

>>> Introduction <<<<

AUTHOR

- 1) The early church fathers — including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus — uniformly identified this John as the apostle of the same name, the one who abandoned his father's fishing nets to follow Jesus.
- 2) There have been a few scholars through the years that have taken exception to that assessment.
- 3) These exceptions are mainly based on style differences between John's gospel and letters, and Revelation.
- 4) To me personally, these would be easily explained due to the nature of the writings if nothing else.
 - a) If one only thinks of the contrast in what the writings are, Revelation is not like a letter that one would sit down and prepare to send to the receiver.
 - b) And it is truly not like a gospel – a well thought out narrative about Jesus and his ministry.
 - c) It is instead a describing of events and scenes in a vision related in a non-real-world setting.
 - i) Apocalyptic style.
 - ii) Apocalyptic literature is a genre of prophetic writing that developed in post-Exilic Jewish culture and was popular among early Christians. (~200 BC to 350 AD)
 - d) Even the letters to the seven churches were dictated and are from Jesus – not John.
- 5) Additionally, when one looks carefully, there are no reasonable alternatives for the writer and therefore, no real reason for doubt.

SETTING and DATE

SETTING

- 1) We don't have to guess or research where Revelation was written.
- 2) The text itself clearly names the location in vs. 9 of the first chapter as the island of Patmos:

Rev 1:9 (NIV)

9 I, John, am your brother and your partner in suffering and in God's Kingdom and in the patient endurance to which Jesus calls us. I was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and for my testimony about Jesus.

- 3) Patmos:
 - a) About 34 miles off the southwest coast of Asia Minor (coast of present-day Turkey)
 - b) Only 7.5 miles long and 4.3 miles wide.
 - c) Inhabited since approx. 3000 BC.
 - d) Part of a large group of small islands in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece.
 - e) Very rugged terrain
- 4) As he states, John had been exiled to that barren and rocky island because he had fearlessly proclaimed the gospel.

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- 5) John had been banished to Patmos as the Roman authorities continued moving against the church.
- 6) Threatened by John's powerful ministry, they viewed John as a dangerous leader of the Christian religion.
- 7) During this exile, while John was separated from his Christian brothers and sisters, the risen Jesus appeared to him in a spectacular vision.

DATE

- 8) Although the island of Patmos where John is, is identified in the text, the exact date is not.
- 9) There are two schools of thought on this:
- 10) Some believe that Revelation was written during Nero's reign, between the years A.D. 54 and 68, the time of Nero's greatest persecution of the Christians.
- 11) The best argument for this date is that the apostle John may have written the description of the New Jerusalem (21) before the destruction of the old city in A.D. 70.
- 12) Another explanation for an early date is that the number 666 works as a possible cryptic reference to Nero.
- 13) When the words "Nero Caesar" are transcribed into Hebrew, the numeric value of the Hebrew letters can be calculated as 666.
- 14) Another argument is that the persecution that Nero instigated against Christians could be coincidental with the persecution in the book of Revelation.
- 15) In context however, these are not really viable arguments.
- 16) In the last analysis, the evidence seems to support the early church tradition that the apostle John wrote Revelation around A.D. 90-95.
- 17) This would place the writing during the reign of the emperor Domitian.
- 18) The early church father Irenaeus made this case.
- 19) Modern scholars agree with Irenaeus.
- 20) Scholars also believe that sometime after writing Revelation, John was released from Patmos.
- 21) He then he returned to Ephesus, where he had been ministering before his exile.
- 22) Several years later, around A.D. 100, John died.
- 23) This progression of events tracks well with the evidence in Revelation itself.
 - a) The writer described himself as a brother and companion of the believers in Ephesus and nearby cities (1:9-11) — an appropriate statement for a leader of the Ephesian church.
 - b) The letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor in chapters 2 and 3 speak of a spiritual decline — something that certainly could have occurred during the forty or so years after their founding.
 - c) In chapter 3 vs. 17, the church of Laodicea is described as rich.
 - d) Since the city was completely destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60-61, it would have been difficult to say this of Laodicea much before A.D. 90.

TO WHOM WRITTEN

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- 1) The churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea and believers everywhere.
- 2) These seven churches were located in what today is southwestern Turkey.
- 3) Reliable historical sources from the second century A.D. describe the apostle John as ministering in Ephesus around A.D. 70-100. This solidifies the primary destination as the churches the writing was addressing.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION

- 1) As to the content, primarily, we must take John's opening statement as a true indicator of the purpose of the book.

Rev 1:1 (NIV)

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.

- 2) Isaiah 53 describes the Christ that we saw as our savior in the gospels. Here is an excerpt

Isa 53:2-6 (NIV)

- 3) Instead of this savior Jesus, in Revelation, we will see Jesus the King – God of the Universe – Conqueror of all evil.
- 4) The book, especially chapters 4 and beyond, is Apocalyptic in style.
- 5) Apocalyptic literature is a genre of prophetic writing that developed in post-Exilic Jewish culture and was popular among early Christians. (~200 BC to 350 AD)
- 6) The Greek word from which we get the word apocalypse means "revelation", "an unveiling or unfolding of things not previously known and which could not be known apart from the unveiling". Wikipedia
- 7) Unfortunately, because of the description of the complete and final destruction of the world described in Revelation, the word Apocalypse has also taken on that meaning.
- 8) One commentator, Joseph Seiss, titled his commentary on the Revelation, Apocalypse rather than Revelation because he felt strongly that the word needed to be clarified and placed in proper perspective.
- 9) The book of Revelation, as with other apocalyptic works, contains mysterious imagery, numerology, cosmic journeys, supernatural beings, and strange beasts.
- 10) This type of literature attempts to describe invisible, supernatural events in human terms.

11) At this point it is important to note that in order to understand the symbols in Revelation, we will consider their meaning to the first-century readers and not impose contemporary events and people on the text.

- 12) Apocalyptic writers never intended for the symbols to be interpreted as literal photographs of the future.
- 13) Instead, they wanted their graphic and disturbing images to symbolize events, beings, or traits in the supernatural realm.

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- 14) For example, 1:16 describes Christ as having a sharp, double-edged sword in his mouth.
- a) By comparing this image to Heb 4:12-13 (which describes the Word of God as a double-edged sword that penetrates the soul and judges every thought), it becomes clear that this sword is a symbol for Christ's words.
 - b) Christ's words are so full of truth that they can cleanly separate good from evil, truth from falsehood.
 - c) Christ with his words of truth will be the ultimate Judge of all people.
- 15) Symbols may also be context sensitive.
- a) Example the sword we were just discussing when it is mentioned in 6:1-8 which is a different context, it means destruction.
- 16) That being said, again referring to the list of symbols that I gave out at the start, we will most likely add symbols to and perhaps add contextual meanings to some that are already there.

Approaches to the Study of Revelation

- 17) There are 4 prevalent ways one can enter into a study of Revelation. These are:
- a) The PRETERIST approach.
 - b) The HISTORICAL approach.
 - c) The IDEALIST approach.
 - d) The FUTURIST approach.
- 18) **The preterist approach** – ("preterist" means "past action"). This view assumes that Revelation simply describes events confined to the apostle John's day.
- a) This approach views Revelation not as future, predictive prophecy, but as a historical record of events in the first-century Roman Empire.
 - b) Those taking the preterist approach strongly support the earlier date for the writing of AD 54 to 68.
- 19) **The historicist approach** – views Revelation as a record of church history from apostolic times until the present.
- a) Many of the Reformers — Luther, Calvin, and others — interpreted Revelation in the historicist manner.
 - b) They understood this mysterious book as a prophetic survey of church history.
 - c) Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) was the first person to interpret Revelation this way; he considered that the book's prophesies to be the events of Western history from the early church until his own time.
 - d) In this approach, each one of the seven churches in Rev 2-3 represents a certain stage of church history, from the early church to the church of the Middle Ages to, perhaps, even the modern-day church.
 - e) According to this view, therefore, the Beast of Revelation would represent a specific person or institution in history.
 - f) Like the preterist approach, the historicist view ignores Revelation's own claims to be a prophecy.

- g) This becomes a perspective issue – looking at things (fitting them if you will) as history is NOT prophesy!
- h) It also robs the book of any meaning for those first-century believers to whom it was addressed.
- i) The historicist view doesn't enjoy much favor today because there hasn't been any agreement on the specific historical events that Revelation describes.
- j) Historicist interpreters often resort to allegorizing the text in order to find various historical events they believe it depicts such as:
 - i) The fall of Rome to the barbarians
 - ii) The rise of the Roman Catholic Church
 - iii) The advent of Islam and even the French Revolution.

k) One comment I read says –

“Because the book of Revelation is categorized as apocalyptic literature and contains numerous symbols, it undergoes a great deal of abuse due to allegorical interpretation.”

l) A commentator by the name of Zuck offers the following description of allegorizing:

Allegorizing is searching for a hidden or secret meaning underlying but remote from and unrelated in reality to the more obvious meaning of a text. In other words, the literal reading is a sort of code, which needs to be deciphered to determine the more significant and hidden meaning. In this approach the literal is superficial, the allegorical is the true meaning.

- m) Not surprisingly, such a subjective, arbitrary, and whimsical approach has given rise to a myriad of conflicting interpretations of the actual historical events in Revelation.
- n) If my understanding of this view is correct, one thing I find especially disturbing about it is the writing must be dynamic.
 - i) In other words, as history unfolds, the meaning of things in the book must change to meet them – to me, this can NOT be considered prophesy.

20) ***The Idealist (symbolic) Approach*** – sees Revelation as depicting a timeless struggle between good and evil that is therefore, played out in every age.

- a) According to this view Revelation is neither a historical record nor a predictive prophecy.
- b) Like the first two views, the idealist or “symbolic” view ignores Revelation's claims to be a prophecy.
- c) Those who take this approach believe that through symbols, Revelation presents timeless truths that were relevant to the original readers and are relevant to readers today.
- d) Proponents of the idealist (symbolic) perspective assert that Revelation's fundamental message can be understood by everyone — a person born in the Roman Empire in the first

century, someone living in New Zealand in the nineteenth century, or someone living in America today.

- e) An extreme symbolic approach would spiritualize the entire book, asserting that Revelation predicts no specific historical events.
- f) It also, if carried to its logical conclusion, severs Revelation from any connection with actual events – past or future.
- g) The book is thus reduced to a collection of myths designed to convey spiritual truth.

21) ***The Futurist Approach*** – in this approach, the book actually consists of two parts:

- a) Chapters 1 thru 3 being an introduction to the context and the words of the Savior to the Churches of Asia.
- b) Then, chapters 4-22 see the predictions of people and events in the future.
- c) However, I think it is important (as we will see) to realize that even though the subject is different, in the two sections, the goal of the writing remains the same.

Rev 1:1-2 (AMP)

1 [THIS IS] the revelation of Jesus Christ [His unveiling of the divine mysteries]. God gave it to Him to disclose and make known to His bond servants certain things which must shortly and speedily come to pass in their entirety. And He sent and communicated it through His angel (messenger) to His bond servant John,

2 Who has testified to and vouched for all that he saw [in his visions], the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. AMP

- d) Only the futurist approach allows Revelation to be interpreted following the same literal, grammatical-historical interpretive method.
- e) This is the method by which non-prophetic portions of Scripture are interpreted.
- f) As previously noted, proponents of the other three approaches are frequently forced to resort to allegorizing or spiritualizing the text to sustain their interpretations.
- g) The futurist approach, in contrast to the other three, does full justice to Revelation's claim to be a prophecy.
- h) Typically, futurists insist that the key to interpreting Revelation can be found in the description of the sealed scroll, which only the Lamb, Jesus, is worthy to open.
- i) Each time the Lamb opens one of the seven seals of the scroll, the earth experiences a cataclysmic event.
- j) Thus, futurists believe that the descriptions of famine, war, and devastation in the central chapters of Revelation depict the final days of human history.
- k) According to this view, the Beast of Rev 13 is the Antichrist, who will appear in the end times to deceive people.

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- 22) One thing that always leads to a problem in studying and interpreting the book of Revelation is the need to answer the unanswered question – when will Jesus return? – when will this all end?
- 23) If that is the answer we are seeking in our study, (which it is not) we will not find it!
- 24) Only the FUTURIST approach allows Revelation to stand as is and backup the true answer! And that is ... WE DO NOT KNOW!
- 25) The answer to that question has already been given – Jesus himself gave the answer in His response to his disciple's question in Matthew 24:3

Matt 24:3-4 (NASU)

3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" NASU

- 26) The discourse between vs. 4 and vs. 36 is basically a mini version (CliffsNotes) -Revelation.
- 27) Jesus ends the discourse with the true answer:

Matt 24:32-36 (NASU)

32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. ***NASU***

28) The last statement is the true answer!

- 29) One of the major causes of confusion regarding Jesus' discourse in Mathew is the word GENERATION in vs. 34.
- 30) One commentary explained it this way.

This is one of the hardest verses in the gospels to interpret. Various views exist for what generation means. (1) Some take it as meaning "race" and thus as an assurance that the Jewish race (nation) will not pass away. But it is very questionable that the Greek term genea can have this meaning. Two other options are possible. (2) Generation might mean "this type of generation" and refer to the generation of wicked humanity. Then the point is that humanity will not perish, because God will redeem it. Or (3) generation may refer to "the generation that sees the signs of the end" (v. 30), who will also see the end itself. In other words, once the movement to the return of Christ starts, all the events connected with it happen very quickly, in rapid succession.

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31) John MacArthur states the definition clearly:

This generation refers to the generation living during the end time. The signs of Matthew 24-25 will be experienced within one generation, the generation living when Christ returns.

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32) One final word regarding interpretation. In any outside study you do, you will likely run across the word eschatology.

33) The Oxford English Dictionary defines eschatology as "the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind"

34) Again, turning to MacArthur,

Some who study Revelation do so seeking evidence to support their own (often bizarre or sensational) eschatological views. But they miss the point. Revelation is a rich source of truth about eschatology; in fact, it contains more details about the end times than any other book of the Bible. Revelation portrays Christ's ultimate triumph over Satan, depicts the final political setup of the world system, and describes the career of the most powerful dictator in human history, the final Antichrist. It also mentions the Rapture of the church (3:10), and describes the seven-year time of Tribulation, including the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation (7:14; cf. Matt 24:21), the second coming of Christ, the climactic battle of human history (Armageddon), the thousand-year earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ, the final judgment of unrepentant sinners (the Great White Throne judgment), and the final state of the wicked in hell (the lake of fire) and the redeemed in the new heaven and new earth.

But the book of Revelation is preeminently the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1). It describes Him by many titles and affirms the full deity of Jesus Christ. He possesses the attributes and prerogatives of God. (reference handout)

Far from being the mysterious, incomprehensible book many imagine it to be, Revelation's purpose is to reveal truth, not to obscure it. That fact is evident in its title, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1), primarily in His second coming glory.

(from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Copyright © Moody Press and John MacArthur, Jr., 1983-2005.)

35) In studying Revelation, we will take the futurist approach.

36) We will take this straightforward view and accept what the text says.

37) It is nearly impossible to consider all the interpretive options offered by people holding the other views, so we will not try to work through that maze of options.

38) Rather, we will take the book as it comes in the normal fashion of language.

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- 39) Anything other than the futurist approach leaves the meaning of the book to human ingenuity and opinion.
- 40) The futurist approach takes the book's meaning as God gave it.
- 41) In our study we will make every effort NOT to focus so much on the timetable of the events or the details of John's imagery.
- 42) We will try to concentrate on the main message — the infinite love, power, and justice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

43) OBJECTIVES

- a) Come to a better and clearer picture of our Savior and Lord.
- b) Come to a better understanding of the book overall
 - i) The symbology
 - ii) The purpose
 - iii) Properly frame the book – removing the often-unnecessary speculation about the times things will take or have taken place.
- c) Most importantly – we will try to make this study about what God wants us to know from what he has given to John.

44) MULTIPLE EXPLANATIONS

- a) We will run into situation throughout our study where the meaning of a passage is debatable.
- b) There may be 2 or 3 explanations for what the particular passage means.
- c) In these cases, I will make every attempt to explain the different explanations and where possible, I will give the reasoning behind the choice.
- d) Unfortunately, it will be up to you as to which one you consider to be the right one.
- e) One thing I am reasonably sure of is that none of these are “eternal” life threatening.
- f) Simply put, they are interesting to think about and try to decide on but they will not affect our salvation and the final outcome of God’s plan.

45) QUESTIONS

- a) We will still have discussion however, due to the nature of the content,
 - i) Most questions will be more along the lines of how we understand what is being said.
 - ii) Less along the lines of how what we are studying impacts our lives
- b) Also be fielding more questions from you to try to help us all understand the content better.
 - i) I may not always have the answer
 - ii) If not, I will attempt to get one and come back with it the following week.

- 1) One more point of introduction (food for thought if you will) before we begin.
- 2) On the “MYSTERY” of this book. One commentator points out that some consider the book to be a mystery. He asks the question:

Why would God be clear and precise in his word to mankind from Genesis to Jude and then choose to be totally mysterious and incomprehensible in His revelation of the end of his redemptive story?

- 3) On that note, let us begin.

Rev 1:1-3 (NIV)

- 4) John begins in verse 1 by laying out the source, the destination, and the subject of the writing.
- 5) First, ***the source*** – the revised NIV clarifies this first sentence by simply changing the word of to from.
- 6) As we have discussed, this entire writing is the Reveling of Jesus Christ as the final ruler of the entire creation and the final conquer of all evil.
 - a) Revelation will reveal the infinite love, power, and justice of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b) Image after image throughout the writing is one of majesty, power, and glory.
- 7) However, first and foremost this is God giving to Jesus, for us, the story of how it all ends.
- 8) It is the last chapter of God’s redemptive story.
 - a) It shows how time as we know it will end and the new heaven and new earth will be brought into being.
- 9) ***Destination (To whom)*** was it given – God’s servants
 - a) As we will see, it is first to the churches that John served, AND further, to all who will ever read these words and are true servants of the God most high.
 - b) That’s US! - All those that came before us! - All those that come after us until the words of this prophesy are fulfilled.
 - c) Verse 3 makes this clear – blessed are those who hear it
- 10) Finally – ***the subject***
 - a) The phrase "what must soon take place" and in particular the word for soon, means imminence."
 - b) This may seem odd to us, today's readers because 2000 years have passed since the time this was proclaimed.
 - c) We must remember that in apocalyptic literature the future is imminent, without concern for intervening time.
 - d) The apostle Peter lays this concept out quite clearly in 2 Peter 3:8 ff.

2 Peter 3:8-10 (NIV)

- e) In God's eyes the future is just around the corner, even though it may seem far away to us.
 - f) No one knows when these events will happen, so believers should always live as though Christ will come in the next moment.
- 11) Of course, here again, John makes clear he is the writer, but the deliverer of the message is God's angel.
- 12) We finish these first verses with a few very important points that will hold true throughout the remainder of our study.
- 13) First, we are promised to be:
- a) Blessed as we read the words of this prophecy
 - b) Blessed as we hear it and take to heart
 - c) This is exactly what we will be doing over the next weeks / months.
- 14) The last point is that the time is near.
- 15) This phrase reiterates the truth taught in 1:1.
- 16) The events depicted in the book of Revelation are imminent – in God's time continuum.
- a) As we will see shortly, John describes God by that time continuum.
 - b) And God uses the same terms to describe himself.
- "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."
- 17) Time does not translate chronos, which refers to time on a clock or calendar, but kairos, which refers to seasons, epochs, or eras.
- 18) To properly keep this is perspective, we must adjust our thinking to get away from hours, minutes, seconds or even years, decades, centuries, or millennia.
- 19) God is timeless.
- 20) Universe – 14 billion plus years old.
- a) God created it THEREFORE he has been around before that and will continue to infinity!
- 21) John MacArthur states:
- "It simply means that the next great era of God's redemptive history is near. That the return of Christ is imminent, the next event on God's prophetic calendar, has always been the church's hope."
- 22) And, to state the obvious, the events depicted here that we are about to study are the next events on God's prophetic calendar.

Rev 1:4-11 (NIV)

- 1) Under the Spirit here simply means under the control of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) In this condition, one is transported to a vision state for want of a better term and allowed to see things beyond our normal senses.
 - b) Peter and Paul as well as Ezekiel had these “in the Spirit” experiences.
- 2) Throughout the book of Revelation, a loud voice or sound indicates the seriousness of what is being said.
- 3) Here, the voice is also described as being “like a trumpet” which indicates divine command.
- 4) This meaning is not new to scripture

Ex 19:16-19 (NIV)

- 5) John is told 12 times throughout Revelation to “write what you see”.
- 6) Here, he is told to write it on a scroll and to send it to seven churches.
 - a) Notice – John makes no reply.
- 7) The seven cities appear in the order that a messenger, traveling on the great circular road that linked them, would visit them.
 - a) From Patmos, the messenger carrying the writing would sail to Miletus. After landing at Miletus, they would have traveled north to Ephesus (the city nearest to Miletus)
 - b) Then in a clockwise circle to Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and finally, Laodicea.
 - c) Copies of the scroll would most likely have been distributed to each church.
 - d) Of note also is that these seven churches were in the key cities of the seven postal districts into which Asia was divided.
 - e) As such, they were the central points for disseminating information.

Rev 1:12-13 (NIV)

- 1) As we said a moment ago, a loud voice or sound indicates the seriousness of what is being said – the trumpet divine command / authority.
- 2) I think I would turn around too!
- 3) The first thing John sees is 7 golden lampstands which he will soon be told represent the 7 churches
- 4) John uses the term “like a son of man” which is a quote from Dan 7:13.

Dan 7:13-14 (NIV)

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- 5) This is the same phrase – “son of man” – that Jesus used on many occasions to refer to himself.
 - a) Ezekiel = 93 times
- 6) Jesus adopted the phrase from Daniel chapter 7, a passage that summarizes a theme that runs throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - a) It’s about the hope for a new humanity who will finally realize the ideal purpose that God has for them.
 - b) This phrase could be a short study all unto itself.
- 7) John then describes the son of man’s clothes as a long white robe and the golden sash.
- 8) This apparel is indicative of the supreme high priest.
- 9) He continues his description in vs. 14

Rev 1:14-16 (NIV)

- 1) To begin, white from our symbol definitions indicates purity in this case.
- 2) Additionally, MacArthur points out that the Greek word translated as white here has the connotation of “bright,” “blazing,” or “brilliant.”
- 3) Combined, it symbolizes Christ’s eternal glorious holy truthfulness.
- 4) The exact same phraseology was used in Dan 7 to describe God the Father which affirms Christ’s deity.

Dan 7:9 (NIV)

⁹“As I looked,
“thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.

- 5) Next John describes the speaker’s eyes – “flames of fire.”
- 6) We will see this phrase used other places as we proceed thru this study.
- 7) Christ sees all. His gaze penetrates the depths of the person and in this case as we see the very depths of the churches he is addressing.
- 8) We read in Hebrews 4,

Heb 4:13 (NIV)

13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

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- 9) Next, John describes his feet as being of bronze glowing in a furnace and a voice of rushing water.
- a) In ancient times, kings sat on elevated thrones. One reason for this was so that all being judged were beneath the king's feet.
 - b) In this way, the king's feet came to be recognized as authority.
 - c) Joseph Seiss comments about this description:

He once said, through Isaiah, "I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Isa 60:13). But here we have the feet themselves, those feet with which he is to tread down the wicked; and the description corresponds with the rest of the picture. Christ is all-glorious, even to his feet. They are like glowing brass-like brass in the fire heated unto whiteness. The glory of this metal, in such a state, is almost insufferable to the human gaze. It presents an image of pureness which is terrible. And it is upon these feet of dreadful holiness that our Lord walks among the churches, and shall tread down all abominations, and crush the antichrist, and Satan, and all who unhappily set aside his authority and his claims.

10) John describes his voice as attention getting to say the least.

- a) NIV uses rushing water.
- b) Other translations use terms like "many waters", "great waters", "raging waters"
- c) The Living Bible says – "thundered like the waves against the shore"

11) Finally, John says

and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

12) Regarding the sharp double-edged sword, Hebrews 4 tells us:

Heb 4:12-14 (NIV)

13) As for the brilliance of the sun – ever buy a telescope or look at the instructions for one?

- a) One of the first things you will always see is instructions to the effect "NEVER look at the sun thru the telescope" and some might even add a caution about looking at the sun directly – NEVER DO IT!!
- b) Why – because it is so bright that it can literally damage your eyes beyond repair!
- c) Christ is that brilliant "bright" to John's eyes.
- d) We should remember that the brightest light other than the sun that these folks knew about was a candle, torch, or perhaps a very large bonfire.

14) If we think of the Christ who walked the earth 2000+ years ago, the Jesus that John knew and loved.

15) As you have thought thru the years about Jesus ascending and setting at the Father's right hand **Was it the Jesus that was human or was it this glorious Jesus?**

What do you see as a summary of the main difference?

16) Perhaps, John did not recognize them as being the same though he had seen something similar if not exactly like it before.

Matt 17:1-8 (NIV)

Rev 1:17-18 (NIV)

- 1) Throughout scripture, those brought face-to-face with the blazing, holy glory of the one true and living God are terrified, realizing their sinful unworthiness to be in His holy presence.
- 2) Summarizing the proper response to God's holiness and majesty, the writer of Hebrews exhorts believers to "offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:28-29).
- 3) Though John was in awe and fear of the magnificent vision of his God, Jesus was still Jesus – loving and comforting.
- 4) Jesus' words to John here are a testimony to the everlasting God – the eternal.
 - a) Again, the first and the last – without beginning and without end.
 - b) The Greek phrase for I was dead is actually "I became dead."
 - c) The eternal living God took on human form and died but again is alive forever.
 - d) MacArthur says of the final statement here:

"Keys denote access and authority. Jesus Christ has the authority to decide who dies and who lives; He controls life and death. And John, like all the redeemed, had nothing to fear, since Christ had already delivered him from death and Hades by His own death."

>>>>>> Lesson 03 <<<<<<<

- 1) We will begin the discussion with verse 19.
- 2) As a refresher and review, we'll begin reading in Rev 1, verse 12.

Rev 1:12-19 (NIV)

- 1) Jesus tells John again to write.
 - a) First, what he has seen – the vision he had to this point and was having.
 - b) Second, what is now – meaning what Jesus is getting ready to expound to him for the seven churches. (chapters 2 and 3)
 - c) Finally, what is to take place later – this will be the prophesies of chapters 4 thru 22.

Rev 1:20 (NIV)

- 5) Take note here, John's vision is like a dream in some respects.
- 6) Ever have a dream where things happen that are left out?
- 7) John originally sees seven stars in Jesus' right hand.
- 8) The stars are now gone but we do not know where. We know this because:
 - a) Christ comforts John by placing his right hand on him.
 - b) Christ also acknowledges that they are gone when he refers to them here in the past tense.

Letters to the Churches – Introduction

- 1) As I stated earlier, chapters 1 thru 3 are almost like a separate part of the book within Revelation – being the context and letters to the churches and then 4 thru 22 cover the second coming and those prophetic events.
- 2) However, I believe we need to make sure we do not carry this thought of **separation** too far.
- 3) In actuality, we can look at these letters to the churches as a bridge between John's Day and the hour of his vision and writing and the day the events of the vision start to unfold.
- 4) Bonnie sent me an introductory lesson on the book of Daniel.
 - a) It made the point that this is another similarity between the two books.
 - b) The first chapters of Daniel are really a lesson in how we should live to please God.
 - c) Not unlike these first chapters of Revelation.
- 5) Additionally, as we will see, there are several references in these letters to the churches that actually connect to the prophesies that are coming.
- 6) We should think of these letters as not just applying to the 7 churches to which they were written but to all churches that exist in the world from that day until the return.
- 7) Obviously, they do!

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- 8) They could be and really are, a road map, a last word directed to all who read them as a real list of things to look out for and to be aware of as churches and, for that matter individuals.
- 9) The general pattern of the seven letters is in stages:
 - a) the correspondent,
 - b) the church,
 - c) the city,
 - d) the commendation or concern,
 - e) the command, and finally,
 - f) the counsel.
- 10) The correspondent in each case is, of course, Christ.
 - a) He identifies himself in each letter with an appropriate part of John's vision description of Himself.
 - b) In this identification, Christ chose the phrases from that earlier vision that best fit His approach to each church.
- 11) One of the curious things about each of the letters is that Jesus says "to the angel of ..."
 - a) The question arises is there really and angel or not.
 - b) Most think, based on the Greek word used which is usually translated messenger, and for other reasons, these "angels" are really the leaders of these churches.
 - i) Leaders in this case could be elders or ministers.
 - ii) At any rate, this is not likely to be a reference to "heavenly beings."
- 1) The conclusion of each letter contains the phrase, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
 - a) There are two points that need to be emphasized here.
 - i) First, it is the responsibility of each individual reading or hearing these letters to heed what God is saying.
 - ii) It is not just the responsibility of the elders or the ministers – it is ours!
 - iii) It is each of us in the collective whole that make our church what it is.
 - iv) Secondly, note the plural of "churches;" again, indicating that these letters should be distributed among all the 7 churches being addressed.
 - b) And, if I may be so bold, since we are dealing in apocalyptic matters, the number 7 (Seven) being complete, this is to be read by all churches throughout the ages.

Rev 2:1-7 (NIV)

- 2) Christ commended the church at Ephesus for five things:

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- a) working hard
 - b) persevering
 - c) resisting sin – not tolerating evildoers
 - d) properly dealing with false apostles
 - e) enduring patiently and bearing up without becoming weary.
- 3) All of these characteristics show a church busy with good works and suffering willingly for the cause of Christ.
 - 4) The Ephesian believers knew evil when they saw it and did not tolerate it.
 - 5) One real clue to how they dealt with evil and immorality with Christ’s comment regarding the Nicolaitans.
 - 6) Not many references to this heresy are made by early church writers.
 - 7) Those that do link it to Nicolas who was one of the men appointed to oversee distribution of food in Acts 6.
 - 8) John MacArthur explains the Nicolaitans like this.

Some argued that Nicolas was a false believer who became an apostate (traitor) but retained influence in the church because of his credentials. Others suggested that the Nicolaitans misrepresented his teaching. Whatever its origin, Nicolaitanism led people into immorality and wickedness. The letter to Pergamum links it with Balaam's false teaching that led Israel astray. The deeds of the Nicolaitans thus involved sensual temptations leading to sexual immorality and eating things sacrificed to idols (2:14) without regard for the offense of such behavior — all in the name of Christian liberty.

- 9) Ephesian church did not tolerate the Nicolaitans but hated their heretical teachings.
- 10) Overall, the church at Ephesus faced a culture characterized by immorality not unlike us today.
- 11) Jesus was saying that they were handling that well.
- 12) **However**, Jesus says to them “you have forsaken your first love.”
- 13) Their first love was referred to here was likely tied to the reason they were doing all the good things that Christ just praised them for.
- 14) When we look at the book of Deuteronomy, we see many instances where the Israelites were admonished to do something but, in many cases, it was preceded by the statement “Love the Lord...”

Deut 6:5-6 (NIV)

Deut 11:1-2 (NIV)

Deut 11:22 (NIV)

Jesus said in Mark:

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

- 15) Every church should have pure faith and root out heresy as the Ephesian church had obviously done.
- 16) However, these good efforts must come from their love for God and others.
- 17) Maintaining sound teaching and moral and doctrinal purity without that love reduces the act to no more than the checklist mentality that we have spoken of so many times in the past.
- 18) We need both – obedience and love.
- 19) If we truly consider in scripture as we should, the love of God should come first the love for others.
- 20) Again, obviously, this applies equally to the individual as to the church as a body.
- 21) So, what happens if we do **not** get this right? We fall into the thing Jesus is saying ...
4 ... You have forsaken your first love.
- 22) As with most if not all of Jesus' comments to the churches, this does apply to the church but can also apply to the individual as well.
- 23) When we are new Christians, we have much enthusiasm but not much knowledge.
- 24) We rejoice at our newly found forgiveness because we feel the full weight of our sin.
- 25) As we mature, we gain knowledge but, many times our enthusiasm may wain.
- 26) With that may come a lessening of the seriousness of sin in our minds and hearts
- 27) We may begin to lose the gratefulness for forgiveness – in essence, we begin taking God for granted?
- 28) As to the individual, I think this is losing our first love.
- 29) As to churches, every church should have pure faith and root out heresy.
- 30) However, these good efforts should come from a love of Christ and our brothers and sisters.
- 31) As the LABC puts it:
In the battle to maintain sound teaching and moral and doctrinal purity, it is possible to lose a charitable spirit. Yet we need both. Prolonged conflict can weaken or destroy patience and affection. In defending the faith, believers must guard against any structure or rigidity that weakens love.
- 32) When the author talks about losing a “charitable” spirit, I believe he is actually saying loving spirit.
- 33) To both the individual and the church, Jesus' command and statement of consequences is the same.

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5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

34) We must always be in the mode of evaluating our progress toward what God wants us to be.

35) We are to be always growing not standing still or going backwards in our faith and our love for the Lord and our brothers and sisters.

36) Again, as individuals and collectively as a church.

