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From Patmos to New Jerusalem: A Comprehensive Revelation Study

This 22-week Revelation study covered Christ's messages to the churches, the heavenly throne room, and the escalating judgments of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls. It explored the cosmic war involving the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet against God's people, culminating in Babylon's fall. The study concluded with Christ's victorious return, Armageddon, the Millennium, the final judgment, and the glorious establishment of the New Heaven and New Earth where God dwells with His redeemed people forever.

Week 1 (Chapter 1): The Unveiling: Vision of the Risen King

This first week sets the stage. We meet the author (John), the recipients (the seven churches), and the true source of the vision: the glorified, resurrected Jesus Christ.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 1, Day 1

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

Scripture Focus: Revelation 1:1-3

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **What is a "Revelation"?** The Greek word is *apokalypsis*, from which we get "apocalypse." To us, this word means "catastrophe" or "end of the world." To a 1st-century reader, it simply meant "an unveiling" or "a disclosure" of something hidden. This isn't just John's book; it's Jesus's book. It's His "unveiling" of (1) Himself and (2) what is to come.
- **"His Servants":** This was a common term for devoted followers. The original audience in the seven churches would have understood this book was *for them*, not just for "super-Christians" or future generations.
- **"His Servant John":** This is almost universally understood to be John the Apostle, the same man who wrote the Gospel of John and 1, 2, & 3 John. He is writing as a fellow "servant" and "brother" (as we'll see in 1:9), not as a detached authority.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This opening sets the stage for all the major interpretive debates.

- **"Things that must soon take place" (v. 1) & "the time is near" (v. 3):** These two phrases are a key battleground.

- **Preterist View:** Takes this literally. "Soon" meant *in their generation*. They believe most of the prophecies in Revelation were fulfilled in the 1st century, primarily in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. For them, "the time is near" was a ticking clock for that specific judgment.
- **Futurist View:** Believes "soon" is from God's perspective ("a day is like a thousand years"). They see "soon" as meaning "imminent"—it *could* happen at any moment, but the main events are still future (our future). "The time is near" means the prophetic clock has started, and these events are the next on the agenda.
- **Idealist View:** Sees "soon" and "near" as symbolic, meaning these events are *always* near. The book describes the timeless, recurring struggle between good and evil, Christ and Satan, that happens in every generation of the church.
- **Historicist View:** Sees "soon" as the *start* of a process that would unfold throughout all of church history, from John's day to the second coming.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"To show to his servants the things that must soon take place" (v. 1):** This is a powerful echo of **Daniel 2:28**, where Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar, "...there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar **what will be in the latter days.**"
- **Difference:** Daniel was told to "seal up the book, for the time is far off" (**Daniel 12:4, 9**). John is explicitly told the *opposite*: "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, **for the time is near**" (**Revelation 22:10**). This contrast is intentional. John is signaling that the era Daniel *saw from a distance* has now arrived with the coming of Christ.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

We live in an age of information overload, where "breaking news" happens every hour. The world is constantly trying to tell us what's happening and what's coming next, often leading to anxiety and fear.

- **The True "Breaking News":** This verse claims the *real* "intel" on world history comes from God, is delivered through Christ, and is given to His servants. It's not a secret code for predicting newspaper headlines, but an unveiling of the *meaning* behind them: Jesus wins.
- **A Seven-Fold Blessing:** Verse 3 contains the first of seven "beatitudes" or blessings in Revelation. This blessing is for *us*, right now. It's a promise that engaging with this book—even the confusing parts—is not a waste of time. God blesses the *act* of reading, hearing, and trying to "keep" (obey) its message.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Verse 1 says this is the "revelation of Jesus Christ." In what ways do you tend to think of this book as the "revelation of the Antichrist" or the "revelation of the end times" more than the "revelation of Jesus"?
2. Verse 3 gives a three-part blessing: to the one who **reads**, those who **hear**, and those who **keep** it. Why do you think all three actions are mentioned? How are they different?
3. The text says, "the time is near." If you truly believed that Jesus's return could be very soon, what one thing in your life would you change *today*?
4. John is called a "servant" who "bore witness." What does "bearing witness" to Jesus look like in your life as a program manager, a husband, and a father?

