

## Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

### A Jet Tour Through Revelation

Scripture: Revelation

Code: 1290

Well, tonight we're in for, I trust, a great time, and in order to make the most of it, open your Bible to the book of Revelation. Tonight we have as our purpose a tour through this marvelous book.

While you're turning to Revelation 1:1, let me just say that no book in Scripture reveals the glory of God and Christ in any more splendor than does this book, and yet no book has been more misunderstood and misinterpreted and neglected than this book. In chapter 22 of Revelation, in verse 10, it says, "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." If there's one thing God wants in regard to this book, it is that we know what it teaches: seal it not.

The book begins with a blessing, chapter 1 verse 3, "Blessed is he that readeth..." It ends with a blessing, chapter 22 verse 7, "...blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book." It is the only book in the Bible that begins and ends with a promise of blessing to the one who reads. And we are told that we are to understand it because the time is at hand, and what that basically means, in chapter 22 verse 10, is that what is said here is the next event on God's messianic timetable.

Now, the key to the book is found in chapter 1 verse 1, and we're going to dive right in at that point and go from there. "The revelation of Jesus Christ," that's what the book is about. It is the apocalypse, the *apokalupsis*, the unveiling, the revealing of Jesus Christ, the uncovering of the truth about Christ heretofore not known. We're going to learn things about Jesus Christ in this book that we wouldn't know if it weren't for this book and, "The revelation, which God gave to Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," in other words, this is a glimpse of the future, the near future, "and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

God wanted to reveal Jesus Christ in full glory. That's a future reality. And so, he sent the message about this with an angel who delivered it to John. Verse 2 says John wrote it down, "He bore witness of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

So, in verse 1, God sets out to reveal. In verse 2, John takes the responsibility to write down that revelation, and in verse 3 it says, "Blessed is the one who reads – " you can underline that " – who hears – " underline that " – who keeps the things written in it." And then this important statement, "for the time is at hand." And that's not related, necessarily, to time itself, but more to the sequence of events. This is the next on God's calendar of messianic events.

It is, then, a revelation of Jesus Christ, and it is Him revealed in full second-coming glory, which was previewed in His first coming on the Mount of Transfiguration, when He showed them a glimpse of His second-coming glory.

Now, that brings us into verse 4, and we get a little more formal introduction. John is writing this book particularly to be sent to the seven churches in Asia Minor. That would be modern Turkey. There were seven churches; they're listed for us in chapters 2 and 3. They were actual congregations. They were the initial recipients of this letter, and then it was passed on from them to all the other churches and down to us as well.

These churches were primarily founded as a result of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, Ephesus being the key church, and from there the Word of God spreading out and no doubt being responsible for the founding of these various churches in the area of Asia Minor. Then comes a greeting, "Grace be unto you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come." Now, that's God, the Eternal God, who was, who is, and yet who is in the future to come. "And then from the sevenfold Spirit before the throne." And it says "seven Spirits," but so that you don't become confused, that is the sevenfold Holy Spirit. If you were to read Isaiah 11:2, you can write that down in the margin there and make it a cross reference, you would find that there are seven unique ministries of the Holy Spirit listed there, and He is there for the sevenfold Spirit, which speaks of the fullness of His ministry here called the seven Spirits before the throne.

So, the book is sent with greetings from God the Father, greetings from the Holy Spirit, and then verse 5 says, " – and from Jesus Christ." So, it is a letter from the Trinity, and that also sets it apart in a very marvelous and unique way: a letter from the Trinity; all being a part.

And then, since it is a revelation of Jesus Christ, it goes on to describe Jesus as the first begotten of the dead. It doesn't mean that he was the first one that ever rose from the dead; there were others that He Himself raised from the dead. It means that of all those ever to be raised from the dead, including the saints, He is the first and foremost and chief and greatest one of all who will ever rise. And may I add, all men who have ever lived will rise from the dead: some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation. But of all who have ever risen, He is the chief one. "He is the Prince – " it says " – of the kings of the earth." And it says, "Unto Him – " now, here's a dedication; the book is from the Trinity, by an angel, to John, written down, passed on to us to read. And then John reminds us it is first sent to the seven churches. It comes from the Trinity and is dedicated – verse 5 – "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood." The dedication is to Jesus Christ Himself, the one who has made us priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." So, the book right there is dedicated to the glory of the eternal Christ.

And then it tells us in verse 7, “Behold, He cometh – “ future tense “ --with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.” You know what “amen” means? What does that mean? So let it be. And so we find right there that the book is introduced to us as from the Trinity, dedicated to Jesus Christ, who is coming, and when He comes, every eye will see Him, and so let it be. And that’s a kind of a glimpse of what the whole book is about, the coming of Jesus Christ.

And then it says in verse 8 that He is “ – Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the one who is, who was, who is to come, the Almighty.” That signifies, of course, God in His essence and Christ in His unique relationship to God within the Trinity.

So, we find that in verses 4 to 8 just some introductory information. The book is from the Trinity to the seven churches, to be spread from there by the agency of John. It is dedicated to Jesus Christ, who is coming, who is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end, the Lord who is and was, who is to come, the Almighty. In other words, this one who comes is none other than Almighty God. So, the book then is about the second coming of Jesus Christ. It’s about His return, and about the facts that are going to occur around that return.

Now, we’ve established then that the theme, in the first eight verses of chapter 1, is Jesus Christ in His second coming. Now, as we look at verse 9, he gets into the first of his visions, and it is a series of visions that God gives to John, “I, John.” And he says that a lot in the book, and it’s almost as if he was in a state of shock. It’s almost as if he’s saying, “Can you believe this? I, John, saw this. Me.” You almost get the idea that there’s a certain amount of incredulity in his own mind as to why God would ever allow him such a privilege.

“I, John, who am just your brother and just your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Me, you know, nothing special, just ordinary me, I was in the isle called Patmos.” He was exiled to Patmos for proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. In order to shut him up and get him out of the mainstream, they put him on the isle of Patmos until he died. “And I was there,” he says, “for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. That’s why I was there. I was put there because I preach Christ, and I preach God’s Word.”

