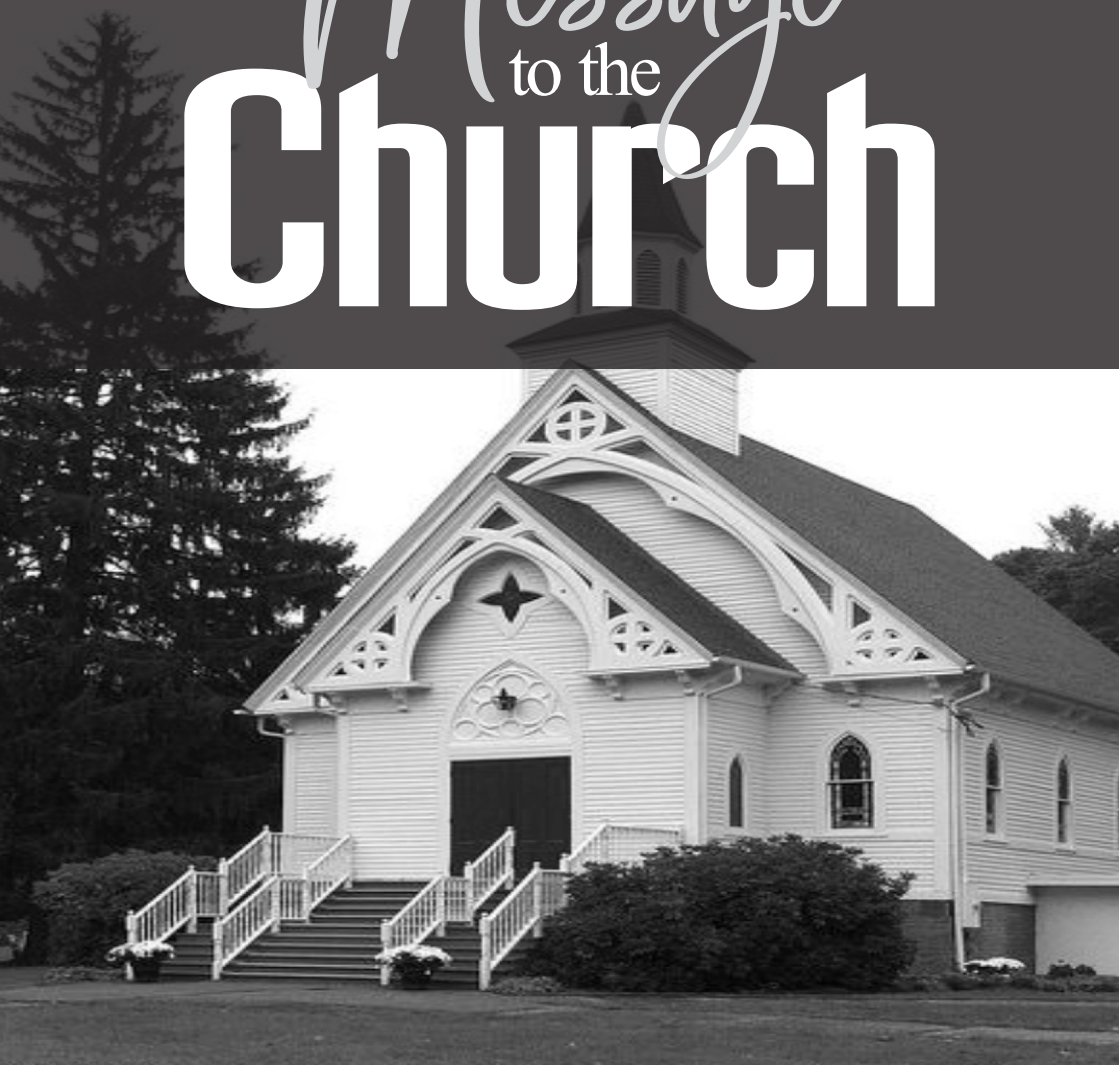


**OLUWAFEMI IKUSAGBA,
AYODEJI DOSUNMU**

Message
to the
Church





Message to the Church

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Email: anplegraphics@gmail.com

AUTHOR'S CONTACT:

Website: www.oluwafemiikusagba.com

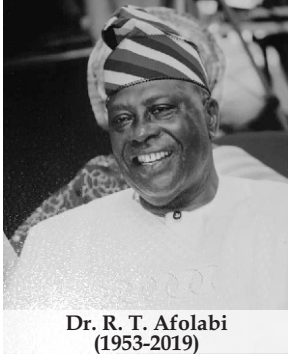
Email: ikusagba@yahoo.com

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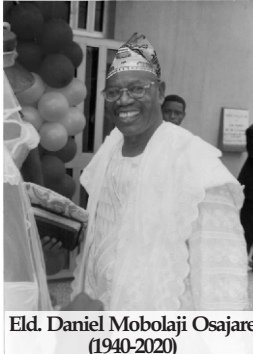
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DEDICATION



Dr. R. T. Afolabi
(1953-2019)



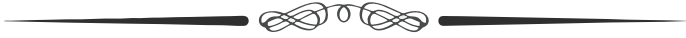
Eld. Daniel Mobolaji Osajare
(1940-2020)



Mrs Eunice Adenike Adeoye
(1967-2019)

I say thank you to the people we are dedicating the book to namely, **Dr. R. T. Afolabi**, that happened to be our family doctor for years, without paying any dime, we thank God you meet christ before departing this world. I also thank God for my father-in-law, **Eld. Daniel Mobolaji Osajare**, we were not really close in the past, But became very close few years ago, Daddy we miss you and we love you. Many thanks also to my Super Sister and Pastor, **Mrs Eunice Adenike Adeoye**, It keeps paining me that you left without saying goodbye, I wish I was there when you were leaving this world, you are a beautiful soul and remain very dear to my heart.

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I give God all the praise for the privilege to come out with this book. The Project took four years, and from feelers it appears to be a very impactful book, testimony from the people that have gone through it is very encouraging so all praise to God. Special thanks to the co-author, Pastor Dosunmu for his encouragement on the project... I almost gave up, because we were supposed to be four authors, but somehow, it turns out to be two. Many thanks to him. Many thanks goes to the Bible Society General Secretary and CEO, that agreed to write the foreword when it remain some weeks to leave the office.

Team of Proof Readers:

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among many others, my friends in discipleship class, ECWA President and General Secretary. Rev. Dr. Stephen Panya Baba and Rev. Madu, My Siblings and mother, Rev Sam Akeju, Mrs. T. Dosunmu. Special thanks to my beloved wife, Mrs Ikusagba... for her constant supports and frequent checks on the outcome of the project. Oluwamisimi, my prophetess and Author too I really appreciate your understanding for what it takes to write a book and decided not to put pressure on me on this project, but you kept praying for my success. Thanks to my pastor, the P.P, owner of ILS Oluwalonimi for maturity and suggestion on this project many thanks to the unmentioned but important supporters on this project.

Ikusagba Oluwafemi

May 2021

FOREWORD



The title of this book *The Message for the Church* sounds suggestive of many things considering the object of the title – the Church. The word church has different meanings in different contexts. Church, from the secular Greek usage *ecclesia* means assembly of citizens but in the Septuagint is used to mean congregation of Israel. The use of Church in the New Testament dominantly means the whole body of Christians, a local Church denomination consisting of a group of Christians gathering for worship, sharing and teaching the Word of God - Philemon 1:2; Revelation 3. It could also mean the called out deriving from the word *ecclesia* which could also mean *Kaleo* (to call or summon). In essence, the Church also refers to an individual called out of the world as God's people. The book of 1 Peter 2:9 clearly supports this definition. Combining the above definitions, one may see that the church of today is an assemblage of people (confirmed unbelievers, pretenders, and the regenerated) with varying motives, needs and objectives, but unified with the universal surface-purpose of worshipping God. This definition makes it easier to understand the issues of the seven churches in the Asia minor as described in this book.

That the book of Revelation is one of the most difficult books of the Bible is not an overstatement and the authors

did not pretend about this. In the introduction to the book, the authors make it very clear that,

“The book of Revelation is one of the neglected and controversial books of the Bible, especially in the New Testament. It is Enigmatic (hard to understand), because it contains a large amount of symbolism as a result of the faulty approaches or methods of interpretation applied to its study, many have a difficult time grasping its meaning. It is a book that is the object of the widest possible divergence of interpretations”.

The authors did extensive work that gives spiritual views about the book of Revelation. However, their views could stand for intellectual attempt of the book of Revelation which was originally written to the seven Churches in Asia Minor but applicable and useful to every believer who reads it – Revelation 1:3. Just like any other books, spiritual or secular, opinions would usually be different among authors and readers. However, the authors of this book have no intension to be controversial in their approach but would still engender divergent perspectives of the readers. Explaining the Book of Revelation from different perspectives or schools of thought like the preterist, historical, idealist and futuristic indicates the attempt not to be biased as authors.

The style of writing makes room for flow, consistency and ease of understanding by readers of any class be it highly or minimally educated the authors' line of thoughts. The simplicity of this book has not taken anything away from it the qualities of a spiritual book with academic potential.

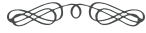
The classification of the whole book makes the somewhat difficult book of Revelation a simplified attempt. Each part is classified to start with title, relevant texts, introduction, definitions where applicable, discussions and conclusion. The occasional interrogative style in some parts of the book gives room for deep reflection while reading. Obviously, the book will be of significant value to theological students and every student of the Bible. The pragmatic approach of textual application of each of the seven Churches to the happenings in the contemporary Church denominations brings about the relevance of the book to would be readers for proper understanding.

Dare Ajiboye

Former General Secretary/CEO

The Bible Society of Nigeria

INTRODUCTION



The book of Revelation is one of the neglected and controversial books of the Bible, especially in the New Testament. It is enigmatic (hard to understand), because it contains a large amount of symbolism as a result of the faulty approaches or methods of interpretation applied to its study, so many have a difficult time grasping its meaning. It is a book that is the object of the widest possible divergence of interpretations. However, it is an indispensable book of the Bible; a book in which all the great themes, seed plots, lines of doctrine, and Bible prophecies find their fulfillment. It is important to note that Revelation is unique in its genre, its purpose, and its method of communicating its message, among the other New Testament writings. It will be naive to assume that one can do justice to the interpretation of this book without responsibly dealing with some of the special interpretive considerations that apply uniquely to it.

It is in this book that the victory of God as the God of history is seen in the culmination of the ages and the establishment of the eternal state.

Title of the Book



The term translated "*Revelation*" is from the Greek word *apokalupsis* which simply means "*a disclosure, an unveiling.*" or "*unveiling.*" It gives us our English word *apocalypse* which, unfortunately, is today a synonym for

chaos and catastrophe. The verb simply means "*to uncover, to reveal, to make manifest.*" In this book, the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain and gives us the privilege of seeing the glorified Christ in Heaven and the fulfillment of His sovereign purposes in the world. Revelation is an open book in which God reveals His plans and purposes to His Church. The author presented the title in Revelation 1:1, it was a Revelation of Jesus Christ to John. It is the revelation that comes from Christ (Rev. 22:16). Jesus Christ, being God Himself, gave this revelation to His servant. Jesus Christ is the center of the book (Rev. 1:7, 13-16; 5:5-14).

The Author and Date

The book of Revelation was written by John in about A.D. 95 or 96, during the reign of the Roman emperor Titus Flavius Domitian (Domitian reigned in Rome from 81-96 A.D.). The emperor had demanded that he be worshipped as "*Lord and God*" as a result of the refusal of the Christians to obey his edict, persecution arose. According to the tradition, it was Domitian who sent John to the Isle (Island) of Patmos, a Roman penal colony off the coast of Asia Minor. According to the book itself, the author's name was John (1:4,9; 22:8). He was a prophet (22:9), and a leader who was known in the Churches of Asia Minor to whom he wrote the book of Revelation (1:4). Traditionally, this John has been identified as John the Apostle, one of the disciples of our Lord. That the style is different from the style of the Gospel of John stems only from the difference like this book as apocalyptic literature.

During Christ's earthly ministry, John and his brother James asked Jesus for special places of honour by His

throne. The Lord told them that they would have to merit their thrones by sharing in His suffering. James was the first Apostle martyred (Acts 12:1-2); John was the last of the Apostle to die, but he suffered on Patmos before his death (Matt 20:20-23).

The book came from God to John, no matter what the various means of communication were; and it was all inspired by the Holy Spirit (Rev. 1:1-2, 10; 7:13; 10:4; 17:1; 19:9-10).

The Readers (Rev. 1:3-4)

The book was originally sent to seven local Churches in Asia Minor, however, John makes it clear that any believer should read and profit from it (Rev 1:3). God promised a special blessing to the one who would read the book and obey its message. (The verb read means "*to read out loud.*" The revelation was first to read aloud in local Church meetings.) The Apostle Paul had sent letters to seven Churches - Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and Thessalonica - and now John sent one book to seven different Churches. Early in the book, he had a special message from Christ to each Churches.

John did not send this book of prophecy to the assemblies to satisfy their curiosity about the future. God's people were going through intense persecution and they needed encouragement. As they read this book, its message would give them strength and hope. But even more, its message would help them examine their own lives (and each local assembly) to determine those areas needing correction. They were not only to hear the Word, but they were also to

keep it - that is, guard it as a treasure and practice what it said. The blessing would come, not just by hearing, but even more so by doing (James 1:22-25).

The special messages to each of the seven churches are given in Rev 2-3. These letters show us that the exalted Head of the church knows what is going on in each assembly and that our relationship to Him and His Word determines the life and ministry of the local body.

No believer in Christ should study prophecy merely to satisfy his curiosity. When Daniel and John received God's revelations of the future, both fell as dead men (Dan 10:7-10; Rev 1:17). They were overwhelmed! We need to approach this book as wonderers and worshippers, not as academic students.

Why did John use symbolism?



Symbolism has to do with the use of symbols to invest things with a representative meaning or to represent something abstract by something concrete. This book is full of symbolism, the symbols used in this book cannot just be carnally understood but this kind of "*spiritual code*" is understood only by those who know Christ personally. If any Roman officer had tried to use Revelation as evidence against Christians, the book would have been a puzzle and an enigma (mystery) to them.

Secondly, John was able to draw on the great "*images*" in God's revelation and assemble them into an exciting drama that has encouraged persecuted and suffering saints for centuries. However, one must not conclude that John's use

of symbolism indicates that the events described are not real. They are real!

Thirdly, symbols not only convey information but also impart values and arouse emotions. John could have written, "*A dictator will rule the world,*" but instead he described a beast. The symbol says much more than the mere title of "*dictator.*" Instead of explaining a world system, John simply introduced "*Babylon the Great*" and contrasted the "*harlot*" with the "*bride.*" The very name "*Babylon*" would convey deep spiritual truth to readers who knew the Old Testament.

In understanding John's symbolism, however, every Christian studying this book must be careful not to allow his/her imaginations to run wild. Biblical symbols are consistent with the whole of biblical revelation. Some symbols are explained (Rev 1:20; 4:5; 5:8); others are understood from Old Testament symbolism (Rev 2:7,17; 4:7); and some symbols are not explained at all (the "*white stone*" in Rev 2:17). Nearly 300 references to the Old Testament are found in Revelation! This means that you must anchor your interpretations to what God has already revealed, lest you misinterpret this important prophetic book. As we study the book of Revelation we must put Deuteronomy. 29:29, which says "*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children forever*".

Schools of Interpretation Used with Revelation

There are various schools of thought on the interpretation of the Book of Revelation and each school of thought has

interpretation for the book based on the contents of the book of Revelation.

The Preterist School

Preterist is from a Latin word meaning "*past*." This school of thought sees Revelation as already fulfilled in the early history of the church by 312 A.D. with the conversion of Constantine. Note the spiritualizing nature of their interpretations: Revelation 5-11 is a record of the church's victory over Judaism; Revelation 12-19 is a record of her victory over Rome, and Revelation 20-22 is the record of the glory of the church. The persecutions of Revelation, it is claimed, are those of Nero and Domitian and all was fulfilled by the time of Constantine (312 A.D.). The preterist approach sees the fulfillment of Revelation's prophecies as already having occurred in what is now the ancient past, not long after the author's own time. Some preterists believe that the final chapters of Revelation look forward to the second coming of Christ. Others think that everything in the book reached its culmination in the past.

Revelation for the Preterist is purely symbolic history rather than prophetic of coming events in history. This not only does total injustice to the nature of the book as prophecy but also to the normal meaning of words.

The Historical Approach

This approach sees Revelation as a symbolic presentation and a panorama (view) of the total period of church history from John's day to the end of the age of Christ's second advent. In this view, Revelation does not just deal with a

future time but covers all of history from the time of John. The problem is most adherents of this view see the book culminating in their day and as many as 50 interpretations have evolved. Why? Because the literal, normal approach of interpretation has been abandoned. Further, such a view must ignore the imminent return of the Lord. This view sees the Book of Revelation as a prewritten record of the course of history from the time of the apostle to the end of the world. Fulfillment is thus considered to be in progress at present and has been unfolding for nearly two thousand years.

The Idealist Approach

This approach sees the book as portraying in symbolic terms the age-old conflict of the principles of good and evil with no historic elements whether past or future. This view does not attempt to find individual fulfillments of the visions but takes Revelation to be a great drama depicting transcendent spiritual realities, such as the spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan, between the saints and the antichristian world powers, and depicting the heavenly vindication and final victory of Christ and his saints. Fulfillment is seen either as entirely spiritual or as recurrent, finding representative expression in historical events throughout the age, rather than in one-time, specific fulfillments. The prophecy is thus rendered applicable to Christians in any age.

The Futuristic Approach

The term "*futurist*" comes from the fact this interpretation sees the book from chapter 4 as yet to be fulfilled. This is the

approach taken in this study. The futurist approach follows the principle of interpretation known as the literal, plain, or normal method of interpretation. This approach postulates that the majority of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation have never yet been fulfilled and await future fulfillment. Futurist interpreters usually apply everything from chapter four to a relatively brief period before the return of Christ.

This method which will be defined below recognizes the use of symbols but understands them in their plain, customary, and normal meaning just as we do in our language. The term star, for instance, can refer to a star in the heavens, or a famous athlete, someone who excels in athletics. It depends on the context.

There are several reasons for the futuristic approach. The prophecies found in this study have simply not taken place. There is nothing in history that comes close to the events of the majority of the book. For instance: (a) No judgments in history have ever equaled those depicted in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16, but in these chapters, these judgments are presented as things that will occur. (b) The resurrection and judgment of chapter 20 have never occurred, but are presented as future facts. (c) The great anticipation of the book, Christ's visible return as portrayed in chapter 20, has also not taken place.

Having considered various approaches to interpreting the book of revelation it is noteworthy to know that, only the futuristic approach, which is based on a literal or plain method of interpretation, has any objectivity about the contents of the book.

The Theme of the Book

The prominent theme of the book certainly concerns the conflict with evil in the form of human personalities energized by Satan and his worldwide system, and the Lord's triumphant victory to overthrow these enemies to establish His kingdom both in the millennium (the 1,000 years of Revelation 20) and in eternity. This is accomplished by taking the reader and hearers (1:3) behind the scenes through the visions given to John to see the demonic nature and source of the awful evil in the world along with the conquering power which rests in the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who is also the Lamb standing, as if slain, but very much alive, angry, and bringing the judgment of God's awesome holiness against a sinful and rebellious world.

Importance and Purpose of the Book

While studying the book of Revelation, Revelation 22:10 should be at the back of every Christian heart, which says, *"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."* God does not intend for the truth of this book to be sealed to man. He intended the church to study and understand the message of Revelation. Why is that?

First, it is a book of blessing, because blessing, not confusion is promised to those who will read it (1:3). Though filled with horror, it ends in the triumph of righteousness and faith.

Secondly, the Bible says *"All Scripture is profitable,"* meaning every book of the Bible, but Revelation has a unique and

very important place as it is the consummation and climax of God's revelation and redemptive history. As the final book of the Bible, Revelation brings together several lines of prophetic truth which run parallel throughout the Old and New Testaments, but, apart from the book of Revelation, they find no complete prophetic fulfillment. The point is that without the book of Revelation, the Bible would be incomplete. Other Old and New Testament books add new dimensions and give added information and details of prophetic truth regarding the end times, but only Revelation draws them all together into a conclusion. This forms one of the arguments for the Bible as a completed canon. All the themes of Scripture are fulfilled and find their culmination in Revelation. There is no need for more revelation from this standpoint. With the book of Revelation, we truly have "*a faith once and for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3).

Thirdly, this book deals with "*things which must shortly come to pass.*" It is the only major prophetic book in the New Testament that deals in an in-depth way with the events of the Day of the Lord. Many other passages deal with this period like Matthew 24 and 1 Thessalonians 5, but not to the extent Revelation does.