>>>>>> Lesson 04 <<<<<<<

- 1) We will begin our discussion at verse 7 but I'll start reading with the entire letter to the Ephesians beginning in verse 1 of chapter 2.

Rev 2:1-7 (NIV)

- 2) At our abrupt end to last week's lesson, we had been discussing the loss of our first love.
- 3) The basic and absolute conclusion of this is that we must never stop growing in our love for God and our fellow man.
- 4) We can do it all and get it all 100% right but if we lose that love "Our first love" all is for naught!
- 5) We must always be in the mode of evaluating our progress toward what God wants us to be.
- 6) We are to be always growing not standing still or going backwards in our faith and our love for the Lord and our brothers and sisters.
- 7) Again, as individuals and collectively as a church.
- 8) The conclusion of this letter (and for that matter, all the letters) contain the phrase, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
 - a) There are two points that need to be emphasized here.
 - b) First, it is the responsibility of each individual reading or hearing these letters to heed what God is saying.
 - i) It is not just the responsibility of the elders or the minister – it is ours!
 - ii) It is each of us in the collective whole that make our church what it is.
 - iii) It is impossible to have a church that is loving without members who are loving!
 - c) Secondly, note the plural of "churches";
 - i) again, indicating that these letters should be distributed among all the 7 churches being addressed.
 - ii) And, if I may be so bold, since we are dealing in apocalyptic matters, 7 being complete, it is likely that this means these are to be read by all churches throughout the ages.
- 9) Finally, the reward – if we do heed what has been said here, we will be given the right to live forever in the presence of God our Father
- 10) Here the letter concludes with another one of those eschatological references – "I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

Rev 2:8-11 (NIV)

- 1) This is the shortest of the seven letters.

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- 2) Also, the first of two letters (the other to Philadelphia) that have no direct warning or condemnation.
- 3) Throughout its history, it appears that the more the church has been persecuted, the greater has been its purity and strength.
- 4) At the end of the first century, life was difficult and especially dangerous for the church at Smyrna.
- 5) The city was a longtime ally of Rome and was a hotbed of emperor worship.
- 6) Under Emperor Domitian, it became a capital offense to refuse to offer the yearly sacrifice to the emperor.
- 7) Not surprisingly, many Christians faced execution.
- 8) The most famous of Smyrna's martyrs was Polycarp, executed in approximately 150 AD.
- 9) While reading and studying this letter, I was thinking of the churches in Afghanistan.
 - a) The Constitution of Afghanistan allows the practice of religions other than Islam, as long as it is within the legal framework of Islamic laws and does not threaten the Islamic religion.
 - b) There is only one legally recognized Christian church building in Afghanistan, the Catholic chapel at the Italian Embassy which has been operational since the 1930s.
 - c) Under the Taliban, there were many more restrictions.
 - d) Obviously, things will likely revert to bad now that the Taliban is back in control.
 - e) Muslims who change their faith to Christianity are subject to societal and official pressure, which may lead to confiscation of property, imprisonment, or death.
 - f) Despite the legal restrictions, many sources claim that there is a secret underground church of Afghan Christians living in Afghanistan.
 - g) The US state department has stated that estimates of the size of this group range from 500 to 8000 individuals.
 - h) Estimates to the size of the Afghan Christian community in Afghanistan however are not reliable.
 - i) Due to the hostile legal environment Afghan Christians practice their faith secretly in private homes.
- 10) Though they suffered physical poverty, the Christians at Smyrna clung to their immeasurable spiritual riches.
- 11) As Scripture makes clear, persecution and trials are an inevitable and unavoidable part of the Christian life.
- 12) The example of the church at Smyrna instructs all churches on how to properly respond to these trials when they come.
- 13) John MacArthur calls the closings of each of these letters the counsel. In this case the counsel is:

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Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. *11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.* He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

- 14) Simply put, if we remain faithful, no matter the circumstances, we will not suffer the ultimate second death – being put away into eternal punishment.
 - a) Of course, this is another eschatological reference.

Rev 2:12-17 (NIV)

- 1) Pergamum was the center of four of the most important gods of the day — Zeus, Athene, Dionysus, and Asclepius.
- 2) The city was also a center for imperial worship.
- 3) Yet, in the midst of all this, they were holding true to the name of Christ.
- 4) Even when one of their own members was killed because of his faith, they did not waver.
- 5) We do not know the circumstance of Antipas' death only that it was because of his faith.
- 6) One possibility is that he was executed outright by the ruling proconsul.
 - a) He had been given “the right of the sword” which means he could perform execution without Rome's approval.
- 7) However, according to tradition, Antipas was roasted to death inside a brass bull during the persecution instigated by Emperor Domitian.
- 8) Even with their faith, the Lord had a few things against them.
- 9) To sum it up, the faithful church in Pergamum were basically turning a blind eye towards those in the congregation that were compromising the faith.
- 10) Idol worship, sexual immorality, and pagan worship were evidently being practiced by members of the congregation.
 - a) It was not unusual for Roman citizens who became Christians to continue to worship their household gods.
 - b) This worship involved sacrifice and partaking of the food that was sacrificed.
 - c) I have learned recently that the head of the household was responsible for all religious ceremonies and they were held within the house.
 - d) Priests were only concerned with state ceremonies to the major gods – not the household gods.
- 11) Jesus also mentions the Nicolaitans here.
 - a) As we spoke of earlier, those that followed the Nicolaitans involved themselves with sensual temptations leading to sexual immorality and eating things sacrificed to idols.
 - b) All of this in the name of Christian liberty.

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12) When the Lord says Repent therefore! He is saying clearly – clean up your house or I will come do it for you!

13) The counsel here begins with a promise of hidden manna.

14) The hidden manna represents Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life who came down from heaven.

John 6:48-51 (NIV)

>>>>>> Lesson 05 <<<<<<<

- 1) We will begin our discussion at verse 17 but, like last time, I'll start reading with the entire letter to the church at Pergamum beginning in verse 12 of chapter 2.

Rev 2:12-17 (NIV)

- 2) As we discussed last time, the hidden manna of verse 17 represents Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life who came down from heaven.

John 6:51 (NIV)

- 3) Next, we have one of those portions of the Revelation that remains a mystery.
- 4) There has been a lot of speculation about what the white stones with the new name represents or symbolizes.
- 5) I read probably 8 or 10 different ideas that different scholars had put forth.
- 6) Some very complex in their derivation others seemed to be a real stretch.
- 7) I probably could have found more however, looking at the basic premise that this writing would be clear to the readers of that time, I found MacArthur's idea the most plausible.
- 8) He explains the white stone in light of the Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors in athletic contests.
- 9) The white stone was inscribed with the athlete's name and served as his ticket to a special awards banquet.
- 10) In this view, Christ promises the overcomers entrance to the eternal victory celebration in heaven.
- 11) In this case, there will be a new name written on the stone which no one knows but the one who receives it.
- 12) It is evident from the verse that we cannot know what that new name is until we receive it.
- 13) The Greek word for "new" here does not mean new in contrast to old in time, but new in the sense of qualitatively different.
- 14) The new name will serve as each believer's admission pass into eternal glory.
 - a) It will uniquely reflect God's special love for and adoption of every true child of His.
- 15) Again, turning to John MacArthur, his closing comment here was I think truly on point!

The Pergamum church faced the same choice that every similar church faces. It could repent and receive all the blessedness of eternal life in the glory of heaven. Or it could refuse to repent and face the terrifying reality of having the Lord Jesus Christ declare war on it. Maintaining the path of **compromise** ultimately leads to **judgment**.
- 16) I feel we must make the very solid and real connection between the church as a body and the individuals that make up that body.
- 17) The leaders of the church – the elders – must set the tone and insist on the correct direction.

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18) However, there is no escaping the fact that the individual member of the body must do the repenting and turning from what is wrong to what is right in their individual lives.

Rev 2:18-29 (NIV)

- 1) Christ's introductory phrase is chosen here to identify Himself with focus on His role as divine Judge.
- 2) To possibly enhance that idea, here He departs from the original phrase in 1:13 – instead of “Son of Man” he uses the term “Son of God”
- 3) This emphasizes Christ's deity, stressing the truth that He is of one essence with the Father.
- 4) The Son of Man emphasizes His human incarnation,
 - a) Also, His sympathetic identification with believers as their merciful High Priest.
 - b) “Son of Man” offers encouragement to persecuted Christians.
- 5) Jesus identifying Himself as Son of God
 - a) emphasizes His deity, because His approach to the church at Thyatira is not as sympathetic High Priest, but as divine judge.
- 6) Comfort is not instore, but judgment is for the church at Thyatira when Christ's divine power moves against this adulterous assembly.
- 7) The description of His feet as being like burnished bronze is reminiscent of Rev 19:15, where it says of Christ that

"He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty."
- 8) That Christ's feet glowed brilliantly like burnished bronze depicts His purity and holiness as He tramples out impurity.
- 9) This terrifying description of the Lord Jesus Christ must have created shock, consternation, and fear when this letter was read to the congregation at Thyatira.
- 10) As Christ begins his address to the church, he again commends them for their faith and the fact that they are improving in their service.
- 11) However, again, good does not outweigh bad.
- 12) Bottom line, unrepented sin **WILL BE JUDGED!**
- 13) Christ says this clearly in vs 23

all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.
- 14) Jezebel was likely not the person's real name but, there was a person who purported herself to be a prophetess and was teaching wrong things!
- 15) She obviously led a large portion of the congregation into immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols.

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- a) Jezebel and her followers claimed to be exploring the very depths of Satan's domain and remaining spiritually unscathed.
- b) They believed they could do so with impunity.
- c) This pre-Gnostic teaching said that one was free to engage the sphere of Satan and participate in sins of the body without harming the spirit.
- d) Since the spirit belongs to God, their twisted logic went, what does it matter if the body attends idolatrous feasts and engages in sexual immorality?
- e) They imagined themselves to be free to explore the satanic sphere and then brazenly come to worship God.

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- 16) This is the same general explanation of their sin as that of the church at Pergamum.
- 17) We can only speculate about the specifics of the sin but, that is truly not important here.
- 18) Christ goes on to explain that he gave her time to repent, and she did not.
- 19) In the result applied to her, we run into a small difference.
 - a) Some translations add the phrase “bed of suffering” or something similar.
 - b) This was not part of the original Greek. Young’s Literal Translation says:

Rev 2:21-23 (YLT)

21 and I did give to her a time that she might reform from her whoredom, and she did not reform;

22 lo, I will cast her into a couch, and those committing adultery with her into great tribulation — if they may not repent of their works,

23 and her children I will kill in death YLT

20) It is most likely that the “couch” (YLT) or “bed of suffering” (NIV) refers to hell and eternal damnation.

21) For those who follow her, the same fate awaits them.

22) However, Christ gives words of comfort to the others who have not fallen prey to the Jezebel’s false teaching. “I will place not further burden on you”.

23) Then, to the counsel,

Rev 2:25-29 (NIV)

24) There are some differences of opinion on exactly what this means.

25) One opinion is that this refers to the millennial kingdom.

26) The other is a more general interpretation relating to the messianic promise that Christ will have authority over all the nations and those who overcome will reign with him.

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- 27) If it refers to the millennial kingdom, in order for this to be an encouragement, they would have to have an understanding of the millennial kingdom.
- 28) Since at this point, one must assume they did not, I think this more general interpretation is most likely.
- 29) Additionally, Christ says that he will give those who remain faithful the “morning star.”
- 30) Christ is referred to as the morning star in 2 Peter 1:19 and in Rev 22:16.
- 31) Though Christians will reflect Christ's glory, here, it is better to see the morning star as Christ Himself.
- 32) Christ promised believers Himself in all His fullness; the One whom we "now . . . know in part [we will] then . . . know fully just as [we] also have been fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).

Rev 3:1-6 (NIV)

- 1) The first point of note here is that the Lord has no words of praise for this church.
 - a) There are a few people in Sardis church who are living the Christian life.
- 2) The Sardis church has a reputation of being a living functioning church but thru their deeds, they are truly dead.
- 3) Here we must really read between the lines, so to speak, when it comes to what is really wrong in detail.
- 4) What we can surmise is there is much sin in this church and, yet there is still a bit of correctness because the Lord tells them to strengthen what remains and is about to die.
- 5) Christ had commended the other churches for their love, faithfulness, obedience, and perseverance.
- 6) There is none of that here.
 - a) This may be what he means when he says their deeds were not complete before God.
 - b) They knew the right things to do but did not do them.
- 7) We must at least consider the fact that at the founding of this church, there was a rightness about them.
- 8) They must have started out correctly but perhaps, they became very lax in their pursuit of right things.
- 9) They may have been content to meet and fellowship but never reach out, never do anything to show Christ to others.
- 10) Again, all of this is supposition.
- 11) What we do know is that they were in danger of death – ***being completely cutoff from God.***
- 12) As we said a moment ago, There are a few people in Sardis church who are living the Christian life.

13) Christ uses them as an example and their lives as lives to be imitated when he says:

They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Rev 3:7-13 (NIV)

- 1) Here we have the second letter that has no ***condemnation*** – the other being to Smyrna.
- 2) The church here kept Christ’s word and they did not deny his name.
- 3) He begins with two descriptions of himself
 - i) Holy and true, who holds the key of David which symbolizes the messianic office.
 - ii) The key symbolizes authority – he who holds the key has control.
- b) The second identification is “what He opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.”
 - i) This stresses Christ’s omnipotence – what he does cannot be overturned or undone.
- 4) The Christians in Philadelphia faced hostility from unbelieving Jews to which, Christ promises “I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”
 - a) Bowing at someone’s feet depicts total defeat and submission.
- 5) The next promise to the Philadelphia church in vs 10 says:

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, ***I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*** 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”
- 6) There are at least two ways one may look at this promise.
- 7) In either case, we need to take a first look at some words that are major sticking points in any study of Revelation.
- 8) These are – ***Rapture and Tribulation and the millennium or 1000-year reign.***
- 9) First, let’s finish this letter to the church at Philadelphia and we will come back to this verse and those definition in a moment.
- 10) The letter ends with these other promises:

12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 11) A pillar represents stability, permanence, and immovability.
- 12) They can also represent honor; in pagan temples they were often carved in such a way as to honor a particular deity.

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- 13) The promise Christ makes to believers is that they will have an eternal place of honor in the temple of God (heaven).
- 14) The second promise is that Jesus will write on him the name of His God.
- 15) That depicts ownership, signifying that all true Christians belong to God.
- 16) Third, Christ promises to write on believers the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.
- 17) Christians have eternal citizenship in heaven's capital city, the new Jerusalem, described at length in Rev 21.
- 18) That is yet another promise of security, safety, and glory.
- 19) MacArthur says of the last promise –
- “Finally, Christ promises believers His new name. Christ's name represents the fullness of His person. In heaven, believers will "see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2), and whatever we may have known of Him will pale in the reality in which we will then see Him. The new name by which we will be privileged to call Him will reflect that glorious revelation of His person.”
- 20) Now, to a brief (hopefully) discussion (introduction)_to – ***Rapture and Tribulation and the millennium or 1000-year reign.***
- 21) Let's begin with ***RAPTURE.***
- 22) First, to be clear, the word rapture is not found in scripture.
- 23) It is a term that has been applied to the second coming and the events that will take place.
- 24) To be specific, the “rapture” is the term that has been applied to how Christians who are living and dead will be taken to heaven.
- 25) Here are scriptures that mention what has commonly been called the “rapture”:
- 1 Cor 15:51-55 (NIV)
- 1 Thess 4:13-18 (NIV)
- John 14:1-4 (NIV)
- 26) Obviously, these are references to the second coming.
- 27) These also give a description of how we Christians – living and dead – will depart the earth.
- 28) Note, none of them says anything about those who are not Christian.
- 29) As we continue thru our study, we will see references to the second coming and we will see were some of the confusion regarding these three topics we are about to discuss comes from.
- 30) The primary second coming reference is in chapter Revelation 19:11-16.
- 31) There are also references in 20:4-6; 21:1-7; 22:6-21.

32) So we do not get derailed in this discussion, we will not read these or discuss them until we come to them in our study.

33) Next the **“Tribulation”**

34) There are several aspects of the “hour of trial” or “Tribulation”

- a) **First**, it is a future event or series of events if you will.
- b) **Second**, the tribulation or test as it is referred to here in the letter to Philadelphia is for a definite, limited time.
 - i) Jesus described it as the hour of testing – not literal but simply meaning for a period of time.
- c) **Third**, it is a test or trial that will expose people for what they really are.
- d) **Fourth**, the tribulation is worldwide in scope since it will come upon the whole world.
- e) **Finally**, and most significantly, its purpose is to test “those who dwell on the earth.”
 - i) That phrase and the phrase “inhabitants of the earth” used many other places in Revelation is a technical term in the book of Revelation. (cf. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8,12,14; 14:6; 17:2,8).
 - ii) The phrase is generally understood to refer to unbelievers
- f) Unbelievers will either pass the test by repenting, or fail it by refusing to repent.
 - i) Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-10,14; 14:4; and 17:14 describe those who repent during the Tribulation and are saved, thus passing the test.
 - ii) Rev 6:15-17; 9:20; 16:11; and 19:17-18 describe those who refuse to repent, thus failing the test, and are damned.

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35) Going back to our verse in the letter to Philadelphia

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”

36) Some believe that the verse refers to times of great distress in general, the church's suffering through the ages.

37) Others interpret **“keep from”** here to mean that the church will go through the time of tribulation and that God will keep them strong during it, providing spiritual protection from the forces of evil.

38) The other way of looking at this promise is that it means there will be a future time of great tribulation from which true believers will be spared.

39) This is a key verse for those who subscribe to the pre-Tribulation-Rapture theory (WE WILL TALK MORE ABOUT THIS IN A MOMENT)

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- a) In that, believers will be kept from the hour of trial because they will not be on the earth during that time of great tribulation.
 - b) Looking back to our verses explaining the “rapture.” ***To reiterate***, nothing is said about the fate of those who are not Christians – only living and diseased Christians.
 - c) This can mean that those who are living and not Christian at the time will begin living in the tribulation that the Church will not.
- 40) As we unfold the seals, trumpets, and bowls, we will be talking more about the Tribulation.

>>>>>> Lesson 07 <<<<<<<

One comment I want to make before we jump back into our Rapture / Tribulation / Millennium discussion is –

Do NOT make up your mind on what is the correct millennialist view for you until we have completed our study and you have all the events and circumstances revealed.

As we continue thru our study, try to weigh the events against these different millennialist views, come up with questions, and we will try to answer them – in context and in scripture.

We may try to answer some questions this evening but there is no way we can possibly answer them all without the New Testament context and the Revelation context combined.

- 1) Let's get started with a quick review of ***Rapture and Tribulation***.
- 2) Again, the word rapture is not found in scripture.
- 3) It is a term that has been applied to the second coming and the events that will take place when it happens.
- 4) To be specific, the “rapture” is the term that has been applied to how Christians who are living and dead will be taken to heaven.
- 5) There are scriptures that mention what has commonly been called the “rapture”:

1 Thess 4:13-18 (NIV)

- 6) We also read two other scriptures that apply here, 1 Cor 15:51-55 and John 14:1-4
- 7) We also noted that none of these scriptures says anything about those who are not Christian.
- 8) Next the ***“Tribulation”***
- 9) Here are facts regarding the “hour of trial” or “Tribulation”
 - a) **First**, it is a future event or series of events.
 - b) **Second**, the tribulation is for a definite, limited time.
 - c) **Third**, it is a test or trial that will expose people for what they really are.
 - d) **Fourth**, the tribulation is universal in scope since it will come upon the whole world.
 - e) **Finally**, and most significantly, its purpose is to test “those who dwell on the earth.”
 - i) That phrase “those who dwell on the earth” and the phrase “inhabitants of the earth” are used many other places in Revelation. (cf. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8,12,14; 14:6; 17:2,8).
 - ii) The phrase is generally understood to refer to unbelievers
 - f) Unbelievers will either pass the test by repenting, or fail it by refusing to repent.
 - i) Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-10,14; 14:4; and 17:14 describe those who repent during the Tribulation and are saved, thus passing the test.

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- ii) Rev 6:15-17; 9:20; 16:11; and 19:17-18 describe those who refuse to repent, thus failing the test, and are damned.

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10) Going back to our verse in the letter to Philadelphia

Rev 3:10 (NIV)

- 11) Some believe that the verse refers to times of great distress in general, the church's suffering through the ages.
- 12) Others interpret "***keep from***" here to mean that the church will go through the time of tribulation and that God will keep them strong during it, providing spiritual protection from the forces of evil.
- 13) The other way of looking at this promise is that it means there will be a future time of great tribulation from which true believers will be spared – "RAPTURE".
- 14) **Finally**, getting back to the **millennium**. This is the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. We read about it in Rev 20.

Rev 20:4-8 (NIV)

- 1) Now, back to the chart.
- 2) This chart attempts to layout the major parts of the end times as presented in Revelation and the current beliefs across the Christian world regarding how they will occur.
- 3) Obviously, each depiction begins with the cross on the left and eternity on the right.
- 4) Between the two, are the major events.
 - a) Tribulation
 - b) Millennium
 - c) Rapture
 - d) Second coming
 - e) Last Judgment – beginning eternity.
- 5) In this chart
 - a) **PRE** – means the second coming occurs **before** the 1000-year reign of Christ.
 - i) **Two Types!**
 - b) **POST** – means the second coming occurs **after** the 1000-year reign of Christ.
 - c) "**A**" (as in amillennialist)
 - i) "**A**" in this usage normally means no or not.
 - ii) Many amillennialists would prefer non-millennialist instead where non means NOW.
- 6) So, let's break the chart down further:
 - a) **Post-tribulational Premillennialism** – simply put,
 - i) Here,

- (1) The tribulation will occur
 - (2) Followed by the second coming
 - (3) Then the millennium,
 - (4) Then judgment and eternity.
- ii) If we apply this model to the promise to the Philadelphia church, it says that Christ meant that the
- (1) church **would** go through the time of tribulation
 - (2) that God will keep them and us strong during it
 - (3) providing spiritual protection from the forces of evil.
- iii) One other note here is that in order for this to work as described, there would possibly not be a “rapture” associated with the second coming.
- iv) Or, the rapture would occur and the millennium would begin immediately with the church as part of the rule.

b) **Pre-tribulational (dispensational) Premillennialism**

- c) In this view,
- (1) Second coming occurring with Rapture
 - (2) Tribulation
 - (3) Christ returns again – with the church
 - (4) Then the Millennium
 - (5) Then judgment and eternity.
- ii) In this view, the church will be spared going thru the tribulation entirely.
- iii) As the chart shows, then, there will be a second “Second Coming” :>)
- (1) With or without a rapture????
- iv) Followed by the millennium and the final judgment.
- v) This would obviously fulfill the promise to the Philadelphia church.
- vi) However, it does leave some other questions to deal with – in particular, the “second” second coming?
- vii) Another question to ponder – why would there be a second rapture or would there be?

d) **Postmillennialism** –

- i) In this scenario
- (1) The tribulation is not usually considered

- (a) There may be no tribulation
- (b) The tribulation could possibly be pre-millennium – i.e., happening now.
- (c) One comment I read indicated that it might be considered by some postmillennialists to occur at the end of the 1000-year reign before Christ's second coming.

- (2) The Millennium occurs.
- (3) Then the Second Coming
- (4) Finally judgment and eternity

e) **Amillennialism** –

- i) here we have a view that there is
 - (1) No millennium or,
 - (2) It is symbolic, and we are living in that time.
- ii) In this scenario, the second coming will occur when it occurs, and the last judgment will occur at that same time.
- iii) Again, the tribulation is not really addressed here.
- iv) I would assume the same comments regarding it that we just discussed in the Postmillennialist theology could be applied here.

- 7) As you may recall, I made the statement that I was told that the Churches of Christ did not believe in the (literal) 1000-year reign. i.e. they have the amillennialists point of view.
- 8) Now, before I open this up for discussion / questions, let me relay to you what I have found in regard to the Churches of Christ views.
- 9) I did some research on the subject and will say, there is (or was) some of truth in the statement that was made.
- 10) This is another one of those “debate” issues that used to split churches.
- 11) Here is what I have learned with the disclaimer that it may not be complete since I did not spend a lot of time researching many sources on this.
- 12) A major part of the information came from a fellow Mark Harris.
 - a) Lives in Dallas and claims to be “a student of the bible.”
 - b) Looking at other facts about him he seems to be able to speak to this reasonably
- 13) All this premillennial / postmillennial / amillennial debate seems to have started around the time the Churches of Christ split from the Disciples of Christ (Christian Churches) in 1906.
- 14) Before that, there were probably only postmillennial and premillennialist views as the predominant views – I base this on

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- a) Alexander Campbell was postmillennial, as was the original stand of the Church.
 - b) However, Barton Stone was premillennialist. – 2001 article Restoration Quarterly.
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/212872787.pdf>
 - c) As one would expect, they did not see this as a salvation issue and the two views appeared to coexist without problems.
- 15) Just prior to WW1, the view of many C of C leaders had changed to premillennial.
- 16) Prior to the split in 1906, one leader, R.H. Boll was advocating a premillennialist view and his writings were quite prevalent.
- 17) Starting in about 1918, many churches began to advocate the amillennialist view.
- a) This view says we are living in the non-literal 1000-year reign.
- 18) This became a topic of debate throughout the first half of the 20th century.
- 19) It came to a head in the 1930's when several leaders and one in particular by the name of Foy Wallace became "singularly opposed" to Boll's views.
- 20) The word HERESY was used to brand the premillennialist view and this all came to a head with a split in the Churches of Christ.
- a) Heterodox vs. Heresy comments!!!!
- 21) The debate raged and finally resulted in a split – premillennial and amillennial churches of Christ.
- a) There was actually a listing of premillennial Churches of Christ separate from amillennial Churches of Christ.
 - b) This ended in the 2000 edition of the directory Churches of Christ in the United States, published by Mac Lynn, congregations holding premillennial views were no longer listed separately.

1) With that, lets jump into the last of the seven letters.

Rev 3:14-22 (NIV)

- 1) We now begin an important transition in the book of Revelation.
 - a) Chapter 1:19 mentions "things which are" and the "things which will take place"
 - b) from the church age described in chapters 2-3, ("things which are")
 - c) to the third great division of the book found in chapters 4-22 ("things which will take place").
- 2) The scene shifts from matters concerning the church on earth to a dramatic scene in heaven.
- 3) The church on earth is not mentioned directly again until chapter 20.
- 4) The scene that begins to unfold centers on the throne of God and forms the prologue to the future historical events (the Tribulation, millennial kingdom, and eternal state)
- 5) These unfold in chapters 6-22.
- 6) Again, for those who ascribe to the Pre-tribulational (dispensational) Premillennialism point of view, the church will have been Raptured before the time of tribulation.

Rev 4:1-2 (NIV)

- 7) The phrase “after this” or “after these things” is used throughout Revelation to mark the beginning of a new vision (cf. 7:9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1).
- 8) This is the second occurrence of the phrase and relates to God's chronology.
- 9) This is the second record in scripture of a man being brought to heaven in a vision (or not)
- 10) The first was Paul. In second Corinthians, we are told:

2 Cor 12:1-4 (NIV)

11) THIRD HEAVEN COMMENT

- a) Paul was suddenly snatched up into the third heaven which, transcending the first (earth's atmosphere; Deut 11:11; 1 Kings 8:35; Isa 55:10) and second (interplanetary and interstellar space; Gen 15:5; Ps 8:3; Isa 13:10) heavens, is the abode of God (1 Kings 8:30; Ps 33:13-14; Matt 6:9). The parallelism of the two phrases demands that Paradise be equated with heaven (see Luke 23:43; cf. Rev 2:7, which says the Tree of Life is in Paradise with Rev 22:2,14,19, which place it in heaven). The Persian word from which the Greek word translated Paradise derives means "walled garden." The greatest honor a Persian king could bestow on one of his subjects was to grant him the right to walk with the king in the royal garden in intimate companionship.

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- 12) And now, here, John is being invited as well.
- 13) We do not know of the interaction in Paul's case but here, we do know that Jesus (the one speaking to John "speaking to me like a trumpet" was the caller.
- 14) In Paul's case, he could not say whether it was in the body or in spirit (vision) but ...
- a) John declares "At once I was in the Spirit" so we must assume it is a vision.
- 15) However, the big difference is that John is instructed to write down what he sees with the idea of sharing it with all Christians everywhere.
- 16) In Paul's case – he says what he saw were "things that man is not permitted to tell"
- 17) The phrase "what must take place after this" or "these things" is reference to the letters to the churches.
- 18) John then exclaims "at once I was in the Spirit"
- a) Again, this expression means that the Holy Spirit was giving him a vision.
- b) The vision will be showing him situations and events that he could not have seen with mere human eyesight.
- c) All true prophecy comes from God through the Holy Spirit (1:10; 2 Peter 1:20-21) so this should not be a surprise at all.
- d) MacArthur makes an interesting comment here:

"As he was taken out of the familiar dimension of space and time and into the heaven of God's presence in the Spirit's power (cf. 1:10), John was amazed and astounded by what he saw, causing him to exclaim behold."

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- 19) As we proceed through the remainder of the Revelation, we need to remember that not only are we seeing some very strange beings and events, but we are also in a different way of looking at time.
- a) We will move back and forth thru time and long and short are not necessarily relevant any longer.
- 20) John immediately recognizes where he is and the first thing that catches his attention was the throne and someone setting on it.
- 21) It appears that the personage of the one setting on the throne is not immediately apparent.
- 22) He continues his description in verse 3. As I read and you follow along let your mind see what John is seeing – try to catch the vision not just the words.

Rev 4:3-6 (NIV)

- 23) If you did what I asked you to do, you probably had a real jumble (MESS) in your mind.
- 24) The reason is, we tend to think literally – and in looking at these visions, we must look deeper than the visual expression.

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25) John first describes the one setting on the throne in what may at first appear to be a visually odd manner – appearance of jasper and carnelian.

- a) These two stones are linked together in Ex 28 17-20 where they are stones in Aaron's breastplate of decisions or judgments.
- b) These were the first and last of the 12 stones.
 - i) One for each of the sons of Israel and each of them was engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes.
 - ii) The first was sardius or carnelian and the last was jasper.
- c) The idea of describing God in this manner I would think, is to show the total correctness and greatness of His decisions and judgments which is what the remainder of the visions are all about.
- d) Based on this interpretation of the visual, you can see that the statement that I made a moment ago that

“It appears that the personage of the one setting on the throne is not immediately apparent.”

Is WRONG – John did recognize who was on the throne and could only describe him as the vision led him to.

26) At the same time, John describes the rainbow encircling the throne.

- a) It was, to the Jews, a sign of God's covenant mercy.
- b) After the destruction of the earth in the flood of Noah's day, God promised that the earth would never be destroyed in that way again. The rainbow was a sign of that promise.
- c) Arching over the throne, is suggesting that God is merciful in all that he does.

27) Next, we must address one of the less clear things that John sees and reports – the 24 elders.

- a) Much debate has occurred thru the years regarding who these elders are:
- b) **Possibility #1** – Elders may represent the patriarchs of the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles.
 - i) Which in essence symbolize the two covenants of the people of God.
 - ii) The thrones and white garments suggest kingly priests.
 - iii) The crowns represent the idea of reigning
 - iv) Considering this possibility, I could not help but think back to the James and John's mother asking that her sons be seated on Jesus' right and left in the kingdom.

Matt 20:23 (NIV)

- c) **Possibility #2** – These elders are the heavenly counterpart of the twenty-four priestly ranks who served the temple.
 - i) This keeps the group together yet still does not answer the question of who they are.
- d) **Possibility #3** – They are an angelic group providing worship at the throne.

- i) I personally discount this because nowhere in scripture are angels seated on thrones or reigning.
- ii) The word elder is also never used to describe angels – only men.

28) John sees coming from ***the throne flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder.***

- a) This strikes a contrast to the emerald rainbow.
- b) These things in combination are throughout scripture usually descriptive of the presence of God Almighty!

29) The next thing John sees is the is seven lamps blazing.

- a) The Greek word used here really describes things more like blazing torches.
- b) He clearly states the these represent the 7 spirits of God (complete Spirit of God).
- c) There are many facets to the Holy Spirit. This is a study all unto itself. As example:
 - i) Isaiah 11:2 speaks of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, reverence, and deity
 - ii) In Zechariah 4:1-10 of power
 - iii) Rev 1:4 of grace and peace; and here of fiery judgment.
 - iv) And, of course, Jesus portrays Him as the Comforter of those who love Christ will be the Consumer of those who reject Him.
- d) All that being said, it really makes sense that the vision would present the Holy Spirit in a form that would be indicative of all of His characteristics.

30) John then in vs 6 says “before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass clear as crystal”

- a) The sea of glass serves as the magnificent floor of God's throne room and highlights both the magnificence and the holiness of God.
- b) It is not a literal "sea"; rather, it is a metaphor for the scene.
 - i) Rev 21:1 tells us there is no sea in heaven.
- c) There was a similar scene written of in Exodus:

Ex 24:9-11 (NIV)

31) In summary, this vision that has here shows heaven and, in particular, God’s throne and surroundings.

