of the Roman Church in relation to political power, the inference here is that this is a future situation that will take place in the end time.
  - a. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the Roman Church is the harlot.
  - b. But this is not the whole picture, for the apostate Church is not merely the Roman Church, but also includes other groups in a family relationship with their mother.
  - c. The fact that the woman, representing the apostate church, is in such a close association with the Beast, and which is guilty of utter blasphemy, indicates that depth to which apostasy will ultimately descend.

**17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:**

- B. The description of the woman as **“arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls”** is all too familiar to one acquainted with the trappings of ecclesiastical pomp today and especially of high officials in the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches.
  1. The most striking aspect of her presentation is that she has **“a golden cup”** in her hand described as **“full of abomination and filthiness of her fornication.”**
  2. That the cup is **“golden”** shows that her teachings may outwardly seem to be godly and moral, yet from within that glistening cup comes only filth.

3. Few crimes in the Scriptures are spoken of in more unsparing terms than the crime of spiritual adultery.

Notes

### III. The Name Of The Woman. (17:5)

**17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

- A. **“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”**
  1. The word **“mystery”** is a descriptive reference to the title, and not part of the title itself as may be implied in the K.J.V.
  2. It has been commonly held that the title, **“Babylon the Great,”** assigned to this woman, is not a reference to Babylon as a city, but is a mysterious religious designation.
- B. The subject of Babylon is one of the prominent themes of the Bible.
  1. The city of Babel is first mentioned in Genesis 10, and continues to be referred to throughout the Scriptures.
    - a. From various passages, it becomes clear that Babylon, in Scripture, is the name for a great religious system in error.
    - b. Babylon is actually the counterfeit, or false religion, which plagued Israel in the Old Testament, as well as the Church in the New Testament.
    - c. It has had a great influence in moving the Church from Biblical simplicity to apostate confusion.
    - d. In keeping with the satanic principle of offering a poor substitute for God’s perfect plan, Babylon is the source of all counterfeit-religion. (II Corinthians 11:14-15, **“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”**)
  2. Nimrod was the founder of Babel, later called Babylon. (Genesis 10-11)
    - a. Genesis 11 records the rebellion of men against God in attempting to make a city and a tower that would reach to heaven.
    - b. In judging this act, God confounded the language of the people and gave their city the name of **“Babel,”** meaning *“confusion”* (Genesis 11:9).
  3. The city, later named **“Babylon,”** had a long history.
    - a. It became prominent under Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.) who was the guiding light to the empire during the Old Babylonian Period.
    - b. Babylon’s greatest glory was achieved under Nebuchad-nezzar, who lived about 600 years before Christ.
    - c. Daniel the prophet wrote during this time.
- C. Of primary importance in the study of Babylon is its relationship to religion.
  1. John Walvoord writes, *“In addition to materials given in the Bible itself, ancient accounts indicate that the wife of Nimrod, who founded the city of Babylon, became the head of the so-called Babylonian mysteries which consisted of secret religious rites which were developed as a part of the*

worship of idols in Babylon. She was known by the name of Semiramis and was a high priestess of the idol worship. According to extra-biblical records which have been preserved, Semiramis gave birth to a son who she claimed was conceived miraculously. This son, given the name of Tammuz, was considered a savior of his people and was, in effect, a false messiah, purported to be the fulfillment of the promise given to Eve. The legend of the mother and child was incorporated into the religious rites and is repeated in various pagan religions. Idols picturing the mother as the queen of heaven with the babe in her arms are found throughout the ancient world, and countless religious rites were introduced supposedly promising cleansing from sin. Though the rites were observed in the Babylonian false religion differed greatly in various localities, there usually was a priestly order which furthered the worship of the mother and child, practicing the sprinkling of holy water, and established an order of virgins dedicated to religious prostitution. Tammuz, the son, was said to have been killed by a wild beast and afterward brought back to life, obviously a satanic anticipation of the resurrection of Christ.”

2. In the Scriptures there are a number of allusions to the conflict of the true faith with this false religion.
    - a. Ezekiel protested against the ceremony of **“weeping for Tammuz.”** (Ezekiel 8:14)
    - b. Jeremiah mentions the heathen practice of making cakes for, and offering incense to, the **“queen of heaven.”** (Jeremiah 7:18, 44:17-19, 25)
    - c. The worship of Baal, characteristic of pagan religion in Canaan, was another form of this same mystery religion originating in Babylon.
    - d. The doctrines of the mystery religions of Babylon seem to have permeated the ancient world, giving rise to countless mystery religions, each with its cult and individual beliefs offering a counterfeit religion.
    - e. The Babylonian cult eventually made its way to other cities, including Pergamos, the site of one of the seven churches of Asia.
  3. The chief priests of the Babylonian cult wore crowns in the form of the head of a fish.
    - a. This was in recognition of Dagon, the fish god.
    - b. This crown was imprinted with the title, *“Keeper of the Bridge.”*
    - c. The Roman equivalent of the title, *“Pontifex Maximus,”* was used by the Caesars and later Roman emperors, and was later adopted as the title for the bishop of Rome.
  4. In the early centuries of the church in Rome, attempts were made to combine some of the features of the mystery religion of Babylon with the Christian faith, a confusion which continues down to the present day.
- D. Babylon is the fountainhead for all false religions, therefore she is called **“THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”**
1. Notice that the phrase, **“MOTHER OF HARLOTS,”** is plural, not singular.
  2. The current ecumenical emphasis has recognized differences in people, and that it is impossible to water down all theologies and practices to suit everyone.
    - a. So each group will come into this great world ecumenical system, but retain some of its peculiarities.

- b. Those who want to immerse will immerse.
  - c. Those who want to sprinkle will sprinkle.
  - d. Those who want elaborate ritual will have elaborate ritual.
3. The principle of becoming “**all things to all men**” will be taken to its perverse conclusion, all the while forgetting Biblical teaching.
- a. In the process of ecumenicalism, what is lost?
  - b. Answer: Biblical accuracy!

IV. The Woman Drunken With The Blood Of Martyrs. (17:6-7)

**17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.**

**17:7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.**

- A. The woman is pictured, not only as the source of all evil in apostate Christendom, but also as the one who is actively engaged in the persecution of the true saints.
  - 1. The true nature of Romanism’s character is here openly revealed.
    - a. As a matter of history, Rome has put to death untold millions of people in the name of religion.
    - b. The history of the Church has demonstrated that apostate Christendom has been unsparing in its persecution of those who attempt to maintain a true faith in Jesus Christ.
  - 2. What has been true in the past will be brought to its ultimate conclusion in this future time.
- B. John “**wondered,**” or “*marveled*” at the sight of “**the great whore.**”
  - 1. In response to John’s wonderings, the angel was prompted to reveal more about the “**whore**” and the Beast upon which she rides.
  - 2. When he explains the mystery of the woman and the Beast, he does it in reverse order.
    - a. In verses 8 through 17, he uses ten verses to describe the animal, and then in verse 18 devotes just one verse to the woman.
    - b. The Beast outlives the woman because the Beast is going to turn on the woman, who is in the saddle.
    - c. That will be the end of religion, per say.
  - 3. As to what we have been looking at, the woman represents apostate religion and the Beast represents godless civilization.
    - a. Chapter 19 will tell us how God plans to destroy civilization as we know it.
    - b. So there are two things that have to be done away with before God sets up His Kingdom: apostate religion and godless civilization.
  - 4. It is hard for us to realize that God hates the religions and the civilizations of this world.
    - a. Both represent the fallen Adamic culture that He will destroy before He sets up His Kingdom.

- b. The only institution that God is truly interested in this world today is His Church.
- c. This is not the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church, or the Methodist Church, but the **“church of the living God”** (I Timothy 3:15), which **“is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”** (Ephesians 1:23).

V. The Origin Of The Beast. (17:8)

**17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.**

- A. The Beast is explained chronologically as that which **“was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit . . .”**
  - 1. This is none other that Satan himself, in the person of the Antichrist.
  - 2. He existed in the past. (Isaiah 14:12-15, Genesis 3)
    - a. He cannot now be seen – he **“is not.”**
    - b. He will appear on the world scene as one that ascended **“out of the bottomless pit.”**
  - 3. His ultimate habitation will be the place of **“perdition”** – hell.
- B. No matter how great a person may be, if he does not know the Lord Jesus Christ he will face **“perdition.”**
  - 1. Although the Antichrist will be a great man in the eyes of the world, and will rule the whole world, he will be doomed because of his rejection of Christ.
  - 2. The truth is, every person who stands as an enemy of the Cross will be destroyed.
  - 3. Who is an enemy of Cross?
    - a. One who rejects the Cross of Christ as the only way to God.
    - b. One who does not accept the death of Christ as the only payment for sin.
    - c. One who does not believe that Jesus died for our sins.
    - d. One who does not believe that the penalty for our imperfections was borne by Christ on the Cross.
    - e. One who claims that there are other ways to approach God – ways other than the Cross of Jesus Christ.
    - f. One who considers the Cross of Christ as foolishness.
    - g. One who opposes and curses Christ and His Cross.
    - h. One who persecutes and attempts to stamp out Christ and His Cross.
    - i. One who denies and questions that Christ died for our sins.

VI. The Seven Heads Of The Beast. (17:9-11)

**17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.**

**17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.**

**17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.**

- A. The explanation of the Beast introduced by the unusual phrase, **“here is the mind which hath wisdom,”** anticipates the difficult and complex revelation to follow.
1. The key to the revelation is in the statement: **“The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth.”**
  2. Many Bible expositors believe this to be the literal city of Rome.
    - a. Seven hills formed the nucleus of the ancient city on the left bank of the Tiber River.
    - b. Throughout its history, Rome has been described as *“The City of Seven Hills,”* as indicated in coins which refer to it in this way and in countless allusions in Roman literature.
    - c. This passage is taken, therefore, to indicate that the seat of the ecclesiastical power will be in Rome geographically.
- B. The **“seven heads”** of the Beast, however, are said to be symbolic of the seven kings described in verse 10.
1. Five of these are said to have fallen, one exists in John’s day, the seventh is yet to come and will be followed by another described as the eighth, which is the beast itself.
    - a. The **“seven heads”** are best explained as referring to seven kings who represent seven successive forms of the kingdom.
    - b. Because the **“seven heads”** are identified with kings, some prefer to divorce the meaning from the city of Rome entirely and center the ultimate fulfillment in a rebuilt Babylon on the site of ancient Babylon.
  2. Joseph Seiss presents evidence that the **“seven mountains”** refer to successive imperial governments: *“Of the seven regal mountains, John was told ‘the five are fallen,’ dead, passed away, their day over; ‘the one is,’ that is was standing, at that moment, was then in sway and power; ‘the other is not yet come, and when he shall, he must continue a little time.’ What regal mountain, then, was in power at the time John wrote? There can be no question on that point; it was the Roman empire. Thus, then, we ascertain and identify the sixth in the list, which shows what sort of kings the angel meant. Of the same class with this, and belonging to the same category, there were five others – five which had then already run their course and passed away. But what five imperial mountains like Rome had been and gone, up to that time? Preceding Rome the world had but five great names or nationalities answering to imperial Rome, and those scarce a school-boy ought to miss. They are Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt; no more, and no less. And these all were imperial powers like Rome. Here, then are six of these regal mountains; the seventh is Not yet come. . . . Thus, then, by the clearest, most direct, and most natural signification of the words of the record, we are brought to the identification of these seven mountain kings as the seven great world-powers, which stretch from the beginning of our present world to the end of it. Daniel*

*makes the number less; but he started with his own times, and looked only down the stream. Here the account looks backward as well as forward. That which is first in Daniel is the third here, and that which is the sixth here is the fourth in Daniel. Only in the commencing point is there any difference. The visions of Daniel and the visions of John are [of] the same Divine Mind. . . .”*

3. Keith Harris adds, *“The seventh empire is the last world empire for Satan and his puppets. This empire will have control under the Antichrist when he is given his crown (6:2 – power and authority). Then, the Antichrist, as a beast, becomes an empire himself. He, himself, becomes the eighth head or eighth empire. This empire arises out of the seven (17:11).”*
  4. By these great imperial powers, then, filling up the whole interval of this world’s history, this great Harlot is said to be carried.
- C. The final form of world government, symbolized by the eighth Beast itself, is the world empire of the Great Tribulation time.
1. The revived Roman Empire which will be in sway immediately after the Rapture of the Church is apparently indicated by the seventh head.
  2. The Beast, described in verse 11 as the eighth, is the world empire which will be destroyed by Jesus Christ at His Second Coming.
- D. In summary, what is described for us in verses 8 through 11 is the final form of Gentile world power in alliance with apostate religion symbolized by the Harlot.

#### VII. The Ten Horns Of The Beast. (17:12-14)

**17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.**

**17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.**

**17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.**

- A. The final stage of the world empire is a confederacy, with a nucleus of ten kings, which are represented by the ten horns.
1. These ten kings rule simultaneously at the end time.
    - a. These ten horns are those ten kings portrayed in Daniel 2:42-44 as the ten toes of the Statue, that is, as the end- time manifestation of the Roman Empire.
    - b. In referring to Daniel 2:42-44, Daymond Duck writes, *“Many expositors refer to this last Gentle world govern-ment as the Revived Roman Empire, reconstituted Europe, Rome II, contaminated Europe, and so forth. It is not Europe alone (not iron alone). It is Europe plus others (iron plus potter’s clay). The ten toes are not ten toes of iron (ten divisions of Europe). They are ten toes of iron plus potter’s clay (ten divisions in a new Gentile world government more than Europe, but dominated by Europe). The potter’s clay indicates the involvement of nations that were not formerly part of the old Roman Empire (nations that were not iron). They are non-Roman empire nations (clay) that join with the old Roman Empire nations (iron) to*

*make up the New World Order (iron plus clay). Europe is not the last Gentile world government. It's the strength of the last Gentile world government. It joins its political, economic, and military clout with others to form one last Gentile world government. And one should not automatically assume that this last Gentile world government will be composed of ten nations, because it may be composed of ten groups of nations. If it is ten groups of nations, the EU will probably be just one group out of ten. Nevertheless, it will be the most powerful group. Clay may be a contaminant, but the EU and its Antichrist will be the primary source of corruption in this group."*

2. Daniel 7:24-28 portrays these ten horns as **"ten kings."**
  - a. Daniel 7:24 then speaks of the Antichrist as **"another horn."**
  - b. Revelation 17:12-13 shows us that these ten kings follow the Antichrist and join him in his final **"hour"** of power.
  - c. These ten end-time kings give complete allegiance to the Beast, the Antichrist.
- B. The ten kings are described as making **"war with the Lamb."**
  1. Once these kings have united in backing the Beast they will feel that they have enough strength militarily, politically, and religiously to attempt anything, including making **"war with the Lamb."**
  2. This is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, and their ultimate subjugation under the Lamb is destined to be fulfilled at His Second Coming – **"and the Lamb shall overcome them."**
  3. Why? Because **"he is Lord of lords, and King of kings."**
- C. Those who are with Christ are the **"called . . . chosen . . . and faithful,"** three glorious titles for God's people, in contrast to the **"peoples . . . multitudes . . . nations, and tongues"** who have aligned themselves with the Beast.

#### VIII. The Explanation Of The Waters. (17:15)

**17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.**

- A. In the first verse of this chapter the Harlot is seen sitting **"upon many waters."**
  1. Here the description, and the symbolic meaning, of the waters are given as referring to **"peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."**
  2. The Harlot Church dominates, by its false teachings, the roaring oceans of people which cover the globe.
- B. **"The whore"** is sitting in the saddle.
  1. Whoever sits in the saddle dominates the beast.
  2. There is no place on earth where Romanism has not gone.
- C. This is not a State-Church deal, but a Church-State deal.
  1. In State-Churches, as seen in Britain and other countries, the State runs the church, pays the salaries, keeps up the buildings, and tells the church what to do and not do, and what to teach and not teach.
    - a. In Church-States, the Church tells the State what to do.