Fourthly, Revelation reveals the Lord Jesus. It reveals Him as the Lamb of God and King of kings who, in the consummation of His programme of salvation, restores to man what was lost by the fall and much more. All of Scripture ultimately speaks of the Lord, it points men to Him, but it is Revelation that thoroughly demonstrates the culmination of God's complete salvation in Christ.

Fifth, Revelation is important because of its unique warnings and challenges to the church in the section spoken of as “things present” (2-3), but even beyond this, the rest of the book also has a very pertinent message for us today for two reasons:

- ❖ On the one hand, it provides us with an extended commentary on the spiritual warfare described in Ephesians 6:12. What we see revealed in this book is but the culmination of the warfare with rulers, principalities, and powers of evil under the control of Satan. As such, it calls us to walk carefully and to understand that what is happening around us is not merely a struggle with flesh and blood, but with supernatural entities that are as real as we are.

- ❖ On the other hand, revelation gives us light concerning things to come, of things that have not as yet occurred in history, but will. It thereby comforts and encourages us to carry on in the light of the sure and final judgment on evil and consummation of God's kingdom in time and eternity.

Sixth, it discloses conditions that will be present in the end-time system of the beast and the final world empire, politically, religiously, economically, and internationally. Such conditions, one would think, would naturally begin to come together to set the stage, as props are prepared for the world stage before this end-time drama would unfold. Thus, while Christ's return for the church is imminent, those members of the body of Christ who will be living in this moment of history can know that His return must be even more imminent, i.e., just around the corner, his return can be anytime from now, so get ready.

C H A P T E R

01

The Revelation from Jesus



C H A P T E R

01

The Revelation from Jesus

Revelation 1:1-19

Introduction

The message in the book of Revelation is the basis for Christian life because in it, the subject of the hope of Christians is brought to light. The writer receives this message from God to His people. The Revelation is a call for everyone to be ready for the final earthly stage of humanity. The book reveals how God would intervene in history to conquer evil. In this study, we shall consider the introductory parts of the book, which exposes us to the source of the Revelation, the writer, the audience, and the purpose of the Revelation.

Discussions

What do you understand by the term Revelation?

How did the Lord convey the contents of this book to His servant? Rev 1:1-2

- What can you say about the writer of the book of Revelation?
- How is Exodus 3:14 related to Revelation 1:1-2?
- What is the purpose of Revelation (Rev 1:1)
- What will happen to anyone who reads and follows the instructions in Revelation? (Rev. 1:3; 22:7, 10)
- The letter was written to whom? (Rev 1:4, 11)
- What is the theme of Revelation according to 1:5
- How was Jesus Christ described in Revelation 1:4,5,12-16?
- How did John describe himself and what can you learn from this description (Rev. 1:9)?
- Where was Revelation received (Rev. 1:9)
- Why was John banished (Rev. 1:9)
- What makes the book of Revelation relevant to the contemporary Christians?
- Point out the titles for the Saviour according to Revelation 1:5, 8, 13, 17, 18; 2:18; 3:7; 5:5, 6; 6:16, 17.
- What can be learnt from Rev. 1:17-18?
- What is the mystery of the seven stars and seven golden lampstands and their meaning? (Rev1:19-20).

Conclusion:

Revelation in the context of this study is an act of showing or revealing what is believed to be divine will or truth. The book is about the future and the present, in which hope is offered for every believer in Christ.

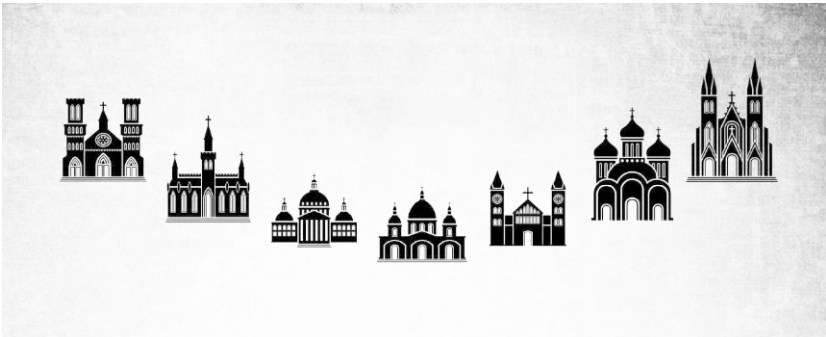
Revelation 1:1-2 has it that the Father gave the revelation to the Son, and the Son shared it with the Apostle, using "*His Angel*" as an intermediary. Sometimes, Christ Himself

conveyed information to John (Rev 1:10 ff); sometimes it was an elder (Rev 7:13); and often it was an angel (Rev 17:1; 19:9-10). Sometimes a "*voice from heaven*" told John what to say and do (Rev 10:4). The book came from God to John, no matter what the various means of communication were; and it was all inspired by the Spirit. According to the Church tradition, this John was the only one of Jesus' twelve (12) disciples who was not killed for the faith. He authored the Gospel of John, 1, 2&3 John, he was a brother to James, who was martyred by King Herod (Acts 12:1-2). He wrote the book of Revelation while exiled on the Island of Patmos. He was sent there by the Romans for witnessing Christ. John does not exalt himself above his fellow believers but calls himself a brother (1:9). He encourages Churches to read this book aloud, for everyone to hear and apply its message. The theme of the message of Revelation is the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a record of things that are now happening and future events (Rev. 1:19). The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches. The word angel means a messenger whether human or divine. The messengers of the Churches are the teachers or ministers/leaders as seen in Daniel 12:3, where the wise/teachers, margin, that turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars. Christ holds them in His right hand of strength. While The Seven golden candlesticks represent the Church in Asia So, the message to the contemporary Church is that the end of everything here on earth is near, so get ready.

C H A P T E R



Letter to the Seven Churches



C H A P T E R



Letter to the Seven Churches

Introduction

The book of Revelation was addressed to selected seven Churches in the province of Asia (Rev 1:4,11). Chapters 2&3 of the book of Revelation comprise of the “*things which are.*” They depict conditions that did and do exist in the churches then and now. Each of these Churches was commended for the good things they were doing, condemned for their flaws, and recommendations were given to each of them. At the time John wrote this Revelation these seven Churches were existent in the cities mentioned. These Churches were representatives of all churches at that time as well as subsequent generations. In the promise to each of these churches, at the close of each letter, is the exhortation to hear what the Spirit says to the Church. Each letter is addressed to the angel of the particular church. The word angel means messenger and as

used in this text, it can either refer to superhuman, implying that each church has its guardian angel. Or the word could be used in a non-technical sense as a human messenger (the human leader or pastor of the Church), in either case, their places of responsibility cause them to share in the blessing and blame of congregations. John was given this message at the Island of Patmos, which was about fifteen miles in circumference in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus. The clause “whoever has ears, let them hear” was a common charge to each church in the entire section (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13&22.) This section of the study will be devoted to the message given to each of the seven Churches.

C H A P T E R

03

Letter to the Church at Ephesus



C H A P T E R

03

Letter to the Church at Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction

The first church to be addressed was the Ephesus Church, as at the time of writing, the city of Ephesus was the capital of the province of Asia. It was the abode of John before and after his exile on Patmos. The city was both the religious and commercial center of that entire area which influenced both east and west Europe and Asia. The temple of Diana was there, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, being the largest Greek temple ever structured (418 feet by 240 feet) (Diana in Roman mythology was the goddess of the moon and of the hunt. Diana was the guardian of springs and streams and the protector of wild animals). The temple of Artemis located in Ephesus also made it the prime center of all major religious activities (in Greek mythology, Artemis was one of the principal goddesses, the counterpart of the Roman goddess Diana.

Artemis was also the goddess of childbirth, nature, and the harvest. As the moon goddess, she was sometimes identified with the goddesses Selene and Hecate).

The Church at Ephesus



The name Ephesus simply means “*desirable*”, The Ephesian. The church was established by Apostle Paul during his second missionary journey. He stayed there for a while and later left for Corinth, where he met a couple Aquila and Priscilla with whom he later returned to Ephesus after a year and a half (Acts 18). Paul discovered some of John's disciples. At Ephesus, the activities of the seven sons of Sceva were discovered, books of magic arts were surrendered and burnt there. At the city of Ephesus, there was an uproar by the silversmiths of Diana shrines (Acts 19:1-41).

However, Paul and other Church leaders (like pastors Timothy, Aquila, Apollos, and Apostle John) tried their best to make the Church grounded in the Word of God. This makes her a Church that has great love until she lost her first love. Ephesian Church was known as the Apostolic Church. The letter of Apostle John to the church involves commendation, condemnation, and recommendation.

Discussions

- Who described Himself in Rev 2:1 and what is the implication of His description?
- What were the commendations given to this Church Rev 2:2-3, 6?
- What was the fault of this Church (Rev 2:5a)?
- What was the recommendation given to this Church (v

5b)?

- What is the implication of the term, “*Whoever has ears, let them hear*” according to verse 7?
- In what ways has your love for God changed since you became a Christian? And how can you re-ignite the flames of your love for Christ?
- Can a Christian keep his/her love for God enthusiastically?
- What will be the benefit of a victorious person?
- Compare Genesis 2:9 with Revelation 2:7.
- In what way is the message to the Ephesian Church relevant to the contemporary Church?

Conclusion



Many Christians today were fervent when they first met Christ but as a result of the care of this world they are backsliding. Just as the Ephesian Church was initially full of genuine love but later forsook the initial love. What are the challenges that are making you lose focus in the Lord? If you were to compare your commitment to the Lord a few years ago, is it still the same today? If not, repent and turn to the Lord to become a victorious person. As a child of God, think and act on how you can motivate others to keep on loving God.

May God help each and every one of us to renew our commitment to Him and bring us back into a right relationship with Him. And may our lives bring honour and glory to God.

C H A P T E R

04

Letter to the Church at Smyrna



C H A P T E R

04

Letter to the Church at Smyrna

Text: Revelation 2:8-11

Introduction

The second church to be addressed was Smyrna. The city of Smyrna was about 40 miles north of Ephesus it was nicknamed "*Port of Asia*" because it had an excellent harbour on the Aegean Sea. It was a splendid city of rare beauty on a fine bay. Smyrna was on a direct trade route from India and Persia to Rome. The city was celebrated for its schools of science and medicine, for its handsome buildings and wide paved streets. In the city were the temples dedicated to Zeus, the god of the sun, Bacchus the god of wine, and the worship of the Roman Emperor. Many apostate Jews who were often leaders in agitating persecution of Christians lived there.

Letter to the Church at Smyrna

The Church at Smyrna

The name Smyrna simply means “*bitter*” being translated elsewhere in the New Testament as myrrh (Matt. 2:11; Mark 15:23; John 19:39). As a church under persecution, many of whose members would experience martyrdom, Smyrna Church came to be known as the Martyr Church because there one of the Church fathers Polycarp was martyred. The Lord appropriately presents Himself to the Church as the One who died and lived, thus assuring them of the hope of resurrection. The letter of Apostle John to the church involves commendation and encouragement.

Discussion

- Who described Himself in Rev 2:8 and how did He describe Himself?
- What were the commendations given to this Church Rev 2:9?
- What was the challenge of this Church (Rev 2:10a)?
- What was the encouragement given to this Church (v 10b)?
- What was the promise given to the Smyrna Church (v 11)?
- In which area is the contemporary Church being persecuted?
- In what way is the message to the Smyrna Church relevant to the contemporary Church?

Conclusion

Many Christians today are facing persecution. Some have been rejected by family and friends because of their faith in Christ, some are being tortured daily because of their faith. Are you being denied what rightfully belongs to you

because you are a Christian? Whatever challenges you are facing, keep on serving God because it will result in eternal rest. Just as the Smyrna Church, do not let anything take you away from Christ, no condemnation was given to this Church but rather they were to be fearless and faithful. He has unfailing promises to everyone who endures till the end.

C H A P T E R



Letter to the Church at Pergamum



C H A P T E R



Letter to the Church at Pergamum

Text: Revelation 2:11-17

Introduction



Pergamum was one of the ancient famous cities. It was the political capital city of Asia, some seventy-five miles north Ephesus. The city had a library with over 200,000 volume books. Pergamos was known for emperor's worship, worship of Zeus, the god of the sun, and worship of Satan was common there. The city's chief god was Asclepius whose symbol was the serpent and who was considered the god of healing. People came to this city from another part of the world to seek healing from this god. No wonder on the altars in their temples, Serpent was being put and worshipped. This made this place to be called the city *"where Satan's seat is"*

The Church at Pergamum



The name Pergamos (Pergamum) simply means “marriage”, Pergamos Church was tagged Compromising Church. The letter of Apostle John to the church involves commendation, condemnation, and recommendation

Discussions

- Who described Himself in Rev 2:12 and what is the implication of His description?
- What were the commendations given to this Church Rev 2:13?
- What was the fault of this Church (Rev 2:14-15)?
- What do you understand by the term “*compromise*” and what makes this Church a compromising Church?
- In which area is verse 14 related with Number 31:16; 1Cor.6:13; 2Pet.2:15 and Jude verse 11
- What was the recommendation given to this Church (v 16a)?
- What would be the judgment for not repenting (v16b)
- What is the implication of the term “*Whoever has ears, let them hear*” according to verse 17?
- In line with verse 17b, compare Exo. 16:13-18 and John 6:51.
- Why are people compromising their faith today?
- What kinds of wrong teachings are being spread today?
- How do you strike the balance between being a part of your community, keeping yourself separate from sin and evangelising?
- How can you combat or guide against wrong teachings and doctrines?
- In what way is the message to the Pergamos Church

relevant to the contemporary Church?

Conclusion

The Pergamos Church was commended for being loyal but was condemned for tolerating heresy and immorality. It was not easy to be a Christian in Pergamos. Christians experienced great pressure to compromise their faith. Many are compromising today because of one pressure or the other. Many Christians today are moving from one Church to the other, not even minding the kind of doctrines that are being preached. Many are confused because of strange doctrines they hear from false pastors. The world today is full of false teachers and they are deceiving many Christians with their sugar-coated mouths, miracles, and so on. Where do you find solutions to your challenges and who is your teacher? Be satisfied with your Church where sound doctrine is being preached. However if you find yourself in the wrong place by the virtue of their practices, you need to find your way out. Do not be deceived by evil and self-acclaimed ministers, hear what the Spirit is telling the Church. In Christendom today, there may be room for differences of opinion in some areas, but there is no room for heresy and moral impurity. So, any Church that is promoting heresy and moral impurity is not from God. God will at the end judge every sin and this will be disastrous for non-regenerated souls. Heavenly manna is awaiting faithful Christians, they will be nourished spiritually.

C H A P T E R

06

Letter to the Church at Thyatira



C H A P T E R

06

Letter to the Church at Thyatira

Text: Revelation 2:18-29

Introduction

The city of Thyatira was about 35 miles southeast of Pergamos. It was a small city, which was probably founded by Alexander the Great around 300 B.C. It was a union city, and headquarters for the trade guilds, such as tanners, potters, weavers, dyers, and robe-makers. It was a secular city, with no focus on any particular religion. It is now known as Akhisar in Western Turkey, south Istanbul near east Athens, about 80 kilometers from the Mediterranean on the border of Lydia and Mysia.

The Church at Thyatira

The name Thyatira means “*continual sacrifice*”. The first convert in Europe Lydia was a native of this city (Acts 16:14). The Church was commended, blamed and given

recommendations. A perfect example of this Church is the Roman Catholic Church

Discussions

- Who fits the description in 2:18b?
- What were the commendations given to this Church Rev 2:19?
- What was the fault of this Church (Rev 2: 20)?
- What was the promise given to this church (vv26-28) ?
- Compare 2:20-21 with 1Kings 16; 2Kings 9.
- What was the punishment prescribed for Jezebel and her followers (Rev 17; 20:11-15)?
- What were the exhortation and counsel given to this Church (v 24-25)?
- In what ways can you avoid being deceived like the church of Thyatira?
- In what way is the message to the Thyatira Church relevant to the contemporary Church?
- What attitudes or activities are you condoning that are not pleasing to God?

Conclusion

The Church at Thyatira was commended for their love, faith, service, and endurance but were condemned for tolerating immorality and so they were encouraged to repent. The actual name of the self-acclaimed prophetess in this Church may or may not be Jezebel, but she was a true Jezebel in her actions because she promoted immorally and idolatry. Just as this Church was commended for growing in good deeds, every Christian should see it as a privilege to do good to everyone around, and we should discourage every form of false teaching and sexual immorality in the

C H A P T E R

07

The Church at **Sardis**



C H A P T E R

07

The Church at **Sardis**

Revelation 3:1-6

Introduction

The city of Sardis was about thirty miles from Thyatira and was the capital of Lydia. It was thought to be impregnable (too strong to be captured or entered by force), but Cyrus the great captured it by following a secret path up the cliff. Coins were first minted in the city. Sardis was noted for her great wealth, the chief of which was its flourishing carpet. It is now a city in the Manisa province of modern Turkey.

The Church at Sardis

The name Sardis means “*remnant*”, the Church in this city is known as Reformation Church. The Church was commended, blamed and given recommendations.

Discussions

- How was the counselor being described in 3:1
- What were the commendations given to this Church Rev 3:4?
- What was the fault of this Church (Rev 3:1-2)?
- What was the promise given to this church (vv5-6) ?
- How are some Christians slumbering and what are the causes today?
- What were exhortation and counsel given to this Church (v 3)? And how relevant is this exhortation for the church today?
- In what way is the message to the Sardis Church relevant to the contemporary Church?

Conclusion



The Church at Sardis was commended for its effectiveness but condemned for being superficial because it had the reputation of being alive but it was dead, and so they were encouraged to wake up, hold the right teaching fast and repent. The problem of Sardis was not heresy but spiritual death. Their wealth and comfort had lulled them to sleep and their self-satisfaction caused them to die spiritually. Are you slumbering in your Christian race or you are dying spiritually? Despite the death state of this Church, some individuals refused to soil their garments. It is high time you woke from your slumber, do not soil your garment.

C H A P T E R

08

The Church at Philadelphia



C H A P T E R



The Church at Philadelphia

Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction

Philadelphia was about thirty miles of southeast of Sardis. It was built as a center of Greek culture around 200 B.C. The city was celebrated for its excellent wine and the majority of its inhabitants drink excessively. It is presently around the Aegean region of modern Turkey.

The Church at Philadelphia

The name Philadelphia comes from the Greek words phileo (love) and depho (brother) it together means “brotherly love”, the Church in this city is an example of the revival Church. The Church was commended, and recommendations were given.

Discussions

- How was the counsellor described in 3:7
- What were the commendations given to this Church Rev 3:4?
- What does the key of David represent in verse 7?
- What was the promise given to this church (vv10)
- What were the exhortation and counsel given to this Church (v 11)? And how relevant is this exhortation for the church today?
- As a child of God, describe a time when you have struggled to remain faithful to God.
- What helped you persevere in your faithfulness?
- In what way is the message to the Philadelphia Church relevant to the contemporary Church?
- How can a Christian strive to the end (Phil 3:8-14, Rev 3:8)

Conclusion

The Church at Philadelphia was commended for her faithfulness without any word of condemnation, it was encouraged to hold on to what it had. They were commended for their effort to obey God (v. 8). The key of David represents Christ's authority to open the door into his future Kingdom, and after the door is opened no one can close it and so salvation is assured (Acts 14:27), and once it is closed no one can open it because judgment is certain. Jesus promised the protection of the eternal souls of His followers in their suffering. Are you not doubting the genuine teaching you have as a child of God? God expects you to hold on to the right teaching because in the end you will be highly rewarded. God knows what you are passing through, he has the power to give you a breakthrough in all

The Church at **Philadelphia**

your ways and renew your little strength. Use your little strength to faithfully serve God. As you journey in this race, know that someday, God will make everything new, pure, and secure.

C H A P T E R

09

The Church at Laodecea

Revelation 3:14-22



C H A P T E R

09

The Church at Laodecea

Revelation 3:14-22

Introduction

The city of Laodecea is about ninety miles due east of Ephesus about forty-five miles southeast of Philadelphia. It was founded by Antiochus II and named after his wife. It was a very common name for women. The city was a banking center and possessed immense wealth. It had a popular medical school well known for the production of eye treatment. It was a city of entertainment and pleasure. Laodecea was noted for the manufacture of rich garments of black glossy wool. Several mineral streams were located nearby

The Church at Laodecea

The name Laodecea means *“people's right or judgment of the people”* The Church was blamed and given

recommendations.

Discussion

- What is the description of the counselor Rev. 3:14?
- What was the fault of this Church (Rev 3: 15)?
- What were the exhortation and counsel given to this Church (vs 18-19)? And how relevant is this exhortation for the church today?
- What were the promises given to this church (vv20-21)?
- What is the characteristic of lukewarm water?
- What is the purpose of discipline from Rev.3:19 (Read also Prov. 3:12; 1Cor11:32; Heb12:6)
- In what way is your current level of wealth, fame and position affecting your spiritual devotion? What areas in your relationship with God are easy to neglect? How can you prevent your faith from becoming lukewarm?
- In what way is the message to the Laodecea Church relevant to the contemporary Church?