32) So many times, when we see heaven portrayed in shows on TV etc., we see this cloudy misty place.

MacArthur comments on this:

“Heaven is not a shadowy world of mists and indistinct apparitions. It is a world of dazzlingly brilliant light, refracting and shining as through jewels and crystal in a manner beyond our ability to describe or imagine”

- 33) Again, we cannot take these images and make them literal, but we must look at them as indicative of what is being portrayed.
- 34) I think that this is exactly what MacArthur has done in this brief comment.
- 35) The Holy Spirit gave to John the images that, to the readers of his time would best describe God and the surroundings of His throne in a manner that was the ultimate for them.
- 36) In a manner that is beyond their ability to imagine anything greater.
- 37) Even though we are not in the same mindset as John’s original readers, we must take these descriptions and use them to transport our minds to the same level of understanding of the awe that is before them and us.

1) Let's begin with a quick review of the first verses of chapter 4

Rev 4:1-2 (NIV)

- 2) The phrase “after this” or “after these things” is used throughout Revelation to mark the beginning of a new vision (cf. 7:9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1).
- 3) The Greek word is edion.
- 4) Of course, Jesus is the one who is speaking to John.
- 5) The phrase “what must take place after this” or “these things” is reference to the letters to the churches.
- 6) John then exclaims “at once I was in the Spirit”
 - a) This expression means that the Holy Spirit was giving him this vision.
 - b) The vision will be showing him situations and events that he could not have seen with mere human eyesight.
- 7) He continues his description in verse 3.

Rev 4:3-6 (NIV)

- 8) Again, we talked about literal verse symbolic meanings and how we must try to stay out of the literal when we here many of John's descriptions.
 - a) In other words, DO NOT try to see God as a creature composed of two types of gemstones.
 - b) DO try to associate him with the having perfect judgment and decision making that these stones represent in Aaron's breast plate.
- 9) Briefly looking at the 24 elders.
 - a) **Possibility #1** – Elders may represent the patriarchs of the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles.
 - b) **Possibility #2** – These elders are the heavenly counterpart of the twenty-four priestly ranks who served the temple.
 - c) **Possibility #3** – They are and angelic group providing worship at the throne.
 - i) I personally discount this because nowhere in scripture are angels seated on thrones or reigning.
 - ii) The word elder is also never used to describe angels – only men.
- 10) John sees coming from the throne flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder.
 - a) These things in combination throughout scripture are usually descriptive of the presence of God Almighty!
- 11) The next thing John sees is the is seven lamps blazing.
 - a) The Greek word used here really describes things more like blazing torches.
 - b) He clearly states that these represent the 7 spirits of God (complete Spirit of God).

- 12) In summary, this vision that he has here shows heaven and, in particular, God's throne and surroundings.
- 13) MacArthur comments on this first vision:
"Heaven is not a shadowy world of mists and indistinct apparitions. It is a world of dazzlingly brilliant light, refracting and shining as through jewels and crystal in a manner beyond our ability to describe or imagine"
- 14) The Holy Spirit gave to John the images that, to the readers of his time would best describe God and the surroundings of His throne in a manner that was the ultimate for them.
- 15) In a manner that is beyond their ability to imagine anything greater.
- 16) Even though we are not in the same mindset as John's original readers, we must take these descriptions and use them to transport our minds to the same level of understanding of the awe that is before them and us.

Rev 4:6b-8 (NIV)

- 1) Here, we meet four creatures that will play a prominent part in the remainder of our study.
 - a) The translation phrase "living creatures" is somewhat misleading.
 - i) It is derived from a single Greek word *zao* which means to live.
 - ii) They were NOT some anomalous conglomerate of parts thrown together for this occasion.
- 2) These are assumedly the same creatures that Ezekiel describes in Ezek 1:4-25. His description differs somewhat from John's, but the idea is the same.
 - a) They were also seen in Isaiah's vision in Isa 6:1-4
 - b) In Ezekiel's description, they are human in form.
- 3) They are actually angelic beings of high order.
- 4) MacArthur calls them "cherubim and exalted order of angels frequently associated in Scripture with God's holy power."
- 5) Again, looking at the symbology, our list tells us, the symbol "eyes" depicts knowledge.
 - a) We should add to that here that the number of eyes also symbolize alertness and awareness.
- 6) Their six wings denote their supreme responsibility and privilege to constantly worship God.
 - a) In Isaiah's vision, they use two wings to cover their face, two to cover their feet and two to fly.
 - i) Covering their face signified that, even though they were highly exalted beings, they could not look directly on God's glory.
 - ii) Covering their feet signified they were on Holy Ground.

- iii) The last two wings were mobility.
- 7) The faces of these creatures:
 - a) First, Ezekiel describes each creature as having all 4 faces whereas John’s vision has one face on each creature.
 - b) Nevertheless, they symbolize the created world (four primary forms of life)
 - i) the lion represents wild creatures – represents strength
 - ii) the ox domestic animals – represents service
 - iii) the eagle flying creatures – represents sovereignty and speed
 - iv) and man the pinnacle of creation – represents reasoning and intelligence.
 - c) It should also be noted that the twelve tribes of Israel camped under these four banners.
 - i) some with Reuben (symbolized by a man),
 - ii) others with Dan (symbolized by an eagle),
 - iii) others with Ephraim (symbolized by the calf, or ox),
 - iv) and the rest with Judah (symbolized by a lion).

Questions / Comments?

- 8) This is a scene of worship! The four creatures begin with "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."
- 9) Then, continuing in verse 9

Rev 4:9-11 (NIV)

- 1) When the four living creatures praise God, it triggers the praise of the 24 elders.
- 2) This phrase “fall down” means lying prostrate in a position of submission and adoration.
- 3) Such posture is one of reverent worship.
- 4) Additionally, here, we see even further submission.
 - a) The elders cast their crowns before the throne.
 - b) This says they are not preoccupied with their own excellence or holiness.
 - c) Instead, what they are pales in the light of God’s glory.
 - d) This must compel them to give everything they are to the praise and glory of Him.

What do you think God’s purpose is in the vision He gives John in these verses?

(No right or wrong answer – just looking for your thoughts)

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To me, if we assume the elders and living creatures know what this is about, they cannot help but be in awe and worship of the God who is about to judge Satan, sinful man, and take his creation back.

Rom 8:19-22 (NIV)

Rev 5:1-5 (NIV)

- 1) As we continue here, the scene is still the great throne room of God.
- 2) John sees a scroll in God's right hand – some translations use the term “book.”
- 3) This scroll plays an integral part in the remainder of the book of Revelation and as such, is the most important object of John's vision.
- 4) As we will see, all of the events of the seals, trumpets, and bowls all have their origins in the scroll.
- 5) We have made the point that anyone in John's time would readily understand what is being said here.
- 6) In that regard, I think Dr. Robert Thomas nails what the scroll really is – it is a contract.
- 7) He says:

“This kind of contract was known all over the Middle East in ancient times and was used by the Romans from the time of Nero on. The full contract would be written on the inner pages and sealed with seven seals. Then the content of the contract would be described briefly on the outside. All kinds of transactions were consummated this way, including marriage-contracts, rental and lease agreements, release of slaves, contract-bills, and bonds. Support also comes from Hebrew practices. The Hebrew document most closely resembling this scroll was a title-deed that was folded and signed, requiring at least three witnesses. A portion of text would be written, folded over and sealed, with a different witness signing at each fold. A larger number of witnesses meant that more importance was assigned to the document.”

(Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1992], 378)

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- 8) Coffman points out the importance of this scroll can be attributed to the fact that it is on or in God's hand.
- 9) Other things the scroll is:
 - a) As we will see, as it is revealed, it contains the climax of human history, overthrow of evil and the gathering of the redeemed.
 - b) It is the written future of mankind.
 - c) It is a new covenant which tells how God will save the church, Israel, the world, and the universe.

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- 10) Though John does not know the content of the scroll at this point (since it has not been opened) he nevertheless understands its importance and begins to weep bitterly (some translations).
- 11) Now, we have a new entity introduced into the scene. “Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”
- 12) From the messianic titles used, it is obviously the Christ. No other creature in all the universe is capable and worthy of opening the scroll.

But John does not see Christ as the Lion or a Davidic King. Instead, beginning in verse 6

Rev 5:1-5 (NIV)

- 13) The scene is still the great throne room of God.
- 14) John sees a scroll in God's right hand.
- 15) This scroll plays an integral part in the remainder of the book of Revelation and as such, is the most important object of John's vision.
- 16) As we will see, all of the events of the seals, trumpets, and bowls all have their origins in the scroll.
- 17) Anyone in John's time would readily understand that the scroll was a contract.
- 18) Dr. Robert Thomas comments that
"This kind of contract was known all over the Middle East in ancient times and was used by the Romans from the time of Nero on. The full contract would be written on the inner pages and sealed with seven seals. Then the content of the contract would be described briefly on the outside.
- 19) Coffman points out the importance of this scroll can be attributed to the fact that it is on or in God's hand.
- 20) Other things the scroll is:
 - a) contains the climax of human history, overthrow of evil and the gathering of the redeemed.
- 21) John weeps because the no one is found who is worthy to open the scroll.
- 22) Now, we have a new entity introduced into the scene.
- 23) From the messianic titles used, it is obviously the Christ.
- 24) No other creature in all the universe is capable and worthy of opening the scroll.
- 25) But John does not see Christ as the Lion or a Davidic King.
- 26) Instead, beginning in verse 6 we read >>>>

Rev 5:6-7 (NIV)

- 1) Once more, let's get our minds geared to interpretation of the description – not as literal but what it means to the reader in John's time.
- 2) The Greek word here for lamb, is that of a pet.
 - a) It evokes images of the Passover lamb that was kept as a part of the family (pet) for four days prior to its sacrifice.
- 3) However, the rest of the description allows us to see that this is no ordinary Lamb.
 - a) Standing – The lamb looked as though it had been slain yet, it was standing.
 - i) The scars of the deadly slaying were clearly visible, yet the creature was alive and functioning.

- b) In the next two features – Seven Horns and Seven Eyes, we have a combination of symbols.
 - i) Seven again representing fullness, perfection, and completeness.
 - ii) Horns – represent power, authority, and strength.
 - iii) Eyes – knowledge, perfect omniscience, and complete understanding.
 - (1) John further indicates here that they represent the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) The implication is that the Holy Spirit is being sent into all the earth.
 - (3) Jesus himself brings this description into what I think is clear focus in John 16:8-11

John 16:8-11 (NIV)

- 4) Verse 7 of the Revelation passage describes the final act in this heavenly scene.
- 5) Everything John has been describing starting in verse 1 of chapter 4 to this point have been building to this very event.
- 6) This is the same scene that is described in Daniel 7 verses 13 and 14.

Dan 7:13-14 (NIV)

- 7) The obvious difference between the two scenes is the mention of the scroll.
- 8) However, in the Daniel passage, we see the true connection to the content of the scroll.
 - a) As we discussed, the scroll's content is representative of the very things that Christ is given in verse 14 of the Daniel passage.
- 9) It is, in my opinion, very important that we see the significance of Christ (the Lamb) taking the scroll from God's hand.
 - a) It is the monumental act in the heavenly scene.
 - b) Everything John has been describing since this vision began in 4:1 has been building toward this moment.
 - c) This views the great, culminating act of history, the act that will signal the end of man's day.
 - d) The ultimate goal of redemption is about to be seen.
 - e) Paradise will be regained, Eden restored.

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Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse once observed that there are four things out of place in the universe: the church, which should be in heaven; Israel, which should be living in peace occupying all the land promised to her; Satan, who belongs in the lake of fire; and Christ, who should be seated on His throne reigning. All four of those anomalies will be set right when Christ takes the scroll from His Father's hand.

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10) This event is so important, so profound, and glorious that it causes praise to come from the entire universe.

Rev 5:8-14 (NIV)

- 1) There are several items of importance that we should mention here.
- 2) First, we must note that the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures offer the same praise to the Lamb as they do to the Father sitting on the throne.
 - a) If nothing else, this is indicative of the triune God.
- 3) The structure of the Greek text indicates that only the 24 elders had the bowls of incense and the harps.
 - a) Harps in the old testament were frequently associated with worship but also, closely linked to prophesy.

1 Sam 10:5 (NIV)

5 "After that you will go to Gibeath of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes, and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying NIV

- b) The incense in the golden bowls represent the prayers of God's people throughout the ages that the prophesied redemption of the earth might come.
 - c) Taken together, the harps and the prayers indicate that all the prophets ever prophesied, and all that God's children ever prayed for is finally to be fulfilled.
- 1) We now move to the beginning of the end of times.
 - 2) Before we jump into this, I think it will be good to get a "big picture" overview of what we are going to be dealing with from here thru chapter 16.
 - 3) This is the first of three 7-part judgment descriptions.
 - a) Chapter 6 and 7 are the opening of the seals,
 - b) Chapters 8 thru the beginning of 15 are the sounding of the seven trumpets,
 - c) Chapter 15:7 thru 16 deal with the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath.
 - 4) Each of the judgments (seals, trumpets, bowls) includes seven parts.
 - 5) In each case, the first four judgments involve natural disasters on the earth; the last three are cosmic disasters.
 - 6) There are three basic views of these events – Recapitulation, Consecutive, and Progressive.
 - 7) Here is a synopsis of the views held about these 3 judgments from the LABC.

Recapitulation View – According to this view, the three sets of judgments repeat each other (are cyclical); they present three ways of viewing the same judgments. Because the trumpets and the bowls have the same order, many have concluded that the three sets are repetitive. In addition, in all three sets, the first four of the seven judgments are very similar, as are the last three of each set of seven. Exact repetition, however, occurs only in the trumpets and bowls.

Consecutive View – This view holds that judgments will follow in the order described in Revelation: first the seals, then the trumpets, then the bowls — in other words, Revelation is describing twenty-one separate events. Thus, chapters 6-16 in Revelation would be chronological.

Progressive Intensification View – The key to this view is understanding the results of the judgments. The seals destroy one-fourth of the earth; the trumpets destroy one-third; the bowls affect everything. The picture seems to be one of progressive intensity, with each of these sets of judgments ending in the same place — that is, the end of history.

These views are helpful as you consider and study the book of Revelation. While many will feel very strongly about one view or another, only God knows the truth. He left much of Revelation unclear to his people for a reason, perhaps so we'll study it and be watchful and morally alert. One truth is sure: as God prepares to end history and usher in his kingdom, he will bring judgments.

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- 8) John MacArthur seems to favor the consecutive view – he comments:
- a) Each of the scroll's seven seals (cf. 5:1) represents a specific divine judgment that will be poured out sequentially on the earth.
 - b) The seals encompass the entire period of the Tribulation (3:10), culminating with the return of Christ.
 - c) It seems best to understand the first four seals as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation.
 - d) The fifth stretching from the first into the second half, (called the "great tribulation" in 7:14 and lasting three and one-half years; 11:2; 12:6; 13:5)
 - e) The sixth and seventh taking place during that "great tribulation."
 - f) Apparently the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgments (8-11) and the seventh trumpet (11:15) contains the seven bowl judgments (16).
 - g) The seven seals thus contain all the judgments to the end when Jesus Christ returns.

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- 9) One of the key points to the consecutive view is, in my opinion, that the trumpets are part of the Seventh Seal, and the bowls are part of the Seventh Trumpet.
- 10) The first 4 seals deal with what you may have heard referred to as the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”.

Rev 6:1-2 (NIV)

- 1) Think back to the last time you were in a thunderstorm and a flash of lighting was exceedingly close.
 - a) Remember how loud and shocking the clap of thunder was that immediately followed.
 - b) This is perhaps what the sound of the voice of the creature was that is associated with the first horseman as he said “Come!”
 - c) Unfortunately, the word in the Greek is unclear – it can literally mean come or go.
 - d) To further confound the situation, it is only used in the present and imperfect tense.
 - i) The imperfect tense is used in the indicative mood only. It often indicates a continuing situation in the past, rather than an event.
 - e) Another issue here with the word come is to whom it is addressed.
 - f) Some of your translations may have the phrase as “come and see” or possibly “behold”
 - i) According to one source, only one early manuscript had the added word for “behold” or in some translations, “look.”
 - ii) With that word in place, the creature would be addressing John.
 - iii) Without this word, it becomes more likely that the creature was addressing the horseman.
 - iv) This is the case for all of the first four seals revealing the horsemen of the Apocalypse
- 2) It was interesting to me that the Complete Jewish Bible was the only translation that I have that had the word “Go” instead of “come” for the command word here.
- 3) Beyond what I just talked about, there is much controversy and debate regarding the actual results of the opening of the first seal.
- 4) First, the rider – some have asserted that the rider is Christ, others, the antichrist.
- 5) I personally do not subscribe to either of these ideas.
 - a) Christ is the one opening the seals – unlikely that he would also be the first horseman of the Apocalypse as well.
 - b) The crown and bow described as associated with him are also not royal.
 - c) Of the two – Christ or the Antichrist, the one I would favor would be the Antichrist because, there is a false peace that comes with him.
 - i) However, he is introduced much later in our study, and I don’t feel that this is him.

- d) Finally, another compelling argument against both is that the other riders are not individuals or persons but impersonal forces (war, famine, and death).
- 6) So, if we do assume the first rider to be an “impersonal force”, what is that force.
- 7) There are at least two major thoughts regarding this idea.
 - a) First, this rider would represent conquest.
 - i) The argument here is that war, famine, and death normally follow conquest.
 - b) The second is that this rider would represent a time of peace.
 - i) Support for that argument is that there is no mention of arrows – he has a bow but no ammunition.
 - ii) Also, white (white of the horse) in addition to the joy of victory, triumph, purity may be indicative of peace.
 - iii) The conquest here would be a conquest of deception with peace to follow.
 - iv) As a parallel to this argument, MacArthur points to Hitler.
 - (1) He wrote *Mein Kampf* which was a complete outline of his idea of conquest and domination over 10 years before WWII began.
 - (2) Yet, even as he annexed countries and reoccupied the Rhineland in violation of the Versailles Treaty, he still claimed to be a man of peace.
 - (3) It was not until he invaded Poland in September of 1939 that the world woke up and realized what was happening.
 - (4) Too late – WWII ensued!
- 8) Regardless of the interpretation we might give, the rider is “bent on conquest” and, since he is given the victor’s crown the assumption must be made that the conquest is accomplished.
- 9) Another note on this from the LABC relates this seal to the first century reader:

The picture behind this for the first-century readers may have been the powerful Roman legions and their greatest foes — the Parthians who lived east of the Euphrates River, which became the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. The Parthians had defeated the Roman army twice with their cavalry (the rider on horseback) and their archery (his bow). This had caused much fear of an invasion by the Parthians, so Rome eventually had made a treaty with them.

Most likely, the rider on the white horse represents sinful mankind's desire for conquest; when this occurs, many suffer.

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- 10) Finally, some scholars believe that the first seal also represents a period of peace on the earth – perhaps after the conquest.

11) As we will see, the description of the second rider lends some credence to this idea; he is given power to take peace from the earth.

>>>>>> Lesson 11 <<<<<<<

- 1) Made a statement – 3.5 years – not the whole story...
- 2) We did not quite finish the opening of the first seal so let's begin with a quick review and finish up on that.

Rev 6:1-2 (NIV)

- 3) Here, we see Jesus opening the first of the seven seals.
- 4) Once, the seal is opened, one of the four creatures says Come!
 - a) The word for come in the Greek is unclear – it can literally mean come or go.
 - b) It is also unclear as to whom the command is given – John or the horseman.
 - c) In my study, I did not find a consensus regarding either of these differences.
 - d) I don't think I mentioned this last week but, the first 4 seals deal with what you may have heard referred to as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse".
- 5) As to the "come or go" aspect, I will say that it was interesting to me that only the Complete Jewish Bible translation had the word "Go" instead of "come" for the command word here.
 - a) This was out of 25 or so translations.
- 6) There is also some controversy regarding the identity of the rider – some scholars assert that the rider is Christ, others, the antichrist.
- 7) On the other hand, some put forth that the first rider is not a person at all, but, like the other three riders, he is an "impersonal force."
- 8) If that is the case. then what is that force? There are at least two major thoughts regarding this.
 - a) First, this rider would represent conquest.
 - i) The argument here is that the forces, war, famine, and death represented by the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th seals, normally follow conquest.
 - b) The second is that this rider would represent a time of peace.
 - i) Support for that argument is that there is, as we discussed last time, no mention of arrows – he has a bow but no ammunition.
 - ii) Also, white (white of the horse) in addition to the joy of victory, triumph, purity may be indicative of peace.
 - iii) The conquest here would be a conquest of deception with peace to follow.
- 9) I mentioned this in passing last time but, another note from the LABC relates this seal to how the first century reader might have seen this seal.

The picture behind this for the first-century readers may have been the powerful Roman legions and their greatest foes — the Parthians who lived east of the Euphrates River, which became the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. The Parthians had defeated the Roman army twice with their cavalry (the rider on

horseback) and their archery (his bow). This had caused much fear of an invasion by the Parthians, so Rome eventually had made a treaty with them.

Most likely, the rider on the white horse represents sinful mankind's desire for conquest; when this occurs, many suffer.

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- 10) So, to finish up on this first seal we can draw a couple of conclusions:
- 11) Regardless of the interpretation we might give, scripture clearly states the rider is “bent on conquest.”
- 12) Since he is given the victor’s crown the assumption must be made that the conquest is (or was) accomplished.
- 13) Finally, some scholars believe that the first seal also represents a period of peace on the earth – perhaps after the conquest.
- 14) As we will see, the description of the second rider lends some credence to this idea; he is given power to take peace from the earth.

Rev 6:3-4 (NIV)

- 1) Red, the color of fire and blood, depicts warfare, bloodshed, violence.
- 2) God's judgment descends and the short-lived, false peace that mankind was enjoying ends.
 - a) We should, I think, make the point here that God is in charge of and controls all the events that are occurring in the Revelation.
 - i) Not Satan, fate, or any other force!
 - b) God controls the conquest and the ensuing false peace of the first rider.
 - c) He also controls the breakout of wars of the second rider.
- 3) When the event of the second seal takes place men will slay one another.
 - a) Violent slaughter will become commonplace.
 - b) While Scripture does not give the details, it is likely that when this occurs, the slaughter will be on an unimaginable scale.
- 4) There are differing opinions regarding the sword described here.
 - a) The Greek word for "sword" in this verse is different from the sharp two-edged sword of chapter 1 verse 16.
 - b) Some think this sword probably would have been about five feet long and would have weighed about twenty-five pounds.
 - i) Strong warriors would swing it while on horseback to kill foot soldiers

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- c) Another opinion is that the sword refers to the short, stabbing sword a Roman soldier carried into battle.
 - i) This type was also a weapon used by assassins.
- 5) Again, stepping away from the literal, the vision depicts a great sword to describe the extent of the war and resulting carnage.

Rev 6:5-6 (NIV)

- 1) In the list of symbols I gave you and in MacArthur's commentary, the color Black is associated with famine.
 - a) This is based on a few translations (primarily the KJV) having the color black associated with the famine in Lamentations 5:10.
 - b) I am not sure, but I feel from the information I could find there may be some issues with this interpretation – black as meaning famine.
 - c) The LABC simply states:

Following on the heels of the red horse of warfare, therefore, comes a black horse, which represents the sorrow and desolation of warfare that leaves people without money or food.

- 2) Though this is a minor point, I do think I would concur with the LABC interpretation of the color black rather than the other of famine.
- 3) This rider is holding a pair of scales for weighing food.
- 4) The words coming from the midst of the four living creatures regarding the amount of food for a day's pay pictures wartime inflation.
- 5) First-century readers would have interpreted this amount as twelve to fifteen times what they were used to paying.
- 6) A quart of wheat is barely enough to sustain one person for one day, while a denarius represents one day's wages for an average worker.
- 7) The point is that people's labor will barely provide enough food for themselves and not enough to feed their families.
- 8) Those with families will be able to purchase three quarts of barley for a denarius.
- 9) That will provide food for their families, but barley was low in nutritional value and commonly fed to livestock.
- 10) Thus, a person's wages will only minimally feed three people with low quality food.
- 11) Both of those scenarios represent starvation wages, and signify severe food shortage conditions.
- 12) This then would indeed lead to widespread starvation – another devastating result of warfare.

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- 13) The phrase "Do not damage the olive oil and the wine" is likely a warning to conserve two staples.
- 14) It could mean that these items would be hoarded and thus unavailable in the marketplace.
- 15) A Worse calamity is still to come.

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Rev 6:7-8 (NIV)

- 1) First, the description of the horse.
 - a) The word used here translated pale or ashen is the word from which we get our word chloroform or chlorine.
 - b) It can really be a color like a pale green. Not to gross you out, but one comment said it would be much like that of a corpse.
- 2) Hades follows behind death and in this case represents the grave.
- 3) Death and hades were given the power to kill $\frac{1}{4}$ of the earth.
- 4) To get a perspective on what is being said here, based on 21 Oct population numbers:
 - a) World population 7.9 billion
 - b) One Fourth = 1.9 billion
 - c) Covid19 deaths = 4.92 million as of that date
 - d) Therefore, one fourth is ~ 400 times the covid19 death toll - ~ 2 BILLION dead!!
- 5) Sword here represents war.
- 6) Famine and plague are pretty much self-explanatory.
- 7) Beasts, however, seems a little odd. One commentator associates the beasts with rats.
 - a) When we look throughout history, we find that rats have been responsible for many different world health crises.
- 8) Again, we are stepping into the literal when the actual point is this seal will unleash death on a scale, number wise that we cannot mistake.
- 9) In all history, looking across all major wars, plagues, famines etc. we have never seen death on this scale.
- 10) Again, there will be no mistaking this seal when it is opened.

Rev 6:9-11 (NIV)

- 1) As a result of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse ridding off, we have a time of peace, war, famine, and death – the Tribulation has begun!
- 2) The Lamb now breaks the fifth seal.
- 3) It reveals an altar in heaven, under which are the souls of all who had been martyred for faithfully proclaiming the word of God..
- 4) They had been killed for standing up for Christ and for his word.
- 5) There are some differences of opinion about the altar.
 - a) Some think the altar John saw is most likely emblematic of the altar of incense in the Old Testament (Ex 40:5), because of the association of incense with prayer.
 - b) Others think altar represents the altar of sacrifice in the Temple, where animals would be sacrificed to atone for sins.
 - i) In this case, instead of the animals' blood at the base of the altar, John saw the souls of martyrs who had died for preaching the gospel.
- 6) The word for "souls" (psyche) refers to the persons or to their lives.
- 7) These martyrs were told that still more would lose their lives for believing in Christ
- 8) We will see this come true in several places as we continue our study:

Rev 13:15 (NIV)

Rev 18:24 (NIV)

Rev 20:4 (NIV)

In the face of persecution and trials even to the point of death, Christians need to stand firmly for what they believe.

- 9) Only those who endure to the end will be rewarded by God (Rev 14:12; Mark 13:13).
- 10) These martyrs stand out because they were faithful.
 - a) Jesus had predicted (Matt 10:22) that his followers would be severely persecuted by those who hated what he stood for.
- 11) In times of terrible persecutions, however, they could have hope, knowing that salvation was theirs.
- 12) Standing firm to the end is not a way to be saved! It is the evidence that a person is really committed to Jesus.
- 13) Persistence is not a means to earn salvation; it is the by-product of a truly devoted life.
- 14) When we are pressured to give up and turn our backs on Christ, we must stand firm!

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15) T. S. Eliot said:

The greatest proof of Christianity for others is not how far a man can logically analyze his reasons for believing, but how far in practice he will stake his life on his belief.

16) The souls of the martyrs beneath the altar were calling out for justice for their deaths, asking God how long it would be before he would judge the earth and avenge their blood.

17) These words may sound harsh when used in prayer, but the martyrs were calling for God's justice, and they were leaving the vengeance to God – “how long until **you** avenge our blood.”

18) God promises to help the persecuted and to bring judgment on unrepentant sinners.

19) This was not revenge that they would carry out on their enemies but an appeal for God to punish **his** enemies.

20) Those who had killed these believers had mocked God by harming his witnesses.

21) The martyrs were told to rest a little longer until the full number of the servants of Jesus had been martyred.

22) God is not waiting until a certain number are killed; rather, he is waiting for the appointed time to arrive.

a) The statement simply says God knows the total number who will die for Christ.

23) He promises, however, that those who suffer and die for their faith will not be forgotten.

24) In fact, they will be rewarded and honored by God.

25) Today, oppressed people may wish for justice immediately, as these martyrs did, but they must be patient.

a) God works according to his own timetable, in keeping His promises to act.

b) No suffering for the sake of God's kingdom is wasted.

26) God will vindicate his people, but he will do it in his time, not ours.

27) The white robe that each martyr was given, as throughout the book of Revelation, symbolizes purity (see also Rev 3:4 and 7:11).

28) The martyred witnesses had prayed for God's justice.

29) Yet God's answer to them was to wait.

a) For a person of faith, it is good when God answers our prayers with a "Wait" or a "No."

30) Too often, people think that the only satisfactory answer to prayer is an immediate and thunderous "Yes!"

31) That is not biblical faith – God shows his great love when he says no or wait because he knows best and is sovereign.

32) Remember that God loves us and that his answers may not be what we expect.

a) Trust him and pray for strength to endure.

Rev 6:12-14 (NIV)

- 1) Worldwide Catastrophe!
 - a) A Massive earthquake beyond anything ever seen or felt before.
 - b) The Sun turns black like sackcloth and the moon is turns blood red.
 - i) The sun and moon are most likely blocked by smoke and ash from all the volcanic activity resulting from the massive earthquake.
 - c) Stars falling from the sky like figs
 - i) Obviously not literal since there are no stars that are smaller than the earth.
 - (1) smallest ever measured is about 20% larger than Jupiter which is 11 time as wide as earth.
 - ii) Must be a massive meteor shower with many meteors hitting the earth.
 - d) The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up.
 - i) Here again, we need to deal with the different ways of looking at the seals, trumpets, and bowls.
 - (1) If we interpret the events as chronological, **we must** consider this to be the end of the first round of judgments.
 - (2) If our interpretation is cyclical, or as showing progressive (varying intensity) with all the judgments ending at the return of Christ, **we will** see the rolling up of the sky as the time when Christ opens heaven and returns to earth (Rev 19:11).
 - ii) John MacArthur's comment here is that this is the human perception of the magnitude of this judgment, but is not the final dissolving of heaven which comes later (Rev 21:1)
 - e) Every mountain and island was removed from its place.
 - i) One theory here would be that the earthquake is so severe that the tectonic plates will actually override each other and as a result, massive amounts of land will be subducted into the earth's core.
 - ii) Without regard to theory, God will make them disappear or move them from where they are to other locations!
- 2) We cannot say precisely what is being denoted here in the dramatic depictions that John is laying out.
- 3) What we can say is that he is describing the terror of an unrepentant world.
- 4) As we see next, everyone from the greatest king to the lowest slave will make futile attempts to escape God's punishment.

Rev 6:15-17 (NIV)

- 5) Everyone fears the pending wrath of God once they see it start to unfold!
- 6) These folks are calling on the wrong thing.

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- 7) They obviously know the source of the destruction – God (him who sits on the throne) and Christ (the Lamb).
- 8) But, instead of calling on God to forgive them and being repentant of the sin they all have, they call on the mountains (which are being displaced) to cover them.
- 9) There was a commercial before Halloween that showed a group of young people who were frightened in a spooky setting.
- 10) They start suggesting places to hide and wind up hiding behind a curtain of chainsaws with the chainsaw murderer looking perplexed in the background.
- 11) Calling on the rocks and mountains to protect us when they are being destroyed and moved by God is much the same thing.
- 12) The last phrase of this chapter has a slightly different phraseology than many others:
For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"
- 13) Young's Literal has it
because come did the great day of His anger, and who is able to stand?
- 14) The idea here must be that the wrath of the God head against sinners is something that no one can stand up to.
- 15) No such thing as playing thru the pain in this case.

- 1) We now enter a break between the sixth and seventh (last seal)
- 2) Just when destruction seemed sure, four angels held back the four winds of judgment until God's people were sealed as his own.
- 3) This sealing occurs in this interlude between the sixth and seventh seals.
- 4) An interlude also comes between the sixth and seventh trumpets (10:1-11:13) but not between the sixth and seventh bowls (16:12-21).

Rev 7:1-3 (NIV)

- 5) The opening phrase of verse 1, "after this" and also the phrase "after these things", where it is used is usually followed by some form of the verb eidon meaning "to see".
- 6) This combination is used several times in Revelation to introduce a new vision.
- 7) The use of after this in this passage signifies that the vision of the sixth seal has ended and John is about to see a new vision.
- 8) It may also indicate that this new vision depicts events that come after the sixth seal chronologically.
- 9) The scene now shifts from judgment on the ungodly to special protection for the godly.
- 10) As the vision unfolds, John first sees four angels.
- 11) These four are given power over the elements of nature.