- b. This is already true in many South American countries where the Church runs the government, dictates foreign policy, and collects tax money to support their Catholic, parochial schools.
- c. During the times of the Inquisition, the Church used the State to weed out apostates.
- 2. Think in terms of basic Catholic doctrine.
  - a. *"We are 'the Church,' and you have to belong to our church or you don't go to heaven."*
  - b. Many Catholics will deny that such is taught, but that is fundamental to basic Catholicism.
  - c. The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the true church, and everything else is apostate.
  - d. The present day practice of the Catholic Church is to reach out to Protestants and others to envelop them back into their realm of influence.

IX. The Destruction Of The Woman. (17:16-18)

**17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.**

**17:17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.**

**17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.**

- A. Here John gives us a picture of the true nature of the **"ten horns."**
  - 1. They are those who have given their power and strength willfully to the Antichrist.
    - a. They, and their appointed leader (the Antichrist) will have only used the religious beast as a catapult for world dominance.
    - b. Outwardly, they have embraced the **"whore,"** but inwardly they hate her.
  - 2. Because of their hatred of this religious system, they will **"make her desolate,"** or lay her waste; strip her **"nude"** of all her protections; they will **"eat her flesh"** by taking all her spoils and riches; and they will **"burn her with fire,"** that is, do away with all her remnants.
    - a. The destruction of the harlot will reduce all her pomp and gorgeous robes to naught.
    - b. A godless civilization will eliminate a godless religion.
- B. The False Prophet himself, however, is not yet destroyed.
  - 1. It is possible that he, after seeing the brutality of the government and the failure of his personal plan, completely aligns with the intent of the Antichrist.
  - 2. After all, the Antichrist, at this time, is the *"new religion"* and *"new messiah."*

- C. All these things come about because **“God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will . . .”**
1. Due to His will for judgment to fall on the false religious systems of the world, God causes the ten kings to agree and give their kingdoms to the Beast until the words of God are fulfilled.
  2. Daniel 2:20-22 tells us, **“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.”**
- D. The **“great city”** mentioned in the closing verse can be none other than Vatican City.
1. Throughout history, kings and nobles alike have feared the popes after they assumed power from their Roman emperors.
  2. This same fear drives the ten kings to destroy her religious system.
- E. After the disposal of Babylon in its religious form, by its destruction at the hands of the Beast, the prophetic revelation in Chapter 18 turns to Babylon as a political force, also destined for destruction at a later date.

**Conclusion:** In the meantime, presently, God calls His children to **“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 1:3). We must be aware **“that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”** (I Timothy 4:1).

We must not give ourselves over to **“endless genealogies, which minister questions”** (I Timothy 1:4), but rather speak **“the truth in love”** (Ephesians 4:15), and convert **“the sinner from the error of his way”** (James 5:20), because Jesus is Coming. Only then will we be recognized as set apart unto God and separate from the Apostate Church.

# THE FALL OF POLITICAL BABYLON

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 18:1-24

**Introduction:** The tragic death of Diana, princess of Wales, in an automobile wreck in Paris in August 1997 mesmerized the world. Few such events make such an incredible impact on a generation.

During the week that she lay in state, the people of Great Britain knew no bounds in their outpouring of grief. Then came the funeral itself: soaring Westminster Abby, a solemn entourage, muffled bells tolling, two young princes left motherless, touching eulogies, and a moving musical tribute.

Diana was the most photographed woman in world history. Nobody could believe that the beautiful young princess, so beloved and full of life, was dead. At one moment, she had been full of hope and dreams. In the blink of an eye, disaster fell. Never would we see her again.

The eighteenth chapter of Revelation tells also of sudden doom coming to a royal female figure. Unlike Diana, she is a queen full of every sort of evil. She is political Babylon. Like Diana, her death is unexpected and catastrophic. At the passing of Babylon, all the rulers of the world will wail and mourn, but the musical tributes are not destined to become the world's best-selling recordings; instead, they have become part of God's inspired Scriptures – nearly 2,000 years ago.

## I. The Fall Of Babylon Announced. (18:1-2a)

**18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.**

**18:2a And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen**

...

- A. The opening phrase of Revelation 18 marks a later revelation than that given in chapter 17.
  - 1. The term, “**another**,” makes it clear that this angel is the same in kind as the angel in 17:1.
  - 2. The great power and glory of the announcing angel testifies of the greatness of his proclamation – “**Babylon the great is fallen.**”
- B. Scholars debate whether the Babylon described here is the actual ancient city or if it is simply symbolic of that city.
  - 1. There are two prominent prophecies that concern themselves with the destruction of Babylon. (Jeremiah 50:35-38, Isaiah 13:17-22)
    - a. The history of the ancient city of Babylon goes all the way back to the tower of Babel in Genesis 11.
    - b. In the 7<sup>th</sup>-century B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, of Daniel's time, ruled the city, and its kingdom, at the zenith of its power.
    - c. When the Medes and Persians conquered the city, they came in suddenly and gained control, but did not destroy the city.
    - d. Instead they made it their capital.

- e. Later, Alexander the Great was there, and planned to make Babylon his capital, but then he suddenly died.
  - f. After the time of Christ, the Apostle Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon. (I Peter 5:13)
2. Because there has never been a sudden destruction of Babylon, the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah have yet to be fulfilled.
- a. In the 12<sup>th</sup>-century after Christ, Babylon had grown and several mosques had been erected there.
    - (1) Later, a city by the name of “*Hillah*” was built there.
    - (2) In 1900, Hillah had a population of 10,000.
    - (3) More recently, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, the ancient city began to be reconstructed according to Nebuchadnezzar’s original plans.
    - (4) Presently, the city of Babylon continues to exist along the Euphrates River in the country of Iraq.
    - (5) An interesting note should be made that during the Gulf War no “*Coalition Forces*” were ever engaged in conflict around Babylon.
  - b. Thus, it is evident that the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah have not yet been fulfilled, for they emphasize that the city will never again be inhabited after the destruction to which they refer.
3. It must also be kept in mind that there will be yet another great assault against the righteousness of God near the end of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.
- a. At that time, Satan will once again be loosed for a “**little season**” to deceive the nations. (Revelation 20:3)
  - b. It is quite possible that at that time Isaiah and Jeremiah’s prophecies will literally be fulfilled.
  - c. Since Babylon was where the first incorporated assault by man against God occurred (the tower of Babel), it would be reasonable that it would also become the final place of organized rebellion against God.
4. Therefore, the reference here to the city of Babylon, in Revelation 18, might best be understood in reference to the Antichrist’s overall kingdom.
- a. Babylon is a vile, wicked system that is the exact opposite of Christ’s holy city, the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2).
  - b. The city symbolizes the wickedness of the Antichrist and all that he values.
  - c. Chapter 17 described the fall of her false religious system and now chapter 18 describes what will happen to her political or economical system.
- C. John sees here an angel crying out, “**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.**”
- 1. Again, the double emphasis of the phrase “**is fallen,**” denotes certainty.
  - 2. She has indeed fallen, for her sins are “**great.**”

II. Indictments Against Babylon. (18:2b-3)

**18:2b Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.**

**18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.**

Notes

- A. The godlessness of her sin – she has **“become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird”** (18:2b).
1. The downfall of this great commercial center of the world is followed by her becoming **“the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.”**
    - a. The system is infested with demon-worship.
    - b. The system of the Antichrist is a system of Satanism.
    - c. The system is occultic, filled with witchcraft and astrology.
  2. Demons from the bottomless pit, unrestrained by the Lord, will infest the world. (Revelation 9)
    - a. People will finally realize that *“science”* will never create a perfect world.
    - b. As a result, men will turn toward *“mysticism,”* believing and following demonic forces.
    - c. Adrian Rogers is quoted as saying, *“The whole thing will be as messy as a birdcage, filled with fighting and hate.”*
- B. The vulgarity of her sin – **“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her”** (18:3a)
1. Fornication is used in two ways in Scripture.
    - a. First, it means the actual sin of sexual immorality.
    - b. Second, it means the sin of unfaithfulness and spiritual immorality: lusting after other gods.
  2. The leaders of the world have been involved in spiritual adultery. (Cp. Revelation 17:2)
- C. The scope of her sin – **“The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies”** (18:3b).
1. Businessmen have become rich through her abundance **“delicacies”** – literally, through her *“excessive luxuries.”*
    - a. Verses 7 and 9 speaks of her as living **“deliciously.”**
    - b. Verse 14 refers to her possessing **“all things which were dainty and goodly.”**
    - c. Verse 16 describes her as being **“clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls.”**
    - d. In her streets, according to verse 22, are heard **“the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters . . . [and] craftsman.”**
  2. In verse 23 we read of her merchants becoming great through her **“sorceries,”** literally meaning she is *“an enchanter of drugs.”*
    - a. The Antichrist is going to legalize drugs, an idea thrown about today in political circles as drug use has proliferated.

- b. Marijuana, cocaine, and heroin will be legalized and sold through government regulated merchants.
  - c. Many, besides the drug cartels, will become wealthy, selling drugs to people.
3. One longtime inner city pastor has said that he has yet to see a person involved in Satan worship who did not first open his mind to mystical experiences through drug use.
- a. One leads to the other.
  - b. So the Antichrist's government will endorse drug use by legalizing it, and the merchants of the earth will get rich by participating in its trade.
  - c. This will have the effect of encouraging more people to become involved with Satan, and further result in more ungodliness.
4. The scope of her sin will result in a time of careless ease.
- a. The Prophet Ezekiel makes it clear that careless ease was the very reason God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (Ezekiel 16:49-50, "**Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.**")
  - b. Rebuilt Babylon will be guilty of spiritual adultery, even as was Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - c. Today, the biggest excuse for having no time for God is business.
  - d. This will also be the excuse of commercial Babylon and God will destroy the city for such careless ease.
5. The downfall of this great commercial center of the world is followed by it becoming "**the habitation of devils.**"

### III. Parenthesis – A Call To Separation From Babylon. (18:4)

**18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.**

- A. Theodore Epp – "*God always pauses in His statements of judgment to call for separation.*"
  - 1. These verses teach us that God has His people in the world to the very end.
  - 2. The Church has already been removed at the Rapture, but others will become believers during the Tribulation.
- B. The One who is speaking in this verse is the Son of God Himself.
  - 1. He is calling His people out of Babylon before the judgment comes.
  - 2. The call is for a physical separation with a corollary to the experience of Lot in Sodom.
    - a. As Lot was warned to get out of Sodom to escape the deluge of fire (Genesis 19:15-22), so these people of God are warned. (Deuteronomy 4:30-31, "**When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt**

- return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice: for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God; he will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.”)**
- b. Such also was God’s warning to Israel in Jeremiah 51:5-6, 45, **“For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, of his God, of Jehovah of hosts; though their land is full of guilt against the Holy One of Israel. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and save every man his life; be not cut off in her iniquity: for it is the time of Jehovah’s vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense. . . . My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and save yourselves every man from the fierce anger of Jehovah.”**
3. The purposes behind the leaving of Babylon are twofold:
    - a. That they partake not of her sins.
    - b. That they flee the judgment that is to fall.
- C. There is great application of this truth for believers today.
1. God also wants us to be a separate people.  
(II Corinthians 6:14-17, **“Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what agreement hath a believer with an unbeliever? and what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you.”)**
    - a. Christians are also warned not to love the world.  
(I John 2:15-17, **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”)**
    - b. This same truth is emphasized in James 4:4, **“Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.”**
  2. Believers should also not walk after the old nature, but after the Spirit.  
(Galatians 5:16, **“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”)**
- D. The sins of Babylon are declared to reach to the heavens with the result that **“God hath remembered,”** or judges, **“her iniquities.”**
1. The fact that her sins have reached unto heaven is an allusion to the tower of Babel, which began the wicked career of ancient Babylon. (Genesis 11:5-9)
    - a. Today, God is withholding His judgment and some think He is not noticing the evil that is taking place.
    - b. However, the present purpose of God’s long-suffering is clearly set forth in II Peter 3:9, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”**

2. Though God has permitted the increase of sin, its ultimate divine judgment is inescapable.  
(Galatians 6:7-8, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.”**)
  - a. The coming judgment will be just.  
(Romans 2:4-11, **“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God.”**)
  - b. The writer of the Book of Hebrews asked, **“how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard”** (Hebrews 2:3).
3. Again, Paul’s reminder is, **“Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord”** (II Corinthians 6:17a).

#### IV. Further Indictments Against Babylon. (18:5-8)

**18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.**

**18:6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.**

**18:7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.**

**18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.**

- A. The enormity of her sin – **“For her sins have reached unto the heaven . . .”** (18:5-6)
  1. Babylon has filled her cup of sin to the brim.
    - a. Her sins are so great that they have mounted up to heaven.
    - b. As the people of Babel wanted to build a tower to heaven, the people of the Tribulation will do so also, building a tower of sin that reaches to heaven.
  2. Not to be forgotten, though, is that God is waiting for the right time for the day of His righteous vengeance.



- B. The boasting of her sin – **“she hath glorified herself . . .”** (18:7)
1. Here we see God’s law of sowing and reaping coming into effect. (Job 4:8, **“Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.”** Cp. Galatians 6:7)
    - a. Humanity will get away with sin forever.
    - b. Except for God’s mercy, most of us would have been dead and in hell long ago.
    - c. His grace, however, passes all understanding. (II Peter 3:9, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”**)
  2. The time for reaping political Babylon’s iniquity has finally come to pass.
    - a. Verse 7 could literally read, *“the double is to be doubled.”*
    - b. In keeping with the enormity of her sin, the voice from heaven now calls on God to reward Babylon even as she rewarded the people of God.
    - c. The standard of her judgment is in contrast to her luxurious lifestyle and self-glorification. (Luke 12:48b, **“ . . . And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.”**)
  3. It is very possible that James 5:1-6 gives hint to the judgment of these verses, **“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”**
- C. The guiltiness of her sin – **“therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine . . .”** (18:8)
1. The collapse of Babylon will come quickly.
    - a. In **“one day,”** the entire system will collapse.
    - b. Because of her guilt, God will cause the greatest economic crash in history, surpassing even the *“Great Crash”* that led to the Great Depression in 1929.
    - c. How unprepared the merchants of the world will be when the judgment comes.
  2. Babylon’s wishful thinking will be rewarded with sudden destruction.
    - a. Her vaunted strength is as nothing compared to the power of God.
    - b. Like the church at Laodicea, her wealth had brought her a false sense of security. (Revelation 3:17, **“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”**)

V. The Lament Of The Monarchs Of The Earth. (18:9-10)

Notes

**18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,**

**18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.**

- A. There is going to be a redistribution of wealth in the future, with money in the hands of a very few.
  - 1. All of the money will be centralized in one pot.
    - a. There will be one ruler, and people will not be able to buy or sell without his mark on their hand or forehead signifying that they agree with, and are in partnership with the ruler's system.
    - b. Everyone will finally think that they have a fair, economic system and live in a state of relative prosperity.
  - 2. Yet, everything in that city will be in rebellion against Almighty God, and centers on the Antichrist.
- B. When it all comes crashing down, the kings of the earth will go into moaning.
  - 1. They had yielded their allegiance to the Antichrist and hoped for stability.
  - 2. But in **"one day"** it will all come apart, and all they will be able to do is sit and wail.
  - 3. No one ever dreamed that such a great city would be so judged.
- C. The city is destroyed at the outpouring of the seventh bowl which occurs before the final end of Armageddon. (Revelation 16:17-21)
  - 1. This one brief hour will dash all hope for future profits.
  - 2. J. Vernon McGee writes, ". . . *Here in chapter 18 we see that the kings of the earth love commercial Babylon because of the revenue she brought to their coffers. In fact, it is called here fornication – you can't find a better word for it than that! All the lobbyists were in Babylon, not Washington D.C. They were representing all the great corporations in the world. But the kings desert Babylon like rats leaving a sinking ship; their mourning is both pathetic and contemptible. They eulogize her with [commendations] of praise, but there is a hopelessness in their anguish. They marvel at the sudden destruction of that which they thought was gilt-edged security. The judgment came in the space of one hour, reminding us of the sudden devastation caused by atomic explosions. This is a frightful picture presented to us, and it is the final . . . catastrophic judgment that will bring Christ to the earth to set up His kingdom.*"
- D. In spite of its greatness, strength, power and accomplishments, Babylon, nevertheless, falls in one hour.