Now he says, “I was in the Spirit – “ that is, he was under the control of the Holy Spirit in a unique way “ – on the Lord’s day...” Now, some people think that means on Sunday; I kind of lean that way myself. Some people think it means, “In a prophetic sense, I was in the Spirit, looking at the day of the Lord in its fullness.” I particularly lean toward the idea that it was on a Sunday, on the Lord’s day, as he was worshiping; he was in the Spirit.

“...I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, and the voice said, ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia.’” So, there’s John’s orders, “Write this stuff down to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.” Actual cities. They actually existed. They had churches, local congregations.

And then as John turns, in the first vision, he has a vision of Jesus Christ, and I’m not going to go through it in detail, but he sees Jesus Christ moving among seven golden lampstands – seven churches, seven lampstands. Each lampstand represents a church. Seven is the number of fullness. So, what you have here is a representation of all the churches, and Christ is moving among the churches, ministering to the churches.

“He holds – “ verse 16 says “ – in His right hand seven stars...” Now, it tells us, down in verse 20, that the seven stars are the ministers of the seven churches, but it is the Lord then moving through His church, ministering, trimming the lamps, doing His work of purification and judgment, applying wisdom and so forth. And he sees Christ in His glory, ministering to the church.

And that introduces us really to the outline of the book, which comes in verse 19, “Write the things which you have seen...” And what had he seen? Just that first vision. “...the things which are...” And what are the things which are? The things which speak to the time in which John lives, the present tense kind of time, and that comes in chapters 2 and 3, “...and then the things which shall be hereafter...” which begin in chapter 4. So, there you have an outline of the book. Chapter 1 is dealt with in the things that you have seen; chapters 2 and 3 in the things which are; and chapters 4 through 22 in the things which shall be hereafter. You’re going to deal with a past vision; you’re going to deal with present issues; you’re going to deal with the future.

Now, it all begins then with Christ being revealed in the Church Age – that this age – moving among the churches, ministering to the Church. And in that ministry comes seven letters written to these individual churches. Then we begin in chapter 2 to see the letters written to the seven churches. Now, listen very carefully to what I say. These are seven real churches; they really existed; they existed in those cities that they’re stated to exist in. And if you study the letters in detail, you find that each letter fits the historical, cultural, geographical context of the city to which it was written. It’s a literal city.

But they are also representative churches, because each one of them has a unique character all its own. And it represents churches of all times because each of them is a special kind of church. And in all the periods of the history of the Church, there have always been these kinds of churches, and each of them gets a special message from the Lord. So, this is His ministry, as it were, to the Church Age.

The first one is Ephesus. What kind of church is Ephesus? It is the church that is orthodox in doctrine but cold. It’s left its first love. Verse 4, “I have somewhat against you because you have left your first

love.” Verse 5, “Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works.” Now, this is the church that’s orthodox. I mean they have the right doctrine. In verse 2 it says they couldn’t bear evil people, they couldn’t bear false apostles and teachers, and they endured, faithful to the sound doctrine, but they lost their love. They were cold and orthodox.

Now, that kind of church has existed in every age and does today: those who have got the right message; they’re just cold and indifferent about it.

The second church we meet is the Smyrna church, verses 8 to 11. This is the church that suffers persecution. And in verse 10 it says, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, you may be tried; you shall have tribulation ten days – “ ten days signifies a brief period of time “ – be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Nothing negative is said against this church. Why? Because the church under persecution will always be a pure church; it’s purged by the persecution. People who are just showing up for whatever reason, once persecution starts, get out. Because if they don’t have anything to die for, they’re not going to stay around and get killed in the massacre. So, this is the church under persecution, and in all period of the Church’s history, there have been those churches, and there are such churches today. We’re going to hear about one in the service following tonight, when we hear Georgi Vins tell us about the Church in the Soviet Union.

The third letter is written to the church in the town of Pergamum or Pergamos, and this is in chapter 2 verse 12 through 17. And this is the church married to the world. This is the worldly church, and he describes their worldliness down through verse 15. And then in verse 16 he says, “Repent; or else I’ll come unto thee quickly, and fight against them with the sword of My mouth.” This is the church Christ fights against, the church that is married to the world. And in all periods of the Church’s history, there are worldly churches, where the people don’t come out from the world, where they cater to the world, where they accommodate the world, where they go along with everything that’s happening in society.

Then the Lord has a message to a fourth kind of church, represented by the Thyatira assembly in chapter 2 verse 18 to 29. Thyatira is the church that tolerates sin. In this particular church, they tolerated a Jezebel-like woman, who was seducing servants to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols. And so, they’re warned because they are a church that tolerates sin, a church that wouldn’t discipline sin, a church that wouldn’t purify its ranks. And there are always churches like that.

And then in chapter 3, we are introduced to the fifth church Sardis. Easy to see what was wrong in this church. Verse 1 says, “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” This is the dead church. Just dead. And it had a few things that were living, verse 2 says, but they were also ready to die. A dead church. And you’ve seen such. Maybe you came from one. Nothing happening, no life, no growth, no productivity, no fruit, no joy.

And then number six, chapter 3, 7 to 13, the church at Philadelphia. This is the faithful church. It says in verse 8, at the end, "...you have kept My word, have not denied My name." This is the church that had an open door and went through it. You might even see it as a missionary church. And so, it is a faithful church, and there are always those kind.

And then the final of the seven comes in chapter 3 verse 14 to the end of the chapter. That whole section deals with Laodicea, the apostate church, the unsaved church, the church of liberalism today. So you see, each of these has a message. By the way, that church is characterized in verse 15, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot." "I wish you were either against me or for me," he says, "but because you're neutral in the middle, I'll spew you out of my mouth." Rejected false church.

Now, let me summarize. First of all, in chapter 2, we have the cold orthodox church. Then we have the church suffering persecution, then the church married to the world, the church tolerating sin, the dead church, the faithful church, and the apostate church. Now, each of these, as I said, was a real church, and each represents churches in all the periods of history. And so, the message to these churches is to all churches, throughout all of this period of time in which the Church exists on the earth, and in which Christ moves among the seven lampstands, ministering to His Church.