Conclusion

The risen Lord presents Himself to this church as the Amen (confirming all that He says), the faithful and true witness in contrast to all the false prophets. The Laodecea Church was condemned without commendation. Even though the city was the wealthiest of the seven cities but there was spiritual poverty and self-deception in the Church. The church was boasting of getting her wealth by her effort. But in reality, she was poor because of her lukewarmness. How is your Christian life? Are you a lukewarm Christian? Are you bragging about your wealth? Know that wealth without Christ is nothing because the real spiritual treasure is found in Christ. Christ told the Church to buy their gold, white

garment, and ointment for their eyes from Him. Though value is not in material possession or riches it is a right relationship with God. Seek first the kingdom of God and your soul will have eternal rest.

C H A P T E R

10

The Heavenly Throne



C H A P T E R

10

The Heavenly Throne

Introduction

Chapter 4-22 is the third section of the book of Revelation, which address *“the things which shall be hereafter.”* Apostle John begins this section with the words *“after this”* 4:1, in which Chapters 4-5 deal with the throne of God and the worship of the Lamb. Hence, Chapter 4 begins with the introduction of the new vision received by John. It is the record of the events that took place in heaven after rapture. This is the vision of how the Church was taken out of the world through rapture by Christ and how glorious the throne of God is.

Discussions

- What is your understanding about Heaven?
- What do you understand about the term throne?
- What is the meaning of trumpet?

The Heavenly Throne

- Compare John 10:9 and Revelation 4:1 in relation to a door.
- What is the implication of an opened door? (Rev. 3:20)
- What do you understand by the term rapture? (1Cor. 15:51-54)
- Whose voice sounds like a trumpet? Rev. 4:1; 1Thes. 4:16
- What does it mean to be in the Spirit? Rev. 4:2; 1;10; 17:3; 21:10)
- How was the throne in heaven described? Rev. 4:2, 5, 6)
- What is the description of the one who sat on the throne? (vv. 3, 9)
- What attributes of God were exclaimed in Revelation 4:8? (Isaiah 6:3; Exo. 1:6,10)
- What is the purpose of all creation as demonstrated by the 24 elders in Revelation 4:10-11 ?
- Who are the 24 elders and what is their work? (vv.4)
- What is the implication of the dresses crowns on the heads of these elders?(v. 4)

Conclusion



John shows us heaven before showing us the earth so that we will not be frightened by future events. God who is seated on the throne is described in terms of the reflected brilliance of precious stones- an emerald rainbow around the throne because He dwells in unapproachable light (1Tim.6:16; Eze. 1:26-28). John was said to be in the Spirit because, the Holy Spirit was giving him a vision-showing him situations and events he could not have seen as a mere man (2Pet 1:20,21). The 24 elders described in verse 4 , they were said by various Bible scholars and commentaries to be the representatives of the whole company of believers (Old

The Heavenly Throne

and New Testaments saints { that is, the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles of Jesus}), the 24 are not the only around the throne, but they only represent the redeemed. The crowns on the head of the elders indicate that they are human, and not angelic being, because crown are never promised to any angel (1Cor. 9:25; 1Thess. 2:19; 2Tim. 4:8; James 1:2; 1Pet. 5:4) John saw the glory of God the Father upon the throne, His holiness and how the Church became victorious over the world and its toiling. The power and the holiness of God extend from eternity past eternity yet to come. The implication of this is that heaven is a glorious place to be. So, let us strive to be their through the grace of God. How prepared are you to be in this glorious place? If you are yet to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, repent and you will be save, then you will be qualify to share in His glory.

C H A P T E R

11

The Book (Scroll) and the Song of the Lamb



The Book (Scroll) and the Song of the Lamb

Introduction

This section reveals what brought about the song of the lamb. It gave the description of the scroll and how no man was able to roll it except the anointed One, which brought about songs of praises to the One who is worthy to be worshipped.

Questions

- What is the description of the Book? (v. 1)
- What is the meaning of song?
- What events can brought about songs?
- What is the meaning of Lamb?
- Why is it that there was no one to open the scroll? (v. 3)
- What was John's response as a result of inability to open the scroll? (v. 4)
- What is the usefulness of the Lamb?

- Who is the Lamb described and why? (1Pet.1:19; Rev. 5:6)
- What is the song of the Lamb?
- Why is Jesus being described as the Lion of the tribe of Judah? (Gen. 49:8-10; 2Sam. 7:8-17; Luk. 1:30-33)
- What was the source of their worship in Revelation 5:8-14?
- What can make one to sing a new song? (v. 9; Ps 33:3; 96:1; 144:9)
- Who was the subject of this worship? (v. 12)
- What is the significant of the book in the hand of Jesus Christ?
- What are the roles of the angels according to Revelation 19:1-3 in relation to Revelation 5:11?
- What is important of worship?
- What are the hinderances to genuine worship and how can you genuinely worship God?

Conclusion

The book was at the right hand of God on the throne when John first sighted it (though it was later removed from His hands Rev. 5:7). No one was qualified to open the scroll as a result of human imperfection. As a result of this, John lamented but he was console by an elder that only the Lord Jesus Christ is perfectly qualifies to move the scroll. This was a victorious proclamation. Because He is the Lamb became he once came to redeem humanity (his past work), and the Lion of the tribe of Judah for he shall reign over his people and this will be His future work. This brought about the New song; that is Song of the Lamb. In the Old Testament, a new song celebrated a new act of divine

deliverance or blessing. The new song came as result of the sacrificial work of Christ, which is the central to New Testament teaching (Mk. 10:45;1Cor. 6:20). It was a song of praise by the angels (angels are spiritual beings ccreated by God who help to carry out his work on earth, (Luke 1:26-28; Dan. 6:22; Gen. 16:7; Exo. 14:19) and the people. God's message of salvation and eternal life is not limited to a specific sex, culture, race, tribe or country. It is for everyone, so anyone who comes to God in repentance and faith is accepted by Him and will be part of His Kingdom. So, use every opportunity to share the Good News to everyone around you, irrespective of their sex, culture and tribe. Therefore, there is a glorious future for everyone who faithfully carries out the work of God. The book in the hand of the Lamb is the final authority for Him to take over the earth and possess it forever.

C H A P T E R

12

The Seal Judgements



C H A P T E R



The Seal Judgements

Introduction

This chapter begins another section of the book of Revelation. Having looked at the heavenly events after rapture in Chapters 4&5, Chapters 6-19 covers the events on earth. The chapters address what will be happening to the people on earth who missed rapture. These chapters concern the event of the tribulation period, climaxing in the second coming of Christ in 19:11-16.

Questions

- What is the meaning of a seal?
- What is Judgement?
- The Six Seal Judgements and their results
- According to English Dictionary, seal has to do a tight closure that prevents the entrance or escape of something or somebody.

Encatar Dictionary has it that judgement is the decision arrived at and pronounced by a court of law.

In this context, seal judgement is the final verdict on earth and its inhabitants, which cannot be altered by anyone.

- ❖ **The first seal** (v. 2) is a symbolic picture of the anti-christ as he subdues to himself the ten nations of the revived Roman Empire. He carries bow with no arrow, which may suggest conquest by diplomacy.

- ❖ **The second seal** (v3,4) brings about uneasy peace (Isaiah 57:20, 20), which the rider on the white horse brings to earth. It was a counterfeit and temporary peace.

- ❖ **The third seal** (vv. 5,6) brings famine to the world, to the extent of using scale to measure food for individuals (Lam. 2:11,12, 19; 4:5, 8,10). This will come as a result of the terrible war on earth.

- ❖ **The fourth seal** (vv7-8) will bring about sickness and pestilence (Lam. 4:7) The identity of the riders of the fourth seal are "*Death and Hell*", which connotes the physical and spiritual death as a result of this riders, one-fourth of the humanity will perish during this plague.

- ❖ **The fifth seal** (vv. 9-11) will bring about religious persecution as never before. These people are tribulational Saints, who will be martyred during the first months of the tribulation when the judgements of the first four seals are being poured out. They are slain for the Word of God and the testimony which they hold.

And as soon as they die they are received into heaven. They are not the martyred of the Church Age (the martyred of the church age will had being raptured). The martyred dead here, as written in the Wilmington's Guide to the Bible, have not been raised from the dead and have not received resurrection bodies. Therefore, it can be concluded that these are Old Testament aints who will experience the glorious bodily resurrection after the tribulation (Rev. 20:4-6).

- ❖ **The sixth C** will bring about terrible natural disasters (vv. 12-17). There are great earthquakes, the sun will become very dark, the moon as red as blood and the stars of the sky fell to the earth. This will makes the rich, poor, great, small, kings, servants to run helter-skelter for a way out and even prefer to die.

Discussion

- What can vindicate a convict?
- What are the causes of natural disasters and famine that are being experience in many part of the world today?
- Will Christians partake in this tribulation?
- Who has ability to set a convict free?
- What is the way out of being involve in this great tribulation?
- Relate Revelation 6:3,4 with Isaiah 57:20, 20
- Who is the source of the genuine peace?
-

Conclusion

Have you been to Jesus for the cleasing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are your garment spotless are they white as snow? Are you washed in the

The Seal Judgements

blood of the Lamb? If the answer is no, humbly come to Him and ask for His forgiveness because The only object to protect the sinner from the judgement and the wrath of the Lamb is the righteousness of the Lamb. The judgement of tribulation are to be worldwide. Genuine Christian will not be involve in this great tribulation. They will have been raptured. The peace promised by the anti-christ is not genuine Only Jesus Christ can bring lasting and permanent peace to every facet of life.

C H A P T E R

13

Preparation and Preservation of the People of God



C H A P T E R

13

Preparation and Preservation of the People of God

Introduction

This chapter is all about the preparation and the preservation of the people of God in the midst of the tribulation. This chapter lies between the sixth and the seventh seal judgements, here God calls a divine time-out. Just as it has been pointed out in the previous lesson (Chapter 6), the sixth seal has been opened, and the people of the earth have tried to hide from God, saying “*Who is able to survive?*” (6:12-17). All hope had been lost but four angels hold back the four winds of judgement until God's people are sealed as His own. Only then will God open the seventh seal (Rev.8:1) During this pause, there are two significant events that took place namely: **the conversion of the 144,000 (Rev. 7:1-8) and the conversion of the multitudes (7:9-17)**. This section, will therefore look at how the people of God were preserved in the midst of tribulations.

Discussion

- What do you understand by preparation and presevation?
- Which group of people can be described as the people of God?
- Who are reffered to as God's servant in verse 3?
- Who are the Jews?
- Why is God interested in the Jews?
- Which of the tribes of Israel was not mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8 and why?
- What do you understand by the term “salvation belongs to our God” (v. 10)?
- Why was Judah mentioned before his elder brother Reuben? (Gen. 37:21)
- Who are the multitudes referred to in v. 9-17 that would be saved?
- What is the significant of palm branches held by the multitudes?
- What is number of the saints, their praise, their background and service (vv.9, 10, 14,15)?
- How is John 6:35 related to Revelation 7:16?
- Compare John 4:10 with Revelation 7:17.

Conclusion

In the midst of tribulation and challenges of life, the people of God are assured of safety. The people of God in this context are the remnants of the Jews and a great multitude. The text does not mean that God will save only the Jews during tribulation (Rev. 7:1-17). What this passage does teach is that God will send 144,000 Hebrews to evangelize the world. The 144,000 are selected from every tribe in Israel, (12,000 from every tribe). The Jews are the

descendants of Abraham the father of faith through Sarah (and his son Isaac). Judah was mentioned first probably because the Messiah belonged to the tribe of Judah (but read Gen. 37:21; 49:3-4). Manasseh (one of Joseph's son) was mentioned and Dan was omitted. Scholars opined that this omission is probably due to Dan's early connection with idolatry (Judges. 18:30; Deut. 29:18-20; 1Kings 12:25-30). The multitudes refers to here are numerous people from every nation and tribe. The palm branches held by the multitudes signifies victory and it is used for festive occasion (Lev. 23:40; John 12:13). They are countless in number, their praise was Salvation to our God, they came out of the great tribulation and are to be serving God continuously.

Some religious beliefs (like the Jehovah Witnesses) that only these 144,000 people will make heaven. This is not true because all Christian will have been with Jesus on the sky for the Bema Judgement, and the Bible tells us of numerous people who will make heaven. Numerous people will come out of the great tribulation triumphantly. Hunger, which characterized one of the seal (third seal) will be taken away and the Lamb who sit at the center of the throne will lead God's people to the spring of living water. Don't wait till that great tribulation time before you accept Jesus as your personal saviour, because it will not be palatable for you to be saved during this period. This is the time of grace, come to the Saviour and make no delay because tommorow (tribulation time) may be too late.

C H A P T E R

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The Seventh Seal and the First **Six Trumpets**



C H A P T E R



The Seventh Seal and the First Six Trumpets

Revelation 8:1-9:21

Introduction

Chapter seven tells us who will be able to stand at the coming of Jesus Christ, but does not give an account of His personal appearing the second time. Thus, we find in chapter eight the seventh seal, the second coming of Christ. The interlude which is dealing with salvation in the Tribulation, is now over and the narrative sequence begins again with chapter 8. The seven seals ultimately contain all the judgments needed to usher in the rule of the Lamb and the kingdom of God. This includes both the trumpet and bowl judgments. With the opening of the seventh seal, the seven-sealed scroll is completely opened and immediately there is silence in heaven. Everything becomes deathly still. In place of the choruses of the elders, the cries of the angels, and the multitudes, all is quiet. The stillness is so intense that it can be felt. The seventh seal contains within its scope

all the rest of the judgments of the Tribulation (the trumpets and the bowls) which will restore the kingdom of God to earth.

The Seven Seal and the Silence in Heaven

- What does seven symbolize in the Bible?
- The term seal means _____
- What is the responsibility of the angels in the presence of God according to Rev. 8:2, 6? (Luke 1:13; Exo. 19:16; 20:18; Jer. 4:5; 1Cor. 15:51-52; 1Thess. 4:6).

Silence in Heaven

This marks the only occasion recorded in history that heaven is silent. There is no slightest sound or movement. This is a silence of expectancy, for it is the last seal. The silence when the seventh seal is opened is a display of awesome reverence for what God is doing.

- What is the purpose of this silence in Heaven? (Eze. 33:11)
- What was the duration of this silence? (Rev. 8:1)
- From the following texts, what is number thirty associated with (Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8)?

The Single Angel with the Golden Sensor (8:3-6)

- How is this angel described?
- What can we learn from the imagery of this angel with the sensor and his function? Heb. 8:5; 9:1-5; Isa. 6:1-7; Heb. 9:3-4, 7; Rev. 8:5; John 3:3-16' 36; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22).

- Which activity was going on at the time of this silence (8:3-4)?
- What is the result of the prayers of the saints? (Rev. 8:3-5)
- What does silence convey in this passage Isaiah 30:15?
- Who is the intercessor of the saints? Who are the saints and what was the implication of the scene?
- What is the responsibility of the angels in the presence of God according to Rev. 8:2, 6? (Luke 1:13; Exo. 19:16; 20:18; Jer. 4:5; 1Cor. 15:51-52; 1Thess. 4:6).
- How can I observe the time of silence as a Christian?
- What is the usefulness of time of silence and what should be our activities during the time of silence?

Describe the events on earth as a result of the first six trumpets

The first trumpet (8:6,7) _____

The second trumpet (8:9) _____

The third trumpet (8:10,11) _____

The fourth trumpet (8:12) _____

The fifth trumpet (9:1-11) _____

The sixth trumpet (9:12-19) _____

In this regard, the seven trumpets are divided into four and three. The first four bring devastation to the world, God's creation. The last three (in Chapters 9 and 11) are aimed more directly at man, though mankind is affected and hurt

by all the trumpets. This is significant since these first four are areas of God's common grace intended for man's blessing. Yet man, on the whole, today, attributes this world to evolution rather than to a personal God. The evolutionists often say, "God did not create the universe; that man simply created God in his imagination out of his fears and weaknesses." But at this point in the Tribulation, remember that there will be no atheists, only rebellious and hardened people.

The seventh seal consists of the seven angels with trumpet judgments

In Revelation 9, Satan, the king of the fallen angels or demons is given the power and authority by God to open the abyss and release these demons on earth as part and instruments of God's divine wrath. All the demons including Satan will be bound and thrown into the abyss again at the end of the Tribulation for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). Satan will be released from his prison at the end of the 1,000 years, and he will come out to deceive the nations. Some will follow him but the King of kings and the Lord of lords will quickly defeat him and cast him with his demon hosts into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

Compare Rev.8:10-11 with 9:1-3 and point out similarities and dissimilarities of the trumpets sounded by the third and the fifth angels respectively and how the verses related to Exodus 15:23-25 and Matthew 24:29 are?

- How are these passages related to Revelation 9:1-2, Eze.28: Ezekiel 28:11; Isaiah 14:12 Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Matt. 12:24, 26; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 12:4, 7; John 12:31;

Ephesians 6:12; Rev. 12:13-17?

- Point out various descriptions of Abyss 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Luke 8:31; Romans 10:7; Revelation 9:1-2; 1 Peter 3:19-20.
- What is the use of the trumpet in contemporary society?
- What is the symbol of Locust from the Biblical perspectives (9:3; Joel 2:1-10)?
- What is the implication of Revelation 9:4-5?
- What will be the effects of the torment according to Rev. 9:6?
- What is the likeness of these locusts (9:7-10)?
- Who is the person described as the king of the locust ? _____ (9:11-12)
- Which category of angels are the four angels in Revelation 9:14-15 and what will be their duties?
- How is the army described and what are the weapons he will use Rev 9:17-19?
- What are the responses of the people that do not die during the plague's time in Revelation 9:20-21?

Conclusion



The silence in heaven here is a silence of expectancy, for this is the last seal. It is also a silence of foreboding that precedes the onslaught of judgments. It lasts for half an hour. Here, then, is a dramatic pause caused by the significance of this final seal, by the intensity of its judgments to follow, and by their final result. The seven angels, who stand in the presence of God as attendants to His service ever ready to carry out His orders, are equipped to carry out the trumpet judgments. In The Old Testament times, the trumpet served to announce important events and give signals and warning in time of war (Jeremiah 4:5-6, 19-21; Joel 2:1). They

are given seven trumpets which stand symbolically for God's provision and authority for these seven angels to pour out these judgments. Seven symbolized perfection. The angel in Rev. 8:3-5 functions as a priest. Some biblical interpreters understand this to be Christ, our High Priest because He is seen often in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 16:7; Ex. 3:2; Numb. 22:22). Others regard him as an angel of high rank because an angel could perform such a function as this on Christ's behalf, symbolically, just as the Old Testament priests did. The Greek word for "*another*" is *allos*, connotes "*another of the same kind,*" and not "*another of a different kind.*" This indicates this single angel may be another angelic being of the same order as the seven.

However, the incense is the sweet savour of Jesus' life and work which gives efficacy to the prayers of the saints (Exo. 30:7-9). The prayers of the saints ascend and judgment descends. The action of the priest angel gives the signal to the presence of angels to sound the trumpets. We are not specifically told who these saints are, but the passage implies that the saints here are Tribulation saints, both Jew and Gentile believers who are living on earth during the Tribulation. Trumpets were used by Israel on all their national occasions: for assembly to battle, public assembly, to signal important events of the calendar year, and almost any important occasion. In this context, they symbolize the announcement of judgment and the number seven signifies the completeness or perfect accomplishment of these judgments.

C H A P T E R

19

The Angel and the Little Opened Book





The Angel and the Little Opened Book

Revelation 10:1-11

Introduction

This chapter is an interlude between the sixth and the seventh trumpet judgments. During this pause, three significant events take place, namely: **the message of the angel of God (10:1-11), the measuring of the temple of God (11:1, 2), and the ministry of the witnesses of God.** However, this section will focus on the first significant event, which is in Chapter 10.

The Message of the Angel of God

- Who is this mighty Angel? (Rev. 5:1; 10:1)
- What does this angel have? (Rev. 10:2)
- What is your understanding of the term scroll? (5:1; 10:2)
- The personal pronoun “I” as used in Revelation 10:4 refers to who?
- Why was John told to keep secret what the seven

thunders said? (Rev10:4; Daniel 8:5; 12:4, 9). Relate Revelation 10:4 with Mark 13:32, 33.

- Compare Revelation 10:4 with 22:10.
- Should the revelation of God be kept secret?
- What does the angel announce? (Rev. 10:5-7)
- What is the implication of Revelation 10:6?
- Why would John be instructed to eat the scroll? (Rev. 10:9-10; Ezek. 2:9-3:3)
- What makes the Word of God sweet in John's mouth and sour in the stomach? (Rev. 10:9-10; Psalm119:103)
- How often do you digest God's Word and what is your attitude to it as a child of God?
- How true is this statement "*Truth is bitter*"?