Call to Action

Fulfill the first part of the blessing in verse 3. Find a quiet place and **read aloud** Revelation 1:1-3. Then, choose one person you will share something you learned with today, fulfilling the command to "bear witness."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Clement of Rome, a 1st-century Christian leader and contemporary of John.)

"We beseech Thee, Lord and Master, to be our help and succour. Save those among us who are in tribulation; have mercy on the lowly; lift up the fallen; show Thyself unto the needy; heal the ungodly; restore the wanderers of Thy people; feed the hungry; ransom the prisoners; raise up the weak; comfort the faint-hearted. Let all the nations know Thee, that Thou art God alone, and that Jesus Christ is Thy Son, and that we are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 1, Day 2

Grace, Peace, and a Kingdom of Priests

Scripture Focus: Revelation 1:4-6

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Seven Churches in Asia":** These were not symbolic; they were seven real, specific, postal-route cities in the Roman province of Asia (modern-day Turkey). John was their pastoral leader.
- **"Grace and Peace":** This was a common Christian greeting, combining the standard Greek greeting (*charis* - grace) and the standard Hebrew greeting (*shalom* - peace). But here, it's super-charged.
- **A Trinitarian Greeting:** John's audience would hear a stunningly high view of God:
 1. **The Father:** "Him who is and who was and who is to come" (a clear echo of God's self-description to Moses in Exodus 3:14, "I AM WHO I AM").

2. **The Spirit:** "The seven spirits before his throne." This is a debated phrase, but most scholars see it as a symbolic reference to the Holy Spirit in His seven-fold fullness and perfection (drawing from Isaiah 11:2, "The Spirit of the LORD... of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD").
3. **The Son:** "Jesus Christ," who is then given a three-part title (v. 5).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This section is more theological than prophetic, but the titles for Jesus in verse 5 set the stage for the entire book:

1. **"Faithful Witness":** Jesus is the ultimate prophet. He perfectly revealed God's truth, even to the point of death (*martyr*, the Greek word for "witness," is also our word for "martyr").
2. **"Firstborn of the Dead":** Jesus is the ultimate priest. As the "firstborn," He has preeminence and inheritance. His resurrection is the "firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20) that guarantees the resurrection of all believers.
3. **"Ruler of Kings on Earth":** Jesus is the ultimate king. This was a *scandalous* political statement. John's readers lived under the Roman Emperor, who also claimed to be the ruler of kings. John begins his letter by stating that a crucified man, not Caesar, is the real king of the world. The rest of Revelation is the story of how this King will finally and fully take His throne.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Made us a kingdom, priests" (v. 6):** This is one of the most important Old Testament references in the book. It's a direct quote from **Exodus 19:6**, where God tells Israel at Mount Sinai, "you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests** and a holy nation."
- **Significance:** The promise originally given to national Israel, which they struggled to fulfill, is now declared *accomplished* for the church (both Jew and Gentile) through the blood of Christ. We don't *need* an earthly priest to mediate for us, because *we are* the priests, with direct access to God.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

We often feel powerless against vast, impersonal systems—global politics, corporate structures, or cultural trends. Verse 5 declares that Jesus is the "ruler of kings *on earth*" (present tense). This isn't just a future hope; it's a present reality. It means that no political leader, no CEO, and no cultural movement is outside of Christ's sovereign control, even when they act in rebellion against Him. The "dominion" (v. 6) is already His, even as we wait for it to be fully revealed.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John's greeting comes from the Father, the Spirit, and the Son (v. 4-5). Why do you think he includes all three persons of the Trinity before even getting to his main message?
2. Jesus is called the "faithful witness" (v. 5). A witness tells the truth, no matter the cost. Where in your life are you tempted to be an *unfaithful* witness (through silence, compromise, or fear)?
3. Verse 6 says you have been made a "priest to his God." In the Old Testament, a priest's job was to stand between God and the people, offering sacrifices and making intercession. What does it look like for you to be a "priest" in your home, at your job, or in your community this week?
4. The passage ends with pure worship: "To him be glory and dominion forever" (v. 6). How does *starting* with worship (like John does) change your perspective before *asking* for things?

Call to Action

Act on your priestly role today. Choose one person in your life who is struggling. Go somewhere private and pray for them *out loud*, acting as their intercessor and bringing their needs directly before the throne of God.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–373 AD), who defended the full divinity of Christ.)

