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"Revelation In Review" — 17

SPECIAL END OF THE STORY ISSUE

West Valley End-Time Ministries Newsletter

"The End of the Story" — Revelation 20

This Special Issue of West Valley Ministries Newsletter follows a rather comprehensive "review" of the Book of Revelation, presented in previous issues over a period of many weeks. The characters of Revelation have been identified and their roles described in the great drama of the ages – the battle between good and evil – the war between Christ and Satan.

In this issue, we will tell, **in narrative form**, the "end" of this story as written in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Revelation. In these chapters we witness the eternal defeat of the devil, evil, and evildoers. Further, we observe in these two chapters the final victory of Christ over Satan and the eternal rescue of the "saints" from this war-scarred battlefield of earth.

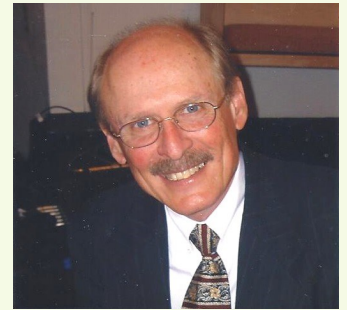
The Fall of Babylon and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

The "end of the story" begins with the fall of Babylon, the final coalition of false religion, invented by Satan to "deceive the whole world." The nations of earth, who have traded in her corrupt, prostitution of truth and in the blood of the saints, have now witnessed the judgments of God upon her (the plagues), they have realized their own imminent fate, and they have withdrawn their support of her, causing "the Euphrates to dry up in preparation of the way of the kings of the east" – the coming of Christ with His armies. Heaven is exuberant as she sees the fall and judgment of Babylon. There is rejoicing and praise to Jesus Christ, "for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [the Church] has made herself ready."

The Invasion of Heaven's Armies

The next scene of this "end of the story" is that of Jesus Christ bursting through the skies, riding victoriously on a white horse, with crowns upon His head, a sword in His mouth and His armies, also on white horses and dressed in white linen, storming from heaven to earth with Him. It's a glorious sight, one bringing terror to the lost yet words of ecstatic praise to the lips of the saved – "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us!" A trumpet sounds, the voice of Christ calls forth the saints of all ages from their dusty graves, myriads of God's angels are sent forth to gather the risen and the living saints to escort them up into the skies to meet their Savior in the air.

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Pastor Darrell Chilson

"We are living in the season of Christ's return."

Jesus said, "Watch and be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

The mission of West Valley Ministries is to help Christ's followers recognize the signs of His approaching return and be prepared for that Great Day.



Our Instructor, Jessica Lindsey

John 20

The Empty Tomb (*Matt. 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12*)

1 Now the **first day of the week Mary Magdalene** went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. **2** Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, **“They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”**

3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. **4** So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. **5** And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, **7** and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. **8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10** Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

1. What does Mary believe has happened? What is the significance?
2. Did Simon Peter, John or Mary know Jesus would rise from the dead?
3. Why do you think Mary stayed but Peter and John went home?

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. **12** And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. **13** Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”


14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to Him,^[fn] “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her, **“Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’”**



18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord,[fn] and that He had spoken these things to her.

Commentary- Do not cling to me

- i. "Probably we should understand the Greek tense here in the strict sense. The present imperative with a negative means 'Stop doing something' rather than 'Do not do something'." (Morris)
- ii. "Jesus was not protesting that Mary should not touch Him lest He be defiled, but was admonishing her not to detain Him because He would see her and the disciples again." (Tenney)

The Apostles Commissioned

(Luke 24:36–43; 1 Cor. 15:5)

19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled,[fn] for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." **20** When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." **22** And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Seeing and Believing

24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" **27** Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."


28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Question

- 1) What does Jesus mean by "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"

That You May Believe

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.



The Great Slaughter

And what are Satan and the armies of earth doing at this moment? As they see the signs of Christ and His hosts coming in the heavens, they, who have been in their final pursuit of the righteous, now turn their attention to the invading armies of heaven and begin gathering their forces for battle. But even as they do, John records,

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." Revelation 19:17, 18.

The Capture of the Beast and False Prophet


For six millennia, since the days of Eden, Christ has looked forward (an understatement) to this moment of victory over the serpent and all the horror and death he has brought upon His cherished creation. Now, with the serpent's judgment, punishment and destruction in sight, the vultures are called to gather for a feast upon the host of wicked who fall from the sword of the Warrior King and the brightness of His coming. The beast is captured, and with him the false prophet, and they are cast alive into the lake of fire. The remaining followers of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are killed at the words of Christ, symbolized by the sword proceeding from His mouth, and "the birds of the air were filled with their flesh."