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- 12) They are seen standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth.
- 13) The phrase actually refers to the whole earth by designating the four primary points on the compass.
- 14) The sudden silence and the angels holding back the four winds from blowing upon the earth picture God's protection from harm.
- 15) Holding back is from *krateō*, a strong word that suggests that the winds are struggling to break free from their restraint.
- 16) They contrast the peace and security of the believers with the terror of those hiding in the rocks.
- 17) The winds described here picture harmful winds as agents of God bringing destruction.
- 18) The four angels hold back the winds so that not a leaf rustled in the trees, and the sea became calm.
- 19) The angelic restraining of the wind also symbolizes the withholding of the plagues associated with the imminent trumpet judgments.
- 20) So the next phase of God's wrath is restrained for the moment. Verse 3 tells us...
3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."
- 21) The winds of judgment are gathering force, soon to be released.

Rev 7:4-8 (NIV)

- 1) Purely as a starting point, what are things you have come to understand about the 144,000?
- 2) Things these 144,000 are not:
 - a) Not the church.
 - b) Not the only Jews that will be saved.
 - c) Not the only people who will be saved.
- 3) Truth is, this is one of those texts that absolutely screams context.
- 4) The context in this case being another passage in Revelation which further explains these being sealed.

Rev 14:1-5 (NIV)

- 5) The specificity of the list says that it is the actual tribes that are being considered.
- 6) MacArthur breaks the list down as follows:
 - a) Although Reuben was the firstborn (Gen 46:8), Judah is listed first.
 - i) Reuben forfeited his birthright as punishment for his sexual misconduct with his father's concubine (1 Chron 5:1).

- b) The omission of the tribe of Dan in favor of the priestly tribe of Levi is also unusual.
- c) Dan was evidently omitted due to the tribe's penchant for idolatry (cf. Deut 29:18-21) — which was even worse than that of the rest of the nation (cf. Judg 18; Amos 8:14).
 - i) While Dan will share in the millennial blessings (Ezek 48:1-2,32) the tribe will not be selected for this duty nor protected during the Tribulation.
- d) Similarly, the name of Ephraim is omitted in favor of his father Joseph because Ephraim defected from the ruling house of Judah (Isa 7:17).
 - i) Also Ephraim, like Dan, was consumed with idolatry (Hos 4:17). His brother Manasseh is included because he was the faithful son of Joseph.

7) He goes on to comment:

This critical passage reinforces the biblical truth that God is not through with the nation of Israel (cf. Rom. 9-11). Though Israel failed in its mission to be a witness nation in the Old Testament, that will not be the case in the future. From the Jewish people will come the greatest missionary force the world has ever known. The result of their effort will be a redeemed Israel, as promised by God, and innumerable redeemed Gentiles.

- 8) Bottom line is, Revelation Jewish believers and evangelists are the first fruits of Israel, which as a nation will be redeemed before Christ returns (Zech 12:10-13:1,8-9; Rom 11:26).
- 9) The 144,000 are not all the Jewish believers at that time, but a unique group selected to proclaim the gospel in that day (cf. 12:17; 14:1-5).
- 10) This squarely addresses the comments we will read next regarding the multitude of believers.

Rev 7:4-8 (NIV)

- 1) We concluded last time discussing exactly who these 144,000 were.
- 2) The obvious answer is that they were Jews from the 12 tribes of Israel.
- 3) The difficult part requires some assumptions.
 - a) Today, for many reasons, not the least of which is the tribal records were lost when the Romans sacked Jerusalem in 70CE, the lineage to the various tribes is unknown to Jews.
 - b) God, of course, does know and if, at the time of the tribulation, he desires to identify 144,000 as indicated he can and will.
- 4) Arguments can be and are made that this listing symbolically represents the new Israel – the church.
 - a) In this case, the 144,000 simply represents completeness.
- 5) In my opinion, what is important is what context tells us these folks are.
 - a) Context in this case being other passages in Revelation which further explains these being sealed.

Rev 12:17 (NIV)

Rev 14:1 (NASB)

14 And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. 4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless. NASB

- 6) MacArthur takes the stand that these are actual Jews from the given tribes.
- 7) The specificity of the list says that not all original tribes that are being considered.
- 8) MacArthur breaks the list down as follows (READ):
 - a) Although Reuben was the firstborn (Gen 46:8), Judah is listed first.
 - i) Reuben forfeited his birthright as punishment for his sexual misconduct with his father's concubine (1 Chron 5:1).

- b) The omission of the tribe of Dan in favor of the priestly tribe of Levi is also unusual.
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- 10) Bottom line is, Revelation Jewish believers and evangelists are the first fruits of Israel, which as a nation will be redeemed before Christ returns (Zech 12:10-13:1,8-9; Rom 11:26).
- 11) The 144,000 are not all the Jewish believers at that time, but a unique group selected to proclaim the gospel in that day (cf. 12:17; 14:1-5).
- 12) Making the choice between the complete church or an actual (literal) 144,000 people from the 12 select tribes is not as important as the fact that these are special followers of Jesus.
 - a) I believe that MacArthur is correct in that they are a special missionary force.
 - b) And that they are especially chosen by God for this purpose.
- 13) As we will see next, they are not the only ones who are redeemed and part of the heavenly bride of our Lord – the church.
- 14) We see this clearly in comments we will read next regarding the multitude of believers.

Rev 7:9-12 (NIV)

- 1) As mentioned before, the opening phrase “After this” or “After these things” indicates the start of a new vision.
- 2) John looks and before him is a multitude – so large it could not be counted.

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- 3) So, what can we say about this multitude?
 - a) It is not the 144,000.
 - i) They are counted and only come from the tribes of Israel.
 - ii) These come from every nation, all tribes, and all tongues – including Israel.
 - b) They are from the earth, so they are not angelic beings.
 - i) They are standing around the throne with angels.
 - c) Their robes are white.
 - i) The word used here describes dazzling, brilliant, shining white.
 - ii) With regard to clothing is normally used to describe that worn for festivals and celebrations.
 - d) They held palm branches.
 - i) This is also associated with celebrations, deliverance, and joy.
 - ii) Recall the triumphal entry into Jerusalem by Jesus in John's gospel.
- 4) They are standing before God, His throne, and the Lamb and they are worshiping!
- 5) So who are they?

Rev 7:13-17 (NIV)

- 6) The elder was not asking for information.
- 7) He was asking so that he could underscore to John and the readers of this description who they were.
- 8) And the descriptions he gives shows clearly who they are by what they will not have to endure any longer.
- 9) To me, that very list says they came from the tribulation.
- 10) Now, if one subscribes to the pre-tribulation Rapture then these would be folks that were converted during the tribulation.
- 11) If not, then, these would be those that entered the tribulation and overcame along with any that were converted during the tribulation.
- 12) Now, a question may arise here – is the tribulation ended?
- 13) One indicator may be the structure of the sentence describing these folks - have come out of the great tribulation.
 - a) There is a present tense implied by this statement about the great tribulation.
 - b) Young's Literal Translation has it:

Rev 7:14 (YLT)

'These are those who **are coming out of the great tribulation**, and they did wash their robes, and they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb; YLT

1) So, the short answer is NO, the tribulation is not ended.

Rev 8:1 (NIV)

- 1) If you look back over the visions to this point, you will find good deal of noise in heaven.
 - a) Emanating from God's throne were "sounds and peals of thunder" (4:5).
 - b) "The four living creatures . . . [did] not cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come'" (4:8)
 - c) The twenty-four elders added their song of praise (4:11).
 - d) And on it goes:
 - i) Praise when the Lamb is chosen to open the scroll
 - ii) The four living creatures saying come as the first 4 seals are opened.
 - iii) With the opening of the fifth seal came the cries of the martyrs for vengeance (6:9-10),
 - iv) While the breaking of the sixth seal brought the loud roar of a powerful earthquake (6:12).
 - v) In the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals, an angel "cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads'"
- 2) Then silence falls on the heavenly scene.
- 3) The implication is that when the seventh seal is broken all of heaven is reduced to silence in anticipation of the judgment that is about to happen.
- 4) It is the silence of foreboding, of intense expectation, of awe at what God is about to do.

Rev 8:2 (NIV)

- 1) In the Greek, there is a definite article which appears to set these angels apart.
- 2) Some call them the "presence angels."
- 3) The usage verb stand indicates they were in the presence of God and had been there for some time.
- 4) Scripture describes various ranks and orders of angels:
 - a) cherubim (Gen 3:24)
 - b) seraphim (Isa 6:2)

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- c) archangels (1 Thess 4:16; Jude 9)
 - i) And for a little trivia, according to one of the apocalypses known as the Jewish pseudepigrapha, 1 Enoch, the names of the archangels are: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Sara Gael, Gabriel, and Remiel
- 5) These angels appear to be one such order of high-ranking angels.
- 6) Throughout the Old Testament, trumpets had a variety of meanings and purposes.
- 7) Moses was instructed to make two silver trumpets that would:
 - a) call the people together
 - b) move the tribes forward on their journey
 - c) sound an alarm
 - d) or signify the feast days
- 8) The trumpets here are to herald the arrival of the day of God's wrath.
- 9) Apparently, the events of 8:3-5 occur immediately following this time of silence.

Rev 8:3-5 (NIV)

- 10) Another angel here is just that – an 8th angel.
 - a) Some have commented that they thought this was Jesus, but other parts of the vision do not bear this out.
- 11) The altar is the heavenly counterpart of the altar of incense in the temple.
- 12) In the Old Testament era, the priests would twice daily (morning and evening) take hot coals from the altar where sacrifices were offered and transport them into the Holy Place to the incense altar (Ex 30:7,8; 2 Chron 29:11; cf. 1 Kings 7:50; 2 Kings 25:15; Jer 52:18-19)
 - a) They then ignited the incense, which rose toward heaven, emblematic of the prayers of the people.
- 13) The consensus is that these are the prayers of all saints for the great judgment of God to come swiftly.
 - a) They are being added to the prayers of those who have been martyred as indicated in chapter 6 verse 10.
- 14) We are not told what was happening on the earth during this half hour of silence, but we do know that it is about to get another wakeup call.
- 15) The fire from the altar being thrown to the earth symbolizes the prayers of the saints on earth being answered.
- 16) God was about to act on their behalf.
- 17) The peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake are the beginning of his answer to their prayers.

Rev 8:6 (NIV)

- 1) The seven trumpet judgments are going to call forth a series of God's plagues on his enemies.
- 2) These judgments affected every part of the world: the earth, the sea, rivers and lakes, the sky, and the "people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads".
- 3) Unlike the bowl judgments we will see in chapter 16, the first six trumpets are targeted on just a third of the cosmos and were intended to produce repentance.
- 4) The LABC draws a striking parallel between these trumpet judgments and the plagues of Egypt.
- 5) The trumpet and the bowl judgments symbolically reenacted the plagues of Egypt recorded in Ex 7-12. The plagues had two purposes:
 - a) The ***first purpose*** of the plagues against Egypt was to prove the powerlessness of the Egyptian gods.
 - i) Every plague was directed at a force that the Egyptians thought was on their side because they worshiped that force.
 - (1) For example, the Egyptians worshiped the sun, so God sent a plague of darkness (Ex 10:21-29);
 - (2) they worshiped the Nile River, so God sent a plague to turn the sacred river to blood (7:14-24).
 - b) The ***second purpose*** of the plagues was to show the Egyptians that God controlled nature and that Egypt's gods controlled nothing.
 - i) The plagues were oriented to the cycle of nature.
 - ii) The Egyptians worshiped many gods representing the various forces of nature so that nature would feed and take care of them.
 - 6) The plagues showed the helplessness of the people of Egypt, who worshiped false gods.
 - a) In the same way, through these trumpet and bowl judgments, God will show the people of this world their helplessness and hopelessness without him.
 - 7) One other note before we get into the actual trumpet results.
 - 8) As we continue, I will mention some of the theories of what the actual mechanisms are for the catastrophic events BUT, the mechanisms are NOT IMPORTANT!!
 - 9) What is important is that these catastrophic events are God's rath and that they are intended as such on the remainder of sinful mankind.
 - 10) Though these event parameters, again, cannot be taken literally, we will look at them as such just to get an idea of the magnitude.
 - 11) These are the end times and the fulfillment of God's promise and warnings which He has given us in scripture throughout the ages.

>>>>>> Lesson 14 <<<<<<<

- 1) One note before we begin studying the actual trumpet event results.
- 2) I touched on this at the end of last week's session, but I think it bears repeating.
- 3) As we continue, we will discuss some of the theories of what the actual mechanisms are for these catastrophic events BUT, the mechanisms are NOT IMPORTANT!!
- 4) What is important is that these events are God's rath and that they are intended as such on the remainder of sinful mankind.
- 5) They are also opportunities for those who will, to repent and turn to God and Christ for salvation.
 - a) We saw this clearly in our study last time as the elder explained about the multitude of worshipers from the tribulation.
- 6) Though in many cases, these event parameters, again, cannot be taken literally, we will look at them as such just to get an idea of the scale and magnitude.
- 7) These are the end times and the fulfillment of God's promise and warnings which He has given us in scripture throughout the ages.

Rev 8:7 (NIV)

- 8) The shocking result was that a third of the earth was burned up and we can easily get a perspective on this one.
 - a) Recall if you will the amount of acres that were burned in this last series of California wildfires.
 - b) Now, looking at present day "earth" as we know it – 1/3 of the earth is equal to the number of acres contained in Russia, Canada, China, and the United States combined.
 - c) As with the California fires, we must assume everything would be destroyed – houses, businesses, churches, crops, animals ... you name it, and it would be gone.
 - d) Additionally, since we truly have no real scientific reason for the mixture of hail and blood with the fire, we can only assume that it will be as stated – God is in control!!!!.
 - e) Some commentators put forth that the combination would render the soil in which crops are cultivated unusable.
 - f) The impact on food supplies would be horrendous!
- 9) Unfortunately, this is only the beginning!

Rev 8:8-9 (NIV)

- 1) Not dwelling on it but one obvious source of the "huge mountain" could be an asteroid.
- 2) Regardless of what the "mountain" is, the result that happens as this trumpet sounds is literally translated, "the third of the sea became blood"

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- a) The indication here is that the sea became blood first and that in turn, the living creatures die.
- 3) Looking at the devastation, the number of fish in the world's oceans is currently estimated at 3.5 trillion (that's 35 with 11 zeros after it) BIG NUMBER!!!
 - a) Combine that carnage with oceans that are 1/3 blood, and we are talking a major environmental disaster.
 - b) Frankly, I don't think we can imagine how terrible this will be.
 - c) Not to mention the impact on world food supplies and the economy.
- 4) As to 1/3 of the ships being destroyed, looking at some statistics for today we find:
 - a) Current commercial sailing ships is over 90,000.
 - i) This would include tankers and cargo.
 - b) Current US Naval ships over 600.
 - c) If we assume other countries to have proportionally significant navies, we can see we are looking at probably in excess of 100,000 ships.
 - d) 1/3 would of course, be 33,000 and we must assume we are speaking of the crews being destroyed as well.
 - e) We have seen recently what an impact worldwide shipping disruption can have on our supply system.
- 5) Scripture does not mention it but one would probably not be far off by also considering the results of the tsunami that would result.
- 6) Imagine the devastation that will be caused when this trumpet is sounded.
- 7) Of course, with all of this in any historical period including the current one – economic chaos will follow shortly behind all these events.

Rev 8:10-11 (NIV)

- 1) I found no commentary with any details describing what the actual mechanism would be here.
- 2) The mechanism for a meteor selectively breaking up and falling only on rivers and springs of water escapes me.
- 3) HOWEVER, again – God is in control!
- 4) Wormwood is a plant name.
- 5) Artemisia absinthium (its proper name) is a moderately poisonous species of Artemisia native to temperate regions of Eurasia and North Africa.
- 6) It is grown as an ornamental plant and is used as an ingredient in the spirit absinthe and some other alcoholic beverages.
- 7) If you look it up, you will find it for sale as over the counter remedies for many ailments.

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- a) Even as such, if you read about it the side effects are very unpleasant and if taken in large enough quantity probably could cause death.
- 8) It is mentioned 8 times in the old testament and is associated with bitterness, poison, and death.
- 9) Whatever the poison represented by the name here, it is obviously lethal and effects 1/3 of the world's fresh water so that those who drink of them are killed.
- 10) Again, it is hard for us to truly imagine the devastation that is taking place on this earth when God unleashes his rath as these trumpets are sounded.

Rev 8:12 (NIV)

- 1) And we think Daylight Savings Time is an issue?
- 2) Looking at Young's Literal translation of this verse we read:
12 And the fourth messenger did sound, and smitten was the third of the sun, and the third of the moon, and the third of the stars, that darkened may be the third of them, and that the day may not shine — the third of it, and the night in like manner.
- 3) Again, trying to interpret these events as literal is almost impossible.
- 4) The Bible Exposition Commentary gives what I think is a clue to the most logical explanation to this phenomena,

The judgments from the first three trumpets affected only a third part of the land and waters, but this fourth judgment affects the entire world. Why? Because it gets to the very source of the earth's life and energy, the sun. With one third less sunlight on the earth, there will be one third less energy available to support the life systems of man and nature.

(The Bible Exposition Commentary. Copyright © 1989 by Chariot Victor Publishing, and imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. All rights reserved.)

- 5) When we look at what causes the moon to shine, we really see the issue.
 - a) The moon shines because of reflected light from the sun.
 - b) The only way the moon would be less bright would be if the sun was also less bright.
 - c) Therefore, what I think is happening here is not that 1/3 of the sun and moon go dark but that the sun's energy and therefore its brightness is reduced by 1/3.
 - d) This in turn will cause the moon's brightness to be reduced by 1/3.
- 6) The impact on to mankind is far more serious than a reduction in light.
- 7) The world will become much colder and all life including food supplies will be effected drastically by this loss of energy.
- 8) As to the effect of all the stars loosing 1/3 of their energy, astronomically, this would be a very hard thing to predict.

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- 9) The one thing I think we can say for sure is that visibly, it would be much more noticeable to those to whom this was originally written. NO LIGHT POLLUTION.
- 10) One of the effects these first 4 trumpets beyond the obvious is that the world will be plunged further into chaos.
 - a) There will probably be international efforts and many, many, scientific conferences held to attempt to understand and solve the crises that will be generated.
 - b) All to no avail – God’s rath is being released and we will not be able to lessen it to any degree at all.

Rev 8:13 (NIV)

- 1) One twist here is when you look at the Greek, you find the word translated eagle in most translations is actually a word for messenger.
 - a) The KJV and a few other translations actually use the word angel here instead of eagle.
- 2) One way or the other, John is being told that this is a transition point.
 - a) The first 4 trumpets caused havoc and destruction throughout the ecosystem of the world
 - b) These next three trumpets herald the releasing of demonic forces on mankind.
 - c) Again, we see the term, “inhabitants of the earth” indicating sinful man.

Rev 9:1 (NIV)

- 1) First, we have to address who the “star that had fallen” was.
- 2) Once more, turning to the literal translation, “star out of the heaven having fallen to the earth”
- 3) Both of these translations (literal and NIV) indicate past tense.
- 4) The consensus of most if not all commentators is that the word star here represents an angelic or heavenly being.
- 5) As to who the angel is, there is much debate.
- 6) Some say that it is Christ or an angel of God’s choosing to whom he gives the key to the abyss.
- 7) Most however, believe the fallen star here is Satan.
- 8) For me, the key to the solution lies in the fact that this is presented in the past tense “star that had fallen.”
- 9) Isa 14:12-16 describes Satan’s fall.

Isa 14:12-15 (NIV)

- 10) We will see this further described in Rev 12 when we get there.
- 11) Satan being the source of all evil, it only makes sense that he should be the one that opens the abyss and unleashes the traumatic events that are the reason for the woe’s issued by the eagle.

12) The fifth trumpet events are described in four distinct parts of John’s vision:

- a) The pit unlocked
- b) The power unleashed
- c) The tormenting evil described.
- d) The king of the Abyss identified.

The Abyss Unlocked

2 When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

- 1) Here, we must remember, this black billowing smoke coming from the Abyss and blocking the sun that is already dimmed, is happening in a world that is already in chaos!
- 2) This is the insult to injury – but – that’s not the end – not by a long shot!

Rev 9:3-6 (NIV)

3) Here, we have several interesting paradoxes.

- a) Locusts that normally eat grass and crops and are not directly harmful to humans are told not to harm the grass.
- b) Instead, they are given “power like scorpions” and were told to harm the people who did not have the seal of God on them.
- c) They are given power to torture but not kill these people and, for a specific period of time – 5 months (normal span of destruction of a locust swarm).

4) It is also interesting that they are told not to harm the grass since, in verse 7 of chapter 8 that all the grass was burned up.

- a) Most likely scenario here is that this trumpet was sounded after enough time that the grass had had a chance to recover and reestablish.

5) There are a couple of things that are probably obvious.

- a) **First** – the reason for the description “locust” is the idea that they are what we might call a weapon of mass destruction.
- b) In the 1950’s – locusts devoured several hundred thousand square miles of vegetation in the middle east.
- c) The last large infestation was last year.
- d) **Second** – as we will see in the description we are about to read; these were not really locusts at all but demons.
 - i) In verse 11 we read.

11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon (the Destroyer)

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- a) The paradox here is found in the interpretation of who Abaddon is.
- b) There are several interpretations as to exactly who Apollyon is – Satan, the Antichrist, and even Jesus.
- c) One source has him as: "Abaddon, however, is an angel not of Satan but of God, performing his work of destruction at God's bidding".
- d) Personally, logic says that the destroyer would not be Satan or the Antichrist.
 - i) Here, the question comes as to why would they independently become instruments of torture bringing God's rath on the unrepentant people of the earth?
- e) If I had to choose one, it would be an angel of God who was in charge of the Abyss.
OPINION!

2) In verse 6, we see a clue to exactly how bad things are.

6 During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

- a) It is not just the demonic plague of locust-like creatures that is causing men to want to die.
- b) It is that all hope is gone; there will be no tomorrow.
- c) The earth people have loved and worshiped will have been utterly devastated.
 - i) The land ravaged by earthquakes, fires, and volcanoes.
 - ii) The sea filled with the putrefying bodies of billions of dead creatures
 - iii) Much of the fresh water supply turned into bitter poison.
 - iv) The atmosphere polluted with gases and showers of heavenly debris.
 - v) Then, worst of all, will come foul smoke from the pit of hell as the demons are released to torment wicked people spiritually and physically.
- d) It is possible that this verse infers that during this time, people could not even commit suicide. They were forced to continue to endure this situation.

Rev 9:1 (NIV)

- 1) The consensus of most if not all commentators is that the word star here represents an angelic or heavenly being.
- 2) As to who the angel is, there is much debate.
- 3) Some say that it is Christ or an angel of God’s choosing to whom he gives the key to the abyss.
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- 6) We will see this further described in Rev 12 when we get there.
- 7) Satan being the source of all evil, it only makes sense that he should be the one that opens the abyss and unleashes the traumatic events that are the reason for the woe’s issued by the eagle.

////////////////////////////////////

- 8) NOW, having said all that let me see if I can confuse you.
- 9) On giving more thought to this, I now find it at least plausible that the angel that had fallen was actually God’s instrument – Abaddon who we will discuss shortly.
- 10) The statement I made regarding the source of evil is true – it is Satan.
- 11) However, I am still struggling why Satan would voluntarily inflict the severe trauma of the locusts that are described here on people he would like to keep in his camp.

Thoughts / Comments?

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- 12) The fifth trumpet events are described in four distinct parts of John’s vision:
 - a) The pit unlocked
 - b) The power unleashed
 - c) The tormenting evil described.
 - d) The king of the Abyss identified.

The Abyss Unlocked

- 2) When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.
- 6) Here, we must remember, this black billowing smoke coming from the Abyss and blocking the sun that is already dimmed, is happening in a world that is already in chaos!
- 7) This is the insult to injury – but – that’s not the end – not by a long shot!

Rev 9:3-6 (NIV)

- 8) There are a couple of things that are probably obvious.
 - a) **First** – the reason for the description “locust” is the idea that they are what we might call a weapon of mass destruction.
 - b) In the 1950’s – locusts devoured several hundred thousand square miles of vegetation in the middle east.
 - c) **Second** – as we will see in the description we are about to read; these were not really locusts at all but demons.
- 3) In verse 6, we see a clue to exactly how bad things are.

6 During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

- a) It is not just the demonic plague of locust-like creatures that is causing men to want to die.
 - b) It is that all hope is gone; there will be no tomorrow.
 - c) The earth people have loved and worshiped will have been utterly devastated.
- 4) It is possible that this verse infers that during this time, people could not even commit suicide. They were forced to continue to endure this situation.

Rev 9:7-10 (NIV)

- 5) WOW! Not something you would like to meet in a dark alley or, for that matter anywhere!
- 6) The general appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle.
 - a) War horses thru history have been powerful, and defiant.
 - b) Some say they were as eager to fight the opponent’s horse as their riders were to fight their opponents.
- 7) They had crowns like gold.
 - a) The crowns they wore are called *stephanoi* (ste’fan’oe), the victors' crowns.
 - b) This indicates that the demon host will be invincible, unstoppable, and all-conquering.
 - c) Men will have no weapon that can harm them and no cure for the terrible torment they inflict.
- 8) That their faces were like the faces of men, indicating they are intelligent, rational beings, not mindless insects.
- 9) Their hair was like the hair of women.
 - a) This characteristic is another that seems to have widely varying interpretation.
 - b) MacArthur says:

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“More likely this emphasizes their seductiveness. The glory or beauty of a woman is her hair, which she may decorate to become more alluring. Like the Sirens of Greek mythology, these locust-like demons will lure people to their doom.”

10) Adam Clark however brings a little different focus which seems more likely to me.

- a) Thru history, many waring armies, especially those in rebellion let their hair and beards grow.
- b) Remember, at this time, men’s hair was to be short and women’s hair long.

1 Cor 11:14-15 (NIV)

11) Their teeth were as the teeth of lions simply indicates they are ferocious and cruel

- a) Since, as we were told in verse 5 “They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them ...” these teeth are not the way they accomplish their purpose.

12) Breastplates of iron

- a) Designed to protect the vital organs and preserve their lives
- b) Likely symbolizes again, their invulnerability
- c) They will be impossible to destroy.

13) The sound of their wings was like a moving army.

14) Finally, John says in verse 10 “They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails, they had power to torment people for five months.”

- a) This emphasizes the demonic torture and torment inflicted by their scorpion like tails.

15) The upside to all this might be the five months.

16) Just a curiosity question – what size do you imagine these creatures are?

Rev 9:11-12 (NIV)

1) The paradox here is found in the interpretation of who Abaddon is.

- a) There are several interpretations as to exactly who Apollyon is – Satan, the Antichrist, and even Jesus.
- b) One source has him as: "Abaddon, however, is an angel not of Satan but of God, performing his work of destruction at God's bidding".
- c) Personally, logic says that the destroyer would not be Satan or the Antichrist.
 - i) Here, the question comes as to why would either one of them independently become instruments of torture bringing God’s rath on the unrepentant people of the earth?
- d) If I had to choose one, it would be an angel of God who was in charge of the Abyss.
OPINION!

2) It is now time for the second woe – the sixth trumpet.

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- 3) It heralds another, more severe demonic attack on sinful mankind.
- 4) This attack, unlike the previous one, brings death.
- 5) It unfolds in three stages: the release of demons, the return of death, and the reaction of defiance.

Rev 9:13-16 (NIV)

- 1) The consensus appears to be that the voice is not identifiable.
 - a) It could be an angel.
 - b) It could be God.
- 2) Just not enough inference or evidence to determine.
- 3) The altar here is the same as we have seen twice before.
 - a) In Rev 6:4, John saw that is was where the souls of the martyred saints were at rest.
 - b) In Rev 8:5 we see an angel fill a censor with fire from it and hurl it to the earth.
- 4) It is important not to miss the word bound here.
- 5) This indicates that these were fallen angels or demons.
- 6) They were obviously unable to release themselves for God had bound them.
 - a) They now become His instruments unleashing the devastation that were being held for.
- 7) They were in command of an army numbering 200,000,000 troops.
 - a) As you may recall from our list of symbols, this was the largest conceivable group of people.
 - b) It was also the approximate number of people in the Roman empire at that time.
 - i) The obvious inference here is that anyone who knew this census figure would realize there would be 1 troop for every citizen.
- 8) One further note regarding how this symbology would be viewed by those of John's time.
 - a) The river Euphrates was the boundary between the Roman empire and the barbarian hordes such as the Parthians.
 - b) It was also the river that was crossed by the Assyrians and Babylonians as they came to conquer Israel.

>>>>>> Lesson 16 <<<<<<<

1) As a quick intro and review of where we are, we begin reading from chapter 9 vs. 13-16

Rev 9:13-16 (NIV)

9) The angels (fallen angels or demons) who were bound were in command of an army numbering 200,000,000 troops.

10) It was also the approximate number of people in the Roman empire at that time.

- a) The obvious inference here is that anyone who knew this census figure would realize there would be 1 troop for every citizen.

Rev 9:17-19 (NIV)

11) In the vision, John sees “Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur.”

- a) These are the colors associated with one of their *possible* killing mechanisms.
- b) When sulfur is ignited, it burns blue and red, and gives off sulfur dioxide which is extremely toxic, and its native color is yellow.

12) At this point, death returns.

13) 1/3 of mankind is killed by this noxious burning sulfur coming from their mouths and, one may probably assume from snake bites from their tails.

14) This brings the total killed thus far to over half of mankind.

15) John goes on ...

Rev 9:20-21 (NIV)

16) Again, we see the shocking fact that, even in the face of all this carnage and disaster the people do not repent.

- a) They continued turning to worthless meaningless gods.
- b) They also continued in sin and debauchery.

1) Rev 10:1 opens with the eidon word which, as we said earlier, marks the beginning of a new vision.

2) We are at the second of three interludes in the events of John’s Revelation.

- a) The first, chapter 7. was between the 6th and 7th seals.
- b) This one, 10:1 to 11:15 is between the 6th and 7th trumpet sounding.
- c) There will also be a very brief one verse interlude between the 6th and 7th bowl – 16:15.

3) These interludes encourage God's people.

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- 4) He comforts them with the knowledge that He has not forgotten them, and that they will ultimately be victorious.

Rev 10:1-2 (NIV)

- 5) This is indeed a different description of this “mighty angel.”
- 6) Some have suggested that this is Jesus, but most disagree for several reasons.
- a) The Greek *allos* means another of the same kind – i.e., the same kind and the other angels John has seen and described.
 - b) Christ is never referred to as an angel in Revelation.
 - c) The oath that we will see shortly in verses 5 thru 7 would never be made by Christ.
- 7) Though one can imagine a regular sized person standing with one foot on land and one in the ocean, this is not the indication here.
- 8) The idea here is that this is a huge angel.
- 9) One commentary mentions that those reading this description might think of the Colossus of Rhodes.
- a) This was a statue of Apollo which stood with one foot on the island of Crete and the other on the mainland of Greece.
 - b) It was said to be 105 feet tall and that ships actually sailed between his legs.
 - c) Though it was destroyed in 227BC, the people of John’s day would still have known about it.
- 10) The LABC adds this comment to this section of scripture which I think pretty well sums up the intent.

“This angel standing on the sea and on the land indicates that his words would affect all creation, not just a limited part, as did the seal and trumpet judgments. The seventh trumpet (11:15) would usher in the seven bowl judgments, which would bring an end to the present world. When this universal judgment comes, God's truth would prevail.”

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- 11) There are varying opinions on the contents of the little scroll which the angel holds.
- a) We will delay discussion of this until we get to verses 8 and 9 when John is told to take the scroll and eat it.

- 12) Moving on to verse 3 of chapter 10.

Rev 10:3-4 (NIV)

- 1) Here we step into another of those mysteries of the Revelation.

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- 2) Whether the voice was that of the Father, Jesus Christ, or another angel is not revealed.
- 3) The command, however, clearly originated with God — the very One who had commanded John to write (cf. 22:10).
- 4) The reason John was forbidden to record the message of the seven peals of thunder is not revealed.
- 5) There are many opinions regarding what the thunders said.
 - a) Judgment too terrible to hear.
 - b) Attributes of the heaven to come that are beyond man’s comprehension.
 - c) And on and on...
- 6) Truth is any speculation as to the specific content of their message is pointless.
 - a) We have no basis or context on which to build a speculation.
 - b) Had God wanted it to be known, He would not have forbidden John to write it.
- 7) What we do know is that this occurred in John’s vision at this point.
- 8) We do not know how long the thunders spoke, but it is part of the interlude we are currently in.
- 9) The other obvious mystery here is why this was included at all? We really have no answer for that either.
- 10) Perhaps, these words from the seven thunders were like what Paul heard when he was in the third heaven. They were not meant for mortal man to hear – perhaps these words were for John only in this case.

Rev 10:5-7 (NIV)

- 1) As we indicated earlier, this is the oath (vow) that this angel is taking.
- 2) Raising of one’s hand toward heaven and speaking in this manner, affirms that one is going to speak the truth.
 - a) The words that are spoken after this by this angel are of the utmost importance and truthfulness.
- 3) “There will be no more delay”! answers the question of the martyrs and the prayers of the saints.
- 4) The events now become deterministic – there is a definite end in sight.
- 5) The angel completes his vow by stating:

“But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”
- 6) This is similar to being on a very long journey and on a strange route.