Conclusion

The angel referred to here, who swore by him that liveth forever (Rev. 10:6) may be Michael the Archangel (Daniel 12:1), and possibly the same angel referred to in Revelation 5:2; 7:2; 8:3 and 18:2. The purpose of this mighty angel is to announce the final judgments on earth and humanity. The Scroll is a written document in the form of a long strip that is rolled up for storage. Throughout history, people have been eager to know what will happen in the future, some of which are written in the Book of Revelation but John was prevented to write a certain part of his vision. God has revealed everything needed for the salvation of humanity and so ours is to be ready for Him at every point in time. The time of His coming is near, so get ready as a child of God to meet with your Saviour. It should be noted that Revelation 10:4 contains the only sealed part of Revelation. God had revealed to John the first part of tribulation and it had been sweet indeed to witness ungodly Gentiles receiving their

just punishment. But now he will be allowed to preview the last three and a half years of the tribulation, which period will begin with the wholesale slaughter of the Israelites by the antichrist. This was indeed bitter medicine to John, particularly what would happen in Revelation 11:1-13. Eating the scroll is a picture of being ready to prophesy God's message. Notice that when Ezekiel ate this scroll he found it to be sweet as honey in his mouth. The word of God is described as sweet. Notice that when John ate the scroll he also finds it as sweet as honey in his mouth. However, after he had eaten the scroll, his stomach was made bitter. The bitterness comes because of the judgments that are still to come. Notice that these judgments to come are the point of verse 11. John is told to prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings. Now the prophecies will be about the nations of the earth. These prophecies will begin in Chapter 12. John has been prophesying about his people, the Jewish nation, and its final judgment by God has been declared. However, John is not done. John must continue to prophesy and speak about the nations. As Christians, there should be nothing sweeter to us than reading God's word. It should be our passion. It should be our delight.

Memory Verse: **Psalm 19:10**

C H A P T E R

16

The Two **Witnesses**



C H A P T E R

16

The Two Witnesses

Text: Revelation 11:1-14

Introduction

This portion is the second and the last significant events that will take place between the sixth and the seventh trumpet, as pointed out in the previous study. God never leaves mankind without an adequate witness. During the first half of the great tribulation period, He not only has 144,000 Israelites from each of the twelve tribes who reach a multitude which no one can number, but also establishes in and around Jerusalem two special witnesses endowed with supernatural powers (similar to two Old Testament Biblical characters).” This study will point out what they do and what happens to them.

What is the necessity for measuring the temple? (verses 1, 2)

- What do you understand about the term “*witness*”?

The Two Witnesses

- How were the two witnesses described?
- Which two characters of the Old Testament fit into the descriptions of these witnesses?(Rev. 11:4; 1Kings 17:1; 18 2Kings 1:10, 12; Luke 4:25; James 5:17; Exo.7:17-21; Mal. 4:5-6; Jude 9)
- What will be the ministry of these witnesses?
- How long will their ministry last? (verse 3)
- What do the sackclothes to be worn by these witnesses symbolize? (Joel 1:13; Jonah 3:5-6; Matt. 11:21)
- What is God's provision for these witnesses? (verses 3-5)
- According to Daniel 11:2; 12:6,7; 13:5, what are the events predicted for this time?
- What is the implication of Revelation 11:6-7?
- The following passages point out what sackcloth is associated with Genesis 37:34, 2 Samuel 3:31, Esther 4:1-3, 2 Kings 19:1-2; Jonah 3:6, 8; and Rev. 11:3
- What is the source of the power of these two witnesses? (verse 4)
- How will these witnesses be treated? (verse 9,10)
- When will their ministry be terminated? (verses 7-10)
- From verse 13, what is the ultimate goal of God's saving plan?
- How will God intervene on behalf of the two witnesses? (verses 11-14)
- What are the hindrances to witnessing for Christ in our contemporary age?
- What are the consolations of true witnesses of Christ (Daniel 12:3)?
- What are the results that characterize men of Satan's kingdom and all men of the Tribulation according to Rev. 9:20-21?
- What are the attitudes of unbelievers to the preaching of

the Gospel today?

- How are the witnesses of Christ being treated in most parts of the world today?
- Which part of the world is hostile to the gospel in contemporary society and how can we preach the gospel amid hostility?

Conclusion

The two witnesses are the light bearers of the truth of God. Their ministry will be terminated only when they shall have finished their testimony. These witnesses will suffer the same fate as their Lord. Some hold that these witnesses will be Elijah and Enoch since the Bible says all men are appointed to die (Heb. 9:27) and these two did not experience physical death, they will be sent back to witness and eventually die a martyr's death. Many Christians believe that these men will be the Old Testament characters because the things they will do are similar to what the Old Testament personages did when they were on the earth.

These two witnesses are modelled after Moses and Elijah and both men appeared with Jesus Christ at his transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-17). During the last half of the Tribulation, men will worship the beast and Satan by exclaiming, *"Who is like the beast and who can make war with him?"* (Rev. 13:4). This could even be exclaimed after the death of these seemingly invincible prophets who are killed by the beast (11:8).

However, as representatives of every believer who has witnessed for Jesus, the two final, faithful witnesses are the picture of both invincibility and vulnerability. They win,

they lose and they win again. Every faithful witness for Christ will experience resurrection someday. The evil reign will surely have a definite end. The ultimate goal of God's saving plan is that everything in creation will glorify Him (verse 13). So like Paul, be ready to share the good news at every point in time (Rom. 1:16). The witnesses were mistreated by the anti-Christ and the people and were killed. However, death has no power over them. Death cannot hold them, and they arise from the grave. John tells us that they have a triumphant resurrection (verse 11). After this, those who are left, in terror, will give glory to God instead of the beast. You don't need to wait for this period before you accept the Lord Jesus Christ if you are yet to do so. As a Christian, who are you witnessing for? If you faithfully serve God you too will experience resurrection someday.

C H A P T E R

17

The Seventh Trumpet



C H A P T E R

17

The Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:15-19

Introduction

This is the parenthetical section between the sixth and the seventh trumpets which has now come to conclusion. (10:1-11:13) it explained some of the details of the Tribulation which is now completed. In 11:14 we have the announcement that *“the second woe is past.”* Literally, *“has come”* with the idea *“has come and gone.”* Here John again resumes the sequential movement of the book. So the second woe, concluded in Chapter 9, is now mentioned as an introduction to the third and final woe. Thus John says, *“Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.”* In 8:13 John was informed that the last three trumpet judgments, there called woes, would be more intense upon the earth-dwellers. Rev. 11:14 makes it clear that the third woe is coming and quickly.

The Seventh Trumpet



This is the seventh trumpet that will take us up to the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. The picture here (vs. 15-19) is panoramic of the rest of the Tribulation. The stress is on the effects of the seventh trumpet: it ushers in the reign of Christ (cf. vs. 15 with 17). This judgment becomes the greatest woe because it includes the seven bowl judgments though they are not mentioned here. Chapters 12-14 form the third parenthetical section filling in more details of other key events and personages.

In verse 14 we are told the third woe *“is coming quickly.”* The word *“quickly”* is the Greek *“tachu”* and can mean (a) quickly in the sense of soon, i.e., the end of the age is near, or (b) *“quickly”* in the sense of *“in rapid succession,”* i.e., once the seventh trumpet is blown, its judgments will come like a trip-hammer blows in quick succession, the end will then be near. This last explanation best suits the conditions of the passage.

Discussion

- What was the heavenly response when the seventh trumpet was blown? 11:15-17
- What is the significance of the ark in the temple? (Rev 11:19; Isaiah 6:1-8; Exo. 25:9; Heb. 8:2, 5; 9:24)
- Why did the twenty elders fall and worshipped God? (12:16-17)?
- How do the Nations respond? (11:18a; Psalm 2:1)
- What was heaven's response to the sound of the seventh trumpet

- Describe the events on earth and in heaven as a result of the seventh trumpets
- What does seven symbolize?
- What are the things sighted when God's temple in heaven was opened and what do they symbolize (11:19)

Lessons:

1. **The preservation of the proclaimers.** Revelation 11 emphasizes the work of the two witnesses. We are supposed to be the instruments that proclaim God's message to the world. God will accomplish his word. We must know his word, explain his word, and teach his word to the world.
2. **Judgment must come against Christ's enemies** (1Cor. 15:20-25). Christ reigns until all enemies are under his feet. Everything will be put under Jesus' feet. He will destroy every rule, every authority, and every power. All things will be subjected and all enemies will be destroyed.

Conclusion



The seventh and final trumpet is blown and immediately something happens in heaven; there is an immediate heavenly response because the dominion of the world is taken over by Christ. This announces the arrival of the King of kings. This will make the coming judgment a complete event. This will bring about joy to the citizens of heaven and it will make the nations of the earth angry. The seventh angel according to Willmington prepares us not only for the consummation of the ages but also for the explanation for all things.

Therefore, we read about the temple of God in Revelation 11:1 which is the true people of God. They are measured for protection from spiritual harm. The seals have revealed that the servants of God will be killed but their salvation is secure even if they die. The measuring of the worshipers is a guarantee that they are members in the heavenly spiritual temple no matter what happens to them on earth. The nation of Israel is coming under God's judgment but the true people of God (the temple) are spiritually preserved. The final judgment of the Jewish nation shows the continuous establishment of Christ's kingdom as Christ conquers all of his enemies. The enemies of Christ's kingdom have been defeated. Every enemy is being subjected under the feet of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:25).

Notice verse 18: The nations rage, but your wrath has come. Time for judgment and time for a reward for those who are God's servants. This imagery recalls Psalm 2:2 where the nations rage against God's anointed. However, Christ rules over the earth and subjects the nations. Are you among the true people of God? If not take a step of faith by doing so, to be counted worthy. Do not be an enemy of Christ. Find favour with him now by receiving the grace He is offering through faith.

C H A P T E R

18

The Great Conflict



C H A P T E R

18

The Great Conflict

Revelation 12

Introduction

Revelation 12 begins another parenthetical and explanatory portion of Revelation that discusses seven great personages of the Tribulation, particularly of the last half. These seven personages of 12:1-14:20 are: (a) the woman who represents the nation Israel (12:1-27); (b) the great red dragon, a picture of Satan (12:3-4); (c) the male child, the Lord Jesus (12:5); (d) Michael who represents the holy angels (12:7); (e) the remnant of the woman, regenerate Israel (12:17); (f) the beast out of the sea, the world dictator (13:1-10); and (g) the beast out of the earth, the false prophet and religious leader of the world (12:11-17). This chapter is a description of the conflict, first on the earth (vs 1-6), then in heaven (vv.7-12), and finally back on the earth (vv.13-17). It not only reveals future things but also unveils the sphere of Satan and angels. In this chapter, what will happen to the

nation of Israel as revealed.

Discussion

- Read the following passages and point out what each of the personages presented there represents
Rev. 12:1-2 _____
Rev. 12:3-4 _____
Rev. 12:5 _____
Rev. 12:7 _____
Rev. 12:17 _____
- Which woman and her baby are described in 12:1-2, 5-6

- Who is Satan attack centered on? (Verses 6, 13)

- Which nation of the world does the woman in Rev. 12:1, 2 represent (12:13, 15, 17)? _____

- Point out three things about Jesus Christ in Revelation 12:5 (Gal. 4:4, 5; Acts 1:11; Psalm 2:6-9). _____
_____ / _____
- Which role will be played by Michael and what will be the outcome? (12:7-8) _____

- What makes Israel different from other nations? (Rom. 10-11:10) _____
- How is the Devil described in Revelation 12:9, 10? _____

- These passages point out various attempts of Satan to exterminate Israel. Exo. 2; 14; 16; 32; Num. 14; 23; 2 Kings 17; 24; Jonah 2; Dan. 3; 6; Esth. 3. And what was the outcome of the attempt? _____

The Great **Conflict**

- Who is said to be the accuser of the brethren and what will be his lot? (12:10; Job 1:6-9; Zach. 3:1) _____
- How was the victory won? Rev. 12:11 _____

- What is the implication of Rev. 12:12? _____

- In your word, what is the meaning of the term conflict? What can bring about conflict? _____

- List possible places where conflict can take place?

- What are the possible ways to manage conflict?

- Point out the description of satan from the following passages. Rev.12:3, 4, 9; Matt. 4:8,9; John 8:44; 2Cor. 6:15; Zech. 3:1-7; 1Pet. 5:8; Ezek. 28:11-19; _____

- What are the events that can lead to conflicts in any society? _____

Conclusion

Chapter 12 is descriptive of warfare, but it is primarily a conflict involving angelic forces, particularly, the fallen angels or the demonic world under Satan's authority. Conflict is warfare between opposing forces, especially a prolonged and bitter but sporadic struggle. It is an act of disagreement or clash between ideas, principles, or people.

The Great **C**onflict

Conflict connotes battle, fight, war, struggle, clash, encounter, disagreement, argument, quarrel, discord, and so on. Satan often employs human means to accomplish his purposes (as with the persecution of Israel) but what we must always keep in mind, as this chapter reinforces, is that behind the scenes are Satan and his demonic forces, our nefarious (wicked) arch-enemy. The warfare of this chapter occurs first on earth (12:1-6), then in heaven (12:7-12), and finally on earth again (12:13-17). However, the fact is that the battle is being won because God has guaranteed believers of victory (1Cor. 15:57). Stand firm in your commitment to God and His Christ. A great spiritual battle is being fought, and there is no time for indecision as a child of God. Jesus is the means of Satan's defeat and condemnation.

C H A P T E R

19

The Beast and His Prophet



C H A P T E R

19

The Beast and His Prophet

Revelation 13:1-18

Introduction

Chapter twelve dealt extensively with activities of the dragon (Satan) during the tribulation while Chapter thirteen dealt with the activities of the beast from the sea, who is known as the world dictator (13:1-10); and the beast out of the earth, the false prophet and religious leader of the world (3:11-18). This chapter will reveal the effort of the false prophet to make the whole world worship the antichrist.

The Beast and His Prophet

The Beast: Revelation 13:11; 16:13; Daniel 2:40-43; 9:27; 8:23; 7:23-26; 11:36. This title applies to both a man and his governmental system. The system is the revived imperial form of the old Roman Empire which is a consolidation of

ten European countries into one 10-nation confederation. But this system is led and controlled by a Satan-possessed man from whom the system gets its character and beastly nature.

The False Prophet: While the beast is primarily a political figure (though he later becomes religious in that he seeks to be worshipped and claims to be God), the False Prophet is religious and promotes the ministry and person of the beast. (Rev. 13:11-18) Since the first beast is Satan-possessed, this forms the unholy trinity, Satan, the beast, and the False Prophet. Satan is to the beast what the Father is to the Son, and the False Prophet is to the beast what the Holy Spirit is to Christ.

Discussion

- What do you understand about the term 'beast'?
- Who is a prophet and what are his roles?
- What type of prophet is this text referring to?
- How can we differentiate between true and false prophets?
- What are the characteristics of the beast out of the sea? (1-3)
- What is the people's response to the beast of the sea? (3-4, 8)
- What is the miracle to be performed by this beast? (verse 3)
- What is the time limit given to this beast and what was the authority given to him? (verses 5, 7)
- What are the three objects of his blasphemy? (verse 6)
- What will be the activity of the beast? (verses 5-7; Daniel 7:25)
- Who are the people that the beast would have no

authority on? (vers7-10)

- What are the characteristics of the beast out of the earth from the passages? (Dan. 8:23; 11:36, 43; Rev. 6:2; 13:8, 16, 17; 17:11; 2Thess. 2:4).
- What will the inhabitants of the earth do to the beast and what will be their lot? (13:8)
- Who is the source of the power of this beast?
- Point out the various names and the title of the lawless man from the following passages: 2Thess. 2:3, 8; Dan. 7:8; 9:26; 11:36; Rev. 11:7, 11; 15:2, 10, 13; 17:3-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10.
- Are signs and miracles real? Can there be genuine signs and miracles?
- How can we differentiate fake miracles from genuine ones? (Exo. 7:1-14)
- Who are those that will refuse to worship the beast? (verse 8)
- Which of these beast is the antichrist?
- Read the following texts and point out what is said about antichrist (1John 2:18, 22; 4:23; 2John 7)
- What has (have) become the object(s) of worship in contemporary society?
- Who will the antichrist war against and who are the people that would suffer it?
- What would be the challenges of great tribulation saints during this period?
- In your word, who is the antichrist?
- What will be the aim of the second beast? (verse 12)
- What will be the activities of the second beast? (13-17)
- In your word, what is the meaning of the term “Mark” and what can the mark do on humans and other creatures?
- What is the significance of the mark of the beast and what

will the mark look like? (verses 17-18)

- Are people presently taking the mark of the beast?
- What is the essence of putting the mark on the forehead or hand?
- What are the differences in the personality between the first beast in Revelation 13:1 and 13:11?

Conclusion

The work of the false prophet is to deceive the inhabitants of the earth with false miracles. During the tribulation time, the antichrist will deceive many with various forms of fake miracles and many will follow him and will fall. The second beast will be the advocator for the first beast. He will force men to become identified with the beast by a mark. The mark (666), is of the first beast because he is the chief character in this text and the one whose worship is promoted by the second beast. The mark may be placed in the forehead or hand where it can be easily sighted. For this reason, the second beast is called elsewhere the false prophet; he is a prophet of the first beast (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Both beasts are antichrist in the sense of being against Christ. Hence, to some Bible scholars, the first beast has to do chiefly with the religious matter while the second is on political activities.

Throughout the Bible, miracles performed are proofs of God's power, love, and authority. But here we see the counterfeit performed to deceive. This is a reminder of Pharaoh's magicians, who duplicated Moses' signs in Egypt. True signs and miracles point us to Jesus Christ, but miracles alone can be deceptive. That is why we must inquire each miracle we see, to know whether it is

consistent with what God says in the Bible. However, the beast will have no power over those whose names are in the Book of Life. The good news is that in the end the captor will be taken captive, and the killer will be killed. When God's purposes are finished through the beast, God will take him captive and confine him to the lake of fire. In the knowledge of this is the patience and faith that sustain the saints who endure these persecutions.

The Purposes of the Tribulation

- (1) **For Israel:** Being uniquely a time of Jacob's (Israel's) distress (Jer. 30:7), it is a time to discipline Israel for her stubbornness and rejection of Christ, to purge out the rebels, and to bring the nation to faith in Christ and so prepare her for restoration and regathering for the millennium (Matt. 23:37-39; Ezek. 20:33-38; Zech. 12:10; Jer. 30:1-17). The Tribulation is also designed to break the yoke of Gentile bondage (Jer. 30:8, 11; 31:11).

- (2) **For the Nations:** The Tribulation will serve as divine judgment for anti-Semitism. (Zech. 1:15-21; 12:3f; 14:3; Joel 3:2; Jer. 30:8, 11, 16) The Tribulation will also be used to bring many Gentiles to faith in Christ (Rev. 7:9; 13:10). Finally, it is a test to try all the inhabitants of the earth

- (3) **About Satan:** The Tribulation will reveal the true character and programme of Satan. The Tribulation will permit Satan's programme to come to its logical conclusion, resulting in judgment from God. It will demonstrate that Satan is the cause of war, murder, and deception and that he deserves his judgment from God (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7-12; 20:1-3; Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek.

28:12-19).

- (4) **In General:** It is an open judgment against all mankind for rebellion to God and rejection of Jesus Christ (Zeph. 1:15, 17, 18; Joel 3:12-14; Rev. 6:16-17).

- (5) **About God:** The Tribulation will demonstrate that God is holy, righteous, just, and still on the throne. That He has not ignored man's rebellion or sin, but that He has held back only in mercy and longsuffering, not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9).

The Beast and **His Prophet**

C H A P T E R

20

The Lamb and the 144,000



C H A P T E R

20

The Lamb and the 144,000

Revelation 14

Introduction

The fate of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists is presented in Chapter fourteen. These evangelists were sealed in the first half of the tribulation (Rev. 7:1-8). They were singing songs that no one else could learn.

Discussion

- What type of songs were the evangelist singing? Verse 3
- What are the commendations given to these 144,000 and what can this generation of Christians learn from their lives? (14:4-5)
- What are the characteristics of the Gospel announced by an angel? verse 6
- What are the threefold of the message? (verse 7)
- What are the announcements of the three angels? (14:6, 8, 9)

- What is the reason for Babylon's judgment? (verse 8)
- Which punishment is awaiting anyone who worships the beast? (10-11)
- Which group of holy people are referred to in Vv. 12-13 and what will be their rewards?
- Who is being described in verse 14?
- What is the role to be played by the Angel in Rev. 14:15?
- What is the implication of verses 15, 18?
- What is the essence of harvesting?
- What are the signs and features of the ripe harvest and the grapes of the vine? (Matt. 13:36ff; 21:19-20; mark 3:1, 3; John 15:1, 6; Rev. 16:5; Psa. 80:8)
- Which role will the Angel in verse 18 play?
- What can hinder one from being spiritually pure? How can you be spiritually pure in this contemporary society?