The Bottomless Pit

With the beast and the false prophet captured and thrown into the lake of fire, the dragon is then apprehended, chained, and thrown into the bottomless pit, where he is shut up for a thousand years "**so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.**" Many have speculated what might be represented by this term, and many have been wrong. Let's look at the meaning of this term from a biblical perspective.

- 1) The bottomless pit is a term used seven times in the Book of Revelation, and is always described as **a place of restricted domain for the devil and his demons**. Notice in the paragraph above, Satan is bound in the bottomless pit **so he cannot deceive the nations** any longer till the thousand years are finished. The nature of this "pit" is such that it temporarily prohibits the devil from deceiving the nations. But when he is released from this "pit" at the end of the millennium, "he will go out to deceive the nations [again] and gather them to battle" Revelation 20:8.
- 2) Before "God created the heavens and the earth" in Genesis 1, the Bible says the earth "was without form and empty" – an abyss. The Greek Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) uses the same Greek word (**abyssos**) that is used in Revelation to describe the "bottomless pit" to describe the earth before creation. The bottomless pit is not a new place, any more than hell is a new place. Both places are planet earth at different times and in different states!

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- 3) The “bottomless pit” is this earth without any living soul upon it, and void of form. The judgments of God have literally destroyed the topography of the earth, prior to and at the time of Jesus’ return, and there is no longer any living creature upon it for the devil to deceive. It is a prison for the devil for one thousand years. It is truly an abyss as it was before creation. And at the end of the thousand years, Revelation 20 speaks of the wicked dead being resurrected to face judgment and then destruction. This is how Satan is “released” from his prison so he can once again deceive the nations, this time into thinking they can take the holy city, the New Jerusalem, which has come down from heaven and destroy the saints within its walls. After all, “look at how many of them there are! – “whose number is as the sand of the sea” Revelation 20:8.

But the Bible tells us that when they attempt to take the city, “fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them.” That, my friend, is hell – this earth on fire, destroying the devil, his agents, the wicked, and all the effects of sin and evil that scar the earth! The infiltration of paganism into the Christian church over the centuries has distorted the simple truth of the Bible, and these are two more examples – a bottomless pit beyond the boundaries of this planet, and a hell beyond the boundaries of this planet where people are even now burning, and will continue to burn throughout eternity! Can you think of anything more insulting to God’s nature – His goodness and justice!!!

The Judgment – Part 1

The thousand years spoken of in Revelation 20 are literally 1,000 years – The Millennium. During that time, there are no living persons on earth, for they have all been killed by the “sword” of Christ’s word or the brightness of His coming. Satan and his demons are bound to this earth in its desolation and darkness with no one to deceive until the wicked are resurrected at the end of the millennium to face judgment. It is then that the hosts of the lost of humanity are gathered together for battle against Christ and the saints.

During the thousand years of desolation on earth, the saints (the saved of all ages) are said to “reign with Christ.” They are those who have given their lives for their witness to Christ and His Word, and those who had not worshipped the beast or received his mark. John says that the saints are involved in the judgment of the wicked during this time – participating in reviewing the lives of those who are to be destroyed in hell and sharing in God’s judgment of them. The saints become somewhat of a jury in the courts of heaven, prior to the final sentencing and destruction of the wicked of humanity and the devil and his angels as well. Pretty incredible that the saved get to judge the lost in partnership with the Great Judge of the Universe! You can be sure that every child of God who has seen and been affected by Satan and the evil he has brought upon our race will know in the end that justice has been served and that God has truly avenged His own! We will see with our own eyes, understand in our hearts, and be satisfied!

The Judgment – Part 2

At the end of the thousand years, we accompany the hosts of heaven in the heavenly city, back to earth. We witness the resurrection of the wicked dead, their final judgment, their attack on the city and the saints within its walls, and then the fires of hell as the devil and his angels, the wicked of all ages, and every vestige of evil are erased from the surface of the earth – FOREVER! Revelation 20 ends with these two verses:

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14, 15.

Next week, our topic will be “The Beginning of a New Story.” In that issue, we get a glimpse of heaven in all its glory, and then we take a peek into a new earth and life on it – FOREVER! —**STAY TUNED!**