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- a) You do not know the territory, so you don't know any markers that indicate how far or near you are from your destination; you know you are progressing, but you have no reference to tell when the end is near.
 - b) Then, someone tells you only have a few more miles to go.
 - c) In that moment, you gain a sense of completeness – a feeling that the end is in sight.
- 7) This is what the angel is attesting to.
- 8) When the seventh trumpet sounds and the events begin to unfold, then you know that the “mystery of God” (time of Christ's return and end of Satan's reign) is only days away.
- a) The seventh trumpet ushers in the seven bowls.
 - b) After that, there will be no more seals or trumpets – the end has arrived.

Questions / Comments?

Rev 10:8-11 (NIV)

- 1) We now return to the little scroll.
- 2) Here, we have another of those points of debate – what is and what is the purpose of the “little scroll”?
- 3) Some believe that it is a different scroll from the scroll given to the Lord in chapter 5 and 6.
 - a) This is based on use of Greek term for “little book” in verse 2 distinguishes this scroll from the term for “book” of 5:1.
 - b) If that is the case, then we have no real concrete evidence as to what it contains or what its purpose is.
 - i) It may contain a revelation of judgments yet to come.
 - ii) It may be like the scroll Ezekiel saw in his vision which was full of funeral songs – words of sorrow and pronouncements of doom.
 - iii) We find that those are judgments against Israel (Ezek 2:9-3:3)
 - iv) In this case Ezekiel also ate the scroll with the same results.
 - v) In this regard, the LABC makes the following comment:

“This could mean that the scroll John ate was full of words of comfort as well as gloom. Through the command to eat this scroll, God was confirming John's prophetic role, as he did with Ezekiel. Receiving the Word of God can be a pleasant experience, but it often results in the unpleasant task of speaking judgment on evil. Believers know that victory is sure, but they are pained by the difficulties they must endure and by many people's stubborn refusal to repent.”

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vi) Logically, this would tie easily to what John was told in verse 11

Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

vii) This also is an affirmation that even though John was told to seal up the words of the seven thunders and not write them down, that was not the end of what he was to write.

c) Some think it is the Word of God.

i) This is probably too general again, leaving much unanswered in the way of reasons and actual content.

4) Others believe that it is the same scroll given to the Lord in chapter 5 and 6.

a) In this case, the term "little book," rather than distinguishing it from the one in chapter 5, adds a further description of it in this vision.

b) The book needed to be made smaller for the sake of the symbolism of this vision, since John was to eat it.

c) The argument here also is that the scroll was open which emphasizes the idea of the scroll was to remain open.

d) This further identifies it with the now fully unrolled scroll of 5:1.

e) If this is the case, then the little book lying open in this unusual angel's hand unveils all the terrors of divine judgment yet to come.

f) In this case, MacArthur comments:

"The act of eating the scroll symbolized the absorbing and assimilating of God's Word (cf. Ps 19:10; Jer 15:16; Ezek 3:1-3). When John took in the divine word concerning the remaining judgments as the Lord took possession of the universe, he found the words written on the little book both sweet as honey and bitter. Sweet because John, like all believers, wanted the Lord to act in judgment to take back the earth that is rightfully His and be exalted, honored, and glorified as He deserved. But the realization of the terrible doom awaiting unbelievers turned that initial sweet taste into bitterness."

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Rev 11:1-2 (NIV)

- 1) Once more, we see John actually participating in the vision that he is currently experiencing.
- 2) We are still in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets.
- 3) Further, we are, as we will see, about one-halfway thru the tribulation
 - a) Additionally, with the appearance shortly of the two witnesses, we will begin what Christ calls the great tribulation.
- 4) We have varying opinions among scholars as to why John measures the temple and, for that matter, what the temple he is measuring actually is.
- 5) One problem with using a word like temple in this context and with so little explanation associated, is that it has been used so many times throughout scripture with various meanings.
 - a) God's dwelling place.
 - b) Temple building compound in Jerusalem.
 - c) The people of Israel.
 - d) The church.
- 6) To keep from getting too far from the point, I have chosen to use Bruce Metzger's explanation of this section of the verse.

“How should we take John's statement when he says that he was given a measuring rod and told to "measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there" (11:1)? This certainly cannot refer to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, for when John is writing in the 90s it had been lying in ruins for some twenty years after the Roman armies under Titus had sacked the city in A.D. 70. There is no longer an altar and, of course, no one could measure (that is, count) those who worship there.

Consequently, it appears that here John is using symbolic language and speaks of the temple, not as a building, but as God's people. Measuring is done in order to build and repair, and John is given a measuring rod so that he can restore and revive the church.

Such a spiritualized use of the word temple to represent the Christian church is found elsewhere in the New Testament. The apostle Paul, for example, asks the Corinthian believers, "Do you not know that you are God's temple?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Later, he says directly, "We are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:16). Furthermore, according to Peter, Christians are living stones, built into a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). Thus, the whole church is growing "into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

John is told to measure only the inner court of the temple: "Do not measure the court outside the temple . . . for it is given over to the nations" (11:2). Those on the outside are the persecutors of the church, who "will trample over the holy city for forty-two months"

Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking the Code - Participant's Book: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (pp. 68-69). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

1) Continuing in verse 3 we read.

Rev 11:3-6 (NIV)

2) The statement regarding the measuring concludes with:

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.

- 3) One must assume here that the speaker is now God since He would be the one to grant such authority.
- 4) The connection of the two witnesses to the previous measuring of the temple is clearly that they are here to proclaim His message of judgment during this final time.
- 5) This dovetails nicely with Metzger's comment: "Measuring is done in order to build and repair, and John is given a measuring rod so that he can restore and revive the church."
- 6) A few commentators put forth that these "witnesses" are movements.
 - a) There are strong arguments against this, and I mention it only for information.
- 7) There are two.
 - a) Here we recall that throughout, the bible requires the testimony of two people to confirm a fact or verify truth.
 - b) This was given in the original law in Duet 17:6 and 19:15.

Deut 19:15 (NIV)

- c) It is confirmed in several places in the New Testament as well and by the Lord himself in

Matt 18:15-16 (NIV)

- 8) A couple of points for clarity here.
 - a) First, the word witness is from the word from which we get our word martyr.
 - b) Second, we need to be sure to think of the word prophesy as meaning "to speak forth," to "proclaim," or "to preach" – not a revelation of future events.
- 9) I think first, and foremost the responsibility of these two witnesses will be to preach the gospel, calling people to repentance and faith in Christ.

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- 10) Additionally, they will proclaim to the world that the disasters occurring during the last half of the Tribulation are the judgments of God.
- 11) They are to warn all who will listen that God's final outpouring of judgment and eternal hell is coming quickly.
- 12) The period of their ministry is the last half of the Tribulation – 1260 days.
 - a) And, by the way, as if matters were not severe enough in the world at this point, these two prophets invoke a draught that last for the entire 3.5 years (1260 days).
- 13) Wearing of sackcloth is a symbol of mourning, distress, humility, and grief.
- 14) The idea of these men being clothed in sackcloth is indicative of their attitude.
- 15) It is one of mourning and distress over the world that is in tribulation and is unwilling to see what is coming and repent.
 - a) Again, this is likely symbolic – when they appear they will not actually be wearing sackcloth.
- 16) So, who are these men? John is told to call them
“...two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth”
- 17) The phrase “olive trees and lampstand” phraseology comes from Zechariah’s prophesy in Zech chapter 4.
- 18) Together, they symbolize the light of revival – lampstands provide the place from which the lamp gives forth its light and the olive oil provides the fuel for the light.
- 19) The actual identity of these preachers is the source of much debate and there are no indications here that would allow us to say who they are with absolute certainty.
- 20) One theory is that they are Enoch and Elijah, because both had been taken to heaven without dying (Gen 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11).
- 21) Another puts forth that they are Moses and Elijah, because both bear much resemblance to Moses and Elijah.
 - a) The two witnesses could:
 - i) consume their enemies with fire (11:5; as did Elijah in 2 Kings 1:10-14)
 - ii) shut the skies so that no rain would fall (11:6; as did Elijah in 1 Kings 17:1,7)
 - iii) turn river and oceans into blood, and send plagues (as did Moses in Ex 7-11)
 - iv) Moses and Elijah also both appeared with Christ at his transfiguration (see Matt 17:1-7).
 - v) Jewish tradition anticipates that Moses and Elijah will return before the end (see Deut 18:15-18; Mal 4:5-6).
 - b) Of course, the power to do these miraculous things came from God so this does not make this an absolute identity of these two prophets.

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22) Also, as we see in verse 5, these men had some other awesome and terrifying powers that have not been seen in apostles or others:

5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die.

Rev 11:7-10 (NIV)

- 1) Some of your translations may have the phrase “make war with them.”
 - a) This is actually what the Greek indicates.
 - b) There are two words – one is war or fight the other is possibly translated make.
 - c) I think the emphasis here may be that this was not just that the beast attacked and killed them but that they fought back as well.
 - d) This is obviously not a critical item but, one that should be considered.
- 2) Moving on to the beast himself. This is the first of 36 references to the beast that we will see in the remainder of our study.
- 3) We will see more detailed information about the beast in chapters 13 and 17, he is the Antichrist and is a world ruler.
- 4) Coming from the Abyss indicates that his power emanates from Satan.
- 5) We must look squarely at what happens here – God allows them to be killed!
- 6) However, He is still in control of this entire situation.
- 7) The reason they were allowed to be killed we must assume, is that God’s appointed time (1260 days) for their preaching had ended.
- 8) Secondly, since this is the introduction of the Antichrist, what better way to start your career as a world ruler than to overcome and destroy two prophets of God.
 - a) We know “the people of the earth” (again non-believers) hated them because of their calls to repentance and conviction of hearts.
- 9) After they are killed, their bodies are left to rot in the street of the great city – Jerusalem.
- 10) There are some interesting observations we must make about this seemingly gross situation.
 - a) In the ancient world, exposing an enemy’s dead body was the ultimate way of dishonoring and desecrating them.
 - b) In Deut 21, we read:

Deut 21:22-23 (NIV)

- c) Applied here, I would take it that this desecrates the city of Jerusalem.
- 11) When these events take place, God’s city Jerusalem will be so full of evil that it will be figuratively called Sodom and Egypt.

12) The literal translation of this verse is interesting:

Rev 11:8-9 (YLT)

8 and their dead bodies [are] upon the broad-place of the great city (that is called spiritually Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified,) YLT

13) Sodom represents the epitome of sexual sin and idolatry.

14) Egypt represents the height of persecution and hatred of God's people.

15) Both Sodom and Egypt had been destroyed by God's power.

16) Verses 9 and 10 show the general condition of the peoples of this world during this time of tribulation.

17) Ironically, this is the only mention of rejoicing in all of Revelation.

18) The sinners will be happy because these two men are gone.

19) Those who declared God's judgments, tormented them with miraculous powers, and messages.

20) Those who condemned their sin and proclaiming God's impending judgment are dead.

21) This emotional response graphically reflects the finality of their rejection.

22) There are those who look at this situation differently and we at least need to look at this aspect.

23) Mid-tribulationists base much of their view on these verses.

a) They believe that the church will be raptured after three and a half years of the Tribulation, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet

b) According to this view, the church will face persecution for the first three and a half years of the seven-year Tribulation period.

c) In the second half of the Tribulation, the Antichrist and those who chose to follow him will be the target of God's wrath.

d) Mid-tribulationists also believe that the book of Revelation is chronological, so that this rapture will occur halfway through the years of tribulation.

e) The pre-tribulationists take the voice from heaven in 4:1 telling John to "come up here" to be a reference to the rapture of the believers.

f) Mid-tribulationists see the two witnesses as representing the believers being raptured at the midpoint of the Tribulation, calling the two witnesses to "come up."

24) Those who believe that the book of Revelation is cyclical (that is, the visions are repetitions of one another, intensifying as they go) may see this as the rapture of the church.

- a) They would say, however, that the Rapture will occur at the end of the Tribulation rather than in the middle, for this event occurs just before the last trumpet.
- 25) Some suggest that this is comparable to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:1-14), a vision of the spiritual regeneration of Israel.
 - a) If these two witnesses represent the Jews, then this event pictures the salvation of the Jews.

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Rev 11:11-12 (NIV)

- 1) Similar to Christ remaining dead for 3 days and then His resurrection so it is with these two prophets.
- 2) Obviously, the rejoicing and gift giving came to a screeching halt when this occurred.
- 3) The world will probably think – “oh no, here we go again” thinking they would begin preaching once more.
- 4) However, their time here was finished.
- 5) God had appointed that they would preach for 1260 days and that was it.
 - a) This was very emphatic – the number of days was stated twice.
- 6) This is another and one of the final opportunity passed for hearing and repenting of their sinful ways.

Rev 11:13-14

13 At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

- 1) The return of the prophets to heaven is marked by an earthquake destroying 1/10th of the city of Jerusalem.
- 2) According to one source, the Greek word used for people in the 7000 people were killed statement had a specific meaning.
 - a) It literally means “names of men.”
 - b) The unusual phrase may mean that those who were killed were prominent people – perhaps leaders in the Antichrist’s world government.
 - c) Interesting thought at any rate.

- 3) The fact is that the survivors will be terrified.
 - a) The survivors connected the events of the past few days with earthquake and realized what was happening.
- 4) Text says, “and gave glory to the God of heaven.”
 - a) This is understood to mean a mark of genuine repentance.
 - b) MacArthur comments on this:

This passage, then, describes the reality of the salvation of Jews in Jerusalem, as God fulfills His pledge of blessing for Israel

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- 5) For the rest of the unbelieving world, the passage ends with a sobering reminder:
 - 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

Quick review of verses 11-14

- 1) God’s two prophets (preachers) have been killed by the beast.
- 2) The “inhabitants of the earth” rejoice, even to the point of sending each other gifts in celebration.
- 3) The bodies of the preachers have been left in the streets of Jerusalem to rot while all this was occurring.

Rev 11:11-12 (NIV)

- 7) Similar to Christ remaining dead for 3 days and then His resurrection so it is with these two prophets.
- 8) Obviously, the rejoicing and gift giving came to a screeching halt when this occurred.
- 9) The preacher’s time here was finished.
- 10) God had appointed that they would preach for 1260 days and that was it.
- 11) This marks the passing of one of the final opportunities for hearing and repenting of their sinful ways.

Rev 11:13-14 (NIV)

- 12) The return of the prophets to heaven is marked by an earthquake destroying 1/10th of the city of Jerusalem.
- 13) *According to one source, the Greek word used for people in the 7000 people were killed statement had a specific meaning.*
 - a) *It literally means “names of men.”*
 - b) *The unusual phrase may mean that those who were killed were prominent people – perhaps leaders in the Antichrist’s world government.*
 - c) *Interesting thought at any rate.*
- 14) The fact is the survivors will be terrified.
 - a) The survivors will connect the events of the past few days with earthquake and realize what was happening.
- 15) Text says, “and gave glory to the God of heaven” – one commentator puts forth that
 - a) This is understood to mean a mark of genuine repentance.
 - b) MacArthur comments on this:

This passage, then, describes the reality of the salvation of Jews in Jerusalem, as God fulfills His pledge of blessing for Israel

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- 16) If I may be so bold, I have a tough time agreeing with either of these assumptions.
- a) I can see nothing in the passage that can lead to these conclusions.
 - b) First, I see no reference to MacArthur's comment regarding the salvation of the Jews in Jerusalem.
 - i) The word translated survivors here simply means rest of them and the like. There is no specificity in it that I can find.
 - c) Second, to the comment regarding the phrase "and gave glory to the God of heaven" being a sign of genuine repentance.
 - i) I would grant that it is possible – however, logically, if that were the case then we might have a really different outcome.
 - ii) There would be no need for further judgments or rath of the seven bowls that are to come.
 - iii) And the last statement regarding the 3rd woe which we are about to read would not be needed.
 - iv) The caveat to that would be if the repentance here was too late – again, no basis for that assumption either.
- 17) Just my thoughts here.
- a) The experts obviously disagree.
- 18) For the rest of the unbelieving world beyond the 7000, the passage ends with a sobering reminder:
- 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.
- 1) We are now going to see the sounding of the seventh trumpet.
 - 2) This signals the beginning of the end when Jesus will return and establish his millennial kingdom.
 - 3) The last three of the seven trumpet judgments are so horrific that they are referred to as woes.
 - 4) The seventh trumpet sets in motion the final portion of God's redemptive plan for the present universe.
 - 5) As this plan proceeds certain things will occur:
 - a) The final fury of the Day of the Lord's judgments (Rev 16)
 - b) The final harvest of judgment on earth (11:18; 16:19)
 - c) The Lamb's defeat of the kings of the earth (17:12-18), culminating in the final, climactic triumph of Christ at Armageddon (19:11-21).
 - 6) The sounding of the seventh trumpet signals God's ultimate answer to the prayer, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).

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- 7) That answer sweeps through chapters 12-22 as God finishes His mighty work of reclaiming creation from Satan.
- 8) It should be noted that although the seventh trumpet is the last in the sequence of the seven trumpet judgments, it is not to be equated with the "last trumpet" Paul refers to in 1 Cor 15:52
- 9) The seventh trumpet sounding unfolds in 4 stages:
 - a) Praise for sovereignty.
 - b) Outpourings of rage.
 - c) The plan for judgment.
 - d) The promise of Communion.
- 10) The praise for sovereignty actually begins immediately with the loud voices in heaven.

Rev 11:15-18 (NIV)

- 11) It comes as no surprise to me any way, that all of heaven should break into praise at this point.
- 12) This is like the “yes” answer to a child who has been asking “are we there yet”!
 - a) Even though the car is still moving, they know that they probably will not have to ask again.
 - b) *When God answers YES there is no “probably” to it! WE ARE THERE!!!***
- 13) There are a few points that bare discussion in the outpouring of praise.
- 14) First, the word kingdom rather kingdoms (plural) in the opening praise statement.
 - a) This indicates the true way God has always looked at his universe – it is a single creation.
 - b) Despite all the diverse national, political, social, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups, in reality, we will be one kingdom under one king – Jesus Christ.
 - c) Currently, the “ruler of the world” is Satan. Jesus tells us this in >>>>

John 12:31-32 (NIV)

- 15) In verse 17, the words of praise of the 24 elders are very similar to those they used in chap 4.
 - i) In chapter 4, the description reads: “who was, and is, and is to come”
 - b) Here, however, (to quote again)

the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

 - c) Obviously, leaving out the “is to come” is a recognition of God’s fulfillment of history – the actual fulfillment of what Jesus predicted in John 12.
- 16) We will see the “anger of the nations” that the elders describe here in chapter 12 thru 19.
 - a) The nations will no longer be afraid as we saw back in chapter 6:15-17).

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- b) Instead, they will be filled with defiant rage that will manifest itself in a futile attempt to fight against Christ.
 - c) The outcome has already been determined.
- 17) The elders are obviously given insight into what will unfold in a mere blinking of the cosmic time's eye.
- a) The judgment is described in chapter 20.
 - b) No one will escape judgment, for Christ will even judge the dead.
 - c) All believers (God's servants — the prophets and the saints, those who reverence his name) will be rewarded according to their deeds.
- 18) Finally, the judgment will also destroy those who destroy the earth.
- a) This is not a reference to those who pollute the environment or cause global warming etc.
 - b) Instead, it speaks of those who pollute the earth with their sin.
 - c) This is especially true in the context of Revelation where we will see in later chapters the false economic and religious system called Babylon (cf. 19:2).
 - i) the Antichrist and his followers
 - ii) And of course, Satan himself, the ultimate destroyer.
 - iii) The apostle Paul speaks of this in some detail in (2 Thess 2:7 ff) where he calls it “the secret power of lawlessness” or “the mystery of lawlessness”.

2 Thess 2:7-12 (NIV)

19) MacArthur comments on this:

Given stewardship and dominion over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), man instead fell into sin and throughout his history has continually corrupted the earth (cf. Rom 8:19-21). When that corrupting reaches its apex, God will destroy the earth and create a new one (21:1; Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:12-13).

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Rev 11:19 (NIV)

- 1) This represents the ultimate “tearing of the veil” that occurred at the crucifixion.

Matt 27:50-51 (NIV)

- 2) Ultimately, John probably does not see a temple floating in the clouds since we will be told later that there is not a physical temple in the new Jerusalem – “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”
- 3) John had already seen God's throne and the altar in heaven back in chapters 4, 6, and 8.
- 4) What John is likely seeing here is God's dwelling place.

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- 5) We again must recall the Holy of Holies where only the high priest could enter once per year.
 - a) In the Holy of Holies, was the Ark of the Covenant.
 - b) That ark represented God's presence with His people.
- 6) That John sees the ark also assures the readers of God's presence and protection in their coming trials.
- 7) The flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm, as in Exodus, are another indication of God's presence.
- 8) These phenomena occur here, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and they also occurred at the opening of the seventh seal (8:5) and prior to that in chapter 4 verse 5.
- 9) They will occur again at the pouring out of the seventh bowl with some definite differences (16:18-21).

>>>>>> Lesson 19 <<<<<<<

- 1) Before we begin chapter 12, we need to look at how things are unfolding in John’s vision at this point.
- 2) Though chapter 11 records the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the effects it produces are not described until chapters 15-18.
- 3) The seventh trumpet will sound near the end of the Tribulation, launching the brief, but final and devastating bowl judgments.
- 4) Following the bowl judgments, Christ returns in power and glory to begin the millennial reign.
- 5) As a review and introduction to where we are and where we are going:
 - a) **chapters 6-11** describe the events of the Tribulation up to the sounding of the seventh trumpet which we just finished.
 - b) **chapters 12-14** give an overview of that same period.
 - c) John’s vision here shows us what Satan is doing during this period. It is more or less from Satan's point of view.
 - d) In addition, we will get a true perspective of where Satan is right this minute and hopefully a better picture of how his future will unfold up to his complete destruction.
 - e) The chronological narrative of the Tribulation events then resumes in chapter 15.

Rev 12:1-6 (NIV)

- 6) John describes two signs in this passage.
 - a) Even though the same Greek word is used for both, most translations differentiate them.
 - i) Here, the NIV translates the first as, “a great and wondrous sign.” The second simply “another sign.”
 - ii) I think the amplified bible gives a better perspective on the two uses and the signs.
 - (1) The first it translates “great sign (wonder)”
 - (2) The seconds it translates “another ominous sign (wonder)”
 - b) In both cases, the word sign describes a picture of something with much deeper significance.
 - c) These are the first of 7 signs that appear in the last half of the Revelation.

7) Reading verses 1 and 2 again;

Rev 12:1-2 (NIV)

- 8) The woman here represents much more than a woman.
- 9) Pictured as a superhuman figure, she was clothed with the sun and had the moon under her feet.
- 10) She was also wearing a victor's crown, a crown of twelve stars.

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- 11) In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel is pictured as the wife of God (Isa 54:5-6; Jer 3:6-8; 31:32; Ezek 16:32; Hos 2:16).
- 12) At this point, the woman represents the faithful people in Israel who had been waiting for the Messiah who would be born from among them (Isa 9:6-7; Mic 5:2).
- 13) Some have put forth that she represents the church, but the more plausible explanation is that she represents Israel.
- 14) Later in the chapter, this woman will represent all believers — Jews and Gentiles.
- 15) God had set apart the Jews for himself (Rom 9:4-5), and that nation had given birth to the Messiah, who would "rule all nations with an iron rod" (12:5; see also Ps 2:9).
- 16) In this part of the vision, John saw that this woman, Israel, was pregnant and . . . about to give birth to the Messiah (see also Isa 26:17-18; 54:1; 66:7-12; Hos 13:13; Mic 4:9-10; 5:2-3; Matt 24:8).
- 17) When Mary gave birth to a tiny baby in Bethlehem, the entire universe took notice, for this event held cosmic significance.
- 18) This picture also symbolizes the nation of Israel agonizing for centuries as it awaited the coming Messiah, the deliverer, who would destroy evil and usher in God's eternal kingdom.

Rev 12:3-4 (NIV)

- 1) With the second sign, a new character emerges on the scene: the woman's mortal enemy.
- 2) Verse 9 clearly identifies the great red dragon as Satan (cf. 20:2).
- 3) Satan, of course, is not an actual dragon (any more than Israel is an actual woman) but a malevolent spirit being, an angel cast out of heaven because of his rebellion against God.
- 4) The symbolic language used to describe him pictures the reality of his person and character.
- 5) Only in Revelation is Satan referred to as a dragon.
- 6) Red, the color of fiery destruction and bloodshed, further stresses Satan's vicious, deadly, destructive nature.
- 7) In the words of Jesus, "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).
- 8) Red is a fitting color for the dragon, since he attacks both the woman and her child.
- 9) The dragon is further described as having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven crowns.
- 10) Some translations use the term diadems.
 - a) Diadem is defined originally as an ornamental head band, worn by Eastern monarchs as a badge of royalty. Later also a crown in general.
 - i) It signifies regal power, sovereignty, empire.
- 11) He is depicted as a seven-headed monster that rules the world.
- 12) MacArthur comments:

- a) Satan has been allowed by God to rule the world since the Fall and will continue to do so until the seventh trumpet sounds (11:15).
 - b) The seven heads with their seven diadems represent seven consecutive world empires running their course under Satan's dominion: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Antichrist's future empire (17:9-10).
 - c) The final kingdom, ruled by the Antichrist, will be a ten-nation confederacy; the ten horns represent the kings who will rule under the Antichrist (17:12; cf. 13:1; Dan 7:23-25).
 - d) The shifting of the diadems from the dragon's heads to the beast's horns (13:1) reveals the shift in power from the seven consecutive world empires to the ten kings under the final the Antichrist.
- 13) Satan's pervasive, evil influence is not limited to the human realm, but extended first into the angelic realm.
- 14) In the picturesque language of John's vision, the dragon's tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.
- 15) The references to the dragon's angels in verses 7 and 9 indicate that the stars of heaven are angels.
- 16) When Satan fell, he swept away a third of the angelic host with him.
- a) Along with their defeated leader, those evil angels were cast from heaven to the earth.
- 17) The number of angels who joined Satan in his rebellion is not revealed, but it is vast.

Rev 12:4b-6 (NIV)

- 1) This opening statement speaks of a battle that has raged for thousands of years and will continue until the devil is finally defeated and removed from the universe.
- 2) Throughout the history of the Jewish people, from Adam and Eve onward, the devil has sought to destroy Israel and thus prevent the Messiah from ever coming into his world.
- 3) God has always either protected His people from Satan **or** at some points allowed Satan to be used as a controlled punisher.
- 4) When the Messiah did arrive, Satan did everything in his power to kill him and prevent salvation from ever occurring.
 - a) From Herod's attempt to kill him thru the temptation in the desert, to the people of Nazareth attempting to kill him in Luke 4:28-30, the devil has never stopped trying.
- 5) In spite of all of Satan's relentless efforts to prevent it, the woman (Israel) gave birth to a son.

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- 6) The incarnation of the male child, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3; cf. Rom 9:5), was the fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; 9:6; Mic 5:2).
- 7) Israel brought forth the Messiah.
- 8) Between Christ's incarnation and His coronation came His exaltation when He was caught up to God and to His throne at His ascension.
- 9) Satan will not give up even though he is a defeated foe.
- 10) Unable to stop Christ's birth, ascension, or rule, Satan still assaults His people.
- 11) He has already instigated the genocidal massacre of Jews in Europe, as well as the death of countless thousands throughout history.
 - a) Sorry to say, in the middle ages, some even at the hands of Christians.
- 12) During the Tribulation, Satan will increase his efforts to destroy the Jewish people, so that the nation cannot be saved as the Bible promises (Zech 12:10-13:1; Rom 11:25-27).
- 13) And so that there will be none left alive to enter the millennial kingdom, he will seek to kill believing Jews.
- 14) As always, Israel will be his prime target.
- 15) In a brief glimpse of what will be described more fully in verses 13-17, John noted that the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days (cf. v. 14).
- 16) God will frustrate Satan's attempt to destroy Israel during the Tribulation by hiding His people, just as the Lord Jesus Christ predicted:

Matt 24:15-21 (NIV)

- 1) We will come back to vs. 5 and following in a moment.

Rev 12:7-9 (NIV)

- 1) In order to understand this passage, we must get a picture of Satan's interaction with God, where he is now, where he has been in the past, and where he will ultimately be.
- 2) First, Satan rebelled against God before the creation of the world.
 - a) This is evident in the fact that he was the tempter in the form of the serpent in the garden of Eden.
- 3) Second, currently, Satan is able to be in heaven and he also roams the earth.
 - a) We see this in Job 2 times:

Job 1:6-9 (NIV)

Job 2:1-3 (NIV)

- b) In first Peter we see:

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

4) According to verse 8 in our current passage, he has a place in heaven prior to this war we are discussing.

But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

5) I think we can assume from this that, even in heaven, he is powerful,

6) We also can see from the passage in Job, and in Rev 12:10 that we will read shortly, he has access to God “day and night” and tries to influence Him against us.

7) From all of this we can know that Satan is NOT in hell.

a) This is not the picture we are normally seeing when we see a picture of him with horns, a forked tail, and flames all around him.

b) Additionally, Jesus tells us that hell is a place prepared for him and his angels.

Matt 25:41 (NIV)

8) Paul tells us, he is the chief ruler of this dark world.

Eph 6:12 (NIV)

9) To further bring this into focus.

a) As we said earlier, throughout the history of the Jewish people, from Adam and Eve onward, the devil has sought to destroy Israel and thus prevent the Messiah from ever coming into his world.

a) On the other hand, Michael the arch angel has, throughout the old testament been the “guardian angel” so to speak of the Israelite nation.

b) Satan also did everything in his power to destroy Jesus and His mission from tempting him to attempting to kill him before it was time.

10) Now, verse 5 is possibly the final clue to why vs. 6 thru 9 are here at this point and brings them into context.

5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

a) DRAT!!!! SPOILLED AGAIN!!!!

b) Jesus wins the battle for the souls of men – salvation is now complete.

c) Satan failed to stop God’s ultimate plan.

11) We are not able to comprehend the war – it’s plain, it’s weapons, or, for that matter, any other real facet of it.

12) It is supernatural and will occur in the heavenly sphere.

13) We do know:

- a) Some consider this verse to describe warfare in the ancient past – perhaps before the world was created.
- b) Others think that Satan's fall to earth took place at Jesus' resurrection or ascension.
- c) Still others say that Satan's defeat will occur in the seven-year Tribulation period.
- d) I personally believe it will take place during the tribulation.
 - i) Chronological context
 - ii) The mention of the 1260 days again.
 - iii) The events that take place after this vision during the remainder of the tribulation.
- e) From John's vision, we can see that God is protecting his people.
- f) Since Satan must realize that the final events of the universe are taking place, this is his last chance to win.

14) MacArthur comments here:

The grammatical construction of that phrase in the Greek text indicates that Satan (the dragon) will start this battle. It could be translated "Michael and his angels had to fight the dragon."

15) As to the exact reason for Satan's escalating the war to an all-out battle at this point, we are not told.

16) What we do know is Michael and his angels are victorious!

17) Most importantly, Satan and his followers will lose their access to God and are casted out of heaven.

18) Satan will never again accuse believers before God's throne.

19) Unfortunately, heaven's cleansing is earth's pollution.

20) At exactly what point in the Tribulation Satan and the demons will be evicted from heaven is not revealed, nor is the duration of their battle with Michael and the holy angels.

21) What can be said with certainty is that Satan and his angels (from this point on known as demons) will be cast out of heaven, possibly at the Rapture, but no later than the midpoint of the Tribulation.

22) Verse 12 says that Satan and his forces have only "a short time" after they leave heaven, supporting the view that they will have only the last three and a half years of the Tribulation to operate, rather than the full seven years.

23) They will not arrive on earth later than that, since they clearly are present during the terrible events of the last three and a half years, the Great Tribulation (cf. 9:1 ff.).

24) During that last period, Satan's full power will be directed at anyone belonging to God, especially Israel.

>>>>>> Lesson 20 <<<<<<<

- 1) I made a comment at the beginning of this entire section that it is a recap of the events up to this point from the devil's perspective.
- 2) Another way to think about this is to realize that God's plan has two major components:
 - a) One is to bring an end to man's sinful ways, end entropy, and bring to be the perfect universe that He first created and wanted for us.
 - b) But a second objective or component is the permanent removal of the cause of the imperfection in the universe and entropy – the removal of evil – the devil and all his minions.
- 3) That is what this section of Revelation is about. Yes, it is from the devil's perspective (so to speak) but it is showing what he will do and how that end and removal will occur.
- 4) As we discussed last time, there was a war and the devil, and his demons lost access to heaven and their ability to interact with God.
- 5) When this happens, as one would expect, there will be great rejoicing and happiness in heaven.