And listen, beloved, I believe these seven letters are to be applied to the Church today. Whatever kind of church, there is a message for that church, isn't there? You say, "Well, how do we know what kind of church a church is?" I'll tell you how. A church will fall into these particular kinds of churches, or these categories, when the dominant influence in the church is in regard to one of these areas. Like if the dominant influence in the church is cold, though orthodox, the church will reflect a cold, orthodox viewpoint, even though there might be some on-fire members. If the dominant influence in the church is in difference totally to God, no production, no life, it's a dead church, though there may be a few people who haven't quite died. Whatever the dominant influence, it gives character to the church. If the church is marked by a dominant number of faithful people going through the open door and taking the Word of God, it'll be marked as a faithful, Philadelphia-type church.

And so, at the end of chapter 3, you have the end of the message to the churches. It began in chapter 1, as Christ was moving among the churches; articulated in 2 and 3; and we come to the end of chapter 3, and we do not hear the word "church" again in the book of Revelation until the very end of chapter 22, when the writer simply says, "Go back and remember what I said to the church." The Church does not appear again until the end of chapter 22. The Church is not particularly in view from here on until the Church, of course, is called by another name in the millennial kingdom, and that is the "Bride." But the Church ceases to be the issue at the end of chapter 3, and the last word in chapter 3 is "churches," and that is the message. And every one of the messages ended the same way, "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." What does that

mean? That means that the message to those churches goes beyond them to everybody who's got spiritual ears. Right? So, they're for all time.

Now we come to chapter 4, and we leave the Church Age. People always say, "Where, where does the rapture come in?" it's in the white spaces between chapter 3 and 4. Yeah, the church on earth in chapter 2 and 3, and all of a sudden, we appear in heaven, and I want you to see what happens. The theme of Heaven is worship. We go from earth to heaven.

"And after this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice I heard as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, 'Come up here, and I will show thee the things which must be hereafter.'" Now we move into phase 3. We've seen the things which thou hast seen. We've seen the things which are – chapters 2 and 3. Now the things which shall be hereafter. You see, the flow and the chronology and the outline is very, very carefully laid out.

And so immediately, again, he was in the spirit, which means that he was led by the Spirit to this vision. And as he was led to this vision, he saw a throne set. And the word "set" has the idea of permanence. It is not a passing throne; it is a forever throne. It is a permanent throne; it is the throne of God. We know that because the one who sat on the throne had a look like "jasper," that's another word for diamond; "sardius," that's another word for ruby. And there was a rainbow around the throne, in sight like an emerald. And emerald rainbow, probably reflecting His faithfulness. And so, there is God and His throne in heaven. John's up there, and now he's going to find out what's going to happen. Now we're in heaven, and heaven's going to begin to act on the earth. What's going to happen?

Well, first of all, let's find out who's up there. "And round about the throne were twenty-four thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." Now, who is this? Very important. Let me just tell you that I believe this is the Church. I believe it represents the Church of Jesus Christ. I'll tell you why: the scene here is rewards. It is a time of rewards. They bear crowns. Crowns of gold. And I see this as the raptured Church, now complete, reigning with God, around His throne in glory, having been rewarded. And I believe that when Jesus comes to take the Church in the rapture, he says, "Behold, I come, and my reward is with me." And I think the first thing that happens when we're raptured is we go up there, and we receive our rewards, and I believe there they are, with their crowns. It says they're on thrones. They have white robes and crowns, and all three of those are promised to the Church.

And I don't believe it can be Israel, based on chapter 5 verse 9, "They sang a new song, said, 'Thou art worthy to take the scroll and open its seals: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God a kingdom of priests: and we shall reign on the earth.'" And I think that's the redeemed people singing that song. And so, I think it refers to redeemed people: those who are saved, redeemed out of every kindred tongue, people, and nation. Like – it cannot refer to angels, as I see it. It cannot refer to saints

of Israel; it must refer to the Church. And then I think – I mean I think that’s the safest place to land on that matter.

“Out of the throne – “ verse 5 “ – the throne proceeds lightnings, thunderings, voices,” and so forth, and then the vision of God, and there’s the sevenfold Spirit again, and this is the divine throne.

Now, before the throne, verse 6, is a sea of glass like crystal. And this is somewhat like Ezekiel chapter 1, the imagery there. The four living creatures, I believe those are angels. It describes them in some detail. And then it says they all worship, verses 9, 10, and 11. All of heaven is worshiping. You’ve got the angels worshiping; you’ve got the saints worshiping, the Church worshiping, all giving praise and glory to God. And as I’ve said to you before, that’s the theme of heaven. Heaven is a place where everybody worships God. And so, when John sees heaven, he sees all these people worshipping God.

And then, all of a sudden, something interesting happens in chapter 5: the worship is broken. “And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a scroll...” You know what it is? It’s a title deed to the earth. It’s the title deed to the earth? How do you know that? It was sealed with seven seals. Roman law required that a will be sealed seven times, so that it couldn’t be broken open. It had to be sealed. In other words, they would roll it so far, seal it; roll it a little further, seal it; roll it further, seal it; roll it further, seal it. And finally, they would roll it to the tightest part, seal it the seventh time, and you couldn’t break through seven seals without being discovered. So, a will was sealed seven times. I believe this is God’s will and testament, and God’s will and testament was to give the earth to Jesus Christ. Wasn’t that his promise in Psalm 2? “I’ll give You the nations for an inheritance. You’ll rule with a rod of iron. This is My Son; He’ll break the power of all the nations. He’ll rule in the world.” That was the promise to the Son, and here is the title deed the Father holds in His hand.

“And a strong angel proclaims, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals?’” Who can claim to have the will of God? Who can unroll the seven sealed scroll? “No man in heaven or on earth, neither under the earth, no one was able to open the scroll or even look in it.” And John wept because nobody was found worthy to open and read the scroll or even look on it. “And then one of the elders – “ and who would know better than one of the elders, one of the 24 elders, who would know better what it mean to be redeemed “ – said, ‘Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and loose its seven seals.’”