Conclusion

We had looked at the roles that will be played by the 144,000 bondservants of God, 12,000 Jews from each of the twelve tribes. These are Jews who will be saved after the Tribulation begins. They are sealed, which refers to their salvation, identification, and protection for special service during the rest of the Tribulation. From the context of Revelation 7, it appears they will be the special evangelists whom God will use to lead multitudes to God from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. (compare Rev. 7:1-8 with Rev. 14:9-10)

The message of the Gospel announced by an angel to all the world was in threefold messages namely: fear, glorify and worship God. The second angel which announces the fall of Babylon is described in detail in Chapter 17 and 18. This text

emphasizes the certainty of the destruction of Babylon. The reason for Babylon's judgment is twofold, namely: her fornication and sinful influence on all the nations. The third angel announces judgment on all who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. The tribulation saint is therefore called blessed. The picture of the harvest in this text is that all the false religions of man are fully ripe and ready for harvest. Get yourself ready for this greatest harvest.

C H A P T E R

21

The Victorious Song of the Saints



C H A P T E R

21

The Victorious Song of the Saints

Revelation 15

Introduction

This text starts with the announcement of the seven plagues, this is the introduction to the preparation for the third woe which are the final plagues of the great tribulation. It gives a record of the victorious songs of the saints (song of Moses and the Lamb). Here comes the time when no one can enter the temple to plead with God. The time of mercy is now over and no one on earth could be saved again.

Song of Moses and the Lamb

The Israelites through the leadership of Moses sang songs of deliverance from the Egyptians in Exodus 15. In Exodus, the Israelites had been delivered by the blood of the Passover lamb; and here they overcame the Beast "by the

blood of the Lamb" (12:11). The later part of Chapter 15 (verses 5-8) reveals how the heavenly temple was opened.

- Who are those that are referred to as victorious over the beast? (verse 2)
- What is the song?
- What motivates people to the song (verse 2)?
- What is the key to God's eternal glory?
- Who was Moses and what was his ministry?
- What is the significance of Moses' song?(Exo.15:1)
- Who is the Lamb referred to in this text?
- What is the song of the Lamb?
- Who is being referred to as the Lamb?
- Who will partake in the song of the lamb?
- What are the contents of songs in the Church today?
- What should be the contents of our songs?
- What is the significance of the heavenly temple that was opened? (verses 5-8)

Conclusion

John in Revelation 15:3-4 presented the song of Moses, which was used to celebrate Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Exo. 15). The song of the Lamb celebrates the ultimate deliverance of God's people from the power of sin and Satan. The substance of those songs is the mighty works of God. To Him are ascribed several things. He is Almighty, righteous and true, King, of nations, holy, and will be worshipped by nations again (Rev. 1:8; 14:7). The song of Moses celebrates Israel's deliverance from the enemy while that of the Lamb is a victorious song of the saints over the beast and Satan. These saints were slain for their faith, yet John says that they "*have the victory*" over the Beast! They

would not wear his mark or worship his image, and so lost their lives; but in losing their lives for Christ's sake, they found them again! Even if the Christian dies in his witness, he is a victor, not the loser. Here again, we see these saints singing by the heavenly sea; in Revelation 20:4, their dead bodies were raised so that the company might reign with Christ during the Millennium. As a Christian, If you suffer for Christ, you shall reign with Him also (2 Tim 2:12).

Just as it opened in Revelation 11:19, here in Revelation 15:5-8, the temple of heaven is opened; The earthly temple has been taken over by the Beast (13:13; 2 Thess 2:3-4), but the Beast cannot touch the heavenly temple. All he can do is blaspheme it (13:6). The opening of the temple is another reminder that God will keep His covenant with His people, Israel. Many of the believing Jews have fled to Edom, Moab, and Ammon, where God will protect them. Others will die for their faith, along with many Gentiles. John saw the temple filled with the glory and power of God. Hence, the key to God's eternal glory and power is his holiness. God's presence is both His strength and perfect moral character. Therefore, our desire to be holy is our only suitable response. Our eternal reign with Christ will not begin until all evil is destroyed by His judgment. The fire reminds us that the wrath of God is now about to be revealed (Heb 12:29). We must wait for his timetable to be revealed. So, every individual should always have this at the back of their minds that the time is near and so one needs to seek the Lord when He may be found because a time is coming when there will be no opportunity to seek Him. (Isaiah 55:6)

C H A P T E R



The Seven Bowl Judgment

Revelation 16





The Seven Bowl Judgment

Revelation 16

Introduction

This chapter records the seven bowl judgment that will come upon the earth during the second half of the tribulation which will be global with great devastating effects. This study will focus on the seven vial (bowl) judgments that will come upon the earth.

- What does seven symbolize?
- What is the meaning of bowl?
- What do you understand by the word judgment?

Describe the devastating events that will come upon the earth as a result of the seven bowl judgments.

- First bowl judgment (Rev. 16:2)
- Second bowl judgment (Rev. 16:3)
- Third bowl judgment (Rev. 16:4-7)
- Fourth bowl judgment (Rev. 16:8-9)

The Seven Bowl Judgment

- Fifth bowl judgment (Rev. 16:10-11)
- Sixth bowl judgment (Rev. 16:12-16)
- Seventh bowl judgment (Rev. 16:17-21)
- Who is described as 'You' in Revelation 16:5?
- What will be the effects of the fifth bowl?
- What is the implication of Revelation 16:15?
- What is the implication of the sentence "*You are just in these judgments*" according to Rev. 16:5-7
- What will be the extent and effects of the earthquake in 16:19-20?

The Seven Vial (Bowl) Judgments Explained

This chapter gives the specific judgments of the seventh trumpet. Bowl is an open container, usually round and wider than it is deep, typically used for holding food and liquids.

1. **The first** bowl judgment was on everyone who had the mark of the beast, it brought about painful sores.
2. **The second** resulted in the death of the living creatures in the sea.
3. **The third** will bring about smitting of the rivers, and all the rivers and fountains of water in the earth become blood.
4. As **the fourth** angel poured out the fourth vial (bowl) judgment, the intensity of the sun was increased more than anyone could bear.
5. **Fifth Bowl:** The vial judgment of the fifth angel this bowl judgment results in darkness, as also in the ninth plague of Egypt (Ex. 10:21-23), the darkness will cause a lot of psychological trauma for those on earth. This bowl is poured out "*upon the throne of the beast.*" This is the direct attack on the antichrist's kingdom. Revelation 13:4 points out that, men will marvel at the beast and proclaim "*who is*

like the beast, and who can make war with him” (Rev. 13:4). He will be seen as the solution to the world, the answer to mankind, the hope of the world. However, regardless of his apparent power, he will not be able to escape God's judgment. This is the fulfillment of Joel 2:1-2; Zeph. 1:15 and Mark 13:24. Neither Satan nor this lawless man can alleviate this judgment. This judgment also anticipates the doom and eternal prospects of the beast and his subjects; they will be cast into outer darkness because they have turned away from the true Light of the world. This will clearly illustrate that there is only one hope, the Eternal God and Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ whom the world has by and large rejected; the One who alone is the Light of the world (John 1:3-5, 9-11). The following are the effects of the fifth bowl judgment: The beast kingdom became darkened because it is a kingdom of great darkness (Col. 1:13a; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:13-15). The heathen gnawed their tongues because of the pain. The heathen blasphemed the God of heaven and they refused to repent of their deeds” (vs. 11). At this time all men will know, like the demons, that God exists, but will remain stubborn in their rebellion. There will be no room for repentance at the judgment throne of God.

6. **The Sixth Bowl:** The sixth bowl prepares the way for the kings of the east, to facilitate the movements of the troops of the oriental kings or the eastern confederacy for the final Battle of Armageddon. The battle of Armageddon will be the final battle to be fought by Christ against the antichrist and the unified army of the east and the west. More light will be shed on the battle of Armageddon in Chapter 19. The eastern army will cross here to attack the army of the antichrist in the west. The object of the sixth

bowl is the river Euphrates. The word “great” stresses the prominence of this river. This is the largest river in western Asia and has figured largely in history and prophecy. The river is 1,800 miles long and has always stood as a natural barrier separating the east from the west. This river formed the Eastern boundary of ancient Rome and its conquests, forms the eastern boundary of the land as promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4), and for a brief season, David and Solomon extended their authority to the Euphrates (1 Kings 4:21; 1Chro. 18:3; 2 Chro.9:26). The sixth bowl reveals that the dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet are seen in action performing demonic miracles. And an unclean spirit like a frog came out of the mouth of each of them. The Arabs have long hated the Jews and of course, in our time this has taken on increased proportions. There appears even now growing sentiment against Israel among nations of the world. The actions of these demons will somehow bring this to a climax at this time. Then there is the lust of the nations for control of Palestine and its warm water seaports which would enable the one controlling Palestine to control the oil of this part of the world. (Zech 14:1-3; Rev. 12:17; Ezek. 38:12) The kings of the world will be gathered together for war with one another, but it is a war in which man is ultimately brought against God. The armies do not know this, they think they are coming to gain control of Palestine, but God uses this to accomplish this confluence of nations for his divine purposes (Joel 3:1-3; Zech. 14:1-3). The war is called “*The war of the great day of God, the Almighty*”(vs. 14), and the place it is fought is called “**Har-Magedon**” (vs. 16). Modern man often refers to this conflict as Armageddon, the final conflict that will be fought in the Valley of Megiddo. This

will be another World War that extends over the entire last half of the Tribulation involving several phases or invasions of Palestine and conflicts. This will finally culminate in the gathering of all nations at the very end of the Tribulation at Har-Magedon. Ezekiel 38; Daniel 11:40-45; Zechariah 14:1-3 and Joel 3:1-17 all describe these military events that will culminate in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. "As a thief" stresses the fact that while the general time of Christ's return in the Tribulation can be known because of the signs and specific events of the Tribulation (like the drying up of the Euphrates), the exact moment cannot be known (Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:7). Therefore, Tribulation believers are warned to stay awake, producing righteousness for the Lord. They are to live with a view to His return. Some will try to apply this to the church, but though there is some similarity to 1 Thessalonians 4:13f in the fact that Christ will come silently for believers, take what is His, and leave the world in disarray, the primary picture of Christ's coming for the church is that of a Bridegroom. The thief concept primarily deals with the Tribulation or the day of wrath (cf. 1 Thess 5:2-3). Thus, a special blessing (happiness) is promised to the believers (tribulation saints), even in these horrible times of the Tribulation if he follows the warnings and exhortations of this verse. They are told to stay awake and keep their garment.

7. The Seventh Bowl: When the seventh angel poured out his vial upon the air, a voice from God's temple in heaven declares: "*It is done*". This is the confirmation that the judgment of God on the wicked mankind is now complete. As the Tribulation is a time of unprecedented trial or judgment, so the seventh bowl is the most severe and

devastating judgment of the whole Tribulation, ending with the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. His return is not mentioned in these verses or this chapter, but from the circumstances and the sixth plague, the return of Christ has to be a part of this judgment. This bowl brought about widespread destruction. A great earthquake that has never been witnessed by a man on earth will occur. This will be so terrible that major cities of the world will be destroyed. Verses 19-20 then give the extent and effect of this earthquake with its worldwide devastation. The phrase, "*And every island fled away and the mountains were not found*", may be a reference to the divine renovation of the earth in preparation for the millennium reign of Christ. This agrees with 2 Peter 3:10.

Conclusion

From the contemporary point of view all the details of these dramatic judgments are not immediately understood, the unmistakable impression of the Scriptures is that the whole world is being brought to the bar of justice before Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. There is no escape from divine judgment except for those who avail themselves of the grace of God in that day by faith in Jesus Christ. The utter perversity of human nature, which will reject the sovereignty of God in the face of such overwhelming evidence, confirms that even the lake of fire will not produce repentance on the part of those who have hardened their hearts against the grace of God. This is the just and fair judgment of God. The nations realized that these judgments come from God, but they still refused to turn to Him and they refused to recognize His authority and repent of their sins, their heart is hostile and hardened

to God just like the heart of Pharaoh. Despite these terrible situations, the people of the earth continue to blaspheme the name of the Lord rather than for them to repent and give glory to God. If you are yet to surrender your life to Jesus, do so before it is too late. Because if you continually ignore the warning of God, you will eventually be unable to hear him at all, so today is the day of your salvation because the coming of Christ will be sudden (2Cor.6:1-2; Rev. 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:1-6). As a child of God, get ready for the coming of Christ and be committed to God's moral standard and at the end, you will sing victorious songs.

Romans 13:11-14 exhort you and me to be awake and get ready for the coming of Christ. In this sense, the passage in Revelation 16:15 has application for us today. We can see events that are unfolding today that could very well be preparatory to the Tribulation—politically, spiritually, morally, and in other ways. The Lord's return for the church before the Tribulation, this means His coming for us, though always imminent, must be drawing nearer every day. This along with the nature of our future with Him should likewise motivate us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ that we might be fully clothed with His life and glorious character. The reference in Rev. 16:5, "*who are and who were*" refers to the eternal essence of God. As the Eternal One, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. God is long-suffering but eventually, God's holiness must act and His judgment against sin will be delayed no longer.

C H A P T E R

23

The Destruction of the World's Religious and Political System



C H A P T E R

23

The Destruction of the World's Religious and Political System

Revelation 17

Introduction

Revelations 17 and 18 deals with the subject of Babylon and form a unit of prophetic doctrine, namely, the destruction of Babylon. However, these are two of the most difficult chapters of Revelation to interpret and expositors vary widely in their understanding of this section of the book. Walvoord writes: Any interpretation of Revelation 17 and 18 is difficult because expositors have not agreed as to the detail of their interpretations. In general, however, it is helpful to consider Chapter 17 as dealing with Babylon as an ecclesiastical or spiritual entity and Chapter 18 as dealing with Babylon as a political entity. Revelation Chapter 17 gives the full description of the destruction of Babylon mentioned in Revelation 16:17-21.

Discussions

- Who reveals the details in this verse?
- How is Babylon described in Revelation 17:1-7?
- Compare the description in Revelation 17:3 with 13:1.
- Compare Revelation 17:12-14 with Daniel 7:23-24.
- How are the latter-day activities of the harlot described by Paul, Peter and John in 2Timothy 3:1-5;4:3,4; 2Peter 2:1 and Revelation 3:15-17?
- What will be the end of the religious harlot? (17:16-18).
- How is religious harlotry being practised today?
- What are the antidotes to religious harlotry?

The Name Babylon: Babylon comes from the Hebrew Bab-el which some say is a Hebrew form of the Assyrian Bab-ili, which means "*Gate of God,*" and is used in the ancient city on the banks of the Euphrates River. However, in Hebrew, Bab-el means "*confusion.*" Babylon is first found in Genesis 10 in the table of nations. Here Moses traces the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. We have here the Japhethites, those least connected with Israel, then he traces the Hammites, those responsible for a great deal of sin and trouble in the world, and then the line of Shem, those who became Israelites.

Babel is the first reference to Babylon and its beginnings. Nimrod is recorded as the founder of Babel, later called Babylon (Gen. 10:10; 11:2-3, 5, 9). Nimrod's nature and character are seen in both his name and in his actions as described in Genesis 10:8-10 and his origin in Babylon. This was one of the most important cities of the ancient world, whose location today is marked by a broad area of ruins just east of the Euphrates River, 90 km (56 mi) south of Baghdād,

Iraq. Babylon was the capital of Babylonia in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC.. In antiquity, the city profitted from its location extending across the main overland trade route connecting the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean. Surviving a series of conflicts, it became one of the most magnificent and luxurious cities in the known world. The famous hanging gardens of Babylon are on record yet today as one of the seven wonders of the world. Babylon is John's metaphorical name for the evil world power and all it represents. As stated and expatiated in the Study Bible, Babylon was the name of both an evil city and an immoral empire, a world center for idol worship. Babylon ransacked Jerusalem and carried the people of Judah into captivity (2Kings 25; 2Chro. 36). Just as Babylon was the Jews' worst enemy, the Roman Empire was the worst enemy of the early Church. John, who probably did not dare to speak against Rome openly, applied the name Babylon to this enemy of God's people (Rome)- and by extension, to all God's enemies at all times (Rev.14:10). The original readers probably rather quickly identified Babylon with Rome, but Babylon also symbolizes any system that is hostile to God. (Rev. 17:5) To some scholars as stated by Wilmington, the Babylon refers to in Chapter 17 is different from the one of Chapter 18. The city in Chapter 18 may be the literal Babylon which will outshine all other cities during the tribulation and possibly be the headquarters for the antichrist. And so to some, Babylon will be rebuilt based on the following reasons:

1. Although it did not happened all of a sudden, ancient Babylon was destroyed as prophesied in Isaiah 13:19
2. The description of literal Babylon by Jeremiah in Chapter 51 is very similar to the one given by John in

church is a counterfeit; federation (v.5) because many groups will come together under the one harlot in a kind of federated church; and the persecutor (v. 6) because this church will be a persecutor of believers in Jesus during this time and she will be successful, but John could not fully comprehend this vision and the angel promised him an explanation (Rev. 17:7). The explanation is summarized below.

The beast in 17:8 is the same one referred to in Revelation 11:7.



The seven heads of the beast are identified as the seven mountains on which the harlot sits. The seven hills of Rome were commonplace with the Latin poets, which implies that the center of the beast's power will be Rome. (V 9-11) To some scholars, it is referred to as a selective list of Roman emperors while some think that they refer to successive forms of government in the Roman Empire. However, there are objections to these views but the beast that is to come during the tribulation is said to be the eight (v.11) and has limited power with the certainty of his doom.

The horns of the beast are described in verses 12-14 as ten kings. (Daniel 7:23-24) They are ten nations who are allowed to rule for an hour with one purpose, however, they will rule independently. They will give their power to the beast, and together make war with the Lamb but they will be defeated by the Lamb.

The water on which the harlot sits is the peoples of the world. Verses 16-18 talk about the destruction of this religious Babylon. The ten kings described above will

Revelation 18.

3. Babylon is said to be destroyed during the day of the Lord, which is the Old Testament term referring to the tribulation (Isaiah 13:6)
4. According to Isaiah 14, Israel will enter into God's rest after Babylon is destroyed. Since this has not yet happened, the event must be yet in the future.
5. Jeremiah predicts that Babylon will drink of the cup of the wrath of God last among all the kingdoms of the earth.

However, as written by Charles Ryrie, Wilmington (Wilmington Guide to the Bible, page 573) quoted that

"Whether the city will be rebuilt once again on the Euphrates is a matter of debate."

Nevertheless, the name is used for more than a city in these chapters (17-18); it also stands for a system. This is much the same as the way Americans speak of Wall Street or Madison Avenue. They are streets, but they also stand for the financial or advertising enterprises.

Interpretation of this Vision

One of the bowl angels was the revealer of these details. Babylon is described as a harlot because this Church will be unfaithful to the Lord (17:1-2); political power because she is described as sitting on the beast, she will have power over the man of sin (v.3); glory because she is described to be with splendor, glory and wealth (v.4); counterfeit (v. 5) because her name is called mystery and since the true Church is also called a mystery (Eph. 5:32), this apostate

voluntarily join forces to destroy the harlot, but in so doing they are in reality fulfilling the purpose of God. Rome is believed to be the religious and political center of the world in tribulations.

Conclusion

The influence of this harlot will be worldwide (Rev.17:1). This influence will be an instrument to corrupt the entire earth. She will be very wealthy and drunk with the blood of God's saints (17:6). She will team up with the beast (i.e the antichrist) for a while, with her name written on her forehead (17:5). In the time of John, it was common for prostitutes to wear their name in jewelry upon their foreheads, thus advertising their trade. In the first half of the tribulation in the false system called Babylon, the Harlot there will be for abomination. This will include other harlot groups. The center of this system will be Rome where great political influence will be exercised. Chapter 17 is in part an amplification (expansion) of chapter 13 in that it shows us one of the ways the beast and his political system rise to power. He uses the religious influence and power of the woman, the religious system of mystery Babylon. This system will have its tentacles in every part of the world where there is any kind of religion, this harlot church will probably be composed of Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, and every other world major religions apostates with the Jewish religion, and the cults and so on. These will all come together in one great ecumenical movement, a super world religion, and the beast will use this to extend his authority and power throughout Europe, parts of Africa, and perhaps the Americas. This false church uses all her strength to elevate the antichrist during the first part of

the tribulation, she will flourish for a while but things will change for her drastically.

This harlot will not be challenged in the first half of the tribulation but the antichrist will refuse to bow. He will turn on her, destroy her buildings, burn her holy books, and murder her priests. And this false Church will be destroyed at the hands of the antichrist. Are you a religious harlot? Some people today are practising syncretism as a result of their spiritual harlotry. Are you being influenced by worldly infatuation with the worldly power of movie stars, sports celebrities, political coalitions, and world economic forces? If so, you are an easy target for Satan's great deception. Worldly power and influence are Satan's trap. And the desire of these can turn an individual away from God. To avoid being deceived, worship only God and serve Him now before it is too late. As seen in John's vision, God uses people that are opposed to Him as tools to execute his will. Although God allows evil to permeate this present world, the new earth will never know sin and will be free of troubles and calamities. So, draw near to the Living God who has power over every power and authority.