"I give Thee thanks, O Lord, my God, that Thou hast been my guide in my journey, and that Thou hast brought me back in joy and peace. And now, O Lord, I stretch out my hands to Thee, and I direct my prayer to Thee: I entreat Thee, O Lord, keep us, that we may be Thy people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. We are Thy people, and the sheep of Thy pasture. Grant, O Lord, that Thy Church may be one, and grant Thy peace to Thy whole world. Through Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 1, Day 3

The Theme of the Book: He Is Coming

Scripture Focus: Revelation 1:7-8

⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Coming with the clouds":** A 1st-century reader would immediately recognize this as an image of divine power and judgment. It wasn't just "weather"; it was a "theophany" (a visible appearance of God).
- **"Even those who pierced him":** For John's original audience, this had a dual meaning. First, it was the Jewish leadership and Roman soldiers literally responsible for the crucifixion. Second, it was a broader spiritual truth: *all* of unrepentant humanity "pierced him" with their sin.
- **"The Almighty":** The Greek word is *Pantokrator*. It means "all-powerful" or "ruler of all." In a world ruled by the "all-powerful" Caesar, this was a defiant declaration. John says, "You think Caesar is the *Pantokrator*? You are mistaken. The *real* Almighty is the Lord God."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

Verse 7 is arguably the "thesis statement" for the entire book, and it's a critical point of difference between the major views.

- **Futurist View:** This is the most straightforward interpretation. Verse 7 is a literal, physical, visible, *future* event: the Second Coming of Christ, where "every eye" on the globe will see Him. The "wailing" is the terror of the unrepentant nations at the final judgment.
- **Preterist View:** This verse is *not* the Second Coming. It is a symbolic "coming" of Christ in *judgment* against 1st-century Jerusalem. "Coming on the clouds" is Old Testament language for God visiting a nation in judgment (see Isaiah 19:1). "Every eye" meant every eye in the *land* (Judea). "Those who pierced him" were the generation of Jews who rejected and crucified their Messiah. The "wailing" was the suffering of the Jewish-Roman War (AD 66-70).
- **Idealist View:** This verse is a timeless, spiritual truth. Christ "comes" in judgment repeatedly throughout history, and there will be a final, ultimate "coming." The "wailing" is the conviction of sin that people feel when confronted by the holiness of Christ.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

This single verse is a direct fusion of two major Old Testament prophecies:

1. **Daniel 7:13:** "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the **clouds of heaven** there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him." (This is where the "coming with the clouds" imagery originates.)
2. **Zechariah 12:10:** "...when they **look on me, the one they have pierced**, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and weep bitterly for him as one weeps for a firstborn." (This is where the "pierced" and "wailing" imagery originates.)

By weaving these two verses together, John is unequivocally identifying *Jesus of Nazareth* as the "Son of Man" from Daniel and the "pierced Lord" from Zechariah.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Accountability:** Verse 7 is the ultimate statement of accountability. In a "post-truth" world where people try to create their own reality, this verse is a stark reminder: there is a non-negotiable, public, and universal reality check coming. "Every eye will see him." There will be no "spin."
- **Sovereignty:** Verse 8 is the ultimate statement of sovereignty. "Alpha" (Α) and "Omega" (Ω) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It's a divine way of saying, "I wrote the first word of history, and I am the one who will write the last word. I am the A to Z of all reality." When the world feels chaotic, this verse reminds us that the *Pantokrator* is still in control of the entire alphabet.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. "Behold, he is coming..." (v. 7). How "behold-able" is this truth in your daily life? How often do you *actually* think about the fact that Jesus is physically returning?
2. If you *knew* the event in verse 7 was happening *next Tuesday*, what would you do differently between now and then? What does your answer reveal about your current priorities?
3. The world will "wail" (v. 7), but believers look for His coming with hope. What is the root difference between those two reactions to the exact same event?
4. How does the title "the Almighty" (v. 8) change the way you view a problem you are currently facing?

Call to Action

Read verse 8 ("I am the Alpha and the Omega...") slowly, three times. Then, take the biggest, most stressful item on your to-do list or in the news. Verbally "surrender" it to the Alpha and Omega, acknowledging that He is in control of its beginning and its end.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430 AD), who wrote extensively on God's sovereignty.)