And so, one of those I believe who is representative of the redeemed knows that Jesus Christ is the one who is worthy to open that scroll. And he is, in verse 6, described as the one who steps forward, “ – in the midst of the living creatures – “ the angels “ –and the elders –“ those representing the Church “ – stood a Lamb, as though it had been slain, having seven horns – “ that’s full power, seven being fullness, horn in an animal referring to power “ – having seven eyes – ” which is perfect wisdom, referred and reflected from the Holy Spirit, the sevenfold Spirit of God.



So, here is Jesus Christ, full of the wisdom of the Spirit of God, full of power. “He came – “ verse 7, here’s a monumental moment “ – He takes the scroll out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne.” Now, keep that in mind. Draw some lines around that verse. That marks the unfolding of all that’s going to happen. Jesus takes the scroll, and he says, “I’m going to take back the earth.” Paradise will be regained.

Well, what do you think this causes in heaven? Well, it causes more worship. And so, verse 8, verse 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 – everybody worshipping, worshipping, worshipping. Why do you think heaven is so excited? I’ll tell you why; they’re tired of the rebellion on earth. Right? And when they begin to see that Christ has taken the scroll – He’s going to unroll it, take the title deed, take back the earth – they get excited about that, and there’s glory and praise and worship culminating in that marvelous statement in verse 12, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” And you can hardly read it without hearing *The Messiah*.

And so you see then that the beginning of this age starts in heaven – or this phase rather – starts in heaven. God on the throne holds a title deed to the earth. All heaven is worshipping. And they say, “Well, who is worthy to take the earth back and give it to God and restore it to its paradise and intention? Who is worthy?” And no one is found. And all of a sudden, John sees himself weeping. And then comes the Lamb, and the Lamb takes the title deed to the earth as if to say, “I’ll unroll that scroll; I’ll take back the earth.” And when that is established in verse 7, then all heaven begins the hallelujahs again.

So, you begin in chapter 6 with the Lord beginning to unroll the seals. And you have seven seals, and each one that breaks open reveals another thing that’s going to happen on the earth. The first seal is peace. “I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures said, ‘Come’ –“ or ““Proceed.””

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow – “ notice he had no arrows, just a bow “ – and he had a crown: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” Now, who’s this? On a white horse, that’s a conqueror. With a bow and no arrows, that means he didn’t have to have a war. He carried his bow, didn’t have to use it. It’s a peaceful conquering. He wore a crown. He went out conquering and to conquer. So, the tribulation period on earth begins then with a false peace, energized by antichrist. If you have any desire to compare that, look at Daniel 9:27 where it says the very same thing. He makes a pact with the people of God and sets up a false peace. So, he is the false Christ; brings what looks like peace, but it doesn’t last long.

I mean it doesn’t last long at all, because the second seal is broken open in verse 4, and another horse comes out. This one isn’t white; this one is red. These are the Four Horsemen of the

Apocalypse, by the way. “ – and power was given to him that sat on it to take peace from the earth, that they should kill one another.” The second seal is war.

That leads us to the third seal which is broken open, and it’s a black horse, verse 5. “The one who sat upon it had a pair of balances in his hand – ” in other words weighing out and measuring out. And it says that when it measured out, “ – a measure of wheat – “ verse 6 “ – for a denarius – “ that means you get about one-and-a-half pints of barley or less wheat, maybe a third of that for one day’s wages. In other words, you work one full day to make not enough for one person to eat, or barely enough for one person to eat. Those are famine conditions. And it says, “ – see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” That’s the rich man’s food; don’t touch that.

So, what you have then is peace, followed by war followed by famine. And where there’s world-wide war, there’s going to be world-wide famine. And then the fourth seal comes along, and it’s death. What follows war and famine but death. Verse 8 says, “There came a rider on a pale horse; his name was Death, and Hades followed after him.” Why? He goes along killing, and Hades comes along scooping up all the dead. “The power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and the beasts of the earth.”

Then you come to the fifth seal, and you find some people under the altar. These are no doubt the redeemed people who have been slain during that period, and now they’re in heaven, and they’re at the very altar of God, the very throne of God, as it were, and they’re under there praying, verse 10, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Because in this war, and in this carnage, and in this famine and all the debacle on earth, the redeemed people are slaughtered by the antichrist. When their spirits come to heaven, they gather together, and they cry to God, “How long are you going to let this go on without bringing vengeance on those who are slaughtering the saints?” That’s a very important section; you ought to make a note about that. That section is a premise on which much future discussion in Revelation is based.

Verse 11 says, “And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” What he says to them is, “You just be patient. In the meantime, here’s a white robe. Here’s your heavenly garment, enjoy, and hang in there till the rest of the martyrs are done being martyred. It’s not over yet.” As someone once said, “It’s never over until it’s over.” And it’s not over yet.

And so, back to earth, the sixth seal, “...and earthquake. The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.” Joel talked about that, and so did Peter on the Day of Pentecost. “The stars of heaven fell to the earth...” Now, imagine that folks. The sun goes black; the moon goes blood; the stars fall out of the sky, “...like a fig tree casting untimely figs...” In other words, you have overripe figs, you shake the tree; they all fall down. The stars all fall out of heaven.

“And the heaven then departs like a scroll...” You ever pull down a blind in a window, and you let go of it, and it ...bleh-bleh-bleh-bleh- bleh-bleh...like that? That’s what’s going to happen to the whole heaven – Bleh-bleh-bleh-bleh-bleh-bleh-bleh-bleh...see. The whole thing is gone. “...and every mountain and every island moved out of their places.” Can you imagine that? Scary time, and they get really afraid, and you have tremendous fear in verses 15 to 17, “...they scream for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of the wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

Now, you can only take so much of this, and you’ll be a basket case, and poor John – can you imagine what it would be like to have all these visions? So, the Lord gives him periodic respite, and chapter 7 is one of those. And we find, in chapter 7, that there is, in the midst of all of this, some protection going on. There’s going to be some blessing. There are going to be some people spared from this judgment. Everybody’s not going to be under the altar; some believers are going to be spared. Who are they? They’re 144,000 Jews out of every tribe. Dan is omitted because of gross idolatry, Deuteronomy 29. But in case you’re worried about Dan, in Ezekiel 48 they’re included in the kingdom layout, so they are restored graciously to the kingdom; they’re just not allowed to serve in this particular ministry.