C H A P T E R

24

Destruction of the World Economic System (Commercial Babylon)



C H A P T E R

24

Destruction of the World Economic System

Revelation 18

Introduction

This chapter is the continuation of the previous chapter. The focus of Chapter 17 is the judgment on religious Babylon (which is the apostate church); while chapter 18 is on political and commercial Babylon. Chapters 17 and 18 are an amplification of one of the main features of the tribulation, the place, function, and final judgment of Babylon. Chapter 17, which deals with the destruction of religious Babylon, will have to occur somewhere around the middle of the Tribulation when the beast is finished using her as a means to his rise to power. The name Babylon is used for more than a city in these chapters (17&18); it also stands for a system. The usage in Chapter 17 has religious and political connotations while that of Chapter 18 is of commercial empire. Chapter 18 describes the destruction of political (economic or commercial) Babylon as it is

embodied in the city of Babylon, the headquarters of the beast. The destruction undoubtedly occurs at the seventh bowl when the great city of 16:19, along with other cities, falls in the great earthquake. Chapter 17 describes Babylon in its mystery form, as a religious system or spirit of false worship; Chapter 18 describes Babylon as a political and commercial system embodied in a city, the city of Babylon of the future. So there are two Babylons: **religious Babylon** and **political Babylon**.

Discussion

- Who is the agent of the announcement of the judgment? (v. 1)
- What necessitates the judgment? (vs. 2, 3)
- How is the city described?
- What should be the attitude of Christians towards this Babylon and what type of appeal is made because of the judgment? (v. 4)
- How can you as a child of God apply Revelation 18:4 in the light of the following texts: Gen. 19:12-14; Num. 16:23-26; Isaiah 48:20; 2Cor. 6:14-17; 1John 2:15-17?
- What happened as a result of the judgment upon Babylon? (Rev. 18:9-19)
- What will be the reaction of the world concerning the judgment? (18:20-24)
- What is the reason for this judgment? (Vv. 23-24)
- Mention some negative means of acquiring wealth in our contemporary society.

Explanation

The agent who gave the announcement in Chapter 18 is an angel with great power. He repeats for the sake of emphasis

fallen Babylon. Some facts that show how evil the system is and how righteous God is, in destroying Babylon are revealed by him. Babylon is described to be demonic (v.2), unfaithful and intoxicating. The appeal here is to come out of Babylon, this appeal will be addressed to tribulation saints, who will also be tempted like the believer of every age to compromise. There was anguish as a result of the judgment (Vv. 9-19). The apostate church is hated by the kings of the earth (17:16); while the commercial center is loved by them (18:9). The kings of the earth destroyed the apostate church and political Babylon is destroyed by the judgment of God (18:5,8), mystery Babylon is destroyed first during the Tribulation; while commercial Babylon is destroyed at the second coming of Christ. The destruction of Babylon is the final answer to the plea of the martyrs in Rev. 6:9-11). The reason for the judgment is two-fold, namely: Babylon deceived the nations and killed the saints (vv.23-24).

Description of Babylon in Revelation 18

The city is described thus:

- Habitations of demons and false doctrines (Rev. 18:2)
- Both rulers and merchants had worshipped at her shrine of silver (Rev. 18:3)
- Her sins had reached into the heavens. (Rev. 18:5)
- She had lived in sinful pleasure and luxury. (Rev. 18:7)
- Her prosperity had blinded her to the judgment of God. (Rev. 18:7, 11-17).
- She had deceived all nations with her sorceries. (Rev. 18:24)
- She was covered with the blood of many of God's saints. (Rev. 18:24)

Conclusion

Just as the tribulation saints are encouraged not to be seduced, as a child of God, there is a need for you and to always avoid Satan's world system in its every form—religious, political and commercial (Gen. 19:12-14; Num. 16:23-26; Isaiah 48:20; 2Cor. 6:14-17; 1John 2:15-17). How do you value money and wealth and how are you acquiring money? How do you manage your wealth as a child of God? As a child of God, do not let the love of money take you far away from God because money will be worthless in eternity. The financially buoyant person often feels secure, and in control, feeling no need for God and anyone else. God hates this kind of attitude and his judgment is against it. If you are financially sufficient, don't look down on others and use your money and resources for the advancement of God's Kingdom and to help others. Guard yourself against greed. The expectation of God for us is to work and provide for our families, and to use our money properly, but when the desire for money fills our lives, it becomes a false god. Do not be enslaved by the desire for money. Let the love of God and His service be your ultimate priority and every other thing shall be added unto you.

C H A P T E R



The Second Advent of Christ



C H A P T E R



The Second Advent of Christ

Revelation 19

The coming of any king will either bring joy to the people or sorrow. Joy to the lovers and those that are faithful to the king while to the enemy it will bring about sorrow and sadness. So will the second coming of Christ will be. It will result in joy and glory for His faithfulness while to the unfaithful and wicked people it will bring about sorrow and gory (horrible experience). With Chapters 17-18 as a background, John receives a new revelation concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the first ten verses, the emphasis is on what he heard in special announcements in preparation for the return of Christ. In verses 11-21, however, the stress falls on what John sees concerning the actual return of the Lord (cf. vs. 1, 2, 5, 6 with 11, 17, 19). The return of the Lord brings the Tribulation events and the wrath of God. This chapter records the glory feast in heaven and the gory (bloody), horrible) feast on earth to a close. Its contents are the Hallelujah choruses (19:1-6), the

announcement of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:7-10), the announcement of the Advent of Christ (19:11-16), and the announcement of Armageddon (19:17-21).

Discussions

- What is the meaning of Halleluyah? v.1
- How is the judgment being described in verse 2?
- What is the meaning of 'marriage' in this context?
- What type of announcement was made in Revelation 19:7?
- What is the responsibility of the bride in Revelation 19:7b-8?
- What followed the wedding? (19:9)
- What do you understand by the action of John and the reaction of the angel in verse 10?
- What is the aim of Jesus' coming in verse 11 (2Thess. 1:7,10; Rev. 19:14).
- How was His appearance described in vv.12-13, 15?
- What type of announcement was given in Rev. 19:11-16?
- What do you understand by the war of Armageddon? (Rev. 19:17-21)
- What are the factors that can be responsible for conflict and war?
- What are you supposed to do to be part of the marriage supper of the Lamb?
- What are the dangers of war and conflict in society? Point out practical examples.
- Knowing in advance that Christ will be victorious, what should be our attitude toward life?
- As a child of God, how does understanding Christ's victory help you persevere through times of defeat?

The Glory Feast in Heaven (Hallelujah Songs in Heaven) Vv. 1-10



The phrase *"after these things"* indicates that this event comes after the visions of the preceding chapters. The four Halleluyah came from *"a great voice of many people"* (v.1) Their joy is seen in the word *"Hallelujah."* This word comes from two Hebrew words. The first is allelu, an intensive verb in the imperative meaning *"give praise."* The second is the Hebrew name of God in the shortened form, Yah. It means *"praise Yahweh,"* or *"praise the Lord."* Praising God is the greatest way to respond to Him, because the more an individual gets to know God, and realizes what He has done, the more the person will respond with praise. The bride was introduced to the glorious feast in heaven (19:1-10). This glorious event is celebrated by the usage of heaven's greatest praise word *"Hallelujah.* The term Hallelujah can only be found in this text. This is the celebration of the Lamb's victory over the harlot and his marriage to the bride. The second section of this text (vv.11-21) is on the battle that will come upon the heathen. Upon hearing the hallelujahs of the great multitude, the 24 elders and the four living creatures respond with their hallelujah and worship of God who sits on the throne.(Psa. 103:19) The primary emphasis in this context is that God is now dramatically establishing His reign upon the earth by the previous judgments and especially by the return of the Lord, which is to be announced shortly. (vs. 11f)

The first aspect of praise consists of the declaration that *"salvation and glory and power belong to our God."* Note the *"our"* in *"our God."* Those giving praise had rejected the god of this world and his false messiah, and by faith had

accepted the Lord as their God and Saviour. For this, many had died a martyr's death, but to their God, who is our God through Jesus Christ, belongs all true deliverance, glory, and power. The apparent successes and victories of the enemies of God over His people are purely temporal.

Marriage of the Lamb



The announcement of the Marriage of the Lamb was made in verse 7. The bride has the responsibility of making herself ready for the Groom. The bride is the bride because of the righteousness of Christ; the bride is clothed for the wedding because of her acts. Righteous acts flow from a righteous character which is entirely of the grace of God. the wedding will be followed by a supper and a blessing is pronounced upon everyone who is called to the supper. These are friends of the Bridegroom, John the Baptist in John 3:29 is called a friend of the Bridegroom. These guests are not the bride and they are not unsaved people, so they must be redeemed people who are not members of the Church. John was overwhelmed and fell at the feet of the angel but the angel restrained him from worshipping him, that worship belongs only to God. To truly grasp the significance and meaning of these passages, it will be helpful to explain the marriage custom of John's day in three phases namely:

- (1) betrothal,
- (2) presentation, and
- (3) the marriage feast.

Christ gave His own life for us as a dowry which is part of the procedure in marriage. Today all believers are legally married to Jesus Christ and through living faithfully in the Word, we are kept as pure virgins, kept from Satanic

apostasy or fornication (Matt. 1:19, 2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25-26). *Secondly*, when the couple reached a suitable age the wedding took place (Matthew 25:1-13) During the betrothal phase, the groom prepares an apartment, a place to live in his father's house. When a son to be married, another portion is completed to make ready for the new bride (John 14:2-3; Eph. 5:27). The rapture, or resurrection and transformation of the church is the event that brings the groom to the bride and which takes the bride back into heaven. *In the third phase*, the groom will invite many guests and gather all his friends to come to the marriage feast to view his bride. The length and lavishness of the feast will of course depend on the wealth and status of the bridegroom. It might last a day or a week or even longer. The millennium represents the marriage feast where Christ displays His bride, the church (Matt. 22:1-14; 25:1-13). The announcement of the marriage, which has already occurred in heaven with the presentation of the bride, the church, to the groom, the Lord Jesus Christ, occurred following the rapture. What we have here, as verse 9 makes clear, is an announcement of the wedding feast or the millennial reign of Christ.

In verse 10, John is overawed by this revelation of the marriage supper of the Lamb and falls at the feet of the messenger, but he is immediately rebuked by the messenger's words. There is a very important message in this verse for all believers as it pertains to the giving and receiving of the Word of God. John had received revelation from angels before, but this revelation was so wonderful and awesome to John, so beautiful, that he fell before the angel to worship him, perhaps in appreciation for this good word from God. In the process, however, he forgot or

ignored some very important principles that must always be kept in mind regarding the messengers of God's Word, whether angelic beings or human beings. When sitting under the ministry of someone who gives out the Word, whether in a church setting, by tape, or by radio, people often become so thrilled with the message, they become enchanted with the messenger. But everyone should see the messenger as an instrument in God's hands (1Cor. 3:4-7).

The Glory Feast on Earth

The word gory connotes bloody, bloodstained, blood-soaked, violent, gruesome, brutal, bloodthirsty, fierce, horrific, disgusting, grisly, unpleasant, ghastly, horrible. It is a situation that involves bloodshed. This experience is described by David in Psalm 2:1-5, 9, Isaiah in 34:1-6; 63:3,4,6; Joel in 3:2, 9-16; Zechariah in 12:2; 14:2,3,12 and John in Revelation 14:14-20; 16:16. This event is known as the battle of Armageddon.

The Announcement of the Advent of Christ (19:11-16)

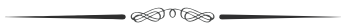
There is the announcement of the advent of Christ in Revelation 19:11-16. This is a climactic place in the book of Revelation as it reveals the person of Jesus Christ, for now, our Lord is presented as the victorious White Horse Rider who comes out of heaven and who is also King of kings and Lord of lords. In the gospels, which deal primarily with Christ's first advent, Jesus is seen in His humiliation, rejection, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. But here, His return is one of triumph, glory, power, sovereignty, and dominion. Here is the high point in history, for here is the manifestation of the Son of God in

glory and the end of all angelic and human rebellion. After the 1,000 year reign, another brief rebellion will occur, but it is short-lived because Christ is present as King of kings.

The reference to Christ's victory in battle via the cross is in Colossians 2:15. Here Christ is proclaimed as the triumphant General in the field of battle. Ephesians 4:7f speaks of Christ giving gifts to men as spoils of war following the victory over the Satanic hosts. (The first phase of the triumph.) *Finally*, Revelation 19:11 speaks of the removal of all enemies. (The final phase of the procession resulting in the execution of all enemies). In His first advent, Jesus Christ came as ho Logos revealing God in His plan of salvation (love, grace, power, and perfect holiness), but, in His second advent, He will come revealing God in His plan of wrath and judgment (compare vs. 13a, the blood dipped garments, and vs. 14, the armies, with John 1:4, 17). Compare also John 12:46-48 where Jesus declared that He would not judge then, but He would later and by the index of God's Word.

As "*the Word of God*" according to Revelation 19:13 Jesus Christ is the complete personal manifestation of God, not just a part of God's essence and plan, but the whole. He is the complete revelation, the collection and expression, and the outward manifestation of all that is God. The classic passage on Christ as "*the Logos*" is John 1:1-18.

The Armageddon Conflict (19:17-21):



Right away a great contrast occurs with this section of Revelation 19. Above, in verse 9, saints are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. "*Supper*" is deipnon, the

primary meal of the day, and there it refers to the blessings and fellowship of the millennial reign of Christ with His bride, the church, but here, birds (vulture types) are invited to another supper (*deipnon*), only now it is to eat the flesh of those killed in this battle. Either one accepts God's supper of grace, or faces his judgment. This conflict will be between the heavenly hosts and all the armies of the earth. While this was discussed in chapter 16, it might be helpful to review the Armageddon conflict. The events discussed here describe the final phase of the battle of Armageddon which began with the invasion of the king of the north and his allies around the middle of the Tribulation (Ezek. 38-39). At that time, the king of the north will be destroyed on the mountains of Palestine by God. This leaves a vacuum of power and the beast of the western confederacy, seeing this as an opportunity to strengthen his power, will move into Palestine, break his peace treaty with Israel, and begin to conquer greater portions of the earth (cf. Dan. 11:40-43).

At the end of the Tribulation, he hears tidings out of the East, i.e., the kings of the East are marching to Palestine to do battle with the beast and his armies (Dan. 11:44-45). Here all the remaining armies of the earth will gather to do battle with one another to gain control of the world and especially Palestine (Joel 3:9-14). Then suddenly, the heavens are opened, and there, appearing for all the world to see, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings with His armies. His authority is seen in several things in these two verses. First, the authority of Christ is seen in His Name, "**KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**" (vs. 16). In verse 12, the "diadems," are the royal crowns He will wear, which, as pointed out previously, likewise demonstrate His authority over the whole earth. He has "many crowns" versus the ten

of the beast, and He is King above all kings and the epitome of kings. But in hardened rebellion and spite of the awesome wonder of the Lord in heaven, the armies of the world band together in what will be the first truly successful United Nations action to do battle with Christ. Verses 17 and following portray the results and the victory of our Lord. Verse 20 makes it clear that the beast and the false prophet will literally be seized (arrested) at the beginning of the conflict and cast directly into the lake of fire. The false prophet is identified as the one of chapter 13. The most dramatic part of verse 20 is the last part where it tells us these two were “*thrown alive*” into the lake of fire. It says, “*Alive, they were thrown, these two, into the lake of fire.*” The beast and his false prophet will be the first occupants of the lake of fire; other unbelievers, now in hades, will join them at the end of the Millennium.

Conclusion/Application

God does not allow His people who suffered unjustly under the harlot to go unavenged. He will avenge the wrong that was done to them. Sometimes in this age, there appears to be no justice, but this cannot and will not always be the case because of the character of God. The word “avenged” is the Greek *ekdikew*, an intensive compound verb and may suggest a complete rendering of justice to avenge His people. At this age, believers in Christ will be singing glorious songs while the wicked people will face gory experiences. How do you take the grace of God? In the present age, the grace of God is being revealed while His judgment is being suspended. The age to come, while continuing to reveal grace, will bring an end to this suspension of God's wrath and finally of even God's grace.

Christ's victory is total and complete. The Word of God makes plain that God so loved the world that He gave His Son and that all who avail themselves of the grace of God are immeasurably blessed in time and eternity. On the other hand, the same Word of God states plainly that those who spurn God's mercy must experience His judgment without mercy. How foolish it is to rest in the portions of the Word of God that speak of the love of God and reject the portions that deal with His righteous judgment. Christ will return for the final battle of Armageddon with all armies gathered to do battle (Rev. 19:11-19). The beast and false prophet are removed (Rev. 19:20). The armies of the world are destroyed (Rev. 19:15, 17, 19, 21). This is followed by the judgment of the rest of the living Jews and Gentiles (Matt. 25:1ff). Then comes the millennial reign of Jesus Christ (Rev. 20).

The present age reveals the grace of God and suspended judgment. The age to come, while continuing to be a revelation of the grace of God, will give conclusive evidence that God brings every evil work into judgment and that those who reject His grace must experience His wrath. How are you preparing for your final destination? Whose camp do you belong to? God's camp or Satan's camp? The final destination of the wicked is the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

This lake is different from the bottomless pit referred to in Revelation 9:1. The final destination of the antichrist and the false prophet is the lake of fire. Then their leader Satan too will be thrown into that lake (Rev. 20:10), death and the grave will also be thrown into the lake (20:14). Afterward, everyone whose name is not recorded in the Book of Life will be thrown into the fiery lake (20:15). Is your name written in the Book of Life? Will you be part of the glorious

celebration? The only prerequisite for eternal rest is to accept Jesus Christ into your life as your Lord and personal Saviour. As a child of God, let your praise of God flow out of your realization of who He is and how much He loves you.

C H A P T E R

26

The Millennium Reign and the **Great White Throne Judgement**



C H A P T E R



The Millennium Reign and the **Great White Throne Judgement**

Revelation 20

Introduction



The focus of Revelation 20 is the millennial reign of Christ, which brings a great sigh of relief with the binding of Satan and the resurrection and reward of the Tribulation martyrs. In the overall outline, this chapter is the second part of the third main section of Revelation (cf. Rev. 1:19). As stated earlier in this study this third section of Revelation covers Chapters 4-22, and its focus is on the future. The first part of the third section describes the Tribulation (4-19). The second part describes the Millennium and great white throne judgment (20), and the third part takes us into the eternal state (21-22). This is one of the greatest and most important chapters of the Bible. This chapter presents, in summary, the tremendous series of events that encompass the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Many Bible expositors believe that it is in this future period that many

Old and New Testament prophecies will find their ultimate fulfillment like Isaiah 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 11:1-10; Jeremiah 23:5-6; portions of Matthew 24 and 25; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; and 2 Peter 3:10-12. The golden age of the kingdom will last a thousand years, during which righteousness will reign, and peace, prosperity, and the knowledge of God will be universally enjoyed. However, the view that Revelation 20 is speaking of a literal thousand-year reign of Christ is also one of the most controversial, and a bewildering array of diverse interpretations may be found regarding this passage. So, various views about the millennium will be pointed out.

Discussion

- What is your understanding of the term millennium?
- What are the differences between the rapture and the second coming of Christ?
- What will happen as a result of Satan's imprisonment? vv.1-3
- What are the roles of Satan in this contemporary age?
- What do you understand by the second death and how can it be avoided? (verse 6; Rev. 21:8)
- What do Gog and Magog symbolize? (vv.7-9)
- Where will the final destination of Satan and His followers be? V. 10
- What do you understand by the Great White Throne Judgment? (20:11-15)
- What is the character of this Throne of Judgment? vv. 11-15
- When will the Great White Throne Judgement come up?
- What will be the basis for this judgment? Vv12-13- the work of the people
- What will be the result of the judgment? Lake of fire

The Millennium Reign (vv.1-10)

The term millennium comes from the Latin word “*mille*” meaning “*thousand*” and it relates to the statement in Revelation 20:4. The Millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ immediately following the Great Tribulation. Millennium is not a Scriptural word, but it is a Scriptural truth.

The following are views on the millennium:

Millennium

The 'a' in a millennium negates the term. This is the view that there will be no literal future millennium or literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. According to this view, the kingdom of God is present in the Church age and at the consummation of this age, the eternal state will be inaugurated without any intervening Millennium.

Post-millennium

This is the view that the kingdom of God is now extended or expanded through the gospel and missionary activities. The world is to be Christianized and the result will be a long period of peace and prosperity. According to this view, the Spirit of God in the heart of the believers is one sense a millennium (Jn 14-16), universal diffusion of the Gospel is another argument (Matt. 28:18-20). This view hold that the presence of the gospel brings about improvement in social and moral conditions.