"O Lord our God, who art the 'I Am,' the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end... Thou art my God, my life, my holy delight. Thou art the Almighty. Though we are not almighty, yet Thou art with us. For Thou art our Father, and we are Thy children. Thou art our ruler, and we are Thy servants. But Thou art the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come. To Thee be all glory. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 1, Day 4

In the Spirit on Our "Patmos"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 1:9-11

⁹ I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"I, John, your brother and partner...":** John doesn't pull rank. He doesn't say, "I, the last living Apostle..." He identifies himself by what he *shares* with his readers: tribulation, the kingdom, and the need for endurance.
- **"The island called Patmos":** This was not a vacation. Patmos was a small, rocky, volcanic island in the Aegean Sea, used by Rome as a penal colony. John was a prisoner, exiled for "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." He was suffering for his faith.

- **"On the Lord's Day":** This is one of the earliest, clearest references in history to the Christian practice of worshipping on Sunday (the day of Christ's resurrection) rather than on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday).
- **"Voice like a trumpet":** In the Old Testament, a trumpet blast signaled a royal decree, a call to war, or a direct Word from God (like at Mt. Sinai). This voice immediately commands absolute attention and authority.
- **The Seven Churches:** These were real cities, arranged in a logical postal-route circle in western Asia Minor (Turkey). This message was meant to be copied and circulated among them.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

The primary debate on this passage is its *dating*, which profoundly impacts the *interpretation*.

- **Traditional (Late) Date (c. 95 AD):** This view, held by most early church fathers, places John's exile under the reign of Emperor Domitian. Domitian fiercely enforced the imperial cult ("Caesar is Lord"). This context makes Revelation a book of "hope in persecution," encouraging Christians to resist the idolatry of Rome because a greater King is coming. This fits well with Futurist and Idealist views.
- **Early Date (c. 65-68 AD):** This minority view places the exile under Emperor Nero. If true, John would be writing *before* the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This makes the book a prophecy *about* that coming judgment, which strongly supports the Preterist view (that "the time is near" for the destruction of the temple).

Today, we'll proceed with the traditional (late) date, as it's the majority view, but it's important to know the debate exists.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Tribulation... kingdom... endurance":** This three-part summary *is* the Christian life, as taught by Jesus in **Matthew 24** and the apostles in **Acts 14:22** ("...through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.").
- **"I was in the Spirit":** This is the same language the prophet Ezekiel used to describe his own prophetic visions. **Ezekiel 3:12**, "Then the Spirit lifted me up..." and **Ezekiel 11:1**, "The Spirit lifted me up..." John is signaling that what he is about to see is a true, divine, prophetic vision, just like those of the Old Testament prophets.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Your "Patmos":** We all have a "Patmos." It's the place of our suffering, isolation, or trial. It could be a difficult job, a chronic illness, a strained relationship, or a season of doubt. John's example shows us two profound truths:
 1. Your "Patmos" is often a *result* of your faithfulness ("on account of the word of God").
 2. Your "Patmos" is not a barrier to God's presence; it can be the very *place* where He reveals Himself most powerfully.
- **"In the Spirit":** John was a prisoner, but his spirit was not. He was still worshipping "on the Lord's day." He didn't let his *circumstances* dictate his *devotion*. This is a direct challenge to us. It's easy to be "in the Spirit" on a mountaintop, but John shows us it's possible to be "in the Spirit" in a prison.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John calls himself a "partner" in "tribulation," "kingdom," and "endurance." Which of those three words do you most identify with in this season of your life? Which one do you most try to avoid?
2. What is your current "Patmos"? What trial or place of isolation are you in?
3. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" *despite* being on Patmos. What does it look like for you to *practically* choose to be "in the Spirit" (worshipful, open to God) when you are in the middle of your own "Patmos"?
4. The voice John heard was "like a trumpet" (v. 10). When God "speaks" to you (through Scripture, prayer, or circumstances), does it have that kind of authority, or is it just one voice among many?

Call to Action

Do not waste your "Patmos." Whatever your current trial or place of "exile" is, follow John's example. Intentionally set aside time today to worship God *from* that place. Put on worship music, open your Bible, or just be still and tell Him He is God, even in this.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Patrick (c. 385–461 AD), who was kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave—his own "Patmos"—where he met God.)