Now, what does this say? In the middle of the week, when the holocaust begins, there will already be Jews saved, believing Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, already been saved, and they will go through that same period, and they will not be able to be killed. Why? Because they can’t be hurt. They’re sealed; they’re protected. It says that in verses 2 and 3: nothing can harm them.

So, during that second half, you’re going to have 144,000 Jews going through, preaching the Gospel. They’re going to be very effective, folks, look at verse 9, “I saw a great multitude, which nobody could number.” I mean they were an uncountable number of all nations, kindreds, peoples, tongues. They stood before the throne, before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palms in their hands. They cried, ‘Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb.’ Where did they come from? They are the fruit of the 144,000 Jews.

You know, it’s one of the marvelous statements about God’s sovereignty and salvation. God will choose to be saved 144,000 Jews, and he’ll choose 12,000 out of every tribe of Israel, and only he knows where people connect up with their tribes; they lost all the records in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But he doesn’t lose the records.

God will literally elect 12,000 out of every tribe. So, there will be 144,000 redeemed Jews in that second half. And they will be the evangelists. And out of their ministry will come an innumerable number of people from every tribe and tongue and nation and people, praising the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, of course, you have, following that, a whole lot of worship in the rest of chapter 7. A

marvelous, marvelous thing.

Now you come to the seventh seal in chapter 8. And the seventh seal is very often a response to the first six, or the seventh trumpet a response to the first six, or the seventh bowl a response to the first six. And verse 1, by the way, is some people's life verse to prove there are no women in heaven, because it says there will be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. But I think that may be pressing the point a little.

Well, "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." What does that mean? That means what stopped? What stopped? Well, what goes on in heaven? Worship. It's just been going on in chapter 7. So, it stops for half an hour. Why? They're in awe? I mean they are in awe of the holocaust of divine fury being poured out.

So, here come the seven trumpet judgments, another way to signify judgment. The Lord has rolled out the seal, and at the end of it come trumpets announcing judgment. Verse 6, "Seven angels had seven trumpets ready to sound. The first trumpet sounded, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood cast on the earth: a third of the trees and all green grass was burnt up." That's a judgment on vegetation. A judgment on vegetation is a judgment on man because he can't live without vegetation, in many places, and a judgment on animals because they can't live without vegetation either. And it may be some kind of a judgment on the oxygenation of the world as well, where vegetation is needed.

And so, we see the third part of the creatures that were – the third part and the second trumpet in verse 8, "The third part of the sea became blood; and a third part of the creatures in the sea that had life died; a third part of the ships were destroyed." God does a judgment, and imagine, one-third of all vegetation is gone, and one-third of the sea becomes blood-like, and a third part of the creatures in the sea die. And you've got, floating around on one-third of the seas of the world, the stinking, rotten, putrefying mess. In other words, man failed to recognize the gift of God in creation, and so God takes it away. Man failed to give glory for the wonderful things that He'd made" the green grass, the plants, and the trees, the sea and all the life that's in it. Man wouldn't glorify God, and so God takes it away.

And then you have the third trumpet in verse 10, "...and it fell on the third part of the rivers – " did the judgment " – and the fountain of waters. It was called Wormwood. And it became bitter." And this is the judgment on the fresh water – all the fresh water sources are struck with bitterness, and a third of them destroyed like the rest.

The fourth trumpet blows in 12, "...a third part of the sun was smitten..." Do you know what that will do to the calendar? Do you know what that will do to the schedule? Do you know what that will do to day by day? You lose a third of the sun – I don't know what kind of chaos that will cause in heaven. A third part of the moon is gone, a third part of the stars are gone. A third part of them is darkness,

“...and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.” Amazing. The whole calendar is wiped out; it’s gone wacko. You’ve got all kinds of screwball eclipses going on all over every place.

“And I heard an angel flying around in the middle of all this – “ verse 13 “ – saying, ‘Woe, woe, woe...’” I can identify with that angel. And what that angel says is, “You think this is bad? Wait till you hear the next three; you haven’t heard anything.” Whew.

And then in 9, the fifth trumpet sounds, and a star falls. Who is that, Lucifer? And he got the key to the bottomless pit. You know who’s in the bottomless pit? Bound demons. Demons that are bound down there by God. There are demons right there, bound in the pit. They can’t get out. But the key’s going to get in the hands of Lucifer in the tribulation. In the fifth trumpet, he’s going to go down, unlock the bottomless pit. And you know what’s going to happen? All the bound demons that have been bound down there, some of them have been bound for centuries, and centuries, and thousands of years. And finally, they’re going to get out, and they’re going to gush out of there, and it says in verse 2, “...as smoke out of the pit, like the smoke of a furnace; and the sun and the air darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.” And they’re like locusts, it says in verse 3. It’s like a plague. They just sweep the earth. You know why the tribulation is going to be a terrible time? Because all the bound demons in hell are going to be turned loose to add to the ones that are already running all over the earth.

And it says that, “They were commanded – “ in verse 4 “ – that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads.” The demons aren’t going to do anything to the creation; they’re just going to wipe out men. And they don’t even give the privilege to kill them in the fifth trumpet. “They can’t kill them – “ it says in verse 5 “ – they can only torment them five months, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when he strikes a man. And in those days, men shall seek death and not find it; and shall desire to die, and death will flee from them.” They’re going to get stung like the sting of a scorpion. The locust plague of demons are going to cross the globe, torturing men for five months. Men will be unable to find relief even in death.

And then you have a description, in verses 7 to 10, of these demonic beings, symbolic language. And it says in verse 11, “They had a king over them, and the king is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon – “ it means destroyer “ – and in the Greek tongue Apollyon “ – means destroyer. If you think that’s bad, there are two more trumpets.

And during that period of time, the sixth trumpet blows, and the Euphrates River is opened up, as it were, “...and the angels –“ verse 15 “ – who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year to slay the third part of men.” Here comes a host, released by an angel, who are going to slaughter one-third of the world. “And the number of the army of the horsemen is two hundred thousand thousand...” that’s 200 million. And they come from the East, across the Euphrates. And so,

by verse 18, it says they kill a third of the world, "...by fire, by smoke, and brimstone, which comes out of their mouth." It may be some kind of weaponry described in those ancient terms.