Historic Pre-millennialism

This is the view that Christ will return before the Millennium to establish His earthly reign of 1000 years. However, this view is different from dispensational pre-millennialism in that it sees rapture and second coming of Christ as simultaneous, therefore, it gives no room for seven years of tribulation. This view sees the Church at present is spiritual Israel (Rom. 11).

Dispensational Pre-millennialism

Similar to historical pre-millennialism. This is the view that Christ will return before His literal 1000 years reign on earth. But it differs in the strong belief that rapture and second coming of Christ are distinct from each other. This view holds that the Scripture makes a distinction between God's programme for Israel and the Church. From this view, the Church will be raptured (1Thess. 4:13-18) before the tribulation. The unbelieving Gentiles and disobedient Israel will be judged during the tribulation. At the end of the tribulation, Christ will return with the Church and establish the millennium Kingdom on earth.

All believers as resurrected saints will share and experience all the blessings of the Millennium, politically, spiritually, morally, and in every possible way. It will be a time of unprecedented joy. This millennium is the reign of Christ in the hearts of believers and His Church. These different views about the Millennium need not cause division and controversy in the Church because each view acknowledges what is most crucial to Christianity: Christ will return, defeat Satan, and reign forever. Whatever and

whenever the Millennium is, Jesus Christ will unite all believers; therefore, we should not let the issue divide us. Satan and the Abyss (1-3): Scripture describes this present time in which we live as an evil age and Satan is called "*the god of this world,*" (literally "*age*"; compare Eph. 5:16; 2 Cor. 4:4). Today Satan is free and walks about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. (1 Pet. 5:8) Consequently, during the Millennium and Christ's reign on earth, Satan (and this includes his demon hosts) will be bound and put out of action until the very end of the thousand-year reign of our Lord (John 12:31; Col. 2:15; Rev 20:1-3). 20:1- The bottomless pit represents the place of the demons and Satan, the king of demons (9:11; Luke 8:31. Verse 2, the dragon was bound so as not to deceive the nations. The 1000 years is often referred to as Millennium.

Saints and the Kingdom (4-6)

This kingdom will be inhabited in the beginning by two categories of saints. First, there will be resurrected saints in glorified bodies like that of our Lord (Phil. 3:21). This will include Old Testament saints, church age saints (the bride of Christ), and Tribulation martyrs. Second, there will be those Tribulation saints who escaped death and were preserved through the Tribulation to go into the kingdom of our Lord (Matt. 24:13; 25:10, 30, 32-34; Rev. 14:1). These believers will have mortal bodies like ours today and during the Millennium they will beget children. These children will also, regardless of the personal and glorious presence of Christ, need to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour by faith. This fact will provide the potential for a third category of people in the Millennium, unbelievers in mortal bodies, men and women susceptible to the

deceptions of Satan. These will form the constituency for the last-time revolt under Satan's final deception.

The first group undoubtedly refers to church saints because of the many specific promises given to the church regarding judgment and ruling with Christ (. Luke 22:29-30 [the apostles were members of the church and represent the church], 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21). In verse 5, concerning the group of verse 4 who "*came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years,*" we are told that "*this is the first resurrection.*" In Revelation 20, as Christ also intimates in John 5:29, two resurrection programmes are seen. There is the first resurrection; this is the resurrection of the just (believers). But there is also the second resurrection, the resurrection of the unjust, and those who experience the second death (unbelievers). Here in Revelation 20, we can see that these two resurrections are separated by one thousand years (cf. vs. 5a).

The release of Satan, the action of the sinners, and the Last Revolt (7-10):



Previously, in verse 3, this release of Satan was anticipated and presented as a must, a moral necessity in the fulfillment of the plan and purposes of God for human history. This was followed by a brief mention of the reign of Christ and the reward of saints who will reign with Him for the thousand years, but nothing of the character and nature of the Millennium is given in Revelation 20. However, the nature of the Millennium is the subject of much Old Testament prophecy as in Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:7-9; and Psalm 72. Here in chapter 20, it is assumed that the reader knows and understands this, so that aspect is not covered.

“Satan will come out to deceive the nations” (vs. 8a) declares the immediate purpose for Satan's release. These will be his age-old schemes of deception, disruption, and war. *“The nations which are in the four corners of the earth”* (vs. 8b) shows his deceptions will reach out to the entire earth.

Gog and Magog (vv.7- 9)

These names are used oppositionally to describe the nations though they are used without any explanation. They are simply introduced as a description of the nations from the four corners of the earth. As exposed in the Application Study Bible, Gog and Magog symbolize all the forces of evil that band together to battle God. Noah's son is named Magog (Gen. 10:2). Ezekiel presents Gog as a leader of forces against Israel (Ezek. 38-39). Believers will here no longer have any doubt about their choice.

The final destination of the devil

The devil and his prophets will finally be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev20:10) The beast and the false prophet are still there after a thousand years; they are not annihilated. Mark 9:43-48 shows that it does not end. Matthew 13:41-42; 8:12; 22:13; and 25:30 speak of weeping, etc. This shows there is not annihilation, but continual torment. Matthew 25:46 states the punishment is everlasting and looks at what the person suffers. Verse 10 shows that Satan's power is not eternal. He will meet his doom and be defeated.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (20:11-15)

The Description of the Great White Throne (11):



This judgment is great because of the awesome intensity and the degree of its importance. It is called "*white*" because it will be the supreme, undimmed display of the perfect righteousness and justice of God. It is called a "*throne*" because here the Lord Jesus Christ will sit in absolute majesty and sovereign authority to consign these eternally to the lake of fire. In Revelation 4:2, John beheld a throne set in heaven from which the Tribulation judgments proceeded. Here is the last and final judgment of history following the close of the Millennium. It is an awesome and solemn scene and one which should cause deep concern to our hearts for many of our friends and even relatives will be here, those who have never received Jesus Christ as their Saviour. All who have scoffed at God, denied His being, rebelled at His rule or rejected His sovereignty, and in the process, have also rejected His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, must at this time stand before this throne to be condemned to eternal judgment. May the study of these verses make us more concerned and more committed to reaching the lost for Christ. This judgment follows the Millennium and the doom of Satan (20:1-10). It is followed by the creation of the new heaven and earth and the eternal state of the redeemed. (21:1f)

Here, each unbeliever's eternal destiny is determined and declared with ample proof and reason. It is great because it is the final judgment putting an end to all judgment for all time. Finally, it is great because all the unbelievers of all time, from Cain to the final revolt at the end of the

Millennium, will be here assembled to face the bar of God's perfect justice. The only exceptions will be the beast and false prophet and perhaps those of the judgment of the Jews and Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation who have already been consigned to the lake of fire.

There will be a new heaven and a new earth. In other words, God has removed Satan and demons, the false prophet, and the beast, etc., and He is about to judge the rest of the unbelieving dead. It is only fitting then, that He also judges the earth and heaven which has been the scene of the struggle with Satan, sin, and sinners. This takes place after the resurrection of the unbelieving dead from the grave and Hades. They are resurrected, gathered before the throne, and behold this destruction as heaven and earth are dissolved before their eyes. Then the judgment will proceed. *"And no place was found for them,"* i.e., for heaven and earth. In the eternal state, there will be no place for that which reminds men of the rebellions of Satan and man with all their wickedness and sorrow. (cf. 21:4; 22:3)

The Participants of the Great White Throne (11b, 12a, 13a):



"The one sitting on the throne" (20:11b), the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:22) will be the judge, and the dead, great and small will be judged (Rev. 20:5-6; John 5:29). This of course refers to the unbelieving dead of the second resurrection. All judgment has been put into His hands as the perfect Son of man, Son of God, the one qualified to judge by his sinless humanity and His defeat of Satan and sin on the cross. (Rev. 5)

The Basis of the Judgment (12b, 13b, 15a):

The basis of the judgment is what is found in the two sets of books: the books which were opened, and the other book, the Book of Life. Note that the text says "*and the books (plural) were opened, and another book (singular) was opened, which is the Book of Life.*" So we have two sets, the books, and the book which is mentioned also in verse 15a. The book is not specifically revealed. We can only speculate from a comparison of other Scriptures and the nature of these verses. The first book opened will probably be the Scriptures, the Word of God which contains the revelation of God's holy character, the moral law, the declaration of the sinfulness of man, and God's plan of salvation by faith in the Saviour. This book also reveals that even when men do not have the written Word, they have the law of God written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14-16) and the revelation of God-consciousness in creation (Rom. 1:19-20) because of this, they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20; 2:12). All men are responsible for the revelation they have and stand at this judgment because of their own negative volition to God's grace. (Rom. 1:18; 2:4, 14; John 7:17) So then, Scripture will be used to demonstrate the clearness of the plan of God and that man is without excuse. (cf. also John 12:48-50; and 1 John 3:23) The second book will be the book of works (deeds). Verses 13 and 14 states that the unbelieving dead will be judged according to their deeds (works). Undoubtedly, one book is the book of works that contains a record of their deeds as a witness of the true nature of their spiritual condition.

The Book of Life contains the names of believers, all who have put their faith in Christ and His plan of salvation

through the suffering Saviour. To put it another way, it is a record of those who have not rejected God's plan of salvation and who have responded to Him in faith; for these their faith is reckoned for righteousness (Rom. 4:22). At the great white throne, the Book of Life is produced to show that their name, because they rejected Jesus Christ, was not found written in the Book of Life. They, therefore, have no righteousness and cannot be accepted before God, but must be cast into the eternal lake of fire. The book of life contains the names of believers who have been justified by faith and who have the righteousness from God imputed to their account. These are accepted by God and will spend all eternity with Him. (Rom. 3:20-26; Phil. 3:9)

Isaiah 65:20 indicates that during the millennium:



- (1) The normal life span will be over 100 years, but death will occur.
- (2) there will be no shortened life span because of sickness or old age, but
- (3) there will be a shortened life span through divine discipline for sin and rebellion. (cf. Isa. 11:4; 65:20b),
- (4) Otherwise, people will live out a long life span and then death will take them. Except for those who die by divine discipline, it will undoubtedly be very peaceful and without fear – perhaps even with immediate resurrection.
- (5) It also appears that when men die, they will die, not from old age, but as a youth, young in body and mind. (Isa. 65:20b)

Conclusion

Are you preparing yourselves to be part of the saints that will be in the Millennium? The end is at hand, so prepare not to be an instrument in the hands of the devil but an instrument in the hands of God. God's purpose with the various economies is to give new opportunities and tests from every conceivable angle. In the Millennium, therefore, God gives man his great society, one which exceeds anything man could ever dream of, a society and world order with a perfect environment. I Corinthians 15:20-23 teaches us that there is a time-lapse or sequence, and a definite order to the resurrection programme. There are also two phases of the coming of Christ because there is the coming of our Lord for the church which is silent and unseen by the world. This is the rapture, (1 Thess. 2:19; 4:15; 5:23) but then there is also the coming of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation which is seen by the whole world (Rev. 19; 2 Thess. 2:8) and this is the second coming.

C H A P T E R

27

New Jerusalem



C H A P T E R

27

New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-22:6

These chapters give the record of the eternal state of man. Throughout the book, the words “*and I saw*” have been John's characteristic designation for new details of revelation given to him. In this chapter, these words appear three times for three major elements of revelation which the Lord wants to call to our attention through the visions given to John, the words appear in Rev. 21:1,2& 22. Throughout Revelation 21:1-22:5, the discussion concerns the new Jerusalem and the eternal state. This seems quite clear from two main factors: (a) The close association apparent between 21:1 and 2, the new Jerusalem is seen following the vision of the new heaven and earth; and (b) the natural chronology of the book. Most consider this entire section as prophetic of the eternal state. About this text, Ryrie comments, that perhaps the best way to understand this entire section is to regard the new Jerusalem as the abode of the redeemed of all ages.

Conditions within the new Jerusalem are conditions of eternity.

Discussion

- What is your understanding of Revelation 21:1,2 about the declaration and the decency of this city?
- What necessitates the destruction of the old earth?
- How is the new city described? Vv10-26
- Why will there no need for the temple in the city? Vv22-24
- Who will dwell in the shining city of the star?
- What are the experiences that do inflict pain on man?
- Why is a new thing necessary? Vv. 5-7
- What is the usefulness of Light?
- What is the implication of 21: 15?
- What are the places of the water and the tree of life in New Jerusalem? 22:1,2
- How can you get yourself ready for this New City?

The Declaration and the Descent of the New Heaven and Earth (21:1, 2)

There is very little revealed about the character of the new heaven and earth in the Scripture. (cf. Isa. 65:17; 66:22) The main emphasis is its uniqueness; it is quite different from the old. The new heaven and earth are not simply the old renovated but an act of new creation. (cf. Rev. 20: 1f with 20:11 and 2 Pet. 3:10, which describes the dissolving of the old heaven and earth). The word "*new*" here is *kainos* which means fresh, new in quality, and character. Further, in the Greek text the words "*heaven*" and "*earth*" are without the article stressing the aspect of quality rather

than identity. It is *“heaven, new, and an earth, new”* not *“the new heaven ...”* There was nobody in need of water in the New city because the man in the eternal state and his glorified body evidently will not need water as he does today to sustain him physically. There will be water, but it will speak of power, purity, and eternal life in the eternal city which has its constant source of life in God.).

It is the holy city, new Jerusalem and this is seen in striking contrast to the Jerusalem of the Tribulation which is called *“Sodom and Egypt”* (Rev. 11:8). Revelation 21:2b-22:5 will develop and describe the special holiness of this new Jerusalem. The city comes down out of heaven from God and is in some way related to the earth. It will be the home of the church, and our eternal abode there begins right after Christ comes for His bride. The author of Hebrews speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem as the abode and hope of the saints (Heb. 12:22-24). The city is made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. The figure of the bride simply emphasizes the following: (a) as marriage is designed to be permanent, so this will be our permanent or eternal abode, (b) as a bride is beautifully adorned for her wedding, so this stresses the beauty of this city as it is adorned for the saints, and (c) as the bride is to be pure, it portrays the purity of the holy city.

The Conditions of the New Jerusalem (21:3-8)



The Personal Dwelling of God Among Men

While John is beholding the descending city, his attention is diverted by a loud voice—the last time of 21 times that either a *“great”* or a *“loud”* voice is mentioned. This is

always an indication of an important piece of revelation that is about to be unfolded. Significantly, the last loud voice announces the dwelling of God among men. Though God is the independent God of the universe, He, in His love, longs to dwell among us to have fellowship with us and to bless us with His care. This ought to touch our hearts and cause us to draw near to Him. "The tabernacle of God is among men ..." "Tabernacle" stands for "dwelling place, a place of abode," or of one's "personal presence." And where is that? "Among men." The word "among" is used here and in the next clause is the Greek preposition *meta*, which is used for association or companionship, or fellowship. Note that the verse goes on to emphasize "God Himself shall be among them," and "they shall be His people," a result of the other. This verse denotes the most intimate and close fellowship with God in a perfect and unbroken way and on a face-to-face basis. This will be far beyond the knowledge of His presence and indwelling which believers can know today. Today we speak to Him in prayer and He speaks to us in His Word, but then He will be openly and visibly in our midst, personally ministering to our needs. The full scope of this is far beyond our comprehension today. What follows is a result of this personal presence of God in the most personal way among men.

These verses give us God's assurance that our present perplexities and sorrows, and indeed even their remembrance, will be wiped away, which undoubtedly includes answers with understanding. Note that "tear" is singular, every single tear. Verse 4 promises no more tears, mourning, crying, or pain. This means perfect, uninterrupted happiness and peace. It appears that with

God visibly and personally in our midst, there will be absolutely no possibility of unhappiness. The emphasis of these verses is that it is God's visible and personal presence that gives this perfect happiness and blessing and not simply the removal of the sources of our problems. Oh, how this should be a reminder and an exhortation to us now to put fellowship with the living Christ as our number one priority.

New Things will be Experienced (5-7):



Interestingly, however, these verses begin with the words “the One sitting on the throne.” Why mention this? To stress God's permanent sovereignty, especially in a context dealing with creation. Creation has always been a mighty display of God's sovereign power, but man one way or another, under the delusions of the evil one, has sought to remove God from His throne and tried to enthrone himself as a god. In one system after another—mysticism, communism, atheism, scientism, and humanism, etc.—man has sought to ignore and reject the God of creation. But now there will be an experience of new things. John was told in verse 6 that it is done. Though the new creation is still in the future, these words solidly affirm the creation of all things new as though already accomplished. And what's the basis of this? The sovereign independence and eternity of God as the Alpha and Omega, the first and last word on all things.

Believers in Christ will enjoy the following promises: there will be the water of life for all who thirst. Here is the offer of salvation that comes as a gift, “*without cost.*” “*All who thirst*” refers to “*all who recognize their need, the spiritually parched*”

condition of their soul, and come to Christ as the source of the water of life” .(cf. John 4:10; 7:37-39; Isa. 55:1) *“Without cost”* means of course, by grace, as God's gift to those who come to Christ by faith (John 7:38). In this context, *“the spring of the water of life”* ultimately refers to the complete satisfaction of life that will come to the child of God in the eternal state. (cf. Rev. 17:17) *Second*, there is the promise of a full inheritance to the one who overcomes (vs. 7a). Contextually, the overcomer promises of Chapters 2 and 3 suggest added blessings and delights, like reigning with Christ for those who faithfully overcome the particular temptations and testings they face. Here the context is different (vs. 6b, 7b) and views the overcomer as one who quenches his thirst by simple faith in Christ and, as a result, becomes God's son (cf. 1 John 5:4-5 and Gal. 3:26). All of God's people, Old and New Testament saints alike, will inherit the blessings of the eternal state, nothing will be lacking.

Finally, another special promise is made to the overcomer. He will have complete and unbroken fellowship with God (vs. 7b), *“and I will be his God and he will be My son.”*

The Exclusion of Certain Ones from the Eternal State:

Revelation 21:8 shows what kind of people cannot be a part of the eternal kingdom in the future. There will be no sinners and no sin in the new heavens and the new earth. According to 1 John 3:2, *“when He is revealed, we shall be like Him.”*

The Description of the New Jerusalem (21:9-21)

John has given us a brief look at some of the glories of

eternity in verses 1-8. One such glory is the new Jerusalem adorned like a bride. So now in 21:9-22:5 more details are given about this glorious city, the eternal home of the redeemed. Revelation 21:9-21 will be a general description of the construction of the city. Then in 21:22-22:5, we shall look at some of the special spiritual and physical delights of our eternal home.

The General, Overall Description (9-11):



“The bride, the wife of the Lamb” is a description, as verse 10 shows us, of the new Jerusalem which is again seen coming down out of heaven from God. Why is the new Jerusalem called the bride, the wife of the Lamb? In verse 2 we are told the city was “made ready as a bride adorned for her husband,” but here, new Jerusalem is called the bride. There are at least two reasons for this: the first is seen, as suggested in verse 2, in the beautiful analogy of the figure of a bride. Ideally, a bride is the epitome of all that is right and beautiful. She is a symbol of purity, hope, purpose, trust, love, beauty, and wholeness in a world pock-marked with ugliness. The bride motive, found in both testaments, is used by God to illustrate His strategy for attracting mankind to the availability of his life-changing grace. So God calls new Jerusalem the bride, the wife of the Lamb because as (a) the Lord is making his bride, the church, spotless and pure (Eph. 5:26-27), so he will make beautiful the new Jerusalem, (b) as marriage is permanent, so will be the new city, and (c) as a bride is beautiful and gloriously adorned, so will be the new city. Though the new Jerusalem will eventually be the home of all the redeemed, it will first be the home of the church, the bride of Christ, who will also be on display during the Millennium, the marriage feast.

Remember, this is the home that He is preparing for us (John 14:2-3).

The glory which the new city displays is God's glory, it is, as with all creation, a derived beauty. The new city perfectly reflects and manifests the glory of God in all His holy perfection and essence. The city is adorned with costly stones. The measurement of the city is symbolic. These measurements are all multiple of 12, the number of God's people: there were 12 tribes in Israel and 12 apostles who started the Church 15-17. It will be a pure and durable place.v18-21. No Temple is needed in the city because the presence of God will be everywhere. God will be the light.

The More Detailed Description (12-21):

The Greek text has, "*It had a wall, great and high.*" The fact of a wall with its emphatic description "great and high" emphasizes the magnificence of the city and that all those within will be secure. Here, unlike the Garden of Eden, there can be no invasion or temptation. The wall, great and high, will also bring out the total exclusion of all unbelievers (cf. vs. 8). The city has 12 gates and at the gates 12 angels. The gates are named after the 12 tribes of Israel, with three gates at each side of the city, east, north, south, and west. The angels are perhaps honoured guards which will again stress the security of the city as well as its glory. Ezekiel 48:31-34 may give the pattern for naming the gates.