VI. The Lament Of The Merchants Of The Earth. (18:11-17a)

**18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:**

**18:12** The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

**18:13** And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

**18:14** And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

**18:15** The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

**18:16** And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

**18:17a** For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.

- A. The picture of Babylon's wealth and trade is one of complete abandonment to the wealth of this world and total disregard of God who gave it.
  - 1. The economic character of the city of Babylon is indicated in the fact that the merchants weep and mourn for her.
    - a. All the things that men have dreamed of, schemed for, and sold their souls to, will one day turn to "*rust and dust.*"
    - b. All of the great businesses, all of the monopolies and conglomerates can do nothing to stop it.
    - c. All of the wheeler-dealers will be wiped out in one hour.
    - d. All the merchants will sit weeping on their stores of merchandise.
  - 2. Verse 14 tells of the sweeping removal of all her precious possessions.
- B. As with the kings, the mourning of the merchants is not for the city itself, but because their wealth derived from their trade with her is now come to an end.

#### VII. The Lament Of the Mariners Of The World. (18:17b-19)

**18:17b** And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

**18:18** And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

**18:19** And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

- A. Joining the merchants, the shippers, the transport companies, the airlines, and freight haulers will all be sitting on their hands with nothing to do.
  - 1. The sailors and longshoremen will posture and weep.
  - 2. They had all decided that materialism was the most important thing in the world, and it is now gone within an hour.

(Matthew 16:26, “**For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?**”)

- B. All that we have seen regarding commercial Babylon has an application to us today.
1. How do the luxuries of today’s world affect you?
    - a. What is your attitude toward them?
    - b. What have you set your heart on?
  2. Would it break your heart if you saw the things of this world go up in smoke?
    - a. Colossians 3:1-2, “**If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.**”
    - b. Matthew 6:19-21, “**Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.**”
  3. Walvoord – “*In contrast to the transitory wealth and glory of this world, which are here consumed by a great judgment of God, are the true riches of faith, devotion, and service for God laid up in heaven beyond the destructive hands of man and protected by the righteous power of God.*”

VIII. Rejoicing Over The Fall Of Babylon. (18:20)

**18:20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.**

- A. In contrast to the grief overtaking worldly rulers, and merchants by the destruction of Babylon, those in heaven are called upon to rejoice at the righteous judgment of God.
- B. The expression, “**hath avenged,**” literally means, “*God has inflicted His judgment on them,*” bringing to bear upon Babylon the righteous recompense for her martyrdom of the saints.
- C. Merrill Tenney writes, “*The kings and merchants mourn because their luxury and power have been destroyed, and thus their hopes of a civilization of complete comfort has vanished. Babylon, their earthly and sensual paradise, has been destroyed, and they are left inconsolable. On the other hand, the angel bids the people of God to rejoice, because God has finally avenged the blood of His people on their chief enemy. . . . The removal of Babylon thus makes way for the city of God, the civilization that God produces through regeneration.*”

IX. The Utter Destruction Of Babylon. (18:21-24)

**18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.**

**18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;**

**18:23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.**

**18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.**

- A. Picture a 300-pound stone being cast off of a bridge into the sea.
  - 1. It falls with increasing velocity, it strikes the water in a tremendous splash, and then almost instantaneously it sinks and fades from sight as if gone and forgotten without a trace.
  - 2. The waves turn into ripples which eventually turn into calm.
  - 3. So it will be with Babylon in the end-times.
- B. Her judgment is described in Revelation 16 when the seventh bowl of God's wrath is poured out. (Revelation 16:17-21)
  - 1. That which characterized Babylon's life, and featured in its luxurious existence, is now silent.
  - 2. Her very silence is a testimony to God's devastating judgment.
  - 3. The greatness that was the secret of her rise in power and influence makes her downfall all the more impressive.
- C. There are obvious parallels to the rise and fall of Babylon in its varied forms in Scripture.
  - 1. Babylon Historically, symbolized by the tower reaching to heaven, proposed to maintain the union of the world through a common purpose and a common tongue.
  - 2. Babylon Ecclesiastically, symbolized by the woman in Revelation 17, proposes a common worship and a common religion through the uniting of a world Church.
  - 3. Babylon Politically, symbolized by the great city of Revelation 18, proposes to achieve its domination of the world by a common market and world government.
- D. Each of these forms of Babylon are ultimately destroyed by Christ at His second coming. (Revelation 19:11-21)
  - 1. The triumph of God is witnessed historically in the scattering of the people and the unfinished tower in Genesis 11.
  - 2. The triumph of God is witnessed prophetically in the destruction of the world Church by the killing of the harlot in Revelation 17 and the destruction of the city in Revelation 18.
- E. With the graphic description of the fall of Babylon, the way is cleared for the presentation of the major theme of the Book of Revelation – the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of His glorious Kingdom.

1. Verses 22-24 declares an end to the last great stronghold of Satan and his religion.
  2. Satan, who has been a murderer from the beginning, will murder no more.
  3. When the fifth seal was opened, the martyrs, who were seen under the altar, were crying for their blood to be avenged on those who dwell on the earth. (Revelation 6:9-11)
    - a. They were told to rest a while longer until other believers joined them in death.
    - b. With the destruction of Babylon, this time has been fulfilled and now the blood of the martyred saints will be avenged.
  4. With the destruction of Babylon, the stage is now set for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
- X. Annotation: Steps To Destruction.
- A. One of the most widely read books of all time is the book entitled, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
  - B. This book was written in 1788, by Edward Gibbon, who set forth five basic reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire:
    1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
    2. Higher and higher taxes; the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace.
    3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming more exciting every year, more brutal, and more immoral.
    4. The building of great armaments when the real enemy was within – the decay of individual responsibility.
    5. The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and losing power to guide the people.
  - C. Gibbons further maintains that nations progress through the following sequence:
    1. From bondage to spiritual faith.
    2. From spiritual faith to great courage.
    3. From great courage to liberty.
    4. From liberty to abundance.
    5. From abundance to selfishness.
    6. From selfishness to complacency.
    7. From complacency to apathy.
    8. From apathy to dependence.
    9. From dependence back again to bondage.
  - D. Compare both these lists to America today.
    1. These comments about world governments show us that a nation's destiny is also affected by the relationship its people have with God. (II Chronicles 7:14, **"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."**)
    2. Thus, we see that it is extremely important to know Jesus Christ as Savior and are bringing Him glory in the world in which we live.

**Conclusion:** While we may not live to see the final form of Babylon, the spirit of Babylon is thriving today. First-century Christians read the exhortation to “*come out of her*” and had to decide how best to obey the divine command. To the extent that such Babyloniash attitudes have crept into our lives today, we must confess our sins and renew our commitment to live in light of Christ’s Second Coming.

*Notes*





## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 19:1-21

**Introduction:** John's vision of the Second Coming of Christ in Revelation 19 is not what we expect. We see no description of believers being resurrected. Instead, we hear about a wedding celebration.

John provides for us no detailed description of the last battle Christ wages against His enemies. Instead, we see Christ alone casting the two ring-leaders of rebellion into hell and killing off all the rest – with the armies of heaven following and observing.

Christ is not seen coming as a lowly babe in a manger, but as the Sovereign Lord and King. Upon His vesture and upon His thigh are written **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,”** leaving no doubt as to whom is executing judgment upon all the ungodly.

In this chapter, Jesus is portrayed first as the Bridegroom ready to enjoy His wedding and wedding supper, and then as the warrior King charging forth to do battle against His enemies.

### I. The Alleluia Of The Saints In Heaven. (19:1-3)

A. J. Vernon McGee points out that chapter 19 *“marks a dramatic change in the tone of Revelation. The destruction of Babylon, the capital of the Beast's kingdom, marks the end of the Great Tribulation. The somber gives way to song. The transfer is from darkness to light, from black to white, from dreary days of judgment to bright days of blessing. This chapter . . . ushers in the greatest event for the earth – the Second Coming of Christ. It is the bridge between the Great Tribulation and the Millennium.”*

1. In Revelation 5 there was great, universal adoration because the Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ, had been found to open the seven-sealed book.
2. The hosts of heaven rejoiced because the One who could properly judge sin and bring in His righteous kingdom had been found.
3. When the seventh seal was opened, the judgments of God were seen to be so severe that there was **“silence in heaven about the space of half an hour”** (8:1).
4. At this point, in Revelation 19, Christ has shown Himself to be the victorious, triumphant, and sovereign Ruler.
5. Great rejoicing results.

B. The people in heaven are shouting **“Alleluia”** because of their salvation.

**19:1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:**

1. God had purposed to redeem the world.
  - a. What He began at Calvary is now nearing completion.
  - b. John tells us of **“much people in heaven.”**
    - (1) Revelation 5:9 reminds us that God has redeemed a people unto Himself, by the blood of Jesus Christ, **“out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”**

- (2) Because He **“was not willing that any should perish”** (II Peter 3:9), His message of redemption had gone out to every tribe and nation on this earth, and many had responded.
  - (3) For this reason, people from every walk of life, who have turned to Jesus Christ, now join in this great song of praise **“unto the Lord our God.”**
- 2. The saints are here seen expressing their praise to the Lord with four great words.
    - a. **“Salvation”** signifies deliverance.
    - b. **“Glory”** speaks of God’s moral glory in judgment.
    - c. **“Honor”** speaks of His rightful authoritative position in the execution of His judgment upon the harlot.
    - d. **“Power”** testifies of His sovereign might.
  - C. Not only is their praise for His redemption, but also for His retribution.

**19:2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.**

- 1. The judgments of God upon Babylon are declared to be **“true and righteous.”**
  - 2. It is said here that the Lord has **“judged the great whore . . . and hath avenged the blood of his saints.”**
- D. The ascription of praise is followed by a second **“Alleluia”** and the statement that the smoke of Babylon will continue to rise **“for ever and ever.”**

**19:3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.**

- 1. This perpetual judgment will be fulfilled upon all who were engaged in **“her”** wicked ways.
- 2. This further emphasizes the eternity of God’s judgment.

II. The Alleluia Of The Twenty-Four Elders. (19:4)

**19:4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.**

- A. A third round of **“Alleluia”** is raised by the **“four and twenty elders and the four beasts.”**
  - 1. With the **“four and twenty elders”** representing the Church, and the **“four beasts”** in reference to other heavenly beings, it appears that all of heaven has joined in this worship and praise.
  - 2. Sin is about to be judged!
- B. The immediate context is taking us to **“the marriage of the Lamb,”** verse 7.
  - 1. This is the last time that the Church is referred to as **“elders.”**

2. The figure now changes to the Church as the Bride of Christ.
- C. The Church alone is the Bride of Christ.
1. In Revelation 4:1, the Church is Raptured and taken to heaven before the Tribulation begins.
    - a. Daniel 12:1, 11-12 indicates that the resurrection of the Old Testament saints will be after the Tribulation.
    - b. Those saved during the Tribulation will also be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation.
  2. Consider for a moment several passages that deal with the Church as the Bride of Christ:
    - a. In II Corinthians 11:2 Paul writes, **“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”**
    - b. Ephesians 5:22-24, **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”**
      - (1) The wife is the type of the Church, and the husband, as the Bridegroom, is the type of Christ.
      - (2) Then verse 25 says, **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”**
    - c. Ephesians 5:30-32 continue, **“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”**
      - (1) Again a portrayal of the Christian husband and Christian wife picturing Christ and the Church.
      - (2) It is said of them that **“they two shall be one flesh.”**
      - (3) As believers, we are part of Jesus Christ, Him being the Husband, and we being the Bride.
  3. Down in verse 7, it is said, **“for the marriage of the Lamb is come.”**

### III. The Final Alleluia Of The Great Multitude.

**19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.**

**19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.**

- A. A voice is now heard coming out of the throne calling upon the servants of God to praise the Lord.
1. This praise takes us all the way back to the Davidic Covenant in which God promised that He would raise One upon David’s throne who would rule the world.

2. In II Samuel 7:16 in speaking of King David we read, **“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”**
- B. Notice again the order of these events.
1. First, there is redemption through which God’s people are saved.
  2. Second, there is retribution, where God judges His enemies.
  3. Third, there is a celebration of our relationship with God; He is our God and we are His servants.
  4. Finally, there is a celebration of His reign, with a great host singing **“Alleluia.”**
- C. Before Christ returns to the earth for a honeymoon with His Bride, there is going to be a wedding, and you and I, as believers, will be part of it.
1. This might be part of what Jesus was looking at in Hebrews 12:2, when it says, **“... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame ...”**
  2. This is an occasion for every true servant of God to praise the Lord.
- D. Continuing the praise of the Lord, the **“great multitude”** now announces a major feature of the Lord’s reign upon the earth: the Marriage of the Bride.

#### IV. The Marriage Of The Lamb Announced. (19:7-8)

**19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**

**19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**

- A. Parenthetical thought:
1. John has been viewing the glory of the Raptured Church, yet he passed over another important event which will also occur prior to the marriage.
    - a. Immediately following the Rapture, and prior to the Marriage, believers will face a judgment.
    - b. In I Corinthians 3:11-15, Paul discusses the Judgment [Bema] Seat of Christ, **“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”**
  2. Paul affirms that this judgment is for believers only because it involves those who built their lives upon the foundation of **“Jesus Christ.”**
    - a. This judgment is not about salvation, but about service.
    - b. The believer’s motive for service will face a fiery judgment.
      - (1) Rewards will consist of **“gold, silver, [and] precious stones.”**

- (2) Losses will be displayed as the consumed ashes of burnt **“wood, hay, [and] stubble.”**
3. Previously, Isaiah 64:6 describes us **“all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”**
- a. II Corinthians 5:21 reminds us that our present standing before God is because of **“the righteousness of God”** found in Christ.
  - b. Only after the Judgment Seat of Christ can the Church, having **“made herself ready”** be **“arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”**
  - c. A righteousness provided by the Groom, but worn by the Bride.
- B. Those in the **“great multitude,”** composed of tribulation saints, regard the wife of the Lamb as an entity other than themselves.
1. The multitude expresses their joy that the marriage has come and that His wife has **“made herself ready.”**
  2. The Old Testament saints are part of this **“great multitude.”**
  3. Even John the Baptist designated himself as only a **“friend of the bridegroom”** in John 3:29.
- C. Though marriage customs varied in the ancient world, usually there were three major components:
1. The marriage contract was arranged by the parents when the parties to the marriage were still children.
  2. At a later time, when a couple had reached a suitable age, there was a ceremony in which the groom, accompanied by his friends, would go to the house of his bride and escort her back to his home.
  3. The marriage supper would then be held at the groom’s home, to which the guests were invited.
- D. The marriage symbolism is beautifully fulfilled in the relationship of Christ to His Church.
1. In the New Testament, the Church is pictured as a virgin waiting for the coming of her Bridegroom.
  2. The wedding contract was consummated at the Cross, when the Church was redeemed.
  3. When Christ comes for His Church at the Rapture, the second phase of the wedding is fulfilled, He receives His Bride.
  4. The third phase then follows, which is the wedding supper.
  5. That which is being announced in Revelation 19 is not the wedding union, but the wedding feast.
- V. The Blessedness Of Those Called To The Marriage Supper. (19:9-10)

**19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.**

- A. Three questions need to be answered concerning the marriage feast:
1. When will this feast take place?
    - a. Believers now living on the earth are betrothed to Christ.

- b. The Church will be Raptured from the earth before the Tribulation begins.
  - c. The wedding will then take place in heaven while Tribulation rages on the earth.
  - d. After the Tribulation, when the Lord Jesus returns to earth with His Bride, the “**marriage supper [feast]**” will take place.
2. How long will it last?
- a. The Marriage Supper will last throughout the entire Millennium, for the Church is still called “**the Lamb’s wife**” when it is ushered into the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:9-10
  - b. The New Jerusalem, then, will become the eternal home of the Bride.
3. Who are the guests, the “**great multitude,**” spoken of back in verse 6?
- a. Old Testament saints.  
(Luke 13:28-29, “**There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.**”)
  - b. Tribulation saints – those believers who will be martyred during the Tribulation Period.  
(Revelation 20:4, “**And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**”)
  - c. Believing Israelites and Gentiles living on the earth at the end of the Tribulation will be ushered into the Millennium in their natural state as guests. (Matthew 25:1-13, 31-34)
- B. John is so overwhelmed by the announcement of the blessing upon those who are called to the marriage supper that he falls down to worship the one who told him these things.