Rev 12:10-12 (NIV)

- 6) We have already discussed some of the important points of this hymn of praise.
 - a) Satan is our accuser and when he is thrown down, that will cease.
 - i) Additionally, we see that those whom Satan does accuse were victorious over him even before God threw him out of heaven.
 - ii) One comment I read said:

When a believer dies, Satan may think he has gained a victory. In reality, however, he has lost. In fact, he loses every time a believer dies.

- b) The good news for heaven is that Satan will be gone – the bad news for earth is he will take up exclusive residence (for a while) here.
- 7) Further bad news is he is not a happy camper and will be worse than his normal BAD self – “he is filled with fury.”
- 8) As we will see in this next passage, he even becomes more enraged and begins waging war again God's people.
- 9) Finally, one other piece of good news (bad for him) is the devil knows his time is short.
 - a) This is another reason I think that this war, the victory, and Satan's expulsion from heaven is during the tribulation.
 - b) As we have discussed, it is only at the opening of the seals that we finally know that God has decided to end this.
 - i) Satan must be aware of what is happening as well and knows that his time is over.

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- ii) The fury and rage he has will now be directed at all those who remain, and he will do everything he can to destroy their belief in and love for God and His Son.

Rev 12:13-17 (NIV)

- 1) Just as verses 7-12 expand on verse 4 and describe the war in heaven and its outcome; verses 13-17 describe the war on earth, expanding on verse 6.
- 2) Remember that, in this vision, the woman represents God's people.
- 3) As we said earlier, the devil, realizing his final predicament, was furious.
 - a) He no longer has access to heaven therefore, he cannot pursue the child.
 - b) He also realizes his time in power is now very short and significantly, he knows that his final fate of having lost his eternal battle is clear.
- 4) In desperation, he pursues the woman (God's people).
 - a) It is unclear at this point if this refers to the Jews alone or to all believers.
 - b) From what we see in the chapters to follow, it will be clear that he is hounding all believers, regardless of the vision association.
 - c) The word pursue here in vs. 13 is the word normally translated persecute.
 - d) In short, Satan is, at this point, stalking and killing God's people, hoping to do as much damage as possible.
- 5) The good news is the woman is given the means to escape to a place (in the desert) where she is protected from Satan's onslaught.
- 6) The phrase "time, times, and half time corresponds to the 1260 days mentioned in verse 6."
 - a) Time means one year.
 - b) Times mean two years.
 - c) Half a time means ½ year – thus, the 3.5 years or 1260 days.
- 7) Next, we are told that Satan attempts to drown the woman by spewing out of his mouth "water like a river."
 - a) Symbolically, this is the flood of lies and deceit we will see in some detail in chapters to come.
 - b) It derived from the Old Testament where floods represent trouble in general.
 - i) (cf. 2 Sam 22:17; Job 27:20; Ps 18:16; 32:6; 69:1-2,13-14; 124:2-5; 144:7)
- 8) God again protects those who are His.
- 9) Next, the dragon will turn his fury toward new targets.
 - a) Some have identified the rest of her children with whom Satan will make war as the 144,000 (cf. 7:2-8; 14:1-5)

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- b) Others see them as believing Gentile Tribulation saints (cf. 7:9-14), who are sons of Abraham by faith (Gal 3:7).
- c) It seems best to take this as an all-inclusive phrase, referring to all those who name the name of Jesus Christ.

Rev 13:1a (NIV)

- 1) Several things to note about this sentence.
- 2) First, it truly belongs to the previous chapter since it completes the statements about the dragon and his war as described there.
- 3) Second, if you look at some translations including the KJV, you will see “And I stood upon ...” The “I” obviously referring to John, the speaker.
 - a) Some Greek manuscripts actually have this phrase.
 - b) However, most older, and what scholars consider more reliable manuscripts have the phrase “And he stood upon ...”
- 4) Finally, in 1994/5, the New American Standard Bible (NASB) changed the phrase to “the dragon stood...”
 - a) This is because even though the dragon is not part of this sentence, he is the antecedent of the of the verb that is translated, he stood.
 - b) Word endings vs. word order.
 - i) TR has nu as the last letter of the word NA27 does not.

5) Continuing with John’s vision we read ...

Rev 13:1b-4 (NIV)

6) We first encountered the beast in chapter 11

Rev 11:7 (NIV)

- 7) The inference here is that the dragon summoned the beast.
- 8) There has been much discussion about what the sea symbolizes.
- 9) Some argue that it refers to the Gentile nations.
- 10) But since 11:7 and 17:8 state that the beast comes up out of the abyss, it is best to equate the sea with the abyss.
- 11) As is obvious by 2 Thess 2:4, the antichrist (**the beast**) will be a man. IT READS>>>>

2 Thess 2:4 (NIV)

- 12) One comment on this verse – the phrase “everything that is called God” – without the capital letter on God, the sentence would fit better with what we will learn of the beast and his empire.
 - a) Satan and the Antichrist will demand that he be the only god people worship.

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- b) This would necessitate even the pagan gods of the time, and any and all other gods would be considered below him and not to be worshiped.
- 13) Going back to the beast, though he is a man, at some point, in his life, he will be indwelt by a powerful demon from the abyss – the beast.
- 14) While all unbelievers are children of Satan (John 8:44), no one in human history will be more completely the devil's child than the Antichrist.
- 15) His "family likeness" to Satan becomes strikingly apparent from John's description of him as having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems.
- 16) This same description was applied to Satan in 12:3 where he was called "an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads."
- 17) The description of Antichrist emphasizes the importance of the ten horns by mentioning them first and associating the crowns with them instead of the heads.
- 18) Horns in Scripture symbolize strength and power, both for attack and defense.
- 19) In this passage, they represent the great power of the kings who will rule under the Antichrist's absolute authority. We will get to that in a later chapter
- 20) The blasphemous names mentioned here are likely names that claim him (the Antichrist) as god, the supreme being.
 - a) Again, looking at 2 Thess 2:4 Paul describes him as – “setting himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God”
- 21) As John looked more closely at the beast, he saw that it incorporated the characteristics of the animals just as those mentioned in the vision recorded in Dan 7:3-7:
- 22) MacArthur comments, the leopard, bear, and lion were well-known in Palestine.
 - a) They dramatically emphasize the characteristics of the nations they represent.
 - b) The ***lion*** was a fitting symbol for the fierce, consuming power of the ***Babylonian Empire***.
 - c) The ferocity, strength, and stability of the ***Medo-Persian Empire*** led to its depiction as a ***bear***.
 - d) The ***Greeks'*** swift conquests, particularly under Alexander the Great, reflect the speed and viciousness of the ***leopard***.
- 23) Like the indescribable fourth beast of Dan 7:7, which represents the Roman Empire, the Antichrist's final empire will be a composite of the empires that preceded it.
- 24) It will incorporate all the ferocity, viciousness, swiftness, and strength of the other world empires.
- 25) This powerful empire, unparalleled in human history, will be Satan's last and greatest attempt to stop the reign of Christ.

26) But, like all Satan's other attempts to thwart God's purposes, it will ultimately fail.

Rev 13:1b-4 (NIV)

- 1) Because Satan (the dragon) is the source of power for the Antichrist (the beast), no human force will be able to withstand him.
- 2) John saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed.
- 3) The interpretation of that phrase has been much debated.
 - a) One interpretation says this represents a revival of the Roman Empire.
 - b) Others believe that it is a specific person who dies and is restored to life.
 - i) Candidates for the person of the “resurrection” are Judas Iscariot and perhaps the Emperor Nero.
 - ii) It was widely believed at the end of the first century that Nero, who had committed suicide in A.D. 68, would rise from the dead.
 - c) However, the most likely interpretation would be that the head whose fatal wound will be healed can only be the future Antichrist himself.
 - i) Whether his death is real or fake (cf. v. 14; 2 Thess 2:9) is not clear.
 - ii) It may be that the Antichrist is really killed, and God, for His own purposes, allows him to be resurrected.
 - iii) More likely, the Antichrist's alleged death and resurrection will be a counterfeit of Christ's death and resurrection, staged, as one of the "lying wonders" perpetrated by the false prophet. Paul speaks of this in >>>>>>

2 Thess 2:9-12 (NIV)

- iv) the Antichrist's resurrection will also be phony since he never really died.
 - v) Or perhaps the Antichrist will explain his extraordinary powers by claiming to be the reincarnation of the Christ spirit, as some have suggested.
 - (1) I personally find this hard to accept because this would give credence to Christ.
 - (2) In fact, in the next few verses, we will see that he will blaspheme God.
 - (3) Unlikely that he would want to give credit to Christ for anything.
- 4) Whatever actually happens, the people of the world will believe that the Antichrist, already popular because of his great powers, has also transcended death.
- 5) Since the Tribulation will be a time where the world will experience death on a scale unprecedented in human history, the Antichrist's seeming invulnerability to death will win him greater, more widespread acclaim.
- 6) As a result, the whole earth will be amazed and follow after him.

Rev 13:5-10 (NIV)

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 1) Satan (the dragon) works his power through the Antichrist (the beast), using him to make war against God.
- 2) This demon-possessed man will be a gifted orator, an intellectual genius, possess great charm and charisma, and have immense leadership power.
- 3) Added to those natural qualities will be of course, the hellish power of Satan.
- 4) The result will be a person of superhuman power, vast intelligence, and absolute wickedness.
- 5) He will be the personification of evil!
- 6) All of this combined will allow the Antichrist to rise to power at God's appointed time and, God will temporarily let sin run its course.
- 7) The Antichrist will possess great authority over the entire world.
- 8) He will have complete, unrestrained freedom of action and will answer to no one.
- 9) The Antichrist will share Satan's throne, just as the true Christ shares His Father's throne (cf. 3:21; 22:1,3).
- 10) Here we see the expression “All inhabitants of the earth” again.
 - a) Here it is followed by an explanatory expression — “all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world”
- 11) This astounding vision of the beast from the sea concludes with a call for spiritual understanding. “He who has an ear, let him hear”
- 12) This expression is used fifteen times in the New Testament to emphasize a particularly important truth (cf. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; Matt 11:15; 13:9,43; Mark 4:9,23; Luke 8:8; 14:35).
- 13) At this point, the phrase introduces a proverb that concludes this passage:

10 If anyone is to go into captivity,
 into captivity he will go.
If anyone is to be killed with the sword,
 with the sword he will be killed.
Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. NIV

- 14) The second phrase in this passage is one that is dependent upon the manuscript that the translator used.
 - a) A translation using an alternative manuscript wording is in the New American Standard Updated and others:

10 If anyone is destined for captivity,
 to captivity he goes;
if anyone kills with the sword,
 with the sword he must be killed.
Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints NASU

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 15) One comment I read said that this verse is quite weird in Greek, and it was no surprise that there are a plethora of variants found in the manuscripts.
- 16) It is thought that the Greek construction may be a literal rendering of a Hebrew idiom.
- 17) It seems to be a paraphrase which combines Jeremiah 15:2 and 43:11.

Jer 15:1-3 (NIV)

Jer 43:11 (NIV)

- 18) Setting the peculiarities of these verses aside, this proverb contains important practical truth for those believers alive at the time of the Antichrist's persecution.
- 19) They are to depend on God's providence and not take matters into their own hands.
- 20) Those believers destined by God's sovereign plan for captivity (imprisonment) are to accept that incarceration as God's will.
- 21) They are not to resist or fight against Antichrist.
- 22) The point here of this saying is to encourage believers to endure and remain faithful under persecution.
- 23) God's people must not retaliate against their persecutors; there is no place now, and there will be no place then, for militant, aggressive, violent believers terrorizing their persecutors.

1 Peter 4:19 (NASU)

19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. NASU

- 24) Instead of reacting violently, believers must exemplify the perseverance and the faith of the saints.
- 25) They must be like the Lord Jesus Christ, who as 1 Peter 2:23 tells us.

1 Peter 2:23 (NIV)

Rev 13:11-15 (NIV)

- 1) The first beast came from the Abyss (sea). This beast comes from the earth.
- 2) The significance of the second beast coming from the earth is that in ancient times, the earth was less mysterious and foreboding than the sea.
- 3) Some view this second beast as an institution, a form of government, or an ideology.
- 4) However, the use of the Greek *allos* (another of the same kind) indicates that he, like the first beast, will be a person.
- 5) Though he has two horns like a lamb, he is no less a child of hell than the first beast.
- 6) This is obvious by the great contrast between the physical description – looks like a lamb – and the voice – spoke like a dragon.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

7) He will later be identified as the false prophet. Looking at three future passages in Revelation we see this.

Rev 16:13 (NIV)

Rev 19:20 (NIV)

Rev 20:10 (NIV)

8) If you think about previous comments, and link them together, you can see that this beast was a counterfeit Holy Spirit.

9) This completes the unholy trinity.

- a) Satan as the counterfeit god,
- b) The second beast as the Antichrist.
- c) And now, the false prophet as the counterfeit holy spirit.

10) The false prophet is in charge of the worldwide worship of the first beast, the Antichrist.

11) His mission is to “make” the entire world worship the Antichrist.

12) To do this, he is given the power of the Antichrist thru which he:

- a) performs miraculous signs
- b) causes fire to come down from heaven to earth
- c) he deceives the inhabitants of the earth
- d) orders them to set up an image in honor of the beast
- e) gives breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak
 - i) The Greek here (pneuma – spirit, breath, wind, inner life) indicates an animation of the image – not actual life (zoa or bios – life) being given to the image.
- f) has the power of life and death over the inhabitants of the earth so that “all who refused to worship the image to be killed.”

13) Then comes the infamous “mark of the beast”

Rev 13:16-18 (NIV)

- 1) Here, we enter a totalitarian state of existence for all the inhabitants of the entire earth.
- 2) Regardless of your age or social status, your rights are history – **they no longer exist.**
- 3) Just as God marked his people to save them so Satan’s beast marked his people to save them from the persecution that he would inflict upon God’s followers.
- 4) That being said, the implications for the mark had consequences.
 - a) This is directed not toward political and economic control though that is a result.
 - b) It is **directed** toward allegiance and commitment – absolute dominance and control.

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- c) Those who accepted the mark will be showing their allegiance to Satan, the Antichrist, and the false *prophet*.
- d) To refuse the mark meant to commit oneself entirely to God, preferring death to compromising one's faith in Christ.
 - i) There are no more "pew warmers," no more "yes, I believe" and not really even know what.
- e) One of the ramifications will be the breaking of the spiritual beliefs of God's people.
 - i) After all, this is a war being waged by Satan against them.
- 5) We have discussed many times the situation and what we would do if we were confronted with immediate death because of our faith – would we deny Christ and live or confess him and die?
- 6) This is that situation for the entire population of believers throughout the world at this time.
- 7) The big difference is that the gun is directed not only at us as an individual but our families.
- 8) If you cannot buy or sell, you cannot eat or buy food for your family.
- 9) Here, we will be forced to choose not only life or death for ourselves but for those who depend on us.
- 10) And it will be a choice of a possible slow and agonizing death.
- 11) Life under totalitarian governments in our time provides a faint glimpse of what is to come.
- 12) A man who had lived under Bulgaria's communist regime remarked:
"You cannot understand, and you cannot know that the most terrible instrument of persecution ever devised is an innocent ration card. You cannot buy and you cannot sell except according to that little, innocent card. If they please, you can be starved to death, and if they please, you can be dispossessed of everything you have; for you cannot trade, and you cannot buy and you cannot sell, without permission."
(Cited in W. A. Criswell, *Expository Sermons on Revelation* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969], 4:120-21)
- 13) The pressure to give in to the worship of the Antichrist will be far worse than anything ever experienced in human history.
- 14) Life will be virtually unlivable, so the people are forced to bow to the demonized king, not prompted merely by religious deception, but also by economic necessity.
(from *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Copyright © Moody Press and John MacArthur, Jr., 1983-2005.)
- 15) Now, to one of the most widely discussed portions of the entire book of Revelation – verse 18 of chapter 13.

18 ... If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. NIV
- 16) People have speculated as to the significance of the mark and how to calculate it probably since the first person read it.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 17) In Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, letters had numerical equivalents, and a myriad of schemes to associate the names of historical individuals with the number 666 have been put forth.
 - a) Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and a host of others have been proposed, based on some sort of convoluted mathematical rendering of the letters in their name.
- 18) In the approach we have taken in our study – the futurist approach – all speculation is futile since the Antichrist is still to come.
- 19) This means, obviously, the number 666 cannot be associated with any historical individual.
- 20) The early church writer and prominent leader Irenaeus cautioned against speculating about the identity of the person associated with the number 666 until that person arrives on the scene.
- 21) Having said all that, there is, as brought out by several commentators, something we can see clearly if we address the number as symbolic.
- 22) John says – “for it is man’s number.”
- 23) Seven, the number of perfection, is God's number.
- 24) Since man falls short of perfection, his number is six.
- 25) Repeating the number three times emphasizes that this is man's number, just as the thrice-repeated statement "holy, holy, holy" stresses God's absolute holiness

>>>>>> Lesson 22 <<<<<<<

- 1) Chapter 14 marks the changing of John's visions back to what God is going to do and away from what Satan and his crew are doing.
- 2) There are three visions.
- 3) We begin with verses 1 thru 5, the first of the three, in which we see the return of Christ and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists appearing with him on Mount Zion

Rev 14:1-5 (NIV)

- 4) John opens his description of this vision with Christ, the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion.
- 5) Some view this passage as a vision of heaven.
- 6) Instead, I must agree with those who put forth that this passage describes the return of Christ to the earthly Mount Zion.
- 7) The whole point would be lost if Mount Zion refers to heaven, because that would mean that the one hundred and forty-four thousand had died.
- 8) In which case, their sealing with the mark of God (7:3-4; cf. 9:4) would be rendered meaningless.
- 9) John goes on to describe a combined worship scene – combined in that the heavenly chorus was joined by the 144,000 on Mount Zion singing a new song that only they on the earth could know.
- 10) In the last part of verse 3 and verses 4 and 5, John paints a picture of the 144,000.
 - a) They are redeemed from the earth and purchased from among men.
 - b) This statement actually applies to all of us but, what makes these 144,000 different are several things:
 - i) The tribulation – a time of exceeding sexual immorality, and corruption.
 - (1) Also a time that many would be falling away because of the massive persecution we discussed last time.
 - ii) In all that, these “followed the Lamb wherever He goes” indicating an unwavering dedication to Christ.
 - iii) Because they were sealed with the seal of God and Christ, they could not be harmed.
 - iv) No lie was found in them, and they were blameless means simply that they led absolutely exemplary lives.
 - v) Finally, they were “offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb”
 - vi) This is most significant.

The 144,000, like the firstfruits offering, will be set apart for divine service. As previously noted, the number 144,000 does not symbolize all the Tribulation saints, but rather designates a group of Jewish evangelists. The purpose of their lives will

be to serve the Lord by proclaiming the gospel to the lost, perishing, Christ-rejecting world.

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- 1) Now, we move to the second of the three visions.
- 2) Laid out in verses 6 thru 12 is an appeal, the judgment, and a warning to unbelievers being proclaimed by three angels.
- 3) The first angel proclaims the gospel – the good news that there is still a chance for “those who live on the earth” to repent.
- 4) The second angel pronounces judgment.
- 5) The third angel has a dire warning which is pointed at anyone who worships the beast and his image.
- 6) Another way of looking at this vision is that it contrasts the destinies of believers with that of unbelievers.

Rev 14:6-7 (NIV)

- 7) The angel is flying in midair – basically, he is in a place where his message can be heard by all the peoples of the earth.
- 8) Here, dealing with the mechanism is not important and, frankly is difficult to even imagine but, we know that all things – especially at this time – are under God’s control.
- 9) The crucial point here is that the angel’s message.
- 10) He is saying that there is still time for “those who live on the earth” to repent and start giving glory to the one and only true God.
 - a) Not Satan, the Antichrist, or the false prophet – only God

Rev 14:8 (NIV)

- 1) As I am sure you recall, in the Old Testament, Babylon was the name of both an evil city and an immoral empire.
- 2) It was a world center for idol worship.
- 3) As with the false prophet and the statue of the Antichrist, Nebuchadnezzar built a great statue to himself and had required everyone to worship it.
- 4) Just like Nebuchadnezzar they (the antichrist and false prophet) will find themselves judged by God.
- 5) Here we have another of those things that John’s original readers would without doubt associated with their current situation.
- 6) Just as Babylon had been Judah's worst enemy, the Roman Empire was the worst enemy of the early Christians and will remain so until 300 ce when Constantine makes Christianity the religion of the empire.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 7) The angel's words here are a prediction: the actual fall of the city will not occur until the judgment of the last bowl (16:19).
- 8) When we place this in context and look at this from the perspective of the future actual hearers of the angel's pronouncement, it will come as a shock to that unbelieving world.
- 9) That the Antichrist's mighty empire, the most powerful in human history, could be destroyed will be inconceivable to his followers.
- 10) Babylon in this passage refers not just to the city, but, as we will see, it refers to the Antichrist's worldwide political, economic, and religious empire.
- 1) On to the third and final angel.

Rev 14:9-13 (NIV)

- 2) The first verses of this passage is a horrific if not straightforward statement of the fate of those who, fail to remain faithful to God and Christ and who instead receive the mark of the beast and worship him.
- 3) The description is not just of the torment but in general what God's final wrath for anyone who deserves it will be like.
- 4) The angel here has another sobering thought – hell is forever!
- 5) If one considers the possibility that this phrase “the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever” means that the smoke caused by their torment rises is really frightening.
- 6) Verse 11 also removes any doubt regarding what God considers bad here.
 - a) In verse one, those who worship... **and** receive the mark.
 - b) Lest we think we can skate by and just get the mark but not actually do the worship, the phrase here removes any doubt – worships... or receives the mark!
- 7) In contrast to the description of the fate of the unbeliever, verses 12 and 13 state the reward of the faithful.
- 8) I really like the New Living Translation of the last statement of this section of verses:

Rev 14:12-13 (NIV)

- 9) What else does one need to say – that really brings our requirements and rewards into focus.

Rev 14:14-16 (NIV)

- 1) There has been debate regarding the identity of the person on the white cloud, however, most commentators agree that it is Christ.
- 2) In the Greek, His crown in this case is not a regal or royal crown but a victor's crown.
- 3) He is waiting for the appointed time which is then heralded by another angel coming out from the temple.
- 4) Lest there be any doubt, Christ is not being ordered by this angel.

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- a) As you recall, Christ himself said that God is the decider of the when the end of time and the judgment will take place – only he knows!
- b) In that regard the angel is merely bringing the signal that God has decided.
- 5) Without any further detail, the one seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.
- 6) There is some debate about who was being harvested — God's people, or the sinners.
- 7) Some scholars have suggested that 14:14-16 pictures the harvesting of God's people, while 14:17-18 which we will get to momentarily, pictures the harvest of sinners.
- 8) Most likely, however, 14:14-16 indicates the harvest of all people.
- 9) Again, this is a general picture of the final judgment, with the elect being taken to heaven and the unbelievers being sent to eternal punishment, as recorded in the following verses.

Rev 14:17-20 (NIV)

- 1) Here we see two more angels – one with a sickle to reap the grapes (sinners) of the earth.
- 2) The second from within the temple with fire.
- 3) Gathering of the grapes here represents gathering of the sinners and unrepentant from the earth to meet God's final wrath.
- 4) Here again, I have to turn to MacArthur. He appears to have a clear explanation of the connection of the fire, altar, and this sixth angel.

“That the angel had power over the altar's fire (the definite article is present in the Greek text, which literally reads "the fire") indicates that he had been ministering at the heavenly counterpart to the earthly incense altar. Unlike the angel in verse 17, this angel does not come from the throne of God, but from the altar associated with the prayers of the saints. His appearance means that the time had come for those prayers to be answered. The time had come for God to take fire associated with intercession and use it for the destruction of His enemies and the enemies of His people.”

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- 5) I think it is obvious that we are now moving swiftly to the final scenes of the Tribulation.
- 6) One point here – these events depicted in these last verses are not happening at this point. They are symbolic of future events as we will see in the next 4 chapters.

>>>>>> Lesson 23 <<<<<<<

- 1) Chapter 14 showed John’s visions of God’s actions during the last half of the Tribulation.
- 2) With that complete, we find ourselves one step closer to the end.
- 3) We are now staring squarely at the final pouring out of God’s wrath in the seven bowls.
- 4) Beginning in vs. 1 of chapter 15 we read ...

Rev 15:1 (NIV)

- 1) John now transitions to another vision – “another great and marvelous sign”
- 2) We need to spend a second or so talking about the word PLAGUE.
 - a) First, when you hear the word, you probably think of pandemics, bubonic plague, and other diseases.
 - b) No doubt, this is one of the primary meanings of the word. However, that is not what we are dealing with here.
 - c) According to one commentator, the origin of the word that is used here is late Middle English: Latin plaga ‘stroke, wound,’ probably from Greek (Doric dialect) plaga, from a base meaning ‘strike.’
 - d) In Strong’s the Greek, plagay, lists as a wound or calamity.
- 3) Long story short, as you will see, when the seven angels pour out their bowls on the earth, none of them appear to be infectious diseases.
- 4) The first does cause sores to breakout on those who worshiped the Antichrist, but it is to be isolated to them and it appears to be total, complete, and immediate – not spreading or communicable.

Rev 15:2-4 (NIV)

- 1) As we saw back in our discussions of chapter 4:6 there may be no actual sea in heaven per Rev 21:1.
- 2) Therefore, what John is describing is a transparent crystal platform before God's throne, shimmering and glistening like a tranquil, sunlit sea.
- 3) I think we can assume this is the same sealike crystal platform John describes in his original reference back in chapter 4.
- 4) Beside the sea, surrounding the throne, John sees all the saints that had remained faithful to Christ throughout the tribulation.
- 5) Their resurrection is described in chapter 20:4

Rev 20:4 (NIV)

- 6) As is obvious here, they are rejoicing at their victory and praising God for it.

Rev 15:5-6 (NIV)

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 7) As earlier in our study, John sees the dwelling place of God standing open.
- 8) Here, it is referred to by the name of the temporary structure used by the Israelites in the wilderness journey – tabernacle of the Testimony.
- 9) Out of the temple come the final 7 angels that will carry out God’s plan and complete the judgments.
- 10) Their garments are indicative of their purity and also hark back to priestly garments of old.
- 11) John continues in vs. 7 ...

Rev 15:7-8 (NIV)

- 1) Here, we have the four living creatures again.
- 2) As I’m sure you recall, they are actually angelic beings of high order.
- 3) MacArthur calls them “cherubim and exalted order of angels frequently associated in Scripture with God’s holy power.”
- 4) As we have seen, they are God’s instruments for making the connection between his desires and the angels carrying out the plan.
- 5) One of them has the bowls that are to be given to the angels who will carry out the plagues or calamities on the earth.
- 6) These bowls (also called basins) would be used in the temple for various purposes, such as collecting the blood of the sacrifices.
- 7) When these bowls are poured out, there will be no escape, and the judgment will be complete.
- 8) This destruction is described in the bowl judgments.
- 9) Again, harking back to Old Testament examples, the smoke that filled the temple is the manifestation of God's glory and power
- 10) God's glory filled the temple, appearing like smoke, and God sets in motion the final phase of judgment.

11) The LABC makes an interesting comment:

The fact that no one would be able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed indicates that the time for intercession had passed.

No one could come before God to stay his hand.

It seems that even the time of worship and praise was suspended as God brought about this final act of history. It is as if heaven was waiting

12) John MacArthur adds:

The glory cloud will remain in the heavenly temple until the earth is completely purged, cleansed, and prepared for the King and His kingdom.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 1) There is a contemporary phrase that I think truly applies here – “tipping point.”
- 2) It is defined as – “the point at which a series of small changes or incidents becomes significant enough to cause a larger, more important change.”
- 3) I’m not really sure I would call the previous events small, but they do lead to this major ending or change.
- 4) Thru the tribulation thus far, sinners will:
 - a) Have been warned repeatedly to repent.
 - b) They will have experienced 14 terrifying judgments.
 - c) They will have acknowledged that these judgments came from God.
 - d) They will have heard the gospel preached many times:
 - i) By the 144,000 Jewish evangelists
 - ii) By the two witnesses
 - iii) By other redeemed Gentiles and Jews
 - iv) Even from an angel flying in midheaven
- 5) Despite all this, they will refuse to repent and turn to God for forgiveness.
 - a) In fact, in some cases they even curse God.
- 6) Thru these next events, God now brings it all to an end – the final invitation has been made!

Rev 16:1-7 (NIV)

- 1) The voice comes from the temple.
- 2) Since the temple is filled with smoke indicating God’s presence, we must assume that it is God who speaks this command.
- 3) I think it is significant here that the voice that John records as the initiator of the bowls is that of God himself. Not one of the four living creatures and not an angel.
- 4) Of course, it is also significant to note that this first judgment effects only those who have the “mark of the beast and worshiped his name”.
- 5) Believers are not subject to these sores.
 - a) The three Greek words describing these sores combine to describe sores that are festering, painful, incurable, inflamed and oozing.
 - b) They are painful beyond description.
- 6) The second angel’s bowl when poured out destroys the seas.
 - a) It kills every living creature in them.
- 7) The third bowl destroys all fresh water – rivers, streams, springs, lakes – any and all sources of water are now unusable.
- 8) As always, these descriptions that John’s vision supply are to show the severity of the situation in clear terms – not necessarily to be taken literally.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 9) However, if we allow our minds to contemplate the situation on earth given these descriptions, we can know without doubt how horrible things are.
- 10) No matter where you look, where you go, there is no escape from the agony and suffering at the individual level.
 - a) The smells of the dead and dying animals and rotting bloody waters are everywhere.
 - b) There is no relief for your pain.
 - c) You likely by this time have no medical help for your sores and the pain is unbearable.
 - d) This is torment like mankind has never experienced in all of human history.

Rev 16:8-9 (NIV)

- 1) For an unspecified amount of time, perhaps up to 3 or more years, the earth's inhabitants have lived with a sun that is at two thirds of its original intensity.

Rev 8:12 (NIV)

- 2) Now, suddenly, it is not back to normal instead, it is blazing hot!
- 3) As John describes, it sears with an intense heat so hot that it causes men to curse God.
- 4) Again, I think it is so important that we see that the people of the world – the sinners – know who is causing the suffering they are enduring but they still refuse to repent.
- 5) God gives us the ability to think logically – to reason right and wrong.
 - a) We have within us these capabilities.
 - b) All that is required in most cases is a knowledge of the situation and its parameters and we can see or workout proper courses of action.
 - c) However, we also have within us emotions that, regardless of any given set of facts, we can and often do choose to ignore the logical conclusion and path to take and become so bound up in our opinion that we take the wrong path.
 - d) We have all seen ample evidence of this over the past 3 years – during the elections and throughout the pandemic.
 - e) Here is the ultimate example of this emotionally warped thinking.
 - f) You know who God is, you know He is the source of the suffering you are experiencing yet, instead of logically acknowledging him in a way that would possibly stop your suffering these folks let their hate and pain (emotions) rule and they curse the very entity that can give them the relief they so desperately need!
- 1) With the fifth bowl, God turns His attention away from the stubborn unbelieving people and toward Satan and the temporary world dominating reign God has given him.

Rev 16:10-11 (NIV)

- 2) There is another debate here among scholars as to where the bowl is poured out – Satan's actual throne, the city of Babylon, or the entire world.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 3) Regardless of where it is poured out, the result is the same – his entire kingdom – the world as it will be known and exist at that moment is plunged into darkness.
- 4) The Greek word translated “plunged into darkness” means to obscure or blind.
 - a) To me, this indicates a complete removal of all light.
 - b) Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet along with all of mankind were in total darkness.
 - c) Have you ever gone into a closet and closed the door and stood for a while?
 - i) When you do, you will find, depending on how well the door opening fits, that you will be able to start to see again.
 - ii) This is because the pupils of your eyes adjust to use what available light there is and you are able to see again.
 - iii) If the door opening is absolutely and completely a seal (very unlikely) you will never be able to see because there is no light source at all.
 - iv) I envision this as the condition that the bowl of the fifth angel brings about – a complete and utter lack of light – everyone is blind and unable to navigate by sight.
 - (1) There only choice is to move along by touch and memory.
 - (2) A state of total blindness.
- 5) And the result of all this -

“Men gnawed their tongues in agony 11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.”
- 6) This is the ultimate act of defiance by those hopelessly engulfed in the Antichrist's satanic system.

>>>>>> Lesson 24 <<<<<<<

- 1) When we met last, we had finished thru chapter 16 verse 11.
- 2) Chapter 16 is the chapter that relates the pouring out of the bowls of God's wrath.
- 3) By way of review, I thought it would be appropriate to read the first 11 verses before we pick up with verse 12.

Rev 16:1-10 (NIV)

- 4) Before we continue are there any Questions / Comments on these verses or, for that matter, anything we have covered so far?