The Jerusalem described in Ezekiel 48 is the millennial Jerusalem and is probably different from this one. It will be the earthly Jerusalem into which any millennial resident can come, but into this Jerusalem, only glorified saints can

come. The fact of the gates also indicates there will be free travel in and out of the city. The fact that the gates are named after the 12 tribes of Israel and that the foundation stones are inscribed with the names of the 12 apostles of the church should clearly show that both Israel (Old Testament saints), and the church will be a part of this city, yet note that they remain distinct groups within the people of God. Everything about the city is beautiful and valuable, even the rule with which it is measured. God is infinite and without limits or measurements, but man, even with his glorified body, is still but a creature, absolutely not God, and therefore limited. As such, this demonstrates the glory and holiness of God (cf. Ezek. 43:12). The city is in the shape of a square and is either a cube or a pyramid. The description of verse 16 can fit either. Regardless, the balance of the shape implies perfection and reminds us of the vastness of God's love for us in Jesus Christ.

No matter what the shape, a city of this size will be necessary to hold the redeemed of all ages. Some have said that even a city of this size can not hold such a number of people. But remember the city is as high as it is wide and long, and it is not necessary to hold that, all will at all times be living in the city. Many will be perhaps in various parts of the new universe carrying out responsibilities for the Lord. Jasper and every kind of precious stone will be used for the city (Rev. 21:18-21).

Special Delights of the New City (21:22-22:5)

The Temple of the City (22) there was:



In the Old Testament there was need of the tabernacle and

the temple and their shadows of things eternal—things which spoke not only of the Lamb as the access into God's presence but of the eternal holy dwelling place of God. In the Old Testament the tabernacle and temple, that which spoke of the very dwelling place of God, was the Holy of Holies (the naos). In the church age, the believer himself becomes the temple, the “*naos*” of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), but this indwelling of the Spirit is only an arraignment, a down payment, a partial experience of things to come (Eph. 1:14). The word “*temple*” here in Revelation 21 is naos. In the eternal state, there will be no need for some special temple, some special sanctuary, because believers, the saved of all ages, will be in the absolute, undiminished, and intimate presence of the Almighty Sovereign God and the Lamb. The Father and Son themselves are the temples, in that men will be living amid the unveiled glory of God. “*Lamb*” is used by Jesus Christ to stress the fact that we are there because of his work as the Lamb of God. “*Almighty*” is used to stress that our being there is a result of His all-powerful and sovereign plan of grace which has perfectly provided for our salvation.

The Light of the City (23-24):

Everything about the eternal state can be nothing but a glorious contrast to what we know today on this earth. The contrast consists in part in the things which are missing. Walvoord points out that “*There will be no temple, no sacrifice, no sun, no moon, no darkness, no gates to shut, no abomination.*” We might also add that there will be nothing hidden (everything will be transparent), no shadows, no sin, no sorrows, no pain, no sickness, no disappointments. There will be no need for the sun and moon because the glory of

God will illuminate the city. The sun and moon in comparison with the light of the glory of God will be like turning on an outdoor light in the broad light of the sun in our world today. That God himself will be the Light of the city is entirely fitting with the rest of the Scripture (John 1:7-9; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35; 1 John 1:5; Rom. 13:12; Heb. 1:3). This refers to both physical and spiritual light.

Our life in the eternal state will be everything this life cannot be. It will be a life untouched by death, unstained by evil, and unimpaired by time because we will obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for us. (1 Peter 1:4)

Access to the City (25-27):



As a precaution to a surprise enemy attack, in ancient times all gates to the city were closed, but due to the permanent light, there will be no night or darkness but only light. These gates will never be closed neither will moving in and out of the city be stopped. Here is a picture of the social life of the city, bustling with activity. This also points to the fact of constant and unbroken fellowship with the Lord. No one will ever walk in darkness again. One final fact here about no night; in our glorified body we will need no rest, so our lives will be full of continuous activity in the service of God. No one will ever be bored. Finally, the emphasis of verse 27 as it pertains to nothing unclean is simply a reiteration of the promise of 21:8. It will be a place inhabited only by those who have been justified and transformed by the grace of God, sinless and in glorified bodies.

The physical provisions of the New Jerusalem (22:1-3)

The River of the Water and Tree of Life vVv. 1, 2 :



The water of life is a symbol of eternal life (John 4:7-14). It is the picture of the fullness of life with God and eternal blessings that come to those who believe in Him. This tree of life in 22:2 is like that of Genesis 2:9. Adam and Eve were forbidden from eating it because they could not have eternal life as long as they were under the control of sin but as a result of forgiveness through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be no evil in this city. Curses will be removed (Zecha. 14:11). Here is paradise regained. What man lost in Genesis is regained by the Lamb. In the Garden of Eden, there was a river that flowed through the garden and a tree of life. So here in paradise regained, we see both a river of the waters of life and a tree of life. God alone will be man's life and his source of the knowledge of good. The words "*the river of the water of life*" symbolically portrays the abundance of life which God and the Lamb will provide in the eternal city. This picture of the river from the throne of God and the Lamb agrees with the following:

(a) the throne speaks of God's sovereignty and reminds us that our salvation stems from God's sovereign power, wisdom, and grace (Eph. 1:3-11), and (b) by that, the throne belongs to both God the Father and the Lamb. This shows the Lamb is still on the throne in the eternal state though in a different way from in the millennial kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28).

The tree of life there means to be in eternity and to possess eternal life. In Genesis 3:22-24 access is forbidden because this would have perpetuated man's mortal body with an

old sinful nature. So in grace, Adam and his progeny were prevented from eating the tree. But it was different for Adam because he had a mortal, perishable body. Perhaps for us, it will be much like the Lord's Supper, a memorial of our eternal life in Christ. Note the words in verse 3, "*no more curse*". The tree will stand for the removal of our spiritual sickness by the Lord Jesus Christ, being made a curse for us (cf. 1 Pet. 2:24 for the scriptural picture).

The Throne of God and the Service of the Servants v.3:



The throne with the servants serving points to an important principle. We stand about God as sons, but we are also bondslaves who serve Him. The principle here is that eternity will not be a time of eternal idleness and uselessness, but a time when every person will be involved in a special vocation of service and activity for the Trinity. "*Serve*" is in the present tense and stresses the continuousness of our ministry. Today our service and activity for the Lord is often distracted and often not for His advantage. We fail and we foul up again and again. But then it will always be for the glory and advantage of God.

The Perfect Fellowship of the New City (4-5):



The following benefits are in the eternal and blessed city of the New Jerusalem.

- (1) Perfect restoration (no more curse, paradise regained),
- (2) Perfect administration (the very throne of God and the Lamb shall be on it),
- (3) Perfect subordination (His servants shall serve Him),
- (4) Perfect transformation (the saints shall see His face and we shall be like Him [1 John 3:2; Rev 21:4a),

- (5) Perfect identification (His name on our foreheads), v. 4b
- (6) Perfect illumination (He shall illumine us), 21:5a
- (7) Perfect exaltation (we shall reign forever and ever) Rev. 21:5b.

Here are seven perfect conditions pointing to one perfect state. Hallelujah, what a Saviour! How great is our salvation in Christ!!!

Conclusion

This earth will not last forever, after the great judgment of God, He will create a new earth (Rom. 8:18-21; 1Pet. 3:7-13). This new earth will be eternal (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22). Nobody knows how the new earth will look like or its location, but God and His followers will be united to live there forever. The new Jerusalem is where God lives among his people. Here there will be no death, sorrow, crying, or pain. He is the beginning and the end Vv. 6. The wicked and ungodly will forever be doomed while the followers of God will endure forever and receive the blessings of God vv.7-8. If the kingdom contained those still in a sinful state, it would not be as glorious as God intends. That would put an eternal damper on the joy the Lord himself and all his followers, could experience. The kingdom will be truly joyful because everyone in it will be holy and sinless. Your background, personality, good works will not qualify you to be in New Jerusalem. It is available to you only because of what Jesus, the Lamb, has done. Trust Him today to secure your citizenship in this New Jerusalem. Today we all experience pain, sorrow, and misery to some degree. Even with believers who are walking intimately with the Lord and know the joy of His care, there are still many times of

pain and sorrow. What are your pains? That is life as we know it today. Of course, the more we walk with the Lord and rest in His goodness and care, the greater our peace and joy even in extreme pressure, but even then, there will still be a pain, but a time is coming soon when all these pains will be taken away. Everything associated with Satan and his rebellion and man, his fall and rebellion, everything except believers themselves, will be removed, put away. In fact, *"the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind"* (see Isa. 65:17b). With the passing away of the old, something new must take its place, so we are now presented with the new things which God will create for His people.

As a child of God you need to practise awareness of and faith in the personal presence and care of our Lord (Heb. 13:4-5; Matt. 28:20; Phil. 4:5b-7; Josh. 1:51). Today in Scripture, God uses anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms so we can understand ideas about what God is like, but then we will be in the direct presence of God with no fog or blurs to dim our vision of God. Today we believe in and teach the doctrine of the trinity. We know it, teach it, illustrate it, and believe it, no one can fully explain it yet, but then we will. Our inheritance is beyond our comprehension. Truly, with such a future inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled, and that will not fade away, reserved and kept by the power of God, certainly we should live now as sojourners with a view to our eternal home (cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 7-18; and 2:11).

C H A P T E R

28

The Concluding Promises of the Prophecy



C H A P T E R

28

The Concluding Promises of the Prophecy

Revelation 22:6-16

Introduction

There are perhaps no more significant and awesome words in the Scripture than those of this epilogue. In these verses, we have the manifold testimony of the voices of the angel, Jesus, the Spirit, the bride, and John. These verses are full of encouragement, declaration, warning, and response to God. They are tremendously significant; may we read them with care and attentiveness. Listen to these words in terms of your entire life, your lifestyle, purposes, goals, priorities, and commitment to God, His faithful Word, and the soon-coming Saviour.

Discussion

- What is the implication of the water and tree of life? (22:1, 2)
- Are you twisting the truth to serve your purpose?

- Will His coming meet you unprepared?
- Read Revelation 22:8-9 and briefly comment on it.
- What is your understanding of 22:12 and how can you as a child of God make it practical?
- How does one add to or remove from the Bible (or Revelation)? 22:18.
- What is the implication of the title “Alpha and Omega” given to Christ in Revelation 22:13?
- What are the implications of these verses in Revelation 22 on the Word of God verses 7, 9, 10, 18, 19?
- Who will be expelled from this new earth? (Rev. 22: 15; 12:19; 13:13-15; 16:14)
- What is the warning given to those who may want to distort the message of this book? vv. 18-19; Deut. 4:1-4
- Which group of people are invited to enjoy the joy of salvation? vv17 John 4:10-15

The Promise of Faithfulness (v6)



The Word of God is faithful and true. God is the sovereign Lord in control of the spirits of the prophets (cf. 2 Pet. 1:20-21). “Spirits” refer to the human spirits within the prophets who were the human agents in the reception and transmission of the Scripture. The same God who inspired the Old Testament and the rest of the New Testament here authenticates the words of the book of Revelation as well. Two things are authenticated: (a) that these words (i.e., the prophecy) are faithful and true, but also (b) that it must all shortly take place.

The Promise of His Coming (v7a)



This verse gives the imminent coming of Jesus Christ.

studied and understood by any who are positive to know God and His Word. To seal up a book means to conceal or hide its message. *“Seal up”* is the Greek *sfragizw* which means *“to put a seal on something,”* either to *“mark it, identify it, certify it, or to close it, keep it secret.”* This book, unlike Daniel 12:4, was never to be sealed and was meant to be understood and applied from the day John received it. Why? Because the time is near, imminent, and people need the truth of this book to understand what God is doing and to prepare for what is coming, i.e., to live with a view to witnessing these coming events through the perspective of eternity; the contents of this book are needed immediately by the churches and those living in the church age having been given the imminent return of Christ, critical choices always need to be made.

The Promise of Reward at the Lord's Coming (v.12)

Throughout the New Testament, one finds repeated references to the return of the Lord for his bride, the church. Each time, there is either a reference to the rewards which will be given or there is some sort of admonishment to godly and purposeful living. This life is a preparation time for eternity and we are to live this life with a view to making eternity—God's glory and our rewards or positions of responsibility in the eternal state. This is then not only a promise of rewards but an exhortation and an incentive to godly living and service. This, however, must not be disassociated from the emphasis of verses 7b and 10 which stress the need to know and understand the words of this prophecy, and ultimately the Scripture in general. Why? Because the only way we can redeem time is by living in the Word. The Word of God is both our motivation and

The Promise of Blessing to Those Who Heed (7b)

Here is another of the beatitudes of the Scripture, the pronouncement of blessing or happiness upon those who comply with certain imperatives and principles of the Word, not meritoriously, but out of faith in the truth of God. It describes a state of blessing which God promises for both now and the future life. It means the capacity for happiness now, even amid the trials, but it also describes the blessing of happiness which comes from facing life with the promises of the Word. And so, there is a need to be on guard and be obedient.

The Promise and Declaration – God Alone is Worthy of Worship (8-9)

Because of the tremendous encouragement of these things and their overwhelming and awesome nature, John wanted his readers to be impressed by the fact that he did see these things under divine inspiration and the angel that brought the message to him refused to be worshipped. The message of God's Word is designed to focus us on the Lord and to enhance our worship of Him, but, if we are not careful, we can lose sight of this in our excitement and appreciation of the Word and get our eyes on the messenger. When this happens we can, if we are not careful, become guilty of the carnal divisiveness of the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 1:11-13; 3:3-4; 4:6-7; 1 Cor. 10:12).

The Promise that this Book is Not Sealed (vv.10-11)

In this command that John is not to seal this book, we have a promise that this book of apocalyptic revelation can be

correction.

The title Alpha and Omega indicates that Jesus is both the beginning (source) as well as the goal and consummation of all things; He is the Eternal Word. This verse confirms and authenticates Christ's capacity and ability to fulfil these promises (cf. Col. 1:15f; 2:3; John 1:1; 8:58).

There is a promise of blessing to those who wash their robes (14-15). Obedience to the commandments of the Lord should be a characteristic of believers, and may even give evidence of one's faith. Entrance into eternity is obtained by faith alone in the person and work of Christ, not by obedience or works (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; John 3:16).

- What do you understand about the content in Romans 8:18-30 and Revelation 6:15-25 about sinful nature?

Revelation 22:16 is on the certification of the promises to the churches (22:16). Jesus himself sent his angel to bear witness of these things to John and for the churches as instruction, warning, and comfort. It aids our understanding of the future and shows us where the present world is going. It gives a greater perspective for what is important today. (cf. Heb. 10:24-25; Titus 2:11) Should this not cause us all to be more involved in reaching the lost for Christ as our next verse, verse 17, will show?

Jesus is the bright and the morning star, Morning star heralds and assures us of a new day and the conclusion of the night (Matt. 2:2; Rom. 13:11-14). So Jesus, as the morning star, heralds and assures us of the conclusion of this night season and the coming of a new day which will begin by his

return for the church at the rapture to be followed by the glories of the millennium and then the eternal state at the end of the Tribulation. For Israel, Christ is seen as *"the Sun of righteousness"* (Mal. 4:2).

Revelation 22:17 is the invitation and the promise of life without cost (22:17). Following this assurance, we immediately read *"and the Spirit and the bride say, 'come.'"* This refers to the Holy Spirit and the church, both of whom, along with the Word, are God's agents of evangelism which is the focus of this verse. This is the invitation for men to come to Christ, an invitation to receive life. It is a reminder of the concept of Isaiah 55:6 *"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near,"*

Psalm 32:6 *"Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to you in a time when you may be found,"* **and 2 Corinthians 6:2b** *"... behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation.'"*

This expresses the responsibility of believers to invite men to Christ and of the responsibility and need of those invited to respond. In verse 18 there is a solemn warning, but please note that the urgency and importance of this warning are supported by the solemn testimony of Jesus Christ himself when he says, *"I testify unto every man who hears ..."*

The Scripture emphatically declares that no one should add to or remove any part of the Scripture. One can add to the Scripture by claiming new revelation, that the Bible and the book of Revelation are not enough (as with the Book of Mormon or any other religious writing that claims to be from God). Another way is by claiming advanced

knowledge in spiritual matters and that the Bible is not the answer or simply wrong (2 John 9). Liberal humanists are grossly guilty of this. Of course, such action not only is adding but subtracting. The point is that this reveals blatant unbelief in the Bible which denies that the Word of God is the revelation and testimony of God. **Such action is clear evidence of personal unbelief and rejection of Jesus Christ.**

The Second Offense with its Penalty (19)

In other words, if he rejects any portion of Revelation since Revelation is the culmination to the Word, this very well may have an application to the whole canon of Scripture. So, if anyone denies the plain teaching of Scripture regarding the Lord Jesus Christ and the great testimonies of this book, he is doing it despite the inspired Word of God. This is a grave warning to the critics of higher criticism who, in blatant unbelief, have tampered with the books of the Bible in arrogant self-confidence thinking that they are spiritually and intellectually competent to judge the truthfulness of the Bible.

The Benediction (22:20-21)

Benediction is an expression of approval or good wishes, it is a state of being blessed. These final words of testimony in revelation 22:20-21 are yet another declaration of the promise of Christ's imminent return: "*Surely I come quickly.*" With this announcement, in contrast to those in verses 7 and 12, this declaration adds the word "*Yes,*" which is the Greek *nai*, "*yea, verily,*" a particle noting an affirmation, agreement, or emphasis. To strengthen this, even more, this

declaration is followed by the word “Amen” (Greek, *amēn*) often translated as “*verily, truly.*” The announcement “*I come quickly*” is therefore buttressed before and after by words used to emphasize the certainty of it. With the word Amen, however, John begins his prayer of response to this announcement: “*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*” Though the book of Revelation concerns itself with a broad expanse of divine dealing with men including the time of Tribulation, the millennium, and the eternal state, for John, the important event is the coming of the Lord for him at the rapture of the church. For this, his heart longs, not only because he is on the bleak island of Patmos in suffering and exile but because of the glorious prospect which his eyes have beheld and his ears have heard.

Do you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ? So John, as a representative of the Lord Jesus, closes with the benediction, “*The Grace of the Lord Jesus is with all, Amen.*”

Conclusion

For church age saints, finding happiness and spiritual joy through the words of this prophecy involves such things as (a) Observing the warnings of Chapters 2 and 3 to the church, warnings against dead, cold orthodoxy, apostasy, immorality, materialism, etc. (b) Living constantly in the light of the presence of Christ in our midst and of his imminent coming, knowing that our work in the Lord is never in vain. (c) Carrying on a vital witness, having an open door to the unbelieving world, giving the coming Tribulation and the lake of fire that we might see men snatched from hell (Jude 23). (d) Living as sojourners who refuse to become bogged down with materialism and who

live with a view to the eternal city. (e) Enduring the trials of this life during this age of darkness, seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, the glory which is to follow. (f) Remembering that God's plan is being accomplished, that he is sovereign and still on the throne as we see this old world moving farther and farther away from the Lord and the absolutes of his Word. The fact is that the book of Revelation is not very easy to comprehend and so many people are not interested in studying it.

In Rev. 22:10-11- The angel tells John what to do after his vision is over just like Daniel (12:4-12). It is to be left open so that all can read and understand. That of Daniel was sealed because it was not a message for Daniel's time. The revelation was a message for John's time. So we must read the book of Revelation, hear its message, and prepare for the imminent return of Christ. The Old Testament ends with the word "*curse*," for it is the warning given the earth whose future hangs upon that of Israel – upon the conversion of the remnant and the receiving of the preaching of Elijah, just before Christ will return. The law could make no absolute promise, and so God's Word by Malachi ends, "*Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*" But now Christ has come and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Although the book of The Revelation has to uncover the fearful rebellion of the earth, and the necessary and dire judgments of God; yet upon those who have believed, to his saints, the benediction of divine favour rests. Just as Christ lifted his hands and blessed them over against Bethany, at his ascension, so all His saints are now – under his pierced, uplifted hands of blessing. Amen. Every one of us needs to draw near to our glorious Savior, who is revealed in such dramatic ways in this awesome book, that we may experience his power in

our lives, represent Him faithfully as his servants. All the while, may we be praying and anticipating with John, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*" Are you preparing for his coming? If yes how? If not, take a step of faith today. Revelation is a book of hope, it shows that no matter what happens on earth, God is still in control. It promises that evil will not last forever and depicts the wonderful reward that is waiting for every follower of Christ. The book ends with an urgent plea: Come Lord (1Cor. 16:22). The day or the hour is not known by anyone (v. 20) but it will be soon, meaning at any moment. The reign of God is associated with peace, security, and love. **YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS HEAVEN** because it will be a place of learning, singing, service, and fellowship (1Cor. 13:9; Eph. 3;14,17,18,19; Isa. 44:23; 7:5; 2Tim. 2:12; Rev. 22:5; 1Cor. 6:2,3; 13:12; Matt. 17:3), so, **get READY.**

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