**19:10a And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God:**

- 1. He is quickly reprimanded, being reminded that the speaker is only a creature of God and that all worship should be directed toward Him alone.
  - 2. It was Satan’s downfall that caused him to desire to be worshiped as God.
- C. The messenger tells John that “**the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**”

**19:10b For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**

- 1. Prophecy is wrapped up in Jesus Christ.
  - a. All of history points to Him.

- b. He is the Groom and He is to be glorified.
- 2. In our earthly weddings, it is the bride who gets all the glory.
  - a. She walks down the aisle and everyone stands.
  - b. She wears the beautiful white dress and everyone admires her.
- 3. But at the wedding of the Lamb, everyone will be worshipping the Groom.

VI. The Revelation Of The King Of Kings. (19:11-13)

- A. At this point in the Book of Revelation, the climax of the revelation is reached with the presentation of Jesus Christ as the **glorified “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

**19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.**

**19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.**

**19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.**

- 1. Though the wedding feast has been announced, the events of verses 11-21 must take place before the wedding feast of the Millennium.
- 2. The revelation here stands in contrast to the Christ of the Gospels where He is revealed in rejection, humiliation, suffering, and death.
- 3. His Return is to be one of triumph, glory, sovereignty, and majesty.
- B. The Apostle John says, **“I saw heaven opened.”**
  - 1. There are those who would again try to explain this chapter away, claiming that Jesus is not bodily returning to this earth. (Cp. Acts 1:11)
    - a. Some claim that this refers to God taking us to heaven when we die.
    - b. Others say that Christ’s return will be like the Holy Spirit’s coming on the day of Pentecost – not visibly, but invisibly.
    - c. Yet John sees it happening and declares, **“every eye shall see him”** (Revelation 1:7).
  - 2. Earlier, in Revelation 4:1-2, heaven was opened to let John enter it by the spirit.
    - a. Now heaven opens for Christ to return to the earth.
    - b. John’s vision, here, is one of Christ’s departure from heaven along with the saints and the holy angels.
- C. This passage contains one of the most graphic pictures of the Second Coming of Christ to be found anywhere in Scripture.
  - 1. Merrill Tenney describes His Second Coming as following *“the pattern of a Roman triumphal procession. When a general returned from a successful campaign, he and his legions were granted the right to parade up the Via Sacra, the main street of Rome that led from the Forum to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Mounted on a white horse, the general rode at the head of the troops, followed by the wagon loads of booty that he had taken from the conquered nation, and by the chained captives that were to be executed or sold in the slave markets of the city. The chief captives or*

*rebels were remanded to the Mamertine Prison, where they were usually executed, while sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered in the temple.”*

2. Many Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments, anticipate the Second Coming of Christ.
  - a. Zechariah 14:3-4, **“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”**
  - b. Matthew 24:27-31, **“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”**
- D. John describes the coming of Christ.
  1. He is riding on a **“white horse,”** a horse of victorious warfare.
    - a. In Revelation 6:2, we saw the imposter (Antichrist) riding on a white horse.
    - b. The Antichrist was attempting to make people believe he was really the Messiah, and he deceived many.
  2. He that sat on the horse is called **“Faithful and True.”**
    - a. He has come to execute the longtime program and promise of God.
    - b. He is the standard of Truth.
  3. He has come to **“judge and make war.”**
    - a. This stands in contrast to His first coming.
    - b. He will return as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, judging the sin of the world.
    - c. Kings and rulers will think up pretexts for going to war, but Christ will rely on His righteousness for warfare.
    - d. He is going to make war and defeat His enemies.
  4. **“His eyes were as a flame of fire.”**
    - a. This speaks of perfect judgment.
    - b. Nothing will escape Him; no one is able to hide from Him.
  5. **“On his head were many crowns.”**
    - a. When He came the first time that crowned Him with a crown of thorns.
    - b. When He comes back in power and great glory, He will be crowned with **“many crowns,”** or *“diadems”* representing sovereign authority.



6. **“He had a name written, that no man knew, but he him-self.”**
  - a. There are still some mysteries left unknown to us.
  - b. Unfortunately, there are probably those Bible teachers that have surmised this **“name.”**
7. The Lord is seen **“clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.”**
  - a. Whose blood?
    - (1) Some have argued that it is His own blood, a reference to His crucifixion.
    - (2) Others think it might be the martyrs’ blood that has aroused their King to act.
  - b. In light of Isaiah 63:2-4, and in keeping with the language of treading the winepress in Revelation 14:20, the text favors the view that His robe is covered with His enemies’ blood.  
(Isaiah 63:2-4, **“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”**)
8. His name is **“The Word of God.”**
  - a. The opening verses of John’s Gospel give Jesus the simple, but profound, title, **“the Word”** (John 1:1, 14).
  - b. The opening verse of I John gives Jesus the title, **“The Word of life.”**
  - c. Here, John ascribes to Jesus His full title, **“The Word of God.”**

VII. The Coming Of The King Of Kings. (19:14-16)

**19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**

**19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

**19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**

- A. Accompanying Christ at His Second Coming are those described as **“the armies which were in heaven.”**
  1. The host, or armies, of heaven are usually supernatural angelic beings. (Deuteronomy 33:2, Psalm 68:17, I Kings 22:19, Luke 2:13)
  2. Not doubt, these armies also include the Redeemed of the Ages.
- B. Out of Christ’s mouth goes **“a sharp sword.”**
  1. The word for **“sword”** indicates a long Thracian sword, or one unusually large or longer than most swords.
  2. The word used here represents a sharp instrument of war with which Christ will **“smite the nations”** and establish His absolute rule.
- C. It is said that **“He shall rule . . . with a rod of iron.”**

1. Here, picturing the Millennial rule of Christ, is the language of Psalm 2:9, **“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”**
  2. After Armageddon, during the 1,000 year Millennial period, Christ’s rule will be absolute and authoritative.
  3. Although Christ will reign during the Millennium, sinners will still be born of those who enter into that period in their natural state. (Zechariah 14:16-21, Revelation 20:7-10)
- D. God’s divine act of judgment is described as Him treading **“the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”** (cp. Revelation 14:19-20)
1. Matthew 24:29-31 shows that this scene occurs immediately at the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period.
  2. In that Day of Judgment it will be too late to expect the mercy of God.
  3. There is nothing more inflexible than Divine Judgment where grace has been spurned.
  4. The fury of His wrath at His Second Coming is in sharp contrast to His gentleness at His First Coming.
- E. Jesus Christ comes as **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”**
1. Our world today is in serious trouble, but we will never find the answers we need in science or politics or wealth.
    - a. Science discovers interesting facts, but they will never find a way to take the hurt out of a man’s heart.
    - b. Governments can pass laws ordering people to beat their swords into plows, but they will never reform the longings of sinful man.
    - c. Wealth can make you feel good, but it will never fulfill the deep longing men have for peace.
    - d. These all give us more information, but none of them can truly solve man’s problems.
  2. The only answer for this world is the hope of Jesus Christ.
    - a. It is for this reason that the Christian prays, **“Thy kingdom come . . .”**
    - b. In view of these things, how important it is to answer the invitation of Psalm 2:10-12, while there is yet time to claim the blessing of those who put their trust in Him, **“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”**

VIII. The Battle Of The Great Day Of God Almighty. (19:17-19)

**19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;**

**19:18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.**

**19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.**

- A. The devastating scene described in these verses is the result of the Battle of Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16)
1. The Battle of Armageddon will be the meeting of the allied armies of the Antichrist in their confrontation with Christ.
  2. There is no evidence that the kings of the earth, or the Beast, or the False Prophet launches an attack.
  3. It is His Word, proceeding **“out of his mouth,”** that casts down the ungodly.
- B. An angel that John sees cries with a loud voice, signifying something significant is about to happen.
1. The message is addressed to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, literally *“in mid-heaven.”*
    - a. The birds are addressed to gather themselves to **“the supper of the great God.”**
    - b. The fowls come together to feast on the dead bodies of those who sought to do battle with God.
  2. Warning: every person will choose which feast they will be part of:
    - a. The glorious Marriage Feast of the Lamb, or
    - b. The gruesome **“supper of the great God.”**
  3. The destruction of the armies of the Beast is the prelude to the destruction of the Beast himself and his associates.

IX. The Doom Of The Beast And The False Prophet. (19:20)

**19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.**

- A. The doom of the beast and the false prophet culminates in their being cast alive into the **“lake of fire burning with brimstone.”**
1. By comparing Revelation 20:15, it seems that the Beast and false prophet are the first to inhabit the **“lake of fire.”**
  2. Unsaved, who die prior to this time are cast into Hell, a place of torment, but not into the **“lake of fire,”** which is reserved for those who have been finally judged as unworthy of eternal life.
- B. H. A. Ironside writes, *“These two men are ‘cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone,’ where a thousand years later they are still said to be ‘suffering the vengeance of eternal life,’ thus incidentally proving that the lake of fire is not annihilation, and that it is not purgatorial either, for it neither annihilates nor purifies these two fallen foes of God and man after a thousand years under judgment.”*

X. The Doom Of The Army Of The Beast. (19:21)

**19:21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.**

- A. **“The remnant”** not killed in the first stage of the conflict are now put to death.
1. There is no evidence that the armies of the earth prevail in any sense against the armies of heaven.
  2. Here is the total defeat of man, at the height of his Satanic power, when brought into conflict with the omnipotence of God.  
(I John 4:4, “ . . . **greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.**”)
- B. The sword which **“proceedeth out of his mouth”** is the Word of God.  
(Hebrews 4:12, **“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**)
1. It is the Word of God that created this universe.
  2. It is the Word of God that saves you.
  3. It will be the Word of God that will destroy the wicked at the end of the age.

**Conclusion:** In the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas brought armed soldiers wielding clubs and swords to capture Jesus. When they asked who Jesus was, the Lord turned and said, **“I am He,”** and John records that those soldiers all fell down as though dead.

Just as the power of His voice was enough to knock over those men, at Armageddon His voice will have even more power, killing the armies of those fighting against Him. But this time, rather than binding the Lord and taking Him off to trial, it will be the Antichrist who is bound and taken away in judgment. He will be cast into the **“lake of fire,”** and the **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”** will take His throne in glory.

At the end of time, it will be Christ who is the Victor. You have a chance to be at Armageddon, fighting for the cause of Christ, or represented by those fighting against Him. For those who remain in unbelief today, grace will no longer be an option in that day. Jesus presently presents Himself as the Lamb of God to take away **“the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). When He comes again, He will come as the Judge against **“all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”** (Romans 1:18).

# THE REIGN OF CHRIST

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 20:1-15

**Introduction:** In his commentary, *Revelation Revealed*, Jack Van Impe introduces Revelation 20 this way: “*Chapter 20 introduces us to the most beautiful, peaceful and rewarding age this world will ever know – the Millennium, or the one-thousand year reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. He will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Further, Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end . . . (verse 7).*”

## I. Review:

- A. Back in Revelation 1:19 is found the simple outline of the Book of Revelation, where John was instructed to “**write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.**”
  - 1. The first three chapters of the Book of Revelation cover the age of grace, or the Church age, that we live in today.
  - 2. In turning to chapters 4 and 5, with the Rapture of the Church, the Church Age comes to a conclusion.
  - 3. Chapters 6-16 then brings out the details of the unfolding drama of the seven-year Tribulation Period here on earth.
  - 4. Chapters 17 and 18 summarize the destruction of religious and political Babylon for all to see.
  - 5. Then in chapter 19, the high point of the Book of Revelation is reached, with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and His victory over the forces of evil.
  - 6. Chapters 20-22 then turn the corner to things concerning Christ’s Kingdom and on into Eternity.
- B. What marvellous and beautiful truths John now sets before us.

## II. The Binding Of Satan. (20:1-3)

- A. Revelation 20 summarizes the events which relate to the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth.
  - 1. The word “*millennium*” is a Latin word which refers to a period of 1,000 years.
  - 2. Because the earthly kingdom rule of Christ lasts 1,000 years, we call it the “*Millennium.*”
  - 3. This is the same Kingdom Jesus mentioned in “*The Lord’s Prayer.*” (Matthew 6:10, “**Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**”)
  - 4. This is also the same Kingdom the disciples referred to when they asked the Lord before His ascension, “**Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**” (Acts 1:6)
- B. Three schools of thought regarding the Millennium.
  - 1. Some people call themselves “*A-Millennialists.*”
    - a. They don’t believe there will be a Millennium.

- (1) They read a passage like Revelation 20:2 and say, *“It is not to be taken literally.”*
  - (2) In other words, the phrase, **“a thousand years,”** does not mean 1,000 years.
  - (3) It is some sort of allegory, or God’s way of saying that the devil has already been chained.
    - (a) If that be so, his chain must be an awfully long one because his evil influence is seen all over the world.
    - (b) And, if he is chained, why does Peter warn us to **“be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”** (I Peter 5:8).
- b. Four times in this chapter we are told that the devil will be bound for a thousand years.
- (1) Again, to disbelieve in his binding is to negate the whole of the Word of God.
  - (2) Daniel 2:44 tells of the day when **“the God of heaven [shall] set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed . . . and it shall stand for ever.”**
2. Another school of thought is that of *“Post-Millennialism.”*
- a. They believe the world is getting better and better, and that by the preaching of the gospel, there will be such a transformation in society that the earth will come to experience a 1,000 year period of perfect peace.
  - b. Such a belief negates the very reality of looking out the window.
  - c. God’s Word warns us that **“in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent [or unrestrained], fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away”** (II Timothy 3:1-5).
  - d. Rather than getting better through the preaching of the Gospel, civilization seems to be more and more inundated with crime, pride, materialism, and perversion.
3. A *“Pre-Millennialist”* believes that Jesus Christ will come back before the Millennium.
- a. That’s what we see in Revelation 20.
  - b. Christ returns in Revelation 19, binds Satan and casts **“him into the bottomless pit,”** and enters into His Millennial Kingdom.
- C. The events of this chapter chronologically follow the events of Revelation 19.
1. Chapter 19 concluded with the last great battle of Armageddon in which Christ destroyed the armies of the earth by the sword of His mouth.
  2. Chapter 20 begins with the words, **“And I saw . . .”**
    - a. This phrase indicates the next major steps in the progress of events.
    - b. In Revelation 19 through 21, the words, **“and I saw,”** appear ten times. (Revelation 19:11, 17, 19, 20:1, 4, 11, 12, 21:1, 2, 3)
  3. These events cannot be understood outside of their chronological sequence.

- D. John observes an angel coming down from heaven possessing the key of **“the bottomless pit.”**

*Notes*

**20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.**

1. This is the place from where the demonic spirits were earlier loosed in chapter 9 to torment mankind.
2. The angel is seen laying hold of Satan and binding him for 1,000 years.
  - a. God has allowed Satan to be **“the god of this world”** (II Corinthians 4:4), and **“the prince of the power of the air”** (Ephesians 2:2), so that his influence for evil is beyond our ability to comprehend.
  - b. Though having exalted himself, the day will come when God will bring him low.
3. When God speaks, Satan’s power is so diminished that even ordinary angels become his jailor and leads him away.
  - a. This is in great contrast to what we read in Jude 9, **“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”**
  - b. Michael is the greatest and most powerful heavenly being, outside of God Himself, that we know of, yet he even refused to bring an accusation against the Devil, but turned the matter over to the Lord.
4. Although the angel who binds Satan, and casts him into the **“bottomless pit,”** is an ordinary angel, he acts under the power and authority of Christ.
  - a. There is unlimited power in Christ.  
(John 14:12, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”**)
  - b. We can say with the Apostle Paul, **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”** (Philippians 4:13).
5. Christ’s unlimited power is made available to the angel who binds Satan and casts him into **“the bottomless pit.”**

**20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,**

**20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.**

- E. The angel is empowered to do six things:
1. To lay **“hold on the dragon.”**
  2. To bind **“him a thousand years.”**
  3. To **“cast him into the bottomless pit.”**
  4. To **“shut him up,”** or literally use the key to lock up the abyss.