Rev 16:12-16 (NIV)

- 1) The sixth bowl is unique in that it actually has no direct horrific impact on mankind.
- 2) Rather, it is a preparation for the greatest battle ever fought – the fight between God and the forces of evil that rule this world.
- 3) The Euphrates river was a natural boundary between the Parthians and the Roman Empire.
 - a) I personally think that this is significant because it clearly gets the point across to John's readers.
 - b) And it gets the point across to us as well – that is, any barriers between God's enemies and this final battle that is to be fought will be removed.
 - c) God wants this done.
- 4) In keeping with the normal amount of bizarreness, John sees three evil spirits (demons) coming from the mouths of Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet.
 - a) They are able to perform miracles – one assumes to convince the kings of the east and indeed of the entire world to come and support the upcoming battle.
- 5) This is preparation for the ultimate "hail Mary pass" on behalf of Satan.
 - a) He and his minions know what is coming – God's final and concluding act – banishment of all evil.
 - b) The three have only two choices – surrender or fight to the death.
 - c) They are choosing to fight to the death.
- 6) In the midst of all this preparation, John is given a word of encouragement for those believers who are still fighting the good fight.

15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

- 7) The final stage is set – all is ready for the end.

Rev 16:17-21 (NIV)

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 1) Again, we must emphasize that these bowls were poured out on the entire earth and in this case, earth's environment.
- 2) Here, I think we can safely infer that the voice we are hearing say, "It is done!" is that of God Himself.
 - a) We can only imagine the joy and rejoicing that will be felt throughout heaven when these words are finally spoken.
- 3) As with the seventh trumpet back in chapter 11, we have flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake.
 - a) John then adds that this is the most devastating earthquake the world has ever known.
 - b) When we look at these results, we can truly see the truth of this statement.
 - i) Islands and mountains disappear.
 - (1) Islands are mountains rising from the sea floor.
 - ii) Cities of all the nations collapse.
 - (1) It is assumed here to be all cities of all nations – total world destruction.
 - c) One commentator assumes that the world is being prepared for the millennial reign.
 - 4) There is a debate regarding the "great city" and the city of Babylon – I mention this only for completeness here.
 - a) Some scholars believe that they are one in the same in this context.
 - b) Others believe the "great city" to be Jerusalem.
 - i) Here, the argument being that Babylon would be destroyed and that Jerusalem would be saved.
 - ii) When we look at the fact that the rest of the cities of the nation's collapse then I can see that point of view. Why would Babylon only be split into 3 parts?
 - 5) Now, consider the hailstones. (Again, only being literal to get an idea of the magnitude of the destruction).
 - a) First, since they are falling, we can assume a velocity of 32ft./s (22 mi/hr.)
 - b) I think we can easily see this would be like being hit by a 100 lb. sack of concrete moving at over 20 mi/hr.
 - c) It will leave a mark!
 - 6) Once more, we see the unrepentant sinners understanding that God is the source of the hail and yet instead of repenting, they shake their fist in God's face and curse Him!

Chapters 17 and 18 are an apocryphal and somewhat poetic description of Satan's kingdom under the leadership of the antichrist and its final state.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 1) These two chapters also lend themselves to quite diverse opinions among scholars as to the true meanings of their content.
 - 2) This diversity led MacArthur to make the comment in his discussion of these chapters that in truth, only those who are alive at that time will see and understand the total meaning of these chapters.
 - 3) The timeline of Revelation actually stops during these two chapters while we look at the target of the judgments, we have just seen in the seven bowls.
 - 4) They are important because, as we sift thru their descriptions, we get a true picture of just how far the world has fallen.
-
- 1) Chapter 17 was an especially challenging chapter for me to figure out the best and clearest way to present it.
 - 2) It is difficult from two perspectives:
 - a) There are a tremendous number of opinions about the meanings of the symbology it contains.
 - b) Second and as a result of the first, it becomes difficult to stay on a single interpretation line thru the entire section.
 - 3) To give us an overview of the chapter, I feel we should read the entire thing before we jump into the breakdown and section by section discussion.

Rev 17:1-18 (NIV)

- 5) O.k. let's start at vs. 1 and 2 and break this down.

Rev 17:1-2 (NIV)

- 6) Obviously, here, the term prostitute or harlot is not referring to an actual person but, instead is a metaphor referring to false religion, spiritual defection, idolatry, and religious apostasy.
- 7) Even farther reaching, it symbolizes any economic, political, or military system that is hostile to God.
- 8) In addition to Babylon, several cities are designated "harlot cities" in Scripture – Nineveh, Tyre, and even Jerusalem.

Isa 1:21 (NIV)

- 9) To John's readers, their mind would most likely take them immediately to the Roman Empire with its many gods and blood of Christian martyrs on its hands.
- 10) Unfortunately, this situation will continue for several more hundred years until Constantine shortly after 300 CE became a Christian and made Christianity the religion of the Empire.
- 11) As the angel describes here, this corruption has led to an eventual worldwide system that has encompassed more evil than has been seen thus far in the world.

Rev 17:3-6 (NIV)

- 1) Once again, John is “carried away in the Spirit” to a desolate place – desert.
 - a) Basically, transported in a vision to a place different than where he was.
- 2) Once there, he describes a woman that he sees before him – a very different woman indeed.
 - i) Sitting on a scarlet beast and, from the description;
 - (1) It is covered in blasphemous names with seven heads and ten horns
 - (2) – she is sitting on satan and/or the antichrist.
 - (a) 12:3 applies this description to Satan
 - (b) 13:1 applies it to the antichrist – with blasphemous names
 - b) The woman is dressed in purple and scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls
 - i) As with prostitutes thru the ages, she is dressed to attract men.
 - ii) Additionally, the adornments indicate wealth which is inferred to come from her ill-gotten gain.
- 3) The golden cup represents her inner self – extremely immoral.
 - a) Beautifully clothed but obscene and impure.
 - b) This picture shows the evil power that will envelop the world.
 - c) It will look attractive and glorious on the outside — wealthy, prosperous, beautiful, luxurious — but the inside will be nothing but rebellion against God
 - d) The rebellion leads to total impurity.
- 4) She is branded on her forehead with the inscription:

MYSTERY
BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
- 5) The harlot is called MYSTERY BABYLON to indicate that BABYLON in this context does not refer to a geographical location.
- 6) This is not ancient Babylon, the Babylon of John's day, or the rebuilt city of Babylon in the end times. **(Peter – Babylon = Rome)**
- 7) The details of this vision can't be applied to any actual city.
- 8) Here is a previously undisclosed Babylon, a secret reality to be revealed in the end times.
- 9) This BABYLON is the symbol of all worldly resistance to God; it is described as THE GREAT because of its far-reaching influence.
- 10) In fact, so great will be its influence that it is called THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

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- 11) Babylon will be the source of all the false, idolatrous, blasphemous worship in the end times.
- 12) Her designation as the MOTHER OF HARLOTS is appropriate, since harlotry in Scripture often symbolizes idolatry.
- 13) So Babylon, the city that spawned the system that corrupted the world with false religion, will do so again.
- 14) Like many harlots, this woman was drunk, but not from drinking alcohol.
- 15) This is a graphic indictment of her for her murderous persecution of God's people.
- 16) She is pictured as drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.
- 17) Some commentators see the saints and the witnesses of Jesus as two distinct groups, the former being the Old Testament saints and the latter the New Testament saints.
- 18) More likely, however, the two descriptions refer to the same group and describe God's people throughout history.
- 19) The important point here is that false religion, represented here by the harlot, is a murderer.
- 20) It has killed millions of believers over the centuries.

Rev 17:3-8 (NIV)

- 1) The angel's question in vs. 7 was rhetorical in that he was getting ready to explain the mystery of the woman and the beast she was riding.
- 2) John understood who the woman and the beast were – the woman represented a false religious system and the beast the antichrist.
- 3) What he did not get was the connection between them.
- 4) In order for John to get that connection, the angel must begin with more detail about them.
- 5) The beast is described as one who was, and is not, and is about to come again.
- 6) In the discussion of chapter 13 vs. 3 and 12, that same phrase refers to the Antichrist's faked death and resurrection.
- 7) In chapter 13 vs. 14 we see the false prophet will use that alleged miracle to deceive the entire world into worshipping the Antichrist ().
- 8) Up to that point, the Antichrist's political and economic empire will coexist with the false religious system headed by the false prophet.
- 9) But after his "resurrection," (staged or otherwise) the Antichrist, then indwelt by a powerful demon out of the abyss, will turn on the false religious system and destroy it.
- 10) He will tolerate only one religion — the worship of himself.
- 11) As you may recall, this takes place approximately halfway thru the tribulation.
- 12) Christians will not be taken in by this fake resurrection – unbelievers “inhabitants of the earth” will be.

Rev 17:9-11 (NIV)

- 13) As read here from the NIV, the angel's statement is "This calls for a mind with wisdom.”
- 14) The NASB2020 and many other translations render this as “Here is the mind which has wisdom.”
- 15) In either case, the statement invites John and his readers to pay close attention to what follows.
- 16) MacArthur makes the statement here:
“It will take much wisdom and spiritual insight to understand it, and perhaps only those alive at the time will fully comprehend it.”
- 17) The first aspect of this difficult section reads:
“The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.”
- 18) Many commentators have looked at this passage and made the assumption that the seven hills forces one to see Rome as city under discussion because the city does set on 7 hills.
- 19) Many also assume that the woman then becomes the Roman Catholic church.

20) All such speculation is unnecessary because the text plainly identifies the mountains as seven kings. I really don't think there is a second underlying meaning.

21) These kings represent seven world empires embodied in their rulers.

22) The angel tells John that five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.

23) Again, per John MacArthur, the five Gentile world empires that had fallen by the time of John's vision are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.

24) The one that existed at that time was obviously Rome.

25) The other one that has not yet come is the Antichrist's final world empire.

26) Commenting on the significance of the first six empires, Henry Morris writes,

Though none of these empires ever actually ruled the whole world, each was the greatest kingdom of its own time, particularly in reference to the land and people of Israel and these kingdoms' opposition to the proclamation of God's Word and the accomplishment of His purposes in the world. . . .

These, of course, have not been the only kingdoms that have been at enmity with God and His purposes. In this category could also be placed such kingdoms as Syria, Edom, Moab, Midian, and many others, but none of these were empires of great size and influence. On the other hand, there were other great and powerful empires in the ancient world — China, India, and the Incas, for example — but these had only peripheral contact with the Word of God and the chosen people. There were only six kingdoms that met both criteria up to the time of Christ and the apostles. Furthermore, all six of these were not only legitimate heirs of political Babel but also of religious Babel as well. Babylonia, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome were all strongholds of the world religion of evolutionary pantheism and idolatrous polytheism. Thus, they appropriately are represented as six heads on the great beast that supports the harlot. (Morris, Revelation Record, 337. Italics in the original.)

27) Ok, let me see if I can bring this a little further into perspective.

28) If we were at the half-way point of the tribulation today, I am sure everyone in here could think of 5 countries (empires) that would fall into the category of enemies of God and God's people.

29) There may be world powers (empires) at the actual time of the tribulation that are far worse enemies of God and His people than any we can think of today.

30) To John's readers, the empires that would fit the picture were the ones just mentioned.

31) I think the idea is to get the readers of any time period to grasp the total domination that will occur under the antichrist's empire.

32) As MacArthur intimated in his comment "...perhaps only those alive at the time will fully comprehend it."

Does that help clear up that portion of the passage?

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- 33) The angel goes on to explain that when the Antichrist comes, he must remain a little while.
- 34) His empire will be short-lived; he will be given "authority to act for forty-two months" (13:5; the second half of the Tribulation).
- 35) Then the angel offered the puzzling comment that the ***beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.***
- 36) The question then becomes, how can the beast (the Antichrist) be an eighth king and also one of the seven?
- 37) The answer is found in the phrase the beast . . . was and is not.
- 38) The antichrist will be one of the seven kings before his supposed death and resurrection and an eighth king afterwards during the second phase of his rule.
- 39) As noted earlier in verse 8, the antichrist will go to destruction — eternal damnation in the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10).
- 40) Unlike the first six empires, his empire will be destroyed by a direct act of God.

Rev 17:12-14 (NIV)

- 1) The angel further explained that the ten horns which John saw are ten kings.
- 2) They cannot be known to any earlier generation because they have not yet received a kingdom, since they are part of the Antichrist's future empire.
- 3) They will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.
- 4) Perhaps the Antichrist's empire will be divided into 10 administrative regions, which these ten kings will rule under him.
- 5) The reference to one hour is a figure of speech that emphasizes the brevity of their rule; their reign will be short-lived because their master's empire itself will be short-lived.
- 6) During their brief reign, they will be unanimously devoted to the Antichrist.
 - a) They will have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.
- 7) They will do his will, and his will alone.
- 8) The agenda of the ten kings, like that of Satan and the Antichrist, will be to wage war against the Lamb at the Battle of Armageddon.
- 9) If we look back at chapter 16, we will see another facet of this international consortium of evil.

Rev 16:13-15 (NIV)

- 10) These three exceptionally deceitful and powerful demons will be the agents to gather the kings for that battle.
- 11) This leads one to conclude that the 10 of the ten horns is not literal but perhaps figurative symbolizing all the kings of the earth.

Rev 17:15 (NIV)

- 1) In 17:1, the prostitute is described as one "who sits on many waters".
- 2) The great prostitute is called "Babylon" (17:5) and the imagery of the waters comes from Jeremiah's prophecy to Babylon.

Jer 51:13 (NIV)

- 3) Although the saints reading John's letter see Babylon and Rome as part of their present world, this Babylon (great prostitute) represents a far-reaching, anti-God power that will encompass the world.
- 4) The angel explained that the waters. . . represent masses of people of every nation and language.
- 5) The Antichrist will influence or even possess the leaders across the world, but we must see also that his influence will extend to all people.
- 6) The "masses" also will be overtaken by the great prostitute and will be enamored by her. In doing so, they will become hostile to God.
- 7) The leaders and the people will be joined in their adoration of the Antichrist.

Rev 17:16-18 (NIV)

- 1) At first glance, this may seem a bit odd that the Antichrist and the ten kings would hate the prostitute.
 - a) Especially to the point of destruction in such a complete and graphic way.
- 2) There are a couple of opinions regarding the why of this.
- 3) First, there is the "nature of evil." (LABC)

This verse describes the nature and outcome of evil. In a dramatic turn of events, the beast on whom the prostitute rides will turn on her and destroy her. In fact, the Beast has hated the prostitute all along. This is how evil operates. Destructive by its very nature, it turns on itself. The Beast and the ten kings (Satan and the leaders) will end up destroying what they have made. The very evil of the culture they have created will leave it in shambles.

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- 4) Second, and, I think more plausible, is that symbolically in this context the prostitute (Babylon) represents the false religious system that will exist at that time.
- 5) Having used this false religious system to help him gain control of the world, the Antichrist will discard it.
- 6) As we will see he will demand that the world is to worship only him.
- 7) Thus, he will turn on the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

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- 8) That graphic language of extreme violence is used to make clear that the Antichrist and his henchmen will utterly and completely obliterate all vestiges of the false religious system.
- 9) The Antichrist's self-serving, satanically inspired actions are, however, precisely in the scope of God's sovereign plan.
- 10) In fact, it is God who will put it in the hearts of the Antichrist's followers to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast.
- 11) God's power is behind the destruction and consolidation of the evil empire;
 - a) As always, Satan is the instrument of God's purposes.
- 12) God hates every form of false religion and will not tolerate those who seek to rob Him of His glory (Isa 42:8).
- 13) The Antichrist's religious empire will be judged and destroyed.
- 14) And, as we will see as we proceed into chapter 18 that the political and economic aspects of that evil world empire will also be destroyed.

- 1) Chapter 18 is truly unique.
- 2) It is somber chapter; a requiem, a dirge for the funeral of humanity.
- 3) The Antichrist will have built the greatest commercial empire the world has ever seen.
- 4) This is a testament to the power Satan has given him since the world is generally in the worst physical shape it has ever seen because of the judgments of the seals, trumpets, and bowls.
- 5) In this chapter, Babylon is most likely the capital of the Antichrist's worldwide commercial empire.
- 6) It will also represent the state of the entire world over the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation and with its destruction, the stage is set for the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7) God's destruction of commercial Babylon is the theme of chapter 18.
- 8) John MacArthur comments on the city:

“Though some commentators view it as a symbol for the Antichrist's whole godless system, the Babylon described in chapter 18 is most likely an actual city. It is called a city five times in the chapter (vv. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21), and other features in the text imply that a literal city is in view.”

- 9) He goes on to say:

“As the Antichrist's capital city, it will be the hub of and represent his commercial empire. Thus, the judgment and destruction of Babylon will kill the head, and the rest of the body of the Antichrist's whole world empire will follow in death.”

- 10) Simply put, God's judgment will fall on Babylon at the conclusion of all this.

- 11) Chapter 18 records seven aspects of that judgment on the Antichrist's commercial empire:

- a) ***Judgment Pronounced***
- b) ***Judgment Avoided***
- c) ***Judgment Defined***
- d) ***Judgment Lamented***
- e) ***Judgment Enjoyed***
- f) ***Judgment Completed***
- g) ***Judgment Justified.***

- 12) We begin with verses 1 thru 5. 1, 2, and 3 are the Judgement Pronounced and 4 and 5 are God's call to his people to avoid the judgement

Rev 18:1-5 (NIV)

Judgment Pronounced

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- 1) With the beginning of vs. 1, John begins a new vision or at least a new portion of his ongoing vision.
- 2) The vision starts with another angel coming down from heaven to earth.
- 3) This angel has a couple of noteworthy characteristics.
 - a) He has great authority which probably will make him even more glorious than other angels that John has seen in his visions.
 - i) This also indicates that he left the presence of God with delegated authority to act on God's behalf.
 - b) A second unique characteristic is that he illuminates the entire world with his presence.
 - i) Since we are not told otherwise, we can probably assume that the world is still in darkness. From 16:10 we read:

Rev 16:10 (NIV)

- c) Finally, the angel cried out with a mighty voice.
 - i) No one will be able to ignore him; everyone will hear him as well as see him.
 - ii) His message will add to the consternation and terror caused by his appearance.
- 4) A comparison of this passage with 16:17-ff suggests that this judgment takes place when the seventh bowl is poured out:

Rev 16:17-21 (NIV)

- 5) Next, the angel begins his description of the reasons for the final destruction.
- 6) The city will be a hideout of demons and evil spirits, a nest for filthy buzzards, and a den for dreadful beasts.
 - a) The "hideout of demons and evil spirits" is literally a prison or watchtower, like a haunt, from which the evil beings watch over the desolate ruins.
 - b) This is an image of desperate desolation.
 - c) "Buzzards" are carrion birds, considered "unclean," also found in desolate places.
- 7) The reason that Babylon had fallen is described in 17:2: "all the nations have drunk the wine of her passionate immorality."
- 8) The rulers of the world have committed adultery with her, meaning that they have committed shameful sins — giving up what is most important for what is gratifying.
- 9) This "adultery" probably refers to both sinful alliances and the total abandoning all morality.
- 10) The rulers were living immorally and there will be no such thing as a "Christian nation" anywhere in the world
- 11) The merchants throughout the world have grown rich as a result of her luxurious living.
- 12) They will be seduced by the great riches that can be gained by their relationship with her.

- 13) At this point, Babylon personifies everything that is evil — sexual immorality, idolatry, greed, and oppression.
- a) I perceive that there will be a polarization (if that is the correct word) between Christian and non-Christian as has never been seen in all history.
 - b) By this I mean the differences are more exaggerated than ever.
 - c) The “people of the earth” will have degenerated morally to a state that has never been seen before.
 - d) On the other hand, those who are Christian will be stronger than ever.
 - e) The situation will dictate that your faith be absolute and true.
 - f) It is no longer a matter of only professing and living a right life and “just standing out.”
 - g) **All** who profess to love and follow Christ will be choosing to live or die for that profession.
- 14) This polarization is clearly seen in the call of the voice in verse 4

Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her plagues;

- 1) The voice from heaven continues by describing or defining the judgement against the Antichrist’s kingdom.
- 2) The angel appears to have stopped talking to John.
- 3) He now addresses a request to God for what the specific judgments are to be.

Rev 18:6-8 (NIV)

Judgment Defined

- 4) These prayers echo the requests of the martyred saints over in chapter 6 when Jesus broke the 5th seal.
- 5) Here however, instead of asking God how long, the angel spells out the magnitude of the judgments.
- 6) In essence, for all the sin she has committed, repay her double in punishments.
- 7) The angel completes his plea with a statement that, as always, places the responsibility for the revenge or punishments on God to whom it always belongs.

“for mighty is the Lord God who judges her”
- 8) We are never allowed to seek vengeance or retribution – that is only God’s right.

- 1) In the next 10 verses, we see the world lament these judgements and the final disposition of the great Babylon.

Rev 18:9-19 (NIV)

Judgment Lamented

- 2) As you can see from these verses, this is clearly a lament for the judgments that the angel requested of God.
- 3) Of course, we must first understand that Babylon here represents not only the capital city of empire, but it also represents the entire evil and corrupt system that now exists under the Antichrist.
- 4) Those who control various parts of the economic system will mourn at Babylon's fall.
- 5) These verses are a funeral dirge for the fall of Babylon, sung by three distinct groups:
 - a) ***the rulers of the world*** (18:9-10) – because they have been the overseers of Babylon's wealth and have been in a position to enrich themselves greatly.
 - b) ***the merchants*** (18:11-16) – because Babylon, the greatest customer for their goods, will be gone.
 - c) ***and the ship owners*** (18:17-20) – because they will no longer have anywhere to bring their goods because the merchants will have nowhere to sell them.
 - i) As the verses tell us, this includes not only the owners but “sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea”
- 6) They have all grown rich because of the evil economy represented by Babylon.
- 7) They will sing songs of mourning because they will lose everything when the economy collapses.
- 8) The kings had given over their power to the Beast (the Antichrist).
- 9) Since the Beast controlled Babylon and they worshipped the Beast they are committing adultery with her.
- 10) As a reward for their subservience, these kings shared her luxury.
- 11) But when the city is destroyed, they will be terrified at her torment and stand far off.
- 12) These rulers will be terrified because, without Babylon, they will be nothing.
- 13) They are terrified for Babylon, but more important, they are also terrified that they will receive the same fate for themselves.
- 14) Merchants – when we look in more detail at the merchants, we get a slightly different picture.
- 15) The list of various merchandise shows only a very few common items.
- 16) Most of the list contains luxuries, including precious metals, jewels, and cloth, aromatic perfumes, foods and so on.
- 17) One interesting item on the list is the last item “bodies and souls of men”
- 18) All the items in this list would be familiar to John’s readers and would be indicative of opulence.

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- 19) Slavery, of course was common in John's time but, it gives one pause for thought.
- 20) It makes one wonder if in the end times, slavery returns.
- 21) With the level of evil that the Antichrist's system represents, it would not be a surprise to me.
- 22) One group that is probably included but not directly mentioned in the merchants are all the countries that fed the economy of the great Babylonian system.
- 23) They too would be lamenting, as did the merchants.
- 24) The final group considered here are the men of the sea – they represent all those who indirectly make their livings from the Babylonian system.
- 25) As is obvious from their short lament, they realize the source of their wealth and know that, in comparison to anything that had existed before this system, none would compare.
'Was there ever a city like this great city?'

Judgment Enjoyed

- 1) As one might consider appropriate, the angel now addresses those who have been waiting for this very moment – all of heaven.

Rev 18:20 (NIV)

Judgment Completed

- 2) John then continues his description of the ongoing vision

Rev 18:21-23 (NIV)

Judgment Completed

- 3) The judgment is now complete.
- 4) John begins by describing another strong angel who completes the destruction.
- 5) From the highest to the lowest, they are all wiped out and will never exist in this system again.
- 6) So complete is the destruction that none of the normal activities of human life will ever take place in her again.

Judgment Justified

- 1) Almost like a period on a sentence, the angel pronounces a justification for the judgment that he has carried out.

Rev 18:23-24 (NIV)

- 1) One interesting note on the final words of this justification is “all who have been killed on the earth.”
 - a) This probably refers to the deaths of all those Christians who have been killed in the past three- and one-half years because they would not bow and worship the Antichrist.
 - b) This makes the ending and justification even more significant.

>>>>>> Lesson 27 <<<<<<<

- 1) The scene in Revelation now shifts from earth, where it has been since chapter 6, to heaven.
- 2) The intervening chapters have detailed God's judgment on the sinful world.
- 3) The final target of God's wrath was the Antichrist's worldwide religious, political, and economic empire, symbolized by its capital city of Babylon.
- 4) Now, is the time for rejoicing!
- 5) Some might think heaven's rejoicing over Babylon's destruction to be insensitive and uncaring.
- 6) The reality is that those sinners will have had the greatest opportunity to repent of any people who have ever lived.
 - a) They will have experienced the unprecedented disasters of the Tribulation, which they will acknowledge to be God's judgments (6:17).
 - b) They will also have heard the most powerful preaching of the gospel in history:
 - i) from the 144,000 Jewish evangelists
 - ii) the two witnesses
 - iii) the host of the redeemed saved during the Tribulation
 - iv) and finally, in chapter 14, we even see them being told by a powerful angel.
- 7) Yet despite all that, they will remain unrepentant to the very end.
- 8) They are hardened in their unbelief and defiant hatred of God.
- 9) The heavenly rejoicing is not over the damnation of these who reject God, but because Jesus Christ will soon remove them from the world and begin His reign.

Rev 19:1-3 (NIV)

- 10) As the beginning text of chapter 19 unfolds, five reasons for heaven's joy become evident:
- 11) The **first** rejoicing is praise and honor to God.
- 12) The **second**, God has made no mistakes His judgements are true.
- 13) **Third**, He has provided salvation for all those who would accept it and turn to Him.
- 14) The **fourth** cause for rejoicing being spelled out is that the worst rebellion against God and His Son that has ever been, is now ended.
 - a) Even though God allowed it, it is still cause for rejoicing when it ends.
 - b) Included in that is the specific destruction of the source of that rebellion – the Babylonian empire.
- 15) **Fifth and final**, not only is it destroyed, but we also see from the statement “The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever” that the destruction is eternal – an empire or force of this nature will never exist again.

Rev 19:4-10 (NIV)

- 1) As John continues relaying the vision before him, he sees the praise continue.
- 2) In this passage, there are two major points of praise.
- 3) The **first** is that God is in control.
 - a) He is now and forever has been.
 - b) Through this entire description of the destruction of Babylon, God has been in control.
 - c) He was in control when he allowed it to come into being.
 - d) And equally in control thru the destruction.
- 4) The **second** praise in this passage is because the marriage of the Lamb is prepared.
- 5) The indication here is that the bride is prepared, the saints are all home.
- 6) Verses 6-10 describe the marriage supper of the Lamb, but the event does not occur at this point.
- 7) This foreshadows the actual event, and its appealing description is meant to invite the readers to take part in the banquet.
- 8) In Jewish tradition, a wedding had three stages.
 - a) First, the two families would agree to the union and negotiate a betrothal.
 - b) Second, they would make a public announcement.
 - i) At that point, the couple would be "pledged."
 - ii) This is similar to engagement today, except that it was much more binding in ancient times.
 - iii) At this point, even though the couple was not officially married, their relationship could be broken only through death or divorce.
 - c) This second step lasted a year. During that time, the couple would live separately.
 - i) This waiting period would demonstrate the bride's purity.
 - ii) In a sense, that betrothal time for the bride is like the present days for the bride of Christ, the church.
 - iii) The church is presently in that waiting period between the betrothal and the actual wedding banquet, described by John here. We will see a fuller description of this in chapters 21 and 22.
 - d) The third and last step is the wedding banquet and the union of the couple.
 - i) In Old Testament times, it was customary for wedding guests to be given special clothes to wear to the banquet.
 - ii) It was unthinkable to refuse to wear these clothes.

- iii) That would insult the host, who could only assume that the guest was arrogant and thought the clothes were unnecessary, or that he or she did not want to take part in the wedding celebration.
- iv) The wedding clothes picture the righteousness needed to enter God's Kingdom — the total acceptance in God's eyes that Christ gives every believer.
- v) Christ has provided these clothes of righteousness, but each person must choose to put them on in order to enter the King's banquet (eternal life).
- vi) This clothing also pictures "the righteous acts of the saints" (19:8).

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9) It is now time for a final cleanup before Christ's millennial reign begins.

1) I think that here, John MacArthur's introductory comments to this section of chapter 19 are right on point and truly set the stage for what we are about to see.

“A century ago most people believed that history was progressing inexorably toward a man-made utopia. The Industrial Revolution, the march of scientific discovery, and the increasing pace of social reform seemed to augur nothing but brighter days ahead. Today, however, two world wars; innumerable regional, civil, and national wars; countless acts of terrorism and senseless violence; and the nearly complete collapse of moral values make such rosy optimism seem quaintly naive.

The Bible teaches that things will be wonderfully better, but only after they become unimaginably worse. There is only one solution for the world's problems: the return of its true King, the Lord Jesus Christ, to establish absolute monarchy and unilateral authority in His earthly kingdom. Only under His rule will there be peace instead of war, justice instead of inequity, and righteousness instead of wickedness. But that glorious event will not occur without fierce opposition from Satan, his demon hordes, and the world of wicked sinners. The Tribulation, the seven-year period immediately before Christ's return, will see the greatest of all human world empires, headed by the evil genius known as the Antichrist. The earth will be infested with demons, those who have been here all along, those cast from heaven with Satan (12:9), and those released from imprisonment during the Tribulation (9:1-10,14-20). The Tribulation will also be a time of escalating human wickedness, despite the unprecedented outpouring of God's wrath in the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. Stubbornly hardening their hearts against the truth of the gospel, people even then will obstinately refuse to repent (9:20-21; 16:9,11). Even the destruction of the Antichrist's magnificent capital city of Babylon (chaps. 17-18) will provoke loud laments, but no repentance.”

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- 2) As we proceed thru the remainder of chapter 19 and the beginning verses of chapter 20, we need to emphasize again, a few of the precepts we have been using during this study.
 - a) First, symbolism – we need to continue to try not to get too bound up in the literal view of the symbols.
 - i) Keep the big picture in mind along with the results.
 - b) Second, overall view – we have taken the futurist view of revelation throughout the study.
 - i) Simply stated (again) this means that John’s visions and writing here are relevant to all who have had and will have access to them until the seals are broken and God’s final plan unfolds.
 - c) Third, millennial view – we have been approaching the study with a premillennial view.
 - i) The basic idea being the there will be a defined tribulation beginning with the passing of the scroll to Christ and the opening of the seals and ending with a second coming and a defined 1000-year reign.
 - ii) That will be followed by the judgement and the passing away of the old earth and the creation of the new heaven and new earth.
- 3) As I have said numerous times, there are other perfectly legitimate views of the Revelation.
 - a) All of them including the one we have taken have varying degrees of challenge in reading, interpreting, and applying the writings.
 - b) Paramount must be the realization that God is in charge and that however He literally has these events unfold, we, His children, and faithful followers, win and will be with Him and His beloved son forever!

4) With that, starting in verse 11 >>>>>>

Rev 19:11-21 (NIV)

- 3) Common sense would dictate that one fantastic way to put your enemy on shaky ground would be to capture their commander.
- 4) Many times throughout history when this has occurred, the troops simply scatter.
- 5) Here, the first actions of this war were the capture of the Beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet.
- 6) They were taken completely out of the action.
- 7) Next, as overwhelming as the vision must have been and is even to us, the rest were killed with the sword.
 - a) The word rest here refers to “the kings of the earth, and their armies.”
 - b) Christ told the church at Pergamum this was going to take place in chapter 2

Rev 2:16 (NIV)

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- c) We of course can't know the actual mechanism that would be used to accomplish this (not that we probably would want to).
 - d) I think the idea here is that the destruction of all who opposed Christ at the battle of Armageddon was total, final, and instantaneous!
- 8) We are now almost ready for the millennial reign to begin – we have one last order of business to attend to.

What is the big thing that is left to do?

>>>>>> Lesson 28 <<<<<<<

- 1) When we left last time, we were almost ready for the millennial reign to begin.
 - a) The battle of Armageddon has been fought
 - b) The beast and the false prophet have been dispatched to the lake of burning sulfur
 - c) We have one last order of business to attend to.

What is the big thing that is left to do?

- 2) Continuing then in chapter 20 beginning with verse 1 >>>>>>

Rev 20:1-3 (NIV)

- 3) This is obviously describing the imprisonment of the spoiler – Satan himself.
- 4) Christ’s reign on the earth for the millennium cannot be the reign it is meant to be with Satan roaming the earth causing problems.
- 5) One thing to keep firmly in mind at this time is that this is not the final punishment for Satan, this is only confining him.
- 6) He will shortly have one more great hoorah before his eternal punishment begins.

Continuing ...

Rev 20:4-6 (NIV)

- 1) Here we have a very brief description of the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.
- 2) I’m sure we all wish John’s vision would have included a more detailed description which told more of the details of what it will be like during that 1000 years.
- 3) Here are some possible ideas of how it might be:
 - a) Imagine a world dominated by righteousness and goodness.
 - i) A world where there is no injustice, where no court ever renders an unjust verdict, and where everyone is treated fairly.
 - b) Imagine a world where what is true, right, and noble marks every aspect of life.
 - c) Our personal relationships, commerce, education, and government are all governed by Christian ideas and God’s principles.
 - i) Not just lip service but true heart felt principles.
 - d) Imagine a world where there is complete, total, enforced, and permanent peace.
 - e) A world where joy abounds and good health prevails, so much so that people live for hundreds of years.
 - f) Imagine a world ruled by a perfect, glorious Ruler, who instantly and firmly deals with sin.
- 4) This may be fantasy – perhaps wishful thinking.