"I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me: God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me, God's host to save me. Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 1, Day 5

The Vision of the Glorified King

Scripture Focus: Revelation 1:12-16

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"One like a son of man":** John's audience would *immediately* know this title. It was Jesus's favorite name for himself, but its origin was a direct claim to divinity from the Old Testament.
- **"Long robe and golden sash":** This was the uniform of the Jewish High Priest (see Exodus 28). The original audience would understand: Jesus is not just our King; He is our *High Priest*. He is not distant; He is "in the midst" (v. 13) of the churches ("lampstands"), actively ministering.
- **A Corrective Vision:** The churches of Asia Minor were under intense pressure to compromise. They were surrounded by pagan temples with "impressive" idols. This vision of Christ was a powerful, corrective answer. It's as if Jesus is saying, "Are you tempted to bow to the 'glorious' emperor? Are you impressed by the 'power' of the pagan gods? Let me show you what real glory and power look like."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This vision is the foundation for Christ's authority in the rest of the book. All interpretive views (Preterist, Futurist, etc.) agree that this is a vision of the glorified, resurrected, and authoritative Jesus Christ.

- **The Idealist View** finds this passage particularly important. It sees this vision as a timeless truth. This is who Christ *is*, right now. He is *always* walking among His churches, inspecting them, judging, and purifying. This vision isn't just about the 1st century or the end times; it's about *our* church service *this Sunday*.
- **The Futurist View** sees this vision as establishing Christ's authority *to* unleash the end-times judgments that will follow. The One with "eyes of fire" and "feet of bronze" is the One who is qualified to be the Judge of all the earth.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

This entire vision is a tapestry woven from Old Testament prophetic threads, applying titles and descriptions of *Yahweh (God the Father)* directly to *Jesus*. This is John's primary way of showing Christ's divinity.

- **"Son of Man" (v. 13): Daniel 7:13-14.** In Daniel, this figure is given "dominion and glory and a kingdom."
- **"White Hair" (v. 14): Daniel 7:9.** In Daniel, the "Ancient of Days" (God the Father) has hair "like pure wool." John applies the Father's description of *eternity* and *wisdom* to the Son.
- **"Eyes of Fire" & "Feet of Bronze" (v. 14-15): Daniel 10:6.** The description of a mighty angelic/divine messenger. It signifies *all-seeing holiness* (His eyes see through every pretense) and *unshakeable judgment* (His feet will tread down all evil).
- **"Voice of Many Waters" (v. 15): Ezekiel 43:2.** This is the sound of the *voice of God Almighty* Himself.
- **"Sharp Two-Edged Sword" (v. 16): Isaiah 49:2.** The Messiah's mouth is his weapon—the Word of God (see also Hebrews 4:12), which has the power to save and to judge.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

We live in a culture that has domesticated Jesus. We've often reduced Him to "our buddy" or a gentle, meek moral teacher. This vision shatters that image. This is not a safe, "tame lion."

This is the Jesus who *actually* rules the universe. His "eyes like a flame of fire" are looking at our churches, our ministries, and our hearts with a purifying holiness. His "feet like burnished bronze" are walking *among* us. This

vision is a terrifying and comforting corrective. It's terrifying if we are hiding sin; it's comforting if we are in "tribulation," because this *powerful* King is the one holding us in His hand.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. We often picture Jesus as the humble carpenter or the man on the cross. How does this vision in Revelation 1 (fiery eyes, sword-mouth, blazing face) challenge or expand your image of Jesus?
2. Jesus is "in the midst" of the lampstands (churches). How does it change your perspective to know that this specific, powerful Jesus is walking in your church, seeing everything?
3. The only "weapon" mentioned is the "sharp two-edged sword" from *his mouth*. What does this tell you about how Jesus wages war and establishes His kingdom?
4. Looking at this full description (v. 13-16), which single attribute is the most *comforting* to you right now, and which is the most *frightening*? Why?

Call to Action

Take five minutes of complete silence. Reread verses 12-16. Instead of *studying* the images, just *meditate* on them. Try to picture this vision of Christ. Then, end your time by saying, "You are this Jesus, and you are my Lord."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033–1109), who wrote profoundly on the nature of God.)

"O Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek Thee, where and how to find Thee. Thou art my King and Thou art my God. I long to see Thee, O Lord. I see Thee not. I long to behold Thy face. But Thy countenance is hidden from my eyes. O, that I might behold Thee! O, that I might see the light of Thy countenance! This is my desire. This is my prayer. I behold Thee, O Lord, in Thy glory, and I am filled with awe. For