5. To “**set a seal**” upon Satan, which will temporarily render him inactive in his work of deceiving the nations.
  6. To loose him for “**a little season,**” after the thousand years are up.
- F. Satan has been the mastermind of evil plots and the coordinator of wicked actions since the dawn of time.
1. But for a period of 1,000 years, he will be taken off the scene and bound, where he can do no harm.
  2. The binding of Satan proves that God can stop the devil’s evil work at the times of His choosing.
  3. From here-on-out, Satan is not mentioned again until after the 1,000 year reign of Christ. (Cp. 20:7-10)

III. The Judgment And Resurrection Of The Tribulation Saints. (20:4)

**20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**

- A. John now observes “**thrones**” occupied for judgment.
1. Specific mention is made of those described as “**beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God . . .**”
  2. This detailed description fits only one class of saints – the Tribulation saints.
- B. These were beheaded for two reasons:
1. For their positive witness for Christ and the Word of God.
  2. For their refusal to worship the Beast and receive his mark.
  3. Those who were the special objects of Satan’s hatred, and the Beast’s persecution, are now exalted, rewarded, and blessed.
- C. The most important truth, again mentioned in verse 4, is the fact that a thousand years separate the resurrection of the martyred dead from the wicked dead.

IV. The First Resurrection. (20:5-6)

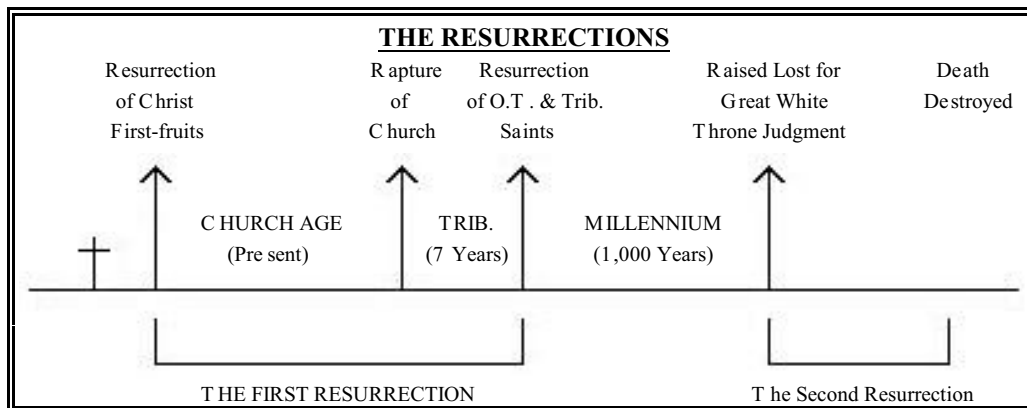
**20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.**

**20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.**

- A. Many people think that everyone who has ever died is going to be raised and judged on the same day.
1. John makes it clear there will be two separate resurrections.
  2. The first is for those who are saved, and the second, following the Millennium, will be for those who are lost.



- B. A careful study of the Scriptures reveal that the first resurrection will happen in stages.
1. The **“first resurrection”** begins like a harvest, with Christ as the **“firstfruit,”** and every man in his order.
    - a. When Israel had a harvest in the Old Testament, the high priest would go out into the field, take a handful of grain, and bring it into the Temple as a sacrifice to God.
    - b. He would wave it before the Lord; this would become the **“firstfruits”** of the promised harvest.
    - c. When Jesus came out of the grave, He was the **“firstfruit”** of the promise of God.  
(I Corinthians 15:20-23, **“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”**)
  2. The second phase of the **“first resurrection”** is the harvest proper, when God will receive the souls of those who belong to Him.
    - a. At the end of the Church Age, the Rapture of the Church will take place, and **“the dead in Christ”** will be raised, and those living *“in Christ,”* will be translated.
    - b. That will be the time for the great harvest of souls  
(I Thessalonians 4:16-17, **“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”**)
  3. The third part of the **“first resurrection”** is the *“gleanings,”* that which is gathered after the regular harvest has been completed.
    - a. At the end of the Great Tribulation, the Tribulation Saints will be raised from the dead as the *“gleanings”* of the harvest.  
(Revelation 20:4)
    - b. The term **“first resurrection,”** then, is not an event, but an order of resurrections including all the righteous who are raised from the dead before the Millennial Kingdom begins.



- c. The “**first resurrection**” stands in contrast to the “*last resurrection*” when the wicked dead will be raised and judged following the Millennium. (Revelation 20:11-13)
    - 4. There is a certain blessedness of those who take part in the “**first resurrection.**”
      - a. Their estate is a happy and holy one.
      - b. They are delivered from the power of the “**second death.**”
      - c. They are given the special status of “**priests of God and of Christ.**”
  - C. The character of Christ’s reign on earth is fully described in many Old Testament passages.
    - 1. Jerusalem will be the capital city. (Isaiah 2:3)
    - 2. War will be no more. (Isaiah 2:4)
    - 3. Isaiah 11 describes the righteous reign of Christ and the peace and tranquility of His kingdom.
    - 4. Every nation will be under His sway, and God’s purpose in originally placing man in charge of the Garden of Eden will have its ultimate fulfillment in the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will reign over the earth.
  - D. One author writes, “*What a blessing the Millennium will be. There will be no prisons, no hospitals, no saloons, and no fighting. The roses will no longer have thorns. The lion will lie down with the lamb. Men will beat their swords into plowshares. All will be at peace, and there will be health upon the cheeks of those a hundred years old. . . . The golden age men have been waiting for will finally have arrived.*”
- V. The Loosing Of Satan And The Final Revolt. (20:7-9)

**20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,**

**20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.**

**20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.**

- A. On being relieved from his confinement, Satan loses no time in resuming his activities and plunges into his campaign to deceive the nations of the entire earth.
  - 1. These who are tempted are the descendants of the Tribulation Saints who survived the Tribulation and entered into the Millennium in their natural bodies.
  - 2. Infants born to them during the Millennium will be required to make a choice between the devil and Christ.
  - 3. Although during the Millennium they must outwardly conform to the rule of the King, the time will come for them to also make a personal profession of faith in Christ.
- B. Three reasons why Satan must be loosed.

1. To demonstrate that man, even under the most favorable circumstances, will fall into sin if left to his own choice.
  2. To demonstrate the incurable wickedness of Satan.
  3. To justify eternal punishment, that is, to show the unchanged character of wicked people, even under divine jurisdiction for a long period of time.
- C. The term **“Gog and Magog”** is used without any explanation.
1. This is not the same event described in Ezekiel 38-39, where Gog and Magog are prominent.
    - a. Ezekiel 38-39 describes the invasion from the north that breaks the false peace of the Antichrist and causes him to show his hand in the midst of the Great Tribulation.
    - b. That rebellion from the north will have made such an impression on mankind that after 1,000 years, the last rebellion of man bears the same label.
  2. Jack Van Impe argues that this reference to **“Gog and Magog”** most likely indicates *“the memory of past brutality – much like the names Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. As Gog and Magog (Russia) invaded Israel and came against Jerusalem during the Tribulation hour, such an indelible impression was left upon all the world that now – one thousand years later – the details are still vivid. Thus, this past war is brought to mind as Satan once again attempts to destroy Israel.”*
- D. The number of those who rebel against God and follow Satan is described as innumerable.
1. This is created man’s last gigantic rebellion against God’s sovereign rule.
    - a. Christ permits the army to assemble and encircle the capital city.
    - b. No sooner has the army of Satan been assembled than fire comes down from God out of heaven and the besiegers are destroyed.
  2. Here is shattered the last vain attempt of Satan to claim a place of prominence and worship; here is the last gasping attack from a defeated foe.

## VI. The Doom Of Satan. (20:10)

**20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

- A. Following the destruction of Satan’s armies, the devil is **“cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.”**
1. The sentence of judgment was passed on Satan at the Cross.
  2. Before He died on the Cross, the Lord Jesus Christ said, **“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out”** (John 12:31).
  3. Although Satan was sentenced at the Cross, God stayed Satan’s execution until He was through using him for His own purposes.
- B. Attention is called to the fact that he is a deceiver.

1. He was first self-deceived.  
(Isaiah 14:14, **“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”**)
  2. He began his career by deceiving Eve in the Garden.
  3. He is still of the same character at the time of his final judgment.
- C. He joins the Beast and the False Prophet who are still in the **“lake of fire.”**
1. This proves that the unsaved are not annihilated at death.
  2. These are the first three persons to inhabit the place prepared for **“the devil and his angels”** (Matthew 25:41).
  3. Later, all the unsaved dead, from all ages, will join them in the **“lake of fire”** to **“be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”**
  4. The language used in verse 10 is the strongest possible language to show that this punishment is everlasting punishment.

VII. The Establishment Of The Great White Throne. (20:11)

**20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.**

- A. Though there is no specific mention of the person sitting on the throne, it is proper to assume that it is God, and more specifically Christ Himself, as mentioned in Revelation 3:21. (Cp. John 5:22, Matthew 19:28, 25:31, II Corinthians 5:10)
- B. The majesty of the Person sitting on the throne results in **“the earth and heaven [fleeing] away.”**
  1. This is also confirmed by the statement in 21:1, where John sees **“a new heaven and a new earth,”** replacing the first, which have passed away.
  2. The Bible anticipates this future time when the present world will be destroyed.
    - a. Matthew 24:35, **“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”** (Cp. Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33)
    - b. Luke 16:17, **“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.”**
    - c. II Peter 3:10, **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”**
  3. This judgment does not take place in heaven, because no unbeliever ever has access to such a holy place.
  4. Theodore Epp says that this is a *“judgment which takes place somewhere in space where truth and justice meet with sin and rejection.”*
- C. The judgment will be **“great.”**
  1. The sovereign justice of an infinite God will be executed.
  2. The result of this judgment will not be in the casting of unbelievers into the **“lake of fire”** for five years, or ten years, or even fifty years, but for all of eternity.
  3. Here will be eternal separation from God in the **“lake of fire.”**
- D. At this judgment there is a **“great white throne.”**

1. **“White”** emphasizes the holiness and purity of the Judge.
  2. This is a righteous judgment based totally on God’s standards of righteousness.
  3. The whiteness of the throne shows the greatest contrast with the blackness of the sin of those who stand before the throne.
- E. When this passage talks about people fleeing from His face, it is because of their awkward position.
1. They are afraid to face Jesus.
  2. They have nowhere to hide.
  3. Though they have denied Him, ignored Him, cursed Him, disbelieved Him, and disobeyed Him, yet Philippians 2:11 tells us of a day when **“every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

VIII. The Resurrection Of The Wicked Dead. (20:12-13)

**20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**

**20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.**

- A. The Bible speaks of three different kinds of death.
1. Physical death.  
(Genesis 5:5, **“And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.”**)
  2. Spiritual death.  
(Ephesians 2:1, **“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”**)
  3. Eternal death.  
(Revelation 20:14, **“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”**)
    - a. This **“second death”** will be experienced by all unbelievers when they are resurrected to stand before the **“great white throne”** and are cast into **“the lake of fire.”**
    - b. This **“second death”** can only be escaped by receiving Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior.
- B. Before the **“great white throne”** stand the dead, **“small and great.”**
1. Those appearing before the throne will come from all walks of life, and degrees of greatness, both the big shots and the nobodies.
    - a. All those who hate God, hate Christ, and hate His Bible will be there.
    - b. The evil men of history – the Hitlers and Stalins – will be there.
    - c. All the out-and-out sinners, the drug pushers, pornographers, rapists, and murders will be in attendance.
  2. All the self-righteous will be there.

- a. Those who think the Gospel is only for the thief and murders will be there.
- b. All those who thought they were too good to be damned will be there.
- 3. All the slow deciders will be there.
  - a. That is, those who procrastinated over their decision about Christ.
  - b. Those people intended to be saved, but just kept pushing off their decision.
- 4. All the “*Sunday Christians*” will be there.
  - a. The people who put their names on the church roll, but never in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
  - b. Many who sat on church boards, taught Sunday School classes, and sang in the choir will find themselves going to hell grasping their baptismal certificates and attendance rewards.
  - c. All those who merely professed Christ, but never possessed Christ, will be there.
- 5. Matthew 7:21-23 warns, “**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**”
- C. Their judgment is made on the basis of the books which are opened.
  - 1. “**The books were opened.**”
    - a. The words of Christ will be the basis of judgment.  
(John 12:47-48, “**And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**”)
    - b. These books will expose the sins of the unbelievers.  
(Numbers 32:23, “**But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.**”)
    - c. Unbelievers will also be judged according to the Gospel.  
(Romans 2:16, “**In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**”)
    - d. Condemnation will be the result of their refusal to receive God’s provision of salvation.  
(Acts 4:12, “**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**”)
  - 2. The “**book of life**” refers to the roll of those who are saved and have eternal life.
  - 3. Though men are judged according to their works, the “**book of life**” is introduced as the real deciding factor as to where they will spend eternity.
- D. They are judged “**according to their works,**” but, alas, “**all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,**” and, therefore, at this judgment, all are condemned. (Romans 3:23)

**20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**

**20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**

- A. All who died physically, and were in “**hell**,” the intermediate state of all unbelievers, will be cast into “**the lake of fire**.”
1. The rich man, in Luke 16, gave this testimony: “**I am tormented in this flame**” (Luke 16:24).
  2. The Beast and the False Prophet will have been confined there for 1,000 years when Satan is cast into it.
  3. The Apostle Paul wrote that as a result of the second death, these “**shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**.”
- B. The characteristics of God’s judgment.
1. A place of consciousness.  
(Luke 16:23-24, “**And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.**”)
  2. A place where there will be the torment of memory.  
(Luke 16:27-31, “**Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**”)
  3. A place of torment.  
(Luke 16:28, “**For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.**”)
  4. A place of darkness.  
(Matthew 8:12, “**But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**”  
Cp. Jude 13)
  5. A place of eternal separation from loved ones.  
(Luke 13:28, “**There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.**”)
  6. A place without the slightest hope of release.  
(Matthew 25:46, “**And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**”)
- C. The thorough appreciation of eternal punishment enhances the doctrine of the grace of God and make the love of God all the more wonderful for those who enter into its truth.

**Conclusion:** Divine justice will be sure, and it will be severe, and it will be sad. The only question that can be rightfully asked at the conclusion of this chapter is, “*Are you ready for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?*” Death and the “**second death**” are real. Only those who have received Christ will participate in the “**first resurrection,**” otherwise, you’ll be a participant in the “**second death**” and the “**great white throne judgment.**” Such be not the case. Come to Christ today if you haven’t already.

*Notes*



# THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 21:1-27

**Introduction:** About 950 B.C. the earthly city of Jerusalem reached its most magnificent expression. Solomon, the wisest king in the world, ruled as the son of David. The glorious Temple stood as testimony to Israel's God. Dignitaries such as the Queen of Sheba came seeking Solomon's council and bringing him treasure. Her staggering gift of gold weighed more than four tons.

Yet, this proved to be a temporary blip in history. After Solomon's death, his kingdom split into two rival factions. Idolatry became the norm. Jerusalem and the Temple were torched by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. But the memory of the golden age burned fiercely in the hearts of the Jewish people. About three thousand years later, that same memory still lives. The blue "*Star of David*" is the central feature of the modern Israeli flag. Jerusalem once again is the center of Israel's life.

But John's vision of New Jerusalem surpasses the old Jerusalem of Solomon as diamonds surpass rhinestones. There are points of parallel to be sure, but the New Jerusalem will have no Temple and the Lamb of God will be King there forever.

- I. The New Heaven And The New Earth Presented. (21:1)
  - A. The story is told of a man dying of cancer, who noticed that his pastor was scheduled to preach on the topic of heaven the next weekend.
    1. He wrote, "*I'm interested in that land because, for fifty years, I've held a clear title to a bit of property there. I did not buy it. It was given to me without price. But the donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. For more than half a century I have been sending materials up to the greatest architect of the universe, who has been building a home for me which will never need remodeling or repairing. Termites can never undermine its foundation. Fire cannot destroy it and floods cannot wash it away. There's a valley of deep shadows between the place where I live and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that city without pass-ing through this valley, but I'm not afraid because the best friend I ever had went through the same valley long, long ago and drove away all its gloom. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of the shadow.*"
    2. Then the man closed with these words, "*I may not be here for your sermon next Sunday, but I'll meet you there someday.*"
    3. Before that pastor could preach on heaven, the man passed away, and now he walks on streets of gold and lives in a mansion that our Lord Jesus Christ prepared for him.
  - B. With the conclusion of Revelation 20, the events of time, as we know them, come to an end.