5) But it might also accurately describe conditions during the future earthly kingdom of the Lord.

6) John MacArthur comments:

“The restored and radically reconstructed earth of the millennial kingdom will constitute paradise regained. The thousand-year reign of the Savior over the earth is the divinely planned and promised culmination of all of redemptive history and the realization of the hope of all the saints of all the ages.”

7) There are a few points that the apostle makes in this short description that we should take a look at.

8) First, John sees thrones of “those who had been given authority to judge.”

a) The Scripture does not identify them specifically.

b) Many interpreters believe that these are those who had been martyred for their faith, but the problem with this idea is that the martyrs are not mentioned until the last part of the verse.

c) Some suggest that this is only the twenty-four elders (4:4) or, that this forms an angelic court of some kind.

d) In Matt 19:28, the apostles are promised that they will judge from twelve thrones.

e) First Corinthians 6:2-3 says that the saints will judge the world.

f) Bottom line is, we don't really know.

g) What we can determine is that this is a court in heaven composed of those whom God wants to assist in judgment

9) Next, the passage discusses those who will reign with Christ during the Millennium. Again, we step into an area that has a wide variety of opinions and interpretations.

a) The NIV breaks this next sentence into two sentences.

“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.”

b) By translating it this way, the inference is made that the second sentence is more describing the subject of the previous sentence – those who had been beheaded because of their testimony.

c) However, if we look at the Greek it is one sentence.

d) That plus the wording, leads to is some uncertainty regarding the second sentence.

e) Should it be further description of the first group or actually describing a second group?

f) The LABC describes this dilemma this way:

“Between the sentence describing the martyrs and the sentence that says they had not worshiped the beast . . . nor accepted his mark, the Greek includes the words "and who," which can be taken as a further description of the martyrs, or as a description of an entirely different group. If the latter is the case, John saw the martyrs, whom he had described in 6:9-11, as well as others who were martyred during the Great Tribulation. Then he saw a separate group, those who "had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their foreheads or their hands.

If "those who had not worshiped the beast" is merely a further description of the martyrs, then it appears that only the martyrs came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years — a reward for their ultimate faithfulness to Christ by giving up their lives.”

10) Looking further at the definition of the word οἱτινες (hoitines) that LABC mentions here I found a definition in Strong’s that says the word can also mean “any that.”

11) Reading the single sentence that way (with the “... and any that” in place) to me, would indicate more strongly for an interpretation that John is describing a second group beyond just describing the martyrs.

12) John then states that

“This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”

13) Note, some translations have a parenthetical expression before these verses:

“(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended).”

- a) This normally indicates it was an added comment not in the original manuscripts.
- b) However, it is in NA27 which indicates that it was part of a requisite number, or it would not be there.

c) Comment on manuscript differences

14) This first resurrection, then, could be a resurrection only of the martyrs and those who had not worshiped the Beast.

15) If so, then the rest of the believers along with the unbelievers are described as the rest of the dead who do not come to life until the thousand years are over.

16) At this point, God will separate the unbelievers from the believers, sending the former to the lake of fire and granting the latter eternal life.

17) However, some commentators think that all believers partake of the first resurrection because all believers have been freed from the second death — that is, the lake of fire.

18) MacArthur states flatly that

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“These are the unbelieving dead of all ages, whose resurrection to judgment and damnation is described in verses 11-15. John calls the resurrection of the saints from all ages the first resurrection.”

- 19) The phrase "come to life" refers to a physical resurrection of their bodies. These believers will have new bodies, as described in 1 Cor 15:51-53.
- 20) It occurs to me that it is possible that one reason for that amillennialist' view is amount of things that are open for interpretation here.
- 21) On the other hand, I personally find the number of specific facts given here to be evidence that the amillennialist' view may not correct.
- 22) I do however want to make the point again that the correctness or incorrectness of this view is not a salvation issue. IT IS OPINION!
 - a) If we are faithful and true to our God, we will be part of His kingdom forever.
 - b) How all of this finally plays out is interesting but – AGAIN, WE WIN!!!
- 23) We may not have an exhaustive description of the earthly millennial kingdom; however, this passage does give us four essential truths about it:
 - a) The removal of Satan
 - b) The reign of the Saints
 - c) The return of Satan
 - d) And the revolt of society.
- 24) We have covered the first two and next, we will look at Satan's return and the revolt of society.

Rev 20:7-10 (NIV)

- 1) Unfortunately, this section of the passage is one more area that becomes controversial and confusing at the same time.
- 2) First, we must return to a fact that may or may not have been clear to this point – the millennial reign of Christ though wonderful and peaceful, is NOT heaven.
- 3) These are living breathing human beings that make up the kingdom over which Christ rules.
- 4) As indicated, there are those who reign with Him that are raised to life (again physical corporeal life) to reign with Him for this 1000 years.
- 5) We might think of this like unto the time Noah and his family spent in the Ark.
 - a) The world had been destroyed – all were gone except for those in the Ark.
 - b) Once they started life back on terra firma, Satan's influence was there, and sin began anew.
- 6) Additionally, it is not totally clear as to the disposition of rest of the population of the world after the battle of Armageddon –
 - a) was the earth totally devoid of life after that and the millennial reign started fresh?
 - b) or were there people remaining?

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- 7) These are simply questions we have no concrete answers to.
- 8) However, what we do know from these verses is that the “nations” (again made up of people) are capable of being deceived.
- 9) And they are going to be deceived in numbers “like the sand on the seashore.”
- 10) Gog and Magog symbolize all the nations of the earth that join together under Satan to battle God.
- 11) It is inferred throughout scripture that Christ will reign from Jerusalem and that is here referred to as the “beloved city.”
- 12) As we see, like Armageddon 1000 years earlier, this battle really becomes a mass execution – last vestige of sinful man will be wiped from the face of the earth in preparation for its final destruction and replacement.
- 13) And the final act here is placing Satan and all his demonic angels in their final home – the lake of fire with the Antichrist and the false prophet – EVIL IS ENDED!!

>>>>>> Lesson 29 <<<<<<<

- 1) Last time, we had much discussion and many questions about the millennium reign of Christ here on earth.
- 2) Probably leaving many questions unanswered.
- 3) Having a couple of weeks to mull this over (well maybe) do you have any questions or further comments on any that we discussed?
- 4) O.k. moving on to verse 11 of chapter 20 John begins his description of the new heaven and earth after the final battle of the 1000-year reign.

Rev 20:11-15 (NIV)

- 1) Here, John begins his description of the final scene for all of mankind.
- 2) The first thing John describes ever so briefly is “a great white throne and him who was seated on it”.
 - a) Obviously, God’s throne.
 - b) However, as MacArthur so aptly describes the one sitting on it:

“Sharing the throne with the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ. In 3:21 Jesus promised, “He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” In John's vision of the new heaven and the new earth, he saw “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (22:1,3).

Though the Father and the Son share the throne, it is the Son who is uniquely in view here, since Scripture teaches that He will judge sinners. In John 5:22 Jesus said, “Not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,”
(from The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Copyright © Moody Press and John MacArthur, Jr., 1983-2005.)

- 3) Moving to the first action that John sees, it is the demise of the earth and indeed, one can assume the universe as it has been known since its creation.
- 4) Not one person or thing will escape this moment in history.
- 5) Scattered throughout the remainder of the passage, John describes those who are there – in short, everyone.
 - a) At this point, there are no more flesh and blood beings.
 - i) Every soul that has ever lived from Adam and Eve to the last human being that was born during the millennial reign is standing before the throne.
- 6) The next action John describes is the opening of the “books.”

“and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”

- 7) Again, there are varying opinions on who is present here – some believe that only sinners are present because scripture tells us there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ.

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- a) I personally find that a very weak argument. Just because you are present at this point does not mean you are one of the ones being condemned so scripture would still hold true.
 - i) Another argument against that idea is scripture tells us that there are “books” that have been opened and “the dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books”
 - ii) Multiple books filled with deeds being judged!
 - iii) However, the “book of life” is also opened.
 - iv) There would be no need of that book to be opened if everyone there was condemned.
- 8) Some view this as a horrific court scene:
 - a) There is only a judge – no advocate no prosecutor.
 - b) The accused have no rights they are only there for sentencing.
- 9) On the other hand, I think this is more **like** the scene that Christ describes in Matthew.
- 10) Though it is a little longer reading I feel it is appropriate in context here.

Matt 25:31-46 (NIV)

- 11) Returning to Revelation, John completes his description of this scene with ... >>>
14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
- 12) Death and Hades being thrown into the lake of fire means that since they are not persons – not capable of being punished – they simply pass from existence.
- 13) There are only two places in existence now for the resurrected souls of all mankind – the lake of fire and eternal punishment or the new heaven and new earth and eternal life with God.
- 14) The STRUGGLE IS ENDED!

Chapters 21 and 22

- 1) Chapter 21 and chapter 22 are considered by most to be the best parts of Revelation.
- 2) These next passages are the actual physical description of the new Jerusalem.
- 3) In this, we read what God gave John thru inspiration to describe our heavenly home.
- 4) John uses terms and items that spark the hope and imagination of all of us and his readers.
- 5) We can rest totally assured that what he describes will be as he describes.
- 6) It will be this and so much more.
- 7) As we proceed, we will be looking at some of the symbols and what they might possibly mean in the apocryphal context.
- 8) However, we will not be searching for hidden meanings to try to describe what heaven will be like beyond what God has revealed here.
- 9) To John and his readers the analogies and descriptions used were probably the most exciting and beautiful ways that could be imagined for them to see their future home.
- 10) Though we do not necessarily see these items with the same level of excitement that they did, we can be sure that our heavenly home will be more exciting, more beautiful, and more peaceful than anything we can ever imagine.
- 11) There will be NO negative emotions left – ONLY positive and wonderful feelings!
- 12) God has promised no more tears, no more sadness, and if I may be so bold, I think we can infer from all that, no more disappointment
 - a) This means simply we cannot possibly be disappointed when we are finally with the Lord in our heavenly home.
- 13) No matter what our imaginings conjure up as to what it will be like, it will be beyond that.

Rev 21:1-5 (NIV)

- 1) John begins another portion of his current vision (καὶ εἶδον) in which he sees the new heaven and the new earth.
- 2) There is really no description given for the new heaven and new earth, save the statement that there was no longer a sea.
- 3) This could be a literal reference to the new earth having no large bodies of water.
 - a) In it is in the literal sense, it represents a total environmental difference from the existing earth.
 - i) Our entire ecosystem depends on the sea as a driving force – all life on earth is dependent on water for its survival.
 - b) In a not so “literal sense” it could be a symbolic statement indicating that there is nothing foreboding or sinful remaining.

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- i) In ancient times the sea was associated with monsters and sin – remember, the beast came from the sea.
- 4) In either case, we can rest assured that the new universe and the new earth will be a magnificent creation.
- 5) It will be perfect in every way – peaceful and beautiful beyond our most wonderful imaginings.
- 6) Next, John sees the most significant part of the new heaven and earth descending from heaven – the new Jerusalem the Holy City which will now be the dwelling place of God himself.
- 7) God will live with us and we with him in perfect harmony.
- 8) He will still be God and we will still be his children, but the relationship will be as it was meant to be before the fall.
- 9) It will be personal and intimate – as the passage indicates, God will wipe tears from our eyes.
- 10) As we said before, this also declares that there is an absence of anything to be sorry about — no sadness, no disappointment, no pain, **no temptations, and no sin.**
- 11) There will be no tears of misfortune, no tears of remorse, no tears of regret, tears over the death of loved ones, or tears for any other reason.
- 12) And the concluding and most significant statement of the passage – “for the old order of things has passed away.”
 - a) The old human experience related to the original, fallen creation is gone forever.
 - b) There is no more entropy – things never get old and fall apart as they do now.
 - c) All the mourning, suffering, sorrow, disease, pain, and death that has characterized “the old order of things” since the Fall are gone forever.
- 13) Stating this in a positive way in verse 5 – “He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"”
- 14) Then, beginning in the second half of verse 5, God speaks to John directly ...

Rev 21:5b-8 (NIV)

- 1) These words bring John back to reality.
- 2) It brings him back to the present – his present – and the actual writing of this book of prophesy.
- 3) Here, I personally think is one of the most significant statements in all scripture.
- 4) God himself simply and directly states to John for all mankind to read and hear the simple requirements that must be met in order to inherit all that has been described – to be part of the new heaven and new earth and have this eternal wonderful relationship with God.

“He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

So, how do we overcome?

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By not being counted among “the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars”

Can we accomplish this? NO

Keeping our sins “fessed up”

Rev 21:9-11 (NIV)

- 1) One of the angels that had poured out the seven bowls takes John away to a high mountain vantage point (in the Spirit of course) and opens to him the most wonderful vision of his entire experience.
 - a) He is to be shown all those who now make up the bride of Christ – the church.
 - b) But first, he is to be shown their dwelling place – the mansions that Christ had promised before he departed this earth.
- 2) As with much of what we have studied to this point, these descriptions are not to be taken literally.
- 3) That does not, however, diminish in any way the glory or the magnitude of what John is describing.
- 4) As we discussed a bit ago, we will never be able to comprehend completely the magnificence and sheer beauty of our new home until we are there.
- 5) The grand reveal will be far more exciting than any HGTV reveal you have ever seen.
 - a) We obviously won't take God's name in vein as those who see the reveals on HGTV but, we will be awed and amazed none the less.
- 6) One thing about the HGTV reveals, some of them have very little of the homeowners original furnishings in them.
 - a) They are "staged" to look like the designer desires which makes them fantastic.
 - b) I often wonder how the home will look when that is all replaced with the furniture etc. that the homeowner has.
 - c) In the case of heaven, that will not be a problem – everything we see is provided by and designed by God and we will not have to deal with any of our old, outdated furnishings.
 - d) Everything including ourselves will be NEW and WONDERFUL!
 - e) The only thing we will keep is the "good old stuff."
- 7) The first point the angel makes in his description is heaven's brilliance.
- 8) The city is the throne and dwelling place of God, so he fills every part of it with his glory.
 - a) In fact, his glory will fill the entire universe at this point.

9) John MacArthur comments

"Heaven's capital city is thus pictured as a huge, flawless diamond, refracting the brilliant, blazing glory of God throughout the new heaven and the new earth."

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Continuing in verse 12 we read ...

Rev 21:12-17 (NIV)

- 1) First, of note here is that the new Jerusalem (**heaven**) appears not to be some nebulous cloud like place floating in a bright shapeless universe – it is physical with dimensions and unique and describable parts.
- 2) There are 12 gates, symmetrically laid out around the 4 walls of the city.
- 3) The fact that they are named for the 12 tribes of Israel celebrates God’s covenant relationship with the children of Israel and the fulfillment of His promises to them.
 - a) The arrangement of these gates was reminiscent of the way the twelve tribes camped around the tabernacle.
- 4) There are 12 foundation stones and on each was the name of one of the apostles of Jesus.
- 5) Here, we obviously have an issue to deal with.
 - a) The term "twelve apostles" could refer to the original twelve disciples, (One would assume minus Judas and perhaps including Mathias).
 - b) However, other believers had been called "apostles" (such as Paul and Barnabas).
 - c) There is obviously some debate on this point but, it is more important to understand the symbolism that the church rests on the work of the apostles — the first followers of Jesus than it is to know exactly which of the apostles’ names are being referred to here.
 - d) Paul writes in Eph 2:19-21:

Eph 2:19-21 (NIV)

- 6) Before there was concrete, in a lot of places, buildings were built on huge, quarried stones.
 - a) Another HGTV reference – foundation stone in old 1700’s inn being restored.
 - b) These 12 stones symbolically represent the most solid foundation that one could ever imagine.
 - c) The sheer magnitude of them is beyond anything we have ever seen.
 - d) As we will learn in a moment, each of them would be ~ 350 miles long (1/4 the length of the wall itself).
- 7) Indeed, that does bring us to the size of the city.
 - a) The 12,000 stadia measurement (1,420 miles) is perhaps coincidentally the approximate length of the Roman empire.
 - i) Perhaps for many people at the time, this represented the known world and even the universe to them.
 - b) For us, it represents a square that would fit approximately an area LA to Dallas, Dallas to the Canadian border, back west to the Washington state coast, and then back to LA.
 - i) In land area, basically ½ the size of the US.

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- ii) It is equally high, which literally, this would be a problem if we were still dealing with the old earth.
- c) The thickness of 144 cubits = 216 ft. ((18” x 144)/12)
- d) As measurements go in the universe as we know it today, this is not very large. In fact, it is miniscule!
- e) When we consider it as a cube, its height is also approximately 1420 miles. To help get this number into perspective, here are some distance facts for comparison:
 - i) Space is officially listed as 62 miles from the surface of the earth.
 - ii) The moon is a little over 200,000 miles.
 - iii) Low orbiting satellites are at approximately 1200 miles.
 - iv) The diameter of the earth is ~ 8,000 miles. A little over 5.5 x this 1420 mi distance.
- f) Again, as measurements go in the universe, a cube 1,420 x 1,420 x 1,420 is not very large.
- g) John does comment that these are in human measurements.
- h) *Again, John’s readers would not be able to comprehend lightyears and distances to the moon etc. To them, this was probably representing a size as large as their universe.*
- 8) As I contemplated this size, I wondered if God feels about space and size as scripture indicates He does about time – “day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day.”
- 9) Could He feel the same about space – in other words, he may feel the same about the size of the universe as we knew it as he does about the size of the new Jerusalem?
- 10) As always, our minds are not able to be like God’s mind.

Questions / Comments / Thoughts?

Rev 21:18-21 (NIV)

- 1) The material the walls are made of is jasper. This is the same stone mentioned in verse 11.
- 2) There is also an interesting connection that the LABC makes regarding this.
 - a) Back in chapter 4 vs. 3, John mentions in his description of God,
“And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian.” NIV
 - a) The commentator makes the connection that since the walls are described in this way, it may indicate that everything in the city would radiate the presence of God.
 - b) In light of upcoming comments in John’s continuing vision regarding no requirement for sun or moon for light because God is the light this fits quite well.
- 2) The next comment that John makes is a little confusing:
“and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass”
 - a) The concept of transparent gold is foreign to us.

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- b) We are not able to understand gold that is pure and clear.
 - c) Suffice to say, the idea is that God glory shines thru everything – this is likely the symbolic meaning of this transparentness we read of thru this and other passages.
- 3) The foundation stones were decorated with precious jewels.
- 4) Here we also see debate as to the meanings of the stones.
- a) Some have suggested that this imagery comes from the breastplate of the high priest, which had twelve precious stones on it (Ex 28:17-20),
 - b) Even though the identifications of the stones are different, this is the most likely source of the imagery
 - c) Of course, this is indicating that what had once been the high priest's privilege alone had become part of the very foundation of the city of God, made available to all.
 - d) The high priest would enter the Most Holy Place (again, this is the same shape as the city — a cube) only once each year on the Day of Atonement to make a sacrifice for the sins of the entire nation.
 - e) The Most Holy Place was the place of God's presence.
 - f) In the new Jerusalem, all of God's people will constantly be in his presence.
 - g) Nothing will ever again separate us from him.
- 5) Bottom line is the names of the various stones indicate jewels of various colors — all of them rare and beautiful.
- 6) The picture John gives of this city indicates beauty beyond description.
- 7) Each of the twelve gates was made from a single pearl.
- a) Pearls were very valuable in ancient times so a pearl large enough to make a gate for this great city would be beyond imagining.
- 1) Beginning in the second half of the last verse (21:b), John is transported to within the city walls for a close look at the features of this new home.

Rev 21:b-27 (NIV)

- 2) John begins his description as he says that "the street of the city is pure gold".
- a) In addition, the main street was pure gold, and again, as clear as glass, just like the rest of the city (21:18).
 - b) Again the emphasis is on its purity and transparency in order to radiate the glory of God.
 - c) In ancient times streets were not paved.
 - d) In the wet season streets were mud; in dry times they were dust.
 - e) This is quite a contrast to that is the new Jerusalem, where the redeemed walk on streets of gold!

- 3) Then we have another of these controversial passages. It is controversial because it makes a couple of references to things possibly outside the New Jerusalem which lead to speculations – these references are:
- a) Nations will walk by the light of the city.
 - b) The gates will never close (possible indication that there is traffic in and out of the New Jerusalem).
 - c) Glory and honor of nations will be brought into it.
 - d) Kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it
 - e) Nothing impure, shameful, or deceitful will ever enter it.
 - f) Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
- 4) If we collect some contextual evidence, I think we can remove some if not all the speculation and clearly see the big picture.
- 5) First, at the beginning of this vision the angel talking to John indicated that ...

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

- a) The bride of Christ is the church – all of us who are saved go to make up the church and the bride.
 - b) It is inferred here that the Holy City Jerusalem contains the bride – the church – all who are saved.
- 6) Next, we need to address the word used for nations here.
- a) It is ethnos which is defined as - Gentile, pagan; (foreign) nation, a people.
 - b) The passage indicates two things:
 - i) Nations will walk by the light of the city
 - ii) Glory and honor of nations will be brought into it.
 - c) Here I again think MacArthur has the correct perspective

"The idea is not that national identities will be preserved in the eternal state, but rather the opposite. People from every tongue, tribe, and nation — both Jews and Gentiles — will be united as God's people. Every believer will be fully equal in the eternal capital city."

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- 7) Also, considering the kings bringing their splendor into it.
- a) Here, I think the LABC really sums up the intent clearly

All people on earth, even the kings of the earth who experienced power and glory in this world, will simply bring their splendor to God's throne, casting down their

crowns before him. Their splendor will be nothing compared to what they will experience in eternity.

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8) Finally, Jesus himself gives us the true picture of the city and what is outside it in some of his final words to John.

Rev 22:12-14 (NIV)

9) To me, all of this brings only one logical conclusion – the New Jerusalem despite all the description of walls and gates and its size is simply heaven – our final dwelling place.

- a) The walls and gates and guardian angels at the gates should be taken only as symbols of how completely safe and isolated from any and all bad things we are – Not necessarily as literal features of our dwelling place.
- b) We are finally at rest and total peace and security reigns with us for all eternity.

>>>>>> Lesson 32 <<<<<<<

- 1) Moving to the final chapter 22 of this prophesy, we see the angel continuing to show John the marvels and wonders of the new heaven.
- 2) These descriptions take us back to the original garden of Eden before sin entered and the fall occurred.
- 3) Here, we have it as it was intended.
- 4) The big thing that is missing is Satan and his temptations.
- 5) We will no longer need to deal with that.

Rev 22:1-5 (NIV)

- 1) John is now shown what he calls the “river of the water of life.”
- 2) This is of course, not water as we know it.
- 3) Instead, it is a symbol that represents eternal life.
- 4) And, equally obvious, its source is the throne of God and Christ.
- 5) The phrase in the middle of its street is best translated "in the middle of its path" and connected with the following phrase on either side of the river was the tree of life.
- 6) The tree of life is the celestial counterpart to the tree of life in Eden.
- 7) We read in >>>>>

Gen 2:9 (NIV)

- 8) The tree of life was a familiar Jewish concept that expressed blessing, and the celestial tree as with the river of life symbolizes the blessing of eternal life.
- 9) That the tree bears twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month emphasizes the infinite variety that will fill heaven.
- 10) Then John makes the intriguing observation that the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
 - a) At first glance, this seems confusing, since obviously there will be no illness or injury in heaven.
 - b) Though one of the meanings of Greek word for healing used here is healing, its primary meaning is service care, serving, and attendance.
 - c) MacArthur comments:

“Perhaps a better way to translate it would be "life-giving," "health-giving," or "therapeutic." The leaves of the tree can be likened to supernatural vitamins, since vitamins are taken not to treat illness, but to promote general health. Life in heaven will be fully energized, rich, and exciting.”

- d) I’m not sure I agree with all that completely but, the point here is that the leaves of this tree are not for healing but for other purposes that will be clear to us when we are there and we see it.

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- e) Instead, it may actually have a relation to the comment the writer makes:

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

- f) We are now and will continue to be throughout eternity, the grateful and willing servants of our God because he loves us, and we love him and ideally desire to please him in every way possible.

11) John points out also that there will no longer be any curse – death will be no more.

12) He tells us again that there will be no night there – no longer a need for light because God will illuminate everything.

- a) This is one of those concepts that is hard to grasp and frankly, I really don't know exactly how it will take place, but I do know that it will be that way.

- b) Some commentators have suggested that everything in heaven will be translucent

- c) Recall, that in verse 21 of the last chapter, John describes the main street of heaven as:

“The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.”

- d) For me, it is hard to image transparent gold.

13) It occurs to me that this may be another way of stating simply that nothing will be hidden.

- a) There will be no more sin – nothing to hide.

- b) Our knowledge of God will be as complete as we will ever need.

- c) No legitimate question will be left unanswered.

14) The final statement here at the end of vs. 5 is “And they will reign for ever and ever.”

15) Paul tells us this in his second letter to Timothy

2 Tim 2:12 (NIV)

“if we endure, we will also reign with him.”

Rev 22:6-7 (NIV)

1) John is now transported back to we assume a non-vision state and is hearing the concluding words of the last angel guide is has had.

2) As we read this passage and the next, we need to pay close attention to a theme that seems to be prevalent in this conclusion.

- a) That theme is that the words of this prophesy are not to be messed with.

3) The angel begins his final remarks with:

"These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

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- a) Simply put, God is responsible for showing John what he is to have written here and they are exactly what “must soon take place.”
- 4) Next, the speaker obviously changes and becomes Jesus himself rather than the angel – he says:
"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."
- 5) This is a promise of a blessing for all who keep the words of this prophesy.
 - a) Keeping the words here I think we must assume implies both believing and obeying.
- 6) Next, John speaks and describes what he is doing.

Rev 22:8-11 (NIV)

- 1) John clearly states for a final time that he is the writer of this record of his visions.
- 2) He is in awe of what he has seen and recorded and attempts to worship the angel that was talking to him at this point.
- 3) The angel refuses his misplaced worship and rightly so.
- 4) He immediately shifts the worship attempt back to the rightful entity – “Worship God!”
- 5) The angle also reminds John of his own place in God’s grand scheme – he is a fellow servant.
 - a) He (and all angels) was actually John’s created fellow servant, and not only his, but also of his brethren the prophets, and of all believers who are defined here as those who heed the words of this book
- 6) The angel then makes a bookend statement:
"Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near"
- 7) I call it a bookend because, it mirrors Jesus’ words to John in Rev 1:1
"Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."
- 8) The message of Revelation that Jesus will return bringing blessing for His own and horrifying judgment on the ungodly, is too critical not to spread.
- 9) As I have stated numerous times throughout this study, there are many ways to look at this book.
 - a) However, I have become more and more convinced that one must be careful in its study.
 - b) MacArthur makes a comment regarding the angel’s statement not to seal the words of this prophesy that I think sums up what our attitude must be in any study of this book.

“That the specific words of Revelation are not to be sealed up stresses again that there is no hidden, secret meaning apart from the normal sense of the text. If the truth is not clear in those words, then this command is nonsense. If the plain, normal

understanding of the words of Revelation does not convey the meaning God intended its readers to grasp, then those words are sealed.”

10) The angel’s next statement may seem a little odd or out of place:

Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.

11) He is not saying that we should abandon the gospel and its teaching and just let mankind go ignorantly to destruction.

12) Instead, I think he is simply acknowledging that there are those who, regardless of their knowledge of God and His requirements will refuse to turn from their own selfish ways.

13) We have seen this clearly time after time in the accounts of the reactions of men to God’s wrath as set forth in this Revelation.

14) It is sobering to realize that people’s response to God’s good news and His love that made that good news possible will determine their eternal destiny.

15) As much as we would like to think otherwise, we must take God at His word and know that there are consequences for our actions or lack of response to Him.

16) However, we also know that God knows the heart of every individual and He has the final say in every case.

17) As a matter of fact, Jesus is going to tell us the same thing in the next few verses.

1) Continuing toward our conclusion, we begin in 22:12 – Jesus is speaking to John.

Rev 22:12-15 (NIV)

- 1) Jesus begins by saying again that he is coming soon.
- 2) He adds here that he is bringing his reward with him.
- 3) An in-depth discussion of rewards could almost be a study in itself.
- 4) The LABC I think, really adds a perspective and focus to this topic:

“Although all God's people will be saved and will enjoy the reward of eternity with him, a number of rewards seem to be given to individuals, according to what they have done. God will look at each individual's heart; thus, it may be that a quiet saint praying daily beside her bed will receive even greater reward than a flamboyant, well-known preacher. It may be that the woman who used her gifts to the fullest extent will be rewarded more greatly than the one who believed but was too afraid to reach her potential. God will not bestow his rewards in ways that we humans might. Each believer's job is to serve God to his or her fullest potential with a heart that is right with him.”

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- 5) One of the hardest concepts for us to grasp here is that no matter what our reward or the rewards of others we will be grateful and satisfied.
- 6) No regrets for not having done more.
- 7) No jealousy of others for what reward they received.
- 8) Nothing bad will beset us because of the rewards we and others receive.
- 9) Jesus continues by pronouncing the seventh and final beatitude of the Revelation. (v. 7; 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6.)

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

10) He is simply saying blessed are those who seek to purify themselves from a sinful way of life.

11) I think, to say it another way, **blessed are those who live for Christ and do everything in their power to live as God wants them to.**

12) God has given us a clear picture of what He wants of us – how He wants us to live.

- a) At the same time and in the same place, He has given us a clear picture of what happens when we ignore or shun His requirements for us.
- b) We also know that no matter how badly we mess up, He has provided redemption and a path to being what He wants.

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- c) Again, our job is to love Him and do all in our power to live for Him
 - d) Part of that is “washing our robes” – confessing our sins and repenting of them.
- 13) In this blessing, Jesus keeps his promise to the saints in his letter to the Ephesians back in chapter 2 of this book.

Rev 2:7 (NIV)

- 14) Entrance into the city of course equates entry into heaven and eternal life with the Lord.
- 15) He continues with another one of those statements that, if taken literally, would make one think He is saying the evil is outside the “City” (heaven).
- 15) Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.
- 16) However, we know that at this point, all those whom he describes here are really in the lake of fire along with the devil, and all that are his.
- 17) Simply put, He is saying that there are those that have missed out and will not be in heaven.

- 1) We now reach the final remarks of this wonderful Revelation of the completion of God’s plan.
- 2) And who is more appropriate to speak them than Christ himself.

Rev 22:16-19 (NIV)

- 3) Jesus first makes clear that he is responsible for ultimately showing John the visions and that he and he alone has the credentials to do so.
- 4) As we think back over the entire book, we can also so see this as an unequivocal statement of the trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are involved in completion of God’s plan.
- 5) He then, being back in and speaking to those of John’s time and forward to today and beyond until the end does come, he offers another encouraging word of promise – the door is still open and anyone who wants can still enter.
- 6) Those who desire can still have access to the tree of life.
- 7) Then, He adds some sobering words regarding the book.
- 8) Basically do not add or take away from the words that are given here.
- 9) If we allow our minds to proceed back thru the study, I think we can all see where there are opportunities to add, subtract, or otherwise change what is actually written.
 - a) As we said from the beginning of the study, there are many ways to approach the overall study of this book.
 - b) Some approaches require making assumptions about events in history.
 - c) Some require making assumptions about what things mean in the actual words of the book itself.

- d) All approaches require making assumptions about the times we see unfold within its pages.
 - e) Bottom line is, given our understanding of the apocryphal nature of the book, it being prophesy, and simply the study in itself, some assumptions must be made.
 - f) However, I personally do not feel that the assumptions we make because of our understandings or lack thereof are really additions or subtractions.
 - g) All that being said, there may be a fine line between assumptions and additions or subtractions.
 - h) The key most likely is why we make the assumptions we do –
 - (1) Is it for understanding? **OR**
 - (2) Is it an attempt to make the text say what we really want it to say?
 - ii) The latter would obviously be the addition/subtraction mode.
 - iii) Then, there is the idea of “binding” – it is one thing to have an opinion as to what a passage may mean or refer to specifically.
 - iv) However, if we make that opinion – a matter of salvation if you will – then we are definitely in the column of “adding or subtracting.”
- 10) One of the reasons why I feel that the futurist approach to the study is *perhaps* best is because it is I think less prone to assumptions than perhaps other approaches.
- 11) The bottom line of this is simply as you proceed from this study and think about the book and its message, keep in mind that what is here is for our edification and knowledge.
- a) It is prophesy – it is not an unsolvable mystery.
 - b) It is not a detective story.
 - c) It is God’s revealing of how His plan completes.
 - d) And, ultimately, as we have said numerous times, WE WIN!
- 12) If we keep these things in mind, perhaps, it will be easier to stay away from studies and teachings that do add to or take away from the “words of the prophesy.”

Rev 22:20 (NIV)

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

NIV