"And the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands; they should worship demons and idols of gold, and silver, and bronze, and stone, and of wood that can't see, or hear, or walk: and neither repented they of their murders, nor of their *pharmakeia* – that's drugs – nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Men didn't repent, they just cursed God.

Now, those are pretty formidable trumpets, aren't they? There you have the first six trumpets. That's all going to come in the end of the tribulation. Have you noticed that the Church isn't around all this time? Chapter 10 is another little respite. I mean poor John, poor us. So, he gives him another little vision of the good part, his face as though it were the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire: and he had in his hand that scroll. And his right foot is on the sea, and his left foot is on the earth. And he cries with a loud voice like a lion, and seven thunders utter their voices. And you know, here he is, in his glorious vision, but he says to John in verse 5, "Don't let them know about this; don't tell them. Too fantastic. Judgment on sinners too much, too terrifying, too horrible, too horrifying. Don't tell them. Don't tell them. This is mystery. Verse 7, "The mystery of God shall be finished." This part we're not going to reveal.

And John saw in that vision that little scroll, which represented the taking back of the earth, and he took it, and he put it in his mouth. Because he was told, "Take it and put it in your mouth and eat it up, swallow it." And he said he did it. And he said, "In my mouth it was sweet, and in my belly it's bitter." What do you mean, John. "I mean when I see the coming of Jesus Christ in His glory, I have a sweet taste because Christ deserves to reign, and reign in glory, but I also have a bitter taste, because when He comes in glory to reign, I know it's going to mean the devastation and eternal damnation of the world, and so it's sweet and bitter."

Now, before that seventh trumpet sounds, there's another glimpse of God's grace in chapter 11. Oh, this is powerful, watch this. These are my two favorite people in the Bible, and I don't even know who they are, apart, of course, from our Lord. I just think these two guys are terrific. I don't know who they are, and if the Lord's looking for volunteers, I volunteer. "And there are two olive trees, two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." Now, watch this, and of course, the earth's going to hate them. I mean the world is going to hate them. The New Age society is going to hate them. The people who explain the rapture away by saying, "Hey, we removed all those people that were holding us back from reaching the next level of consciousness," they're going to hate them. And when they preach Jesus Christ and so forth, they're going to hate them. But you know what happens? "If any man hurts them – " verse 5 says " – fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies." "Haaah!" I mean you could get used to that. You're being persecuted and antagonized, and they don't believe your message, and they try to take your life...Haaah!

And they have power to shut heaven. In other words, they can go into a place they want to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and as long as they preach, they'll cause a drought to happen. And they can control the weather, "...they have power over waters to turn them to blood, smite the earth with all the plagues, as often as they want."

Now, what do you think is going to be on the news each night? "Next, we have our two witnesses report. This week they were in Cincinnati; it didn't rain; all the rivers turned to blood; people were struck with plagues. We've got to do something about these two guys, but every time we try, we go up in smoke." And you know what will happen? Finally the beast comes right out of the pit –the beast himself, "...and he overcomes them, and he kills them. And their dead bodies –" when they die, you know where they are when they die? They're in Jerusalem. That's right " – that great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt –" verse 8 says, " – where our Lord was crucified." So, they're murdered in Jerusalem.

Can you imagine what the news will say. "Finally, they're dead." And it says they leave their bodies in the street. Now, this is in our modern time. You don't leave bodies in the street. They leave them in the street. "And the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations see their dead bodies three days and a half." Now, how can a whole-wide world see dead bodies in Jerusalem? Only one way; how's that? Television. It couldn't be true a hundred years ago. They couldn't have seen them all over the world. And they don't permit their bodies to be put in graves. Why? Because they're so excited, "... they rejoice, make merry, and send presents." Happy Dead Witnesses Day, here's your gift.

That's right; the world is so happy that these guys are dead. And I can just see some reporter standing there saying, "Well, they've been dead now for three-and-a-half days, and we are so relieved that these men are removed from the earth." And then in verse 11, it says, "After three days and an half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet –" and I'd like to see the instant replay on that one " – and fear fell on them who saw them." Don't you imagine it did? And that's what's going to happen.

And then I love this, "And a voice from heaven said, 'Come up here.'" Whoooooo! See. And they did. "And the same hour there was a great earthquake, a tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were terrified, and gave glory to the God of heaven." Terror, sheer terror. Listen, God will never be without a witness, will he? Ever.

And after that little interlude, we come back to the seventh trumpet, and when it blows, it's the finale, folks. I love this. Verse 15, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." That's it, folks. When that seventh trumpet blows, the kingdoms of the world belong to Jesus Christ. Marvelous, marvelous.

Chapter 12 goes back to pick up some more details before we get to the final seven bowls, and it describes Satan's incessant persecution of Israel and the Messiah and the people of God. It talks about how he has always warred against God's people. The woman in this chapter is Israel. The child is Christ. The dragon is Satan. And the dragon has always been after the child born of the woman. And he has fought in the past, and he will fight in the future. Verse 7 says Satan's demons and Michael and his angels are going to have a war in heaven. Guess who will win? Super angel Michael and his angels will win. They'll throw, verse 9, the end says, "...cast out into the earth all the demons."

Now, what happens is, listen, you've got demons that have come out of the pit now, like locust all over the place. You've got demons that have been floating around in the air, rulers in high places; they're thrown down. So, you've got them out of the pit on the earth, cast out of heaven, no longer having access to God as Satan did in Job, when he went before the throne of God. They'll all be to the earth. And on the earth, the incredible result of a demonically infested world. And the attack has always been sort of directed at Israel, but the rest of chapter 12 talks about how He protects Israel, how God wonderfully protects them. In fact, at one point, this whole host of – this army is chasing Israel, and the ground just swallows them in verse 16. Just opens up and swallows them all. Marvelous.