**21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.**

1. Beginning with Revelation 21, God begins to unveil eternity before our eyes.

2. The key phrase for the remainder of Revelation is, “**Behold, I make all things new**” (Revelation 21:5).
  - a. There is no way to imagine what Heaven is really like.
    - (1) Some Indian tribes imagine Heaven as a “*happy hunting ground.*”
    - (2) Fisherman might imagine Heaven as a place of good fishing, after all, who can go wrong when Jesus tells you to cast your nets on the right side of the ship.
    - (3) Others envision Heaven as a place where we will eternally enjoy doing the things we do here on earth.
  - b. Can I suggest to you that Heaven will be much more than these mere mortal speculations.
    - (1) Just imagine how boring that place would be if you don’t enjoy hunting, fishing, or playing golf.
      - (a) If we really knew what Heaven is like we would never take the chance of missing it.
      - (b) If we really knew what Hell is like, we would take the very next opportunity to avoid it.
    - (2) To know your final destination at the end of your life is more important than life itself.
  - c. There is coming “**a new heaven and a new earth,**” for this present heaven and earth are marked for the judgment of God.
3. In the remaining verses we are told about:
  - a. A new heaven. (21:1)
  - b. A new earth. (21:1)
  - c. A new Jerusalem. (21:2)
  - d. A new people. (21:3)
  - e. A new Temple. (21:22)
  - f. A new light. (21:23)
  - g. A new paradise. (22:1-2)
- C. The “**new heaven and [the] new earth**” presented here are not simply the old heaven and earth renovated, but the result of a new act of creation. (Cp. 20:11)
  1. “**The first heaven**” will have “**passed away.**”
    - a. There are actually three heavens mentioned in the Scriptures.
      - (1) The “**first heaven**” is the atmospheric expanse just above the earth; also, called the “**firmament.**” (Genesis 1:6-8, 7:11, 8:2)
      - (2) The second heaven is the sphere of the stars. (Genesis 1:14, 15:5)
      - (3) The third heaven is the abode of God. (II Corinthians 12:2, “**I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.**”)
    - b. The heaven John is referring to is the “**first heaven,**” the atmospheric heaven.
      - (1) This has been the place of Satan’s influence. (Ephesians 2:2, “**Wherein in time past ye walked according**

- to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”)**
- (2) Although there will be drastic changes in the sun, moon and stars during the Tribulation, they are not what John is referring to as having passed away.
  - (3) Obviously, he is not talking about “*the abode of God.*”
2. The “**first earth**” is mentioned as having “**passed away**” prior to the Great White Throne Judgment. (20:11)
    - a. Peter wrote, “**But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up**” (II Peter 3:7, 10).
    - b. In this verse, we find that God is the One who remains forever, even though the earth and the heavens perish.
  3. The prophet Isaiah was the first to predict these things.
    - a. Isaiah 65:17, “**For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.**”
    - b. Isaiah 66:22, “**For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed [the nation of Israel] and your name remain.**”
  4. In turning to II Peter 3:13, we read, “**Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.**”
    - a. In the present heaven and earth there is no righteousness dwelling.
    - b. Wickedness is found everywhere, and in Ephesians 6:12 we read of wicked spirits in heavenly places.
    - c. But, in the “**new heavens and a new earth**” all of that will be forever past.
  5. God intends to destroy everything in this earth that has anything to do with sin and none of it will be remembered again, therefore, “**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever**” (I John 2:15-17).
- D. The chief characteristic of the “**new heaven**” and “**new earth**” will be the absence of the “**sea.**”
1. This would automatically change the climate, the atmosphere, and the living conditions on the planet.
    - a. The seas and oceans, in the past, have been great barriers, as well as borders, to mankind.
    - b. The waters of the sea were also instruments of judgment at the time of the Flood.

2. The absence of the “**sea**” does not mean that there will be no more waters at all, for Revelation 22:1-2 mentions “**a pure river of water**” flowing “**out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.**”

## II. First Vision Of The New Jerusalem. (21:2)

**21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

- A. Although John is impressed with the “**new heaven**” and the “**new earth**” his attention is immediately directed to that which is central in the vision, “**the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.**”
  1. There is presently no city on earth that could be called “**the holy city.**”
    - a. Jerusalem, in modern day Israel, has been referred to be some as “**the holy city,**” but it is just as wicked as Chicago, Detroit, New York, or even San Francisco.
    - b. Certainly Rome garbed in all her religious harlotries cannot be considered a “**holy city.**”
  2. “**The holy city, new Jerusalem**” is the eternal home of the Church, which is the Bride of Christ.
    - a. “**The holy city**” stands in contrast to the earth on which we live today and the Jerusalem that will be built during the Tribulation. (Revelation 11:8)
    - b. The conditions within the city will not be earthly, but glorious.
  3. This city is called “**holy**” because it comes down from God out of heaven and is related to the “**new earth**” in a special way.
    - a. Astronomers tell us something of the immensity of the heavens and the distances to differing stars staggers the imagination.
    - b. Images produced by the Hubble Telescope, and more recently the Webb Telescope, are awe-inspiring.
    - c. But these will be nothing compared to “**the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**”
- B. John tells us that this city was “**prepared.**”
  1. Thus we can understand what Jesus meant when He said, “**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also**” (John 14:3).
  2. One pastor used to say, “*Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.*”

## III. God To Dwell With Men. (21:3-4)

**21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.**

**21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**

- A. A great voice declares, **“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.”**
1. This **“tabernacle”** is in contrast to the tabernacle of God in the Wilderness, where God dwelt among His people Israel.
  2. This **“tabernacle”** symbolizes that God is now present with His people in the **“new earth”** and in the **“new Jerusalem.”**
  3. The presence of God assures us of an entirely new state for those who inhabit the **“new Jerusalem.”**
- B. John does not tell us what *“is”* in the **“new Jerusalem,”** but what is *“not”* there.
1. God is stated to **“wipe away all tears from their eyes.”**
    - a. There is no grounds for imagining that the saints will shed tears in heaven concerning the failures of their former life on earth.
    - b. The emphasis here is on the comfort of God, not on the remorse of the saints.
  2. This passage goes on to say that other aspects of human sorrow, such as **“death,” “sorrow,” “crying”** or **“pain,”** will also exist no more.
    - a. These things will be things of the past.
    - b. There will be no more hospitals, funerals, or graves.
    - c. There will be no more broken homes, broken hearts, or broken hopes.
  3. While we experience pain here on earth, every pain we experience only serves to make heaven all the sweeter.
    - a. One author has written, *“God sends us through a Gethsemane or Golgotha so we will grow to appreciate the new heaven and the new earth.”*
    - b. Paul put it this way, **“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”** (Romans 8:18).

IV. All Things Made New. (21:5-6)

**21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.**

- A. **“Behold, I make all things new.”**
1. Because of Adam’s sin, the former things belong to the first creation.
    - a. In the new creation, all things will be made new in Jesus Christ.
    - b. This is comparable to what takes place at the time of salvation. (II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”**)
  2. Even the physical bodies of Christians are not just made over at the resurrection, but are rather replaced by new bodies.

(I Corinthians 15:53, “**For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**”)

- B. The things John heard are said to be “**true and faithful.**”
1. As far as God is concerned, these things are as good as accomplished.
  2. “**Behold, I make all things new!**”

**21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**

- C. The phrase, “**it is done,**” is a reference to the whole work of redemption accomplished throughout the drama of human history prior to the coming Eternal State.
1. In Genesis 1:1, we find that in the beginning of time God “**created the heaven and earth.**”
  2. In the end, we find that the Lord Jesus Christ is the consummation of everything pertaining to time.
  3. As stated back in verse 1, time ceases and eternity begins.
  4. The major works of God in history have been completed, and the works relating to the Eternal State are just beginning.
- D. Time is measurable, but eternity is not.
1. The eternality of the Lord Jesus Christ is again affirmed with His statement, “**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.**”
    - a. Back in Revelation 1:8, Jesus said, “**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**”
    - b. In 22:12-13, we read, “**And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**”
  2. Revelation 22:16 begins with these words, “**I Jesus . . .**”
    - a. The “**Alpha and Omega**” is the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - b. Therefore, the One sitting “**upon the throne**” in verse 5 is the Lord Jesus Christ.
  3. In light of His statements, you will meet Him someday.
    - a. If you meet Him presently, you can be saved.
    - b. If you wait, eventually you will stand before Him with all the other sinners of all the ages, lost and without hope.
    - c. You can either meet Him as your Savior, or you will meet Him as your Judge.
    - d. “**These words and true and faithful,**” Jesus said, for “**I am Alpha and Omega.**”
- E. In verse 6 Jesus lays claim to being the source of the fountain of life.
1. Like the woman at the well, Jesus offers that “**whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life**” (John 4:14).

2. Have you ever been parched and experienced the pleasantness of cold water?
  - a. That is what Jesus compares heaven to.
  - b. Mankind fell at Eden when Adam sinned, but the pleasantness of that Garden will be renewed when He makes **“all things new.”**

V. The Blessings Of The Overcomer. (21:7-8)

- A. The reward for overcoming sin, by asking Christ for mercy at the Cross, is to **“inherit all things.”**

**21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.**

1. Every blood-bought child of God has an inheritance awaiting.
  - a. Colossians 1:12, **“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”**
  - b. Acts 20:32, **“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”**
  - c. I Peter 1:3-4, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”**
2. Everything that Jesus has belongs to the believer as an **“inheritance.”**
  - a. John 3:35, **“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”**
  - b. Hebrews 1:1-2, **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”**
  - c. Romans 8:16-17, **“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ . . .”**
3. What a blessedness awaits the believer.  
(Proverbs 4:18, **“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”**)
- B. In contrast to the abundant blessings on the child of God is the sad inheritance of those who remain in unbelief.

**21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.**

1. What a tragic list:
  - a. The **“fearful”** includes those who do not confess Christ because they fear what others might think.

- b. The “**unbelieving**” are those who have rejected Jesus as the only begotten Son of God and Savior of the world.
  - c. The “**abominable**” include those who have given themselves over to the impurities and lusts of this old world.
  - d. The “**murderers**” have taken the precious lives of others.
  - e. The “**whoremongers**” are those who are sexually impure.
  - f. The “**sorcerers**” include those given over to all forms of spirit worship and illicit drug usage.
  - g. The “**idolaters**” have bowed themselves down to false gods made of their own hands.
  - h. The “**liars**” not only tell falsehoods, but reject the truth.
2. The cornerstone of this list might be in the “**unbelieving.**”
- a. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “**Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God**” (I Corinthians 6:9-11).
  - b. Paul’s emphasis to the Corinthians is found in the phrase, “**and such were some of you,**” but no more.
  - c. Their transition came about because they were “**washed,**” “**sanctified,**” and “**justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.**”
  - d. They did not continue in their unbelief, but readily responded to the invitation to drink “**of the fountain of the water of life freely.**”
3. Back in verse 6, the thirsty who had turned to Christ for forgiveness was given the promise of life.  
(Matthew 5:6, “**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**”)
4. Here, in verse 8, the unrepentant is assured of his fate by the dreadful promise of “**the second death.**”

#### VI. The New Jerusalem As The Bride. (21:9-11)

**21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.**

- A. It is significant that the invitation extended to John, to “**Come . . . I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife,**” comes from one of the angels who had earlier said to John, “**Come, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore . . .**” (17:1).
- 1. This provides a structural link, deliberately placing the harlot side-by-side in contrast to the “**bride.**”
  - 2. Another link in this passage is seen in John being carried “**away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain.**”



- a. In contrast to 17:3, John was carried **“away in the spirit into the wilderness.”**
- b. The Bride-City is elevated upon a mountain as **“the joy of the whole earth”** (Psalm 48:2) while the harlot city is situated in a barren wasteland.
- 3. This new city of the Eternal State is the residence of the saints for all eternity future.
- B. In Matthew 4:8, Satan carried away Jesus to **“an exceeding high mountain”** to show Him the kingdoms of this world.
  - 1. Satan attempted to entice Jesus to sin in order that He might obtain these kingdoms **“easily”** and without enduring the Cross.
    - a. Jesus, however, would not yield to Satan, and now in God’s own time, from a high mountain, God’s eternal kingdom/city is seen coming into existence.
    - b. It comes as the Lamb’s Bride and it far surpasses any-thing that Satan could have promised.
  - 2. Salem Kirban – *“If we but resist temptation and turn to Christ, God’s eternal reward will outshine the glitter of Satan’s illusory promises.”*

**21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,**

**21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;**

- C. Instead of directly viewing the wife, John is shown the new city, New Jerusalem.
  - 1. This is significant, for a city is not just made up of buildings, businesses and parks, but also of people.
    - a. The occupants of the new city are those who make up the Bride.
    - b. Thus, John sees both the city and the occupants in the form of God’s glory.
  - 2. John sees the glory of God, the glory of the Bride, and the glory of the city as one.
    - a. The wife and the city are inseparable connected.
    - b. Alongside the glory of God, the glory of the Bride also lightens the city.
    - c. In speaking to His Father, Jesus prayed, **“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one”** (John 17:22).
  - 3. In reference to the New Jerusalem, John Walvoord makes this statement: *“As the glory of God is the sum of His infinite perfections in their manifestations, so the new Jerusalem reflects all that God is.”*

#### VII. The Wall And The Gates Of The City. (21:12-14)

**21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:**

**21:13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.**

**21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

- A. The “**wall**” of the city, described as “**great and high,**” is an obvious symbol of exclusion to all that is unworthy to enter the city.
1. The “**twelve gates**” spoken of are open because the cross has unlocked them.
  2. They open in every direction to speak of the grace of God for all people, of all colors, from every tribe, of every language, and from any land.
  3. They are open to all who have accepted the invitation of Jesus Christ when He said, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me**” (John 14:6).
- B. It is difficult to escape the fact that here we have, in this eternal city, a togetherness of both the believers of the Old and New Testament.
1. In the wall are “**twelve gates**” guarded by “**twelve angels**” and inscribed with the names of the “**twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**”
  2. Also prominent in connection with the wall and the gates are “**twelve foundations**” inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Ephesians 2:20-22, “**And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**”)

#### VIII. The Dimensions Of The City. (21:15-17)

**21:15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.**

**21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.**

**21:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.**

- A. The height, length, and width of the city are described as 12,000 furlongs each, or about 1,320 miles.
1. That equals one million, seven-hundred forty-two thousand, four-hundred square miles.
  2. Or two-billion, two-hundred ninety-nine million, nine-hundred sixty-eight thousand cubic miles, if the city is a cube.
  3. If only 25 people took possession of each cubic mile of New Jerusalem, that city’s population would reach the astounding figure of fifty-seven billion,

four-hundred ninety-nine million, one-hundred thousand (nearly 57.5 billion) people.

- B. It is important to note that the city's cube shape was also the shape of the Holy of Holies.
  - 1. Since John sees no Temple in the city (21:22), it seems that the whole of the city is God's Temple, or more specifically, the holy of holies.
  - 2. It is the place of "**the glory of God**" (21:11).
  - 3. This is the nature of the Church today; it is the place of God's residence where God communes with men.
- C. The implication here is that there is plenty of room for everyone and that this city has enough room to provide a residence for all the saints of all ages.

#### IX. The Beauty Of The City. (21:18-21)

**21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.**

**21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;**

**21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysopterus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.**

**21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.**

- A. Employing the language of semblance, John is endeavoring to give a description of a scene which, in most respects, transcends earthly experience.
  - 1. Part of the adorning of a bride is her jewelry.
  - 2. The jewels are here incorporated into the city's motif itself.
  - 3. The walls, foundations, and gates are all made of great gemstones.
- B. The constant mention of transparency indicates that the city is designed to transmit the glory of God without hindrance.

#### X. The Temple Of The City. (21:22)

**21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.**

- A. II Chronicles 7 tells of the dedication of Solomon's Temple in the 10<sup>th</sup>-century B.C.
  - 1. The Temple was a place where the Holy God dwelt in a special way in the midst of His people.
    - a. Because all the inhabitants of the earth were sinners, God's holiness demanded some type of isolation from sin.
    - b. The Temple provided this isolation.

2. But, since God is a merciful God who is willing to forgive His people for their sins when they call upon His name in repentance and prayer, the Temple also provided a localized manifestation of His presence where this could be done.
- B. In the world to come, since all sinners will have already been excluded at the Great White Throne Judgment, and since the New Earth will never have been touched by sin's defilement, there will be no more need for a Temple.
  1. There will be no more need for God to be isolated from His people – they will be sinless.
  2. Thus, the omnipresent God will fill the New Jerusalem, and the entire New Earth.
  3. No longer is a structure necessary, for the saints are in the immediate presence of the Lord with no need for an earthly mediator or for shadows of things eternal.

XI. The Light Of The City. (21:23-24)

**21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.**

**21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.**

- A. New Jerusalem will be distinguished by the things missing.
  1. No Temple.
  2. No Sacrifice.
  3. No Sun.
  4. No Moon.
  5. No Darkness.
  6. No Gates to Shut.
  7. No Abomination.
- B. God Himself is the source of “light” in the city.
  1. Because “**God is light,**” and there is no darkness in Him, believers are exhorted to walk in the light in their present existence on this earth in keeping with their future presence in heaven.  
(I John 1:5-7, “**This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**”)
  2. The whole of the city of New Jerusalem is designed to transmit “light” in all the beauty and color previously described.

XII. Access To The City. (21:25-27)

**21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.**

**21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.**

**21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

- A. Nothing will ever enter the city which is in any sense evil.
  - 1. This will be a perfect environment, in contrast to the centuries of human sin, and the saints will enjoy this perfect situation throughout all of eternity to come.
  - 2. The inhabitants of the city will be characterized by eternal life and absolute moral purity.
- B. The question has been raised, "*How long is eternity?*"
  - 1. Try to imagine that this earth, upon which we dwell, is nothing but sand.
    - a. Now try to imagine that a little bird could fly through space from a faraway planet and carry back with him one tiny grain of sand.
    - b. Imagine, if you will, that it would take that little bird one-thousand years to make a round trip.
    - c. How long would it take for that little bird to carry away the entire earth, one grain of sand at a time?
    - d. The time required for this feat would be but a moment in comparison to eternity!
  - 2. Eternity is forever!
    - a. In this world, men and women must either accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, or, by their own sinful indecision, reject Him.
    - b. Based on that decision, they destine themselves for God's forgiveness, and an eternity in Heaven, or for God's judgment and an eternity in hell.

**Conclusion:** The most important question you will ever face is this: Where will you spend *ETERNITY?*



## CONCLUDING REVELATION AND EXHORTATIONS

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 22:1-21

**Introduction:** Even people that reject the Biblical account of Creation in Genesis 1-2 understand the power of the portrait of mankind's first home in the Garden of Eden. Just think about a few of the themes that the account of Eden introduces:

- ☞ Human beings, given the opportunity, rebel against their Creator.
- ☞ The serpent continually attempts to beguile people away from God.
- ☞ The curse on the human race includes banishment from paradise.
- ☞ Pain and suffering are the lot of mankind.
- ☞ People are absolutely barred from access to the Tree of Life.
- ☞ BUT, one day, **“the seed of the woman”** will prevail.

By the time the final vision of Revelation ends, these have all been resolved.

- ☞ All rebellion has ceased and God's people serve Him forever.
- ☞ The serpent has been thrown into the fiery lake forever.
- ☞ **“There shall be no more curse”** (Revelation 22:3).
- ☞ God has removed all pain and suffering from His people.
- ☞ The Tree of Life reappears with its fruit and leaves freely applied.
- ☞ And, Jesus, **“the seed of the woman,”** rules from Eternity's throne.

I. The River Of The Water Of Life. (22:1)

**22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.**

- A. The first five verses of this last chapter belong with the preceding chapter.
  - 1. The opening phrase, **“And he showed me,”** is a throw back to chapter 21, verse 9, **“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.”**
  - 2. So we find that the angel is still active in the first part of chapter 22.
- B. The waters of this present Earth are muddy, polluted with toxic waste and a myriad of other contaminants.
  - 1. Water purification plants are a necessity in just about every city.
  - 2. Yet, there will be no need for purification of the water flowing in the new city.
  - 3. Here, pure water is found flowing from the **“throne of God and of the Lamb.”**
- C. Such purity is symbolic of the holiness and purity of God and His Lamb.
  - 1. There was a river in the first Eden which branched into four rivers.

2. Although there was an abundance of water then, it was not called the “**water of life.**”
  3. In the New Jerusalem, there will be found a “**water of life,**” and the throne of God is its living fountain supplying an abundance of water.
- D. It is significant that the Lamb is pictured on the throne.
1. This makes it clear that I Corinthians 15:24 does not mean that Christ’s reign will end, but that it will change in character.  
(I Corinthians 15:24, “**Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.**”)
  2. Jesus Christ is the “**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**” for all eternity. (Revelation 17:14, 19:16)

## II. The Tree Of Life. (22:2)

**22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**

- A. The visual picture presented is that the “**river of . . . life**” flows down through the middle of the city, and the “**tree of life**” is large enough to span the river, so that the river is in the midst of the street, and the “**tree of life**” is on both sides of the river.
- B. The “**tree of life**” seems to have reference to a similar tree found in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:22-24)
  1. Its character, as revealed in Genesis, is such that if Adam and Eve had eaten of it, physical death would not have been a possibility.
  2. The tree in the New Jerusalem seems to have a similar quality and intent.
  3. The “**tree of life**” is a fruit tree, bearing twelve kinds of fruit each month.
  4. There is a continuous supply in abundance and variety.
- C. The leaves of the tree are beneficial, and seem to have some kind of medicinal value.
  1. The word translated, “**healing,**” is the same word from which we derive our word for “*therapy.*”
  2. Therefore, the leaves are not for the purpose of healing, but for the purpose of yielding continuous health to the occupants in New Jerusalem.

## III. The Throne Of God. (22:3)

**22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:**

- A. The first creation was blighted by the curse of sin, and this old earth bears many scar marks of the curse of sin.  
(Romans 8:22, “**For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.**”)



1. In the Millennial scene, there will be a lifting of the curse upon the earth, but not the total deliverance from the world's travail brought on by sin.
  2. In the **"new heaven and new earth,"** the curse will no longer have any influence.
  3. The **"new earth"** will possess all the pristine beauty of God's original design of creation before Adam's fall.
- B. The new creation will never again be marred by sin.
1. Sin will never be permitted to enter, not even potentially.
    - a. It was potentially in the Garden of Eden, in the **"tree of the knowledge of good and evil."**
    - b. It was during the *"apparent"* absence of God in the Garden that sin became a reality when the tempter came to our first parents and they fell to his devices.
  2. In the new creation, the throne of God is permanently here in the presence of all.
- C. Here we have a picture of blessedness in service rather than of arduous toil.
1. Heaven is not a place of unoccupied idleness, but a place of ceaseless activity.
    - a. The **"servants"** of God will assist the Lord Jesus in His reign over the earth.
    - b. He will be King and we will be His *"diplomatic corp."*
  2. Here we see the ultimate fulfillment of Jesus' teaching in Luke 19:11-27, the *"Parable of the Ten Pounds,"* leading to His discussion regarding faithful service.
    - a. In the parable, two servants who were entrusted with ten and five pounds were rewarded in kind for their faithful service.
    - b. A third servant, given but one pound by his master was rebuked for his unfaithfulness in what had been committed unto him.
    - c. To those who had proven themselves faithful, the master said, **"Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities . . . over five cities."**
    - d. Our faithful service for Christ today will determine our rank of service in Christ's Kingdom.
  3. Furthermore, those who haughtily claim that they would not wish to spend eternity *"in heaven"* because *"it sounds like a rather boring place,"* know neither the wonderful Biblical teaching about **"heaven"** nor the awful truths about **"hell."**

IV. The Blessedness Of Fellowship. (22:4-5)

**22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.**

**22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.**

- A. Immediate access to the glory of God will characterize the saints in the Eternal State.

1. His name is declared to be in their foreheads, indicating that they belong to Him. (Cp. Revelation 2:17, 3:13, 7:3, 14:1)
  2. The fact that they see His face demonstrates, beyond question, that these are glorified saints.  
(1 John 3:2, **“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”**)
- B. This is the last reference in the Bible to the face of Jesus Christ.
1. We shall finally see Him face to face!
    - a. No one knows what a thrill that will be, to see the face of our Savior.
    - b. We read of a terrifying thing in 20:11, **“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”**
    - c. The great multitude of the unsaved before the Great White Throne Judgment will be terrified by the face of the Lord Jesus when He executes His righteous wrath.
    - d. But for the saved, there will be nothing more wonderful than to see His face.
    - e. One author writes, *“O the preciousness of the hope! The glory and majesty of the hope! The stirrings and excitement of the hope! Our wonderful Lord has given us a hope that explodes all imagination! We will have the glorious privilege of living face to face with our wonderful Lord!”*
  2. The Gospel writers frequently mention the face of Jesus, but they never give a description.
    - a. After His arrest and trial, the Roman soldiers **“struck him on the face”** (Luke 22:64), apparently so severely and repeatedly that **“his visage was so marred more than any man”** (Isaiah 52:14).
    - b. But when He comes again and we see Him, we shall rejoice forever in **“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (II Corinthians 4:6).
  3. For those who gave themselves over to the worship of the Beast and his False Prophet, they received a mark on their forehead or right hand.
    - a. These receive the name of the Lamb Himself.
    - b. In the New Testament, Paul speaks of believers as being **“sealed by that holy Spirit of promise”** (Ephesians 1:13) as an indication that we belong to Him.
    - c. Here, the continued security of the believer is indicated by the Lamb’s name **“in their foreheads.”**
- C. The wonderful blessings of verses 3-5 brings out clearly the marvelous and comprehensive character of the gracious and divine provision of the saints.
1. Perfect restoration – There shall be no more curse.
  2. Perfect administration – The throne of God and the Lamb shall rule.
  3. Perfect subordination – His servants shall serve Him.
  4. Perfect transformation – We shall see His face.
  5. Perfect identification – His name shall be in our foreheads.
  6. Perfect illumination – There shall be no night, no candle, nor even the light of the sun; for the Lord giveth them light.
  7. Perfect exultation – We shall reign forever and ever.

- D. What a wonderful reunion for those who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior, but what tragic sorrow and grief awaits those who reject Christ. (John 3:36, **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”**)

V. The Certainty Of The Blessed Hope. (22:6-7)

**22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.**

- A. Verse 6 brings us to the conclusion of the Book of Revelation.
1. Throughout the remainder of the book there are different ones speaking.
  2. An angel is speaking in verse 6, then the Lord Jesus is verse 7, and so forth.
- B. In reinforcement of the wonderful revelation given, the angel now states to John, in verse 6, **“These sayings are faithful and true.”**
1. They are **“faithful”** in that all that has been said is worthy of our complete confidence.
  2. They are **“true,”** that is, no one should trifle with these truths by allegorizing their meaning or reducing them to meaningless symbols.
  3. The words of this Book have not been written to satisfy the curiosity of the natural man’s mind concerning future events, but they are words to live by and act upon.
- C. The descriptive phrase, **“shortly be done,”** literally means, *“what is necessary to do, do quickly.”*
1. The thought seems to be that when the action comes, it will be sudden.
  2. It constitutes a message of warning that those who believe should be alert.
    - a. Matthew 24:44, **“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”**
    - b. I Corinthians 15:58, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”**

**22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**

- D. Three times in these remaining verses, Jesus says, **“I come quickly.”** (22:7, 12, 20)
1. The phrase, **“Behold, I come quickly,”** may refer to Christ’s coming for the Church at the Rapture, rather than His Second Coming to the earth, though both are in the larger context.
  2. The word **“quickly”** does not necessarily mean *“soon.”*
    - a. There is not as much a time element in this word as there is a sense of promptness.

- b. Galatians 4:4, **“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”**
- c. The same truth is emphasized regarding the Holy Spirit’s coming in Acts 2:1 and 4, **“When the day of Pentecost was fully come, there were all with one accord in one place. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”**
- 3. *“Behold, I come on time,”* is the thought here, in exactly the right moment. (Matthew 25:36, **“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”**)
- E. The blessing of God is especially pronounced on the one who keeps **“the sayings of the prophecies of this book.”** (Cp. 1:3)
  - 1. The Greek word translated **“keepeth,”** in verse 7, is used in two senses:
    - a. To hold, retain or preserve. (John 2:10, **“ . . . hast kept . . . ”**)
    - b. To obey, observe or heed. (Matthew 23:3, **“ . . . that observe and do . . . ”**)
  - 2. Thus, here, in Revelation 22:7, the one who will be blessed is the one who *“holds to”* and *“obeys”* the message of this Book.

VI. John Worships Before The Angel. (22:8-9)

**22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.**

**22:9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**

- A. John’s response is natural, but he is rebuked by the angel who informs him that he is John’s fellow servant who should also be classified with those who keep the sayings of the Book.
  - 1. Again, John is commanded not to worship angels.
  - 2. Previously, in Revelation 19:10, we read, **“And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”**
- B. The angel’s command is direct and to the point: **“worship God.”**
  - 1. This is important.
  - 2. In all acts of worship, worship only God.
  - 3. Failure to worship God alone was the very beginning sin that brought chaos out of what God had created.

VII. Command To Proclaim The Prophecy. (22:10-11)

**22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**

- A. Since there are blessing for those who keep the sayings of the prophecies given, John is commanded not to seal **“the sayings of the prophecies,”** but rather to proclaim them.
1. The time of the unveiling of this book’s contents is now.
  2. Revelation is the opening up of what Daniel was told to seal, **“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end . . .”** (Daniel 12:4).
- B. The warning given is that if men would remain unmoved by the prophecies of this book, and reject them, then there is no other message that will work.
1. In his closing psalm of thanksgiving, David prayed, **“With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright. With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavory”** (II Samuel 22:26-27).
  2. Verse 11 is an immediate call and statement concerning the eternity of the soul.

**22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**

- a. While the ages of the new Heaven, the new Earth, and the new city of Jerusalem roll on, so Hell will also continue to exist.
  - (1) Those who do not make preparation to enjoy the heavenly glories will continue to exist in the eternity of Hell forever.
  - (2) Those who die without accepting God’s plan of escape will remain unjust eternally.
- b. There is no *“praying out”* to be done by earthly priests or anyone else.
  - (1) The fate of the soul will be sealed.
  - (2) The time is coming when it will be too late to repent.
3. If you haven’t done so already, **“behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”** (II Corinthians 6:2).
  - a. Only those who have accepted God’s plan of salvation will remain righteous eternally and enjoy the glories that await.
  - b. Present choices will become permanent in character.

VIII. The Blessed Hope And Assurance Of Reward. (22:12)

**22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

- A. Verse 12 has in view the Judgment Seat of Christ as it relates to the Christian. (II Corinthians 5:10-11, **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”**)

1. The same standard is established for reward here, as in II Corinthians, namely, that of works.
  2. All the final judgments relate to works, whether they are in connection with Christians who are being rewarded, or unsaved who are being punished.
- B. God, the righteous Judge, will deal with every man's works in His proper time and order.

IX. The Majesty Of The Eternal Christ. (22:13-16)

**22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**

- A. The three part title given in verse 13 all connote the same truth, that Christ is the beginning and source of all things, as well as the goal and consummation of all things. (22:13)
1. Words are made out of letters and all letters come out of an alphabet.
    - a. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are "**Alpha**" and "**Omega**."
    - b. Revelation 19:13 calls Jesus, "**The Word of God**."
  2. David Allen writes, "*The Lord Jesus is the Word of God, the Alphabet of God. He is the nouns of God, the verbs of God, the conjunctions of God, the subject of God, the predicate of God. He is the punctuation also. Everything God has ever said, He has said in His Son. That is the way the Hebrew letter begins: 'God, who at sundry times and divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us in his Son' (Heb. 1:1-2). JESUS CHRIST IS THE LAST WORD [Emphasis added!].*"

**22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**

**22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**

- B. The contrast between verses 14 and 15 have basically the same message as Revelation 21:7-8.
1. Only blood-washed believers have authority to the "**tree of life**" and access to the Holy City. (Ephesians 1:7-12, "**In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**")

2. The inclusion of “**dogs**,” along with “**whoremongers**,” “**murderers**,” and other gross sinners, would indicate that the sin of being a “**dog**” is also a flagrant perversion of God’s moral law.
    - a. In the ancient world, “**dogs**” were scavengers, and were therefore considered unclean and impure.
    - b. The term “**dogs**,” as used here, is used to describe any person of low character.  
(Philippians 3:2, “**Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.**”)
    - c. Within the “**gates**” of the Holy City there will be no “**dogs**” found.
  3. The fact that these stand “**without**” means that they are outside the New Earth and New Jerusalem forever.
    - a. They have been sent away infinitely into the Lake of Fire.  
(Revelation 20:12-15)
    - b. They have been cast into “**outer darkness.**”  
(Matthew 22:13, “**Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**”)
- C. Jesus sends His personal message to the churches.

**22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.**

1. This is the first time the word “**church**” has occurred since the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3.
  - a. A Messianic prophecy, as given by Isaiah seven centuries before Christ, showed the coming Messiah to be of a shoot that would grow up out of the cut down stump of the House of David.  
(Isaiah 11:1, “**And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.**”)
  - b. “**I Jesus**” is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy: “*I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*”
2. Here we find the signature of Jesus Christ Himself upon the Book of Revelation.
  - a. It is His testimony authenticating His messages to the churches.
  - b. It is a wonderful book, the only book in the Bible to which Christ Jesus openly ascribed His name to.

X. The Invitation Of The Spirit And The Bride. (22:17)

**22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

- A. In light of the prophetic word, the invitation to all is given: “**Come.**”
1. The Holy Spirit and the Bride (the Church) give the invitation to “**Come.**”

- a. The one hearing these words – John, the angels, you, or I – is admonished to say, **“Come.”**
  - b. The one who is thirsty for righteousness is invited to **“Come.”**
  - c. One only needs to be a lost sinner who desires forgiveness and eternal life to meet the qualification.
2. The invitation to **“Come,”** is an urgent command, for the day will arrive when it is too late to come.
    - a. Proverbs 27:1, **“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”**
    - b. II Corinthians 6:2b, **“. . . behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”**
    - c. Hebrews 3:15, **“While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”**
    - d. Hebrews 2:3, **“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.”**
- B. Finally, **“whosoever will”** is invited.
1. This is God’s gracious invitation to those who wish to have life.
  2. It can be taken **“freely”** because Jesus, by His death at Calvary, has paid the infinite price for the sins of all who will come.
  3. To all who are willing to accept the invitation, there is the offer of the **“water of life”** without cost.

#### XI. The Final Testimony Of Christ. (22:18-20)

**22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:**

**22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

- A. The word **“book”** here is from the Greek word *BIBLION*.
1. This, of course, is where the *“Bible”* got its name.
  2. Here John warns, first of all, against adding to the prophecies given in the Book of Revelation.
    - a. In a broader sense, however, John would warn against adding to the Bible itself, for he was the last of the apostles, and Jesus had told His apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit Who would **“teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”** (John 14:26).
    - b. Also, the Apostle Paul had written that the church would be **“built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”** (Ephesians 2:20), and that the truths of the New Testament would be **“revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit”** (Ephesians 3:5).
    - c. That **“foundation”** of divine revelation has been laid in the Apostolic Era and thus need not be laid again.



- d. Furthermore, Paul had said that the gift of prophecy would cease once **“that which is perfect [or complete] is come”** (I Corinthians 13:8, 10).
  - e. There can be little doubt, therefore, that John’s warning, in this vitally important verse at the end of the Bible, applies to any *“new revelation”* that might come along.
3. An equally serious crime as adding words to the Bible (as many cults have presumed to do) is that of taking away from its words (as numerous liberal theologians have done).
- a. The cultic and liberal approaches have tried to undermine every book of the Bible, especially the foundational Book of Genesis and the consummational Book of Revelation.
  - b. Some Bible scholars have equated the adding or subtracting from God’s prophecy as a direct blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, the Inspirer of Scripture, and, as such, a violation of the *“unpardonable sin.”* (Matthew 12:31-32, **“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”**)
- B. The final testimony of the Book is yet another repetition of the promise of Christ’s soon return: **“Surely I come quickly.”**

**22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

- 1. There are no predictions in the Bible that must be fulfilled before the Lord comes at the Rapture.
  - a. The Rapture of the Church is a signless, timeless event.
  - b. He could come at any moment.
- 2. The promise was given over 1,900 years ago, but in the scale of eternity, 1,900 years is a very brief period of time.
  - a. In any case, His coming is sure, and when He does come, all the events associated with it will indeed take place quickly as described in this Book.
  - b. In the meantime, we must obey His simple command in Luke 19:13, **“Occupy till I come.”**
  - c. John elsewhere wrote, **“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”** (I John 3:3).
- 3. John’s response to Jesus’ promise is, **“Amen,”** or *“so be it.”*
  - a. He then adds, *“Do come quickly, Lord Jesus!”*
  - b. May we ever live with the same prayer on our breath: **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”**

XII. Benediction. (22:21)

- A. Nothing is clearer in the Book of Revelation than that God's blessing is on the saints, but not on the wicked.
- B. This final Book of the Bible, which began with "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**" (1:1), ends with a prayer that His grace might be with those who have witnessed the scenes through John's pen.
- C. With John, may our prayer be, "**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**"

**Conclusion:** Thus we bring our study of the Book of Revelation to an end. As the Church lives in expectancy of Christ's return, such an attitude should provoke us to ministry and evangelism, as well as purity of heart. We ought to want to tell others of the grace of God. A true understanding of Bible prophecy should motivate us to obey God's Word and to share God's invitation with a lost world.

If our study of the Book of Revelation has been truly led by the Spirit, then we ought to join John in the Bible's last prayer: "**Even so, come Lord Jesus.**"

Finally, we must ask one last question. Are you saved? Have you been "**born again?**" The question is not about what church you attend, what faith you might hold to, or if you've been baptized. The question is, "*Are you saved?*" If not, you can be right now. Acts 16:31 tells us, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .**"

## A CLOSING SERMON: THE CHALLENGES OF CITY LIFE

Notes

**Text:** Revelation 22:6-21

**Introduction:** Human history began in a Garden and will end in a City. In the Apostle John's day, Rome was considered the greatest city that ever existed, yet God compared it to a harlot. Luke 16:15 tells us that, "**That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.**"

But, in contrast, the Eternal City of God, described in the closing chapters of the Bible, is compared to a beautiful bride, because it is the eternal home of God's beloved people.

God's statement in Revelation 21:5 aptly summarizes the final two chapters of the Bible, "**Behold, I make all things new**" What began in Genesis is brought to completion in Revelation. In the closing book of the Bible we see God's ability and power to take all the ungodliness and evil of this world and work it out for good.

In Revelation 5, we see God holding the great Book of Destiny in His hand and Jesus Christ walking over, opening it, and revealing the concluding days of this age.

As if reading today's newspaper, we find that in the Last Days this world is going to experience an increase in natural catastrophes: earthquakes, tsunamis, and violent changes in weather patterns.

As is the hope of many today, a great charismatic leader will arise upon the world scene who, unknowingly, will be so evil that he can only be described as a beast.

In response to this growing wickedness, the Bible further reveals that God will rightfully judge this ungodly and evil world. In judgment, God will unleash His holy wrath against "**all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness**" (Romans 1:18).

Famine, disease, and war will kill one-half of the earth's population. Violent storms will devastate one-third of the earth's vegetation. The seas and waters will be wasted of their inhabitants.

Finally, the Antichrist and his massive army will be destroyed in one moment's time at the last great battle of human history – Armageddon.

But that's not the end yet. Following that battle, the Bible reveals that Jesus Christ will reign on this earth for a thousand years, after which this present heaven and earth will be destroyed, Satan will be cast into "**the lake of fire,**" and all unbelievers will stand to be judged at what is called the "*Great White Throne Judgment of God.*"

And finally, a new heaven and new earth will be created in which Jesus Christ will reign eternally with all true believers.

These are the highlights of what God has revealed to us in the Book of Revelation. God wants us to know these things so we can be prepared for them. He has warned us so that we can find hope in light of the coming judgments.

Heaven is more than a destination – *IT IS A MOTIVATION.* Know-ing that we can dwell in a heavenly city ought to make a difference in our lives here and now. The vision of the heavenly city motivated the Old Testament saints as they walked with God and served Him. The assurance of heaven for us must not lull us into complacency, but ought to spur us on to fulfill our spiritual duties. Revelation 22 tells us of four of these spiritual duties.

- I. We Must Keep God's Word – Five Reasons. (22:6-11, 18-19)

A. The message of the Bible is “**faithful and true.**”

**22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.**

1. The same God who spoke through the prophets also spoke through the Apostle John.
  2. As the “*capstone*” of God’s revelation, John’s book cannot be divorced from the rest of the Bible.
  3. II Timothy 3:16 teaches us that “**all scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .**”
    - a. To this, II Peter 1:21 adds, “**For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**”
    - b. We must either believe all the Word of God or we cannot trust any of it.
  4. The verse before us declares that the message of the Bible is both trustworthy and true!
- B. The message of the Bible brings blessings.

**22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.**

1. To keep “**the sayings of . . . this book**” means “*to guard, watch over, and obey it.*”
  2. In anticipation of Christ’s coming, to really study the Bible brings many blessings:
    - a. You will be drawn closer to the Lord as you become more deeply aware of His presence.
    - b. You will be better able to cope with world events as you see God being faithful to what He has written prophetically.
    - c. You will have a greater understanding of heaven and be more stirred to long for it and live in light of it.
  3. On and on the list could go, for the Lord’s blessings are endless to the person who studies and keeps the Word of God.
- C. The message of the Bible stirs worship.

**22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.**

**22:9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**

1. When John heard the prophecies, he was so astounded that he was gripped with a spirit of fear and worship.
  2. He actually fell down at the feet of the one who was delivering the message for the Lord.
    - a. This is the second time that John had done this. (cp. Revelation 19:10)
    - b. The messenger rebuked John and told him that worship goes to God alone.
  3. The great tragedy of our day is that many worship false gods, or gods of their own making, and there is nobody to tell them the truth.
    - a. In receiving worship, these false prophets show their true identities.
    - b. They are of the spirit of anti-Christ and they reject that which is **“faithful and true.”**
  4. True worship ascribes to God His rightful worthiness of all glory, honor, and majesty. (Psalm 96:9, **“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness . . .”**)
- D. The message of the Bible provokes righteous living.

**22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**

**22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.**

1. The message is clear – the book is never to be sealed or closed.
  - a. It must be read, studied, preached, and taught, if it is ever to be lived.
  - b. But the time is coming when it will be too late.
  - c. If Timothy 4:3 warns, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”**
  - d. The more a person hardens his or her heart, the harder it is to be changed. (Romans 2:5, **“But after thy hardness and impenitent [or “obstinate”] heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”**)
2. The warning of verse 11 does not suggest that God does not want men to repent and change their ways.
  - a. The message must be understood in light of the repeated statement, **“Behold, I come quickly.”** (22:7, 12)
  - b. Jesus’ coming will occur so quickly that men will have no time to change their behaviors.
  - c. Revelation 22:11 is a solemn warning that decision determines character, and character determines destiny.
  - d. There is coming a time when you will continue in the path you have chosen.
  - e. The emphasis in verse 11 is that we must make our decision for Christ while there is still opportunity.

- f. Furthermore, to have made the right decision regarding Christ will promote right living for Christ.
- E. The message of the Bible must not be tampered with.

**22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:**

**22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

1. It would be unpardonable for an ambassador to add words to, or take away from, any royal mandate which he was commissioned to deliver.
  - a. It would be unacceptable for a pharmacist to tamper with a physician's prescription, when the life and death of a patient trembles in the balance.
  - b. Yet, we fear that the tendency of many in our day is to treat the message of the Bible far more lightly than they would any other important human communication.
2. Human history has shown that many have added to or subtracted from this book.
  - a. The Church of Latter-Day Saints don't deny the Bible, they just add their Book of Morman to it.
  - b. Many have distorted the plain teaching of the Bible in order to hold on to their preconceived notions of evolution.
  - c. Others want to pick and choose the parts of the Bible that they want to believe.
  - d. To deny any part of the Bible is to reject the whole of it.
  - e. The Bible is Divine in origin, and therefore is too sacred for human hands to mar.
3. Furthermore, we ought to give serious consideration to our working out of God's Word in our every day lives. (Philippians 2:12, "**Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**")
  - a. When we knowingly go against God's recorded Word, we are in danger of taking away from God's revelation for our lives.
    - (1) The one who guards the Word and obeys it will be blessed.
    - (2) The one who alters it will be disciplined in some way.
  - b. We must keep God's Word.

## II. We Must Serve The Lord. (22:12-14)

**22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

**22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.**

**22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**

- A. **“My reward is with me,”** implies that God is mindful of our sufferings and our service, and nothing will ever be done in vain if it is done for Him.
1. Throughout church history, there have always been those who have become so *“heavenly minded that they were of no earthly good.”*
    - a. They quit their jobs, sold their property, and sat and waited for Jesus to return.
    - b. All of them have been embarrassed, of course, because it is unbiblical to set dates for His coming.
  2. It is also unbiblical to become careless and lazy just because we believe Jesus is coming soon.
    - a. No wonder Jesus added, **“Blessed are they that do his commandments.”**
    - b. If we really believe that Jesus is coming soon, then we will watch and be faithful in doing the Lord’s work.
    - c. The Apostle John elsewhere wrote, **“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”** (I John 3:3).
- B. Verse 13 is a great encouragement to anyone who seeks to serve the Lord.
1. Whatever God starts, He will finish; for He is the **“Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”**
  2. God spans all *“Time.”*
    - a. He is the Creator and Finisher of the universe.
    - b. He began all things and He’ll finish all things.
    - c. Christian, take heart, because Philippians 1:6 promises, **“that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**
    - d. I Corinthians 15:58 admonishes, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”**

### III. We Must Clean Our Lives. (22:15-16)

**22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**

**22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.**

- A. We do not keep His commandments to get into heaven; we are to keep His commandments because we are on our way there.
1. Romans 10:4 tells us that **“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”**
  2. The contrast here is between those who do God’s commandments and enter the city, and those who reject God’s Word and are excluded.

- B. There are some people who will not be allowed into the heavenly city of God.
1. Who are they?
  2. They are the group described in Revelation 21:8, **“But the fearful, and UNBELIEVING, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”**
  3. The warning is clear.
- C. Jesus Christ, and He alone, is the **“root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”**
1. He alone is the hope of salvation.
  2. He alone is the only entrance into that blessed city.

IV. We Must Expect Christ’s Return. (22:17, 20-21)

**22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

**22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

**22:21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

- A. The Book of Revelation closes with the greatest of all assurances.
1. Jesus Christ is the One who reveals and testifies to the things written in the Bible.
    - a. They are not imaginary.
    - b. They are the Written Word of God, just as Jesus is the Living Word of God.
  2. Secondly, Jesus unequivocally declares, **“Surely I come quickly.”**
    - a. Jesus is coming.
    - b. Are you living in expectation of this fact.
    - c. John declared, **“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”** (I John 3:3).
- B. The invitation is before you – **“Come!”**

**Conclusion:** Three times in this chapter Jesus said, *“I come quickly.”* But He has delayed His coming for more than 2,000 years. When we remember that 1,000 years to God is but one day, it has not been that long since He made His promise to *“come quickly.”*

But why the delay? As has been repeatedly cited in these studies, Peter tells us that God wants to give you an opportunity to repent and be saved. He says, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not will-ing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord WILL COME as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”** (II Peter 3:9-10).



In light of Christ's soon coming, four spiritual disciplines are needed in your life: you must keep God's Word, you must serve the Lord, you must clean up your life, and you must live in expectation of His soon return. Are you ready? Have you sat and drank of the "**water of life freely?**" I invite you to come to Him.

*Notes*