Chapter 13 picks up another detail; it introduces us to the antichrist, the world ruler, and he's something. He leads all this attack on God's people. In verse 4, at the end, it says, "Who is like him? Who is able to make war with him? He has a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given to him to continue 42 months." That's three-and-a-half years. That's the last half of the tribulation again. "He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, blaspheming His name, His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. It was given him to make war with the saints and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." He has tremendous power, tremendous influence.

He also has a cohort. Chapter 13 verse 11 to the end introduces the false prophet. The beast is the antichrist, the false prophet is his cohort. It's like Pharaoh had Jannes and Jambres; like Balak had Balaam; like Absalom had Ahithophel. The antichrist will have his cohort, and his job is to point everybody to the antichrist, tell them all to worship the antichrist. And he performs some lying wonders and lying signs, and he builds a big image to the beast and makes it come alive through some electronic ventriloquism, or whatever it talks about in verse 15. Or better yet, he puts a demon right in that idol itself, and it becomes a demon-possessed idol.

And now the world is so utterly demon influenced, that everybody in the world could potentially be a raving maniac, like the boy we read about, who fell in the fire and fell in the water and foamed at the mouth and rolled in the dirt. Everybody in the world could be like the demoniac of Gadara, who lived



in the caves and cut his body all over the place with stones because he was so demon infested. The whole earth is literally crawling with demons, and they're in control of everything. And they even are able to make an image speak, and it draws the whole world to worship the antichrist, and that's the job of the false prophet.

And then he says in verses 16 to 18 that in this vision he saw that if you didn't have a number, you couldn't buy or sell; you couldn't operate in society. And the number was 666. That isn't significant, except that it represents man. Man was created on the sixth day. Seven is God's perfect number, and no matter how hard man tries, he's always 666; he's short of perfection. So, it's the number of man's system. It's always curious to me that all the taxicabs in Israel start with the number 666, then a dash, and then the rest of the numbers. I don't think that's particularly significant; it's just interesting.

But what is significant is – what is interesting, and what is significant is that you can't operate in this society unless you have the number on your forehead or on your hand. And we're getting to that. We already have credit cards and numbers. If you have a bank card, where you can go stick your bank thing in, punch your number into the deal, you've already got your number. Connect it with your bank card number, they know exactly who you are, and they can find out everything about you. And if they decided that you couldn't buy or sell, all they got to do is remove that number. And if you have a cashless society, and if you – the problem with a credit card is you lose it, so they're developing ways to put it on your hand and your forehead, because in a cold climate, those are the two parts of your body that are readily exposed and can be scanned easily. And so, antichrist will rule the world, and he'll accommodate it all, and he'll control it all because of the power he has.

I told you the last time that they now have developed – and this is incredible to me – they're trying to develop computer chip implants, where they can put a chip in an individual, right into your body, that's compatible between your brain, the chip, and a computer system, so that whatever profession you're in, you can have instant access to all material in a library that will come right from the computer, into your chip, and into your brain. And if you just did that with a guy like antichrist, for sure he could control everything.

Verse 1 of chapter 14 looks again to the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see that the 144,000 are in heaven, and they're having a great time singing praise. And they're singing praise because of the victory of Jesus Christ. Now, of course, all of the holocaust comes to final focus in Armageddon. And if you look over at chapter 14 verse 14, and we'll move more rapidly through this remaining part – rest easy; we're on schedule here – but in chapter 14 we begin to get a glimpse of Armageddon, and this idea of thrusting in the sickle, in verse 15, the sickle and the reaping and the harvest always speaks of judgment. The Lord comes in terrifying judgment.

Verse 20 sums it up, "The winepress is trodden outside the city, and the blood came out of the winepress, even to the horses' bridles – " that's four or five feet high " – by the space of a thousand

and six hundred furlongs.” That’s 200 miles. That’s the length of Israel. Five feet deep, the length of Israel, is used to symbolize the bloodbath. And grapes have no strength against the smiting feet of Almighty God, and so you see God tramping out His judgment.

And the world will be judged. In fact, earlier in the chapter, verses 9 to 12, he says, “Hang in there, saints, be patient, because God is coming in judgment.” And if you’re martyred – if you die as a martyr, verse 13, “Blessed are you who die in the Lord.” So, don’t worry about that; God’s working out His wrath; He’s working out His judgment.

And now, as we come to chapter 15, we come to the last seven judgments. And this is like a Gatling gun –bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. It just happens at the very, very end, seven last plagues. And they fill up, verse 1 says, the wrath of God. And you see this tremendous scene in heaven unfolding in chapter 15, and it’s getting ready for the final judgment. And verse 8 says, “The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” This is a private thing. God gets all the smoke rolling in heaven, and they burst out in chapter 16, and the first bowl is poured out, and instantly, it says, “There fell a foul and painful sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and upon them who worshiped his image.” This is the *helkos*. This is like the beggar who had the sores. It may well refer to some cancerous sores.

Immediately after that comes the second bowl poured out or vial – the same as a bowl. And “...the sea became like the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.” A stinking mess with a surface of dead creatures beyond comprehension.

“And the third angel poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.” Not a fourth anymore, not a third, but now the whole thing. Devastating judgment, pollution of fresh water.

Down in verses 8 and 9, the fourth bowl is poured out, and the sun is so hot that it burns men with fire; it scorches them to death. And instead of repenting, they blaspheme the name of God.

And then the fifth one – incredible, but after the scorching sun comes darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain. Why? They couldn’t see where they’re going; there is no light at all, pitch blackness, and they are susceptible to terrible injury and pain and can find no relief because they can’t see where they are. And may I add, by the way, verse 11, “...blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores...” which takes us all the way back to the beginning and says all these plagues are cumulative. Cumulative.

“The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the river Euphrates, and now comes the way of the kings of the east...” that army we talked about earlier, and then Armageddon. The final battle on the plain of

Armageddon. I've been there; I've stood on the plain. Napoleon said it was the finest battle place he had ever seen on the face of the earth.

And three unclean spirits like frogs, these are demons of a special nature – come out of the slime of hell itself, and out of the mouth of the dragon, and the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet. And there, by the way, you have the unholy trinity. They are spirits of demons working miracles. They gather the world to the battle at Armageddon, and they don't know it's the great day of God Almighty.

And all the world comes to Armageddon to fight. Daniel 11, I think, describes it. The kings of the north come down, sweep through the south. The king of the east comes up. The west gets involved. The kings of the east come. They're all fighting, and this massacre is going on. In the midst of it all, out of heaven comes Jesus Christ.

The seventh bowl is poured out at the end of chapter 16, and there's lightning and thunder. Every island fled away. The mountains were not found, and there was hail out of heaven. Can you believe this? And they weight about a hundred pounds each. That's a hundred-pound block of ice. And that's the finale.

Chapter 17 and 18 are very important. They go back over the second half. And you know what they tell us? The question you ask here is this, "John, what about religion in the tribulation? Will there be religion?" Chapter 17 describes it. There will be religion. The false church – you know what it's called? If the true Church is a bride, what is the false church? A harlot. A harlot. And it talks about the harlot that sits on many waters, that drinks the wine of fornication, that sits on the beast. The harlot rides the antichrist. The antichrist political leader and the false harlot religious world system exist together.

But the antichrist is consumed by his own power, so finally he devours the harlot; he just gobbles it up, and he says, "The whole world will now worship me." I believe that's when the false prophet sets up the image, and the whole world is commanded to worship him. No other religion is tolerated but him because the beast, in verse 16, says eats up the harlot.

Now, chapter 18 takes us back over it and asks another question. You say, "Well, what's going on in the world at this time? I mean what are the economics like?" This is an economic view of the same period. What's going to be going on? Well, when everything starts to collapse in verse 2, this angel says, "...Babylon the great –" and Babylon is the name for the final world economic system " –is fallen, is fallen; it's become the habitation of demons." Demons have taken over the world. And the nations are saddened.

Verse 5 says, “The sins of the world have reached to heaven, and God’s remembered her iniquities.” When they begin to see the whole system come to collapse, everybody’s economy collapses, all the money collapses, the banks collapse, everything goes.

In verse 10, “‘Alas,’ they say in torment, ‘alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; no man buyeth their merchandise anymore.’ Nobody cares about that anymore; they’re just trying to survive. Who’s going to go shopping? Who’s going to the mall then?

“The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and thyine wood, and all kinds of ivory, and most precious wood, and of bronze, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and incense, and ointments, and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour, and wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, souls of men.” Who cares? Who cares?

And the ship trade is going to go, verse 17. All the transportation system falls apart. And people in verse 19 are throwing dirt all over their heads, weeping and wailing, “Alas, alas; it’s over; it’s over.”

And while everybody in earth is doing that, verse 20 says, “All you folks in heaven – “ what? “ – rejoice. Rejoice.” You know what’ll be a worse thing of all in the world? The music will all end; no more music. Verse 22, “The voice of harpers, minstrels, flute players, trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee – “ no music “ – and no craftsman –” no art, nothing, the end of everything; it’s all over. The party’s over on earth.

You know what happens in chapter 19? The party begins in heaven. All of a sudden, in verse 1, “Hallelujah.” In verse 3, “Hallelujah.” Verse 4, “Hallelujah.” Verse 6, “Hallelujah.” What are you all so excited about? The end of verse 6, “...for the Lord God omnipotent –“ what? “ –reigns.” Finally. “And let’s be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride has made herself ready.” And now the redeemed are joined to their Lord. “...given linen clean and white, fine linen the righteousness of the saints.” Glorious.

I think this is going on in heaven. “Everybody get your duds on, folks, we’re going to the kingdom. We’re going to the kingdom.” How are we getting there? Here it comes; here’s how you’re getting there. In verse 11, “I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and Him that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are like flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; He had a name written, that no man knew...” and it goes on to describe Him.

And in verse 14, here we are folks; this is us, “The armies that were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” That’s us. This is Him coming back to set up His kingdom; that finale as He comes to Armageddon in blazing glory to establish His kingdom on earth.

And He's coming in white, on a white horse, and we're coming on white horses, in white garments, with Him. We go to be with Him; we come in glory with Him.

I love at the end of verse 16, His name is, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." And when He comes, devastation, Armageddon. And the result of Armageddon is in verses 17 and following: carnage, death. He calls the birds to eat the flesh.

Verse 20, the beast, the false prophet are both cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the people in the armies who remained are slaughtered with the sword. You know what happens? Chapter 20, the Lord sets up His kingdom. That's right. Look at verse 4, "I saw thrones..." What are they for? Look at the end of verse 4; they're for the saints who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. You know what happens at the end of the thousand years? Verse 7, Satan's loosed a little while. He's been bound the whole time. He's loosed a little while. He goes out into the world. And you know that during the kingdom, there will be some people who went in, in physical bodies. They'll have kids. They'll repopulate the earth. There'll be a population all over the earth. Some of those won't even believe in Jesus Christ, though He's been reigning in the city of Jerusalem for a thousand years. Isn't that amazing? Not so amazing. They didn't recognize Him the first time He came either. They rejected Him when they did know who He was.

And so, Satan gives a final rebellion, and verse 9 says at the end fire comes from heaven and devours all those rebels. And then in verse 11, all the unsaved of all history are collected to the great white throne judgment. And verse 15 says when their names are not found written in the book of life, they were cast into hell. That's the end of the thousand-year kingdom.

You say, "What happens after that?" Chapter 21, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth..." Verse 2, "...and a new Jerusalem." You say, "What is it like?" Verse 3, "...God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." That's the eternal state, isn't it? That's the new heaven and the new earth. And then the rest of chapter 21 and into chapter 22 describes it.

Well, the last message comes at the end of 22. Can I give it to you? Look at verse 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say —' what?' —'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That, my friend, is the last invitation. Come. Come to Christ. Come and drink. Come and partake of His salvation. Because if this happens, it will be too late.

Verse 11, when the judgment comes, "He that is unjust, will be unjust still: and he that is filthy, will be filthy still: but he that is righteous, will be righteous still: he that is holy, will be holy still." In other

words, whatever you are when it happens is what you're going to be forever. Can you say with John, "Even so," what? "come Lord Jesus; I'm ready"? I hope so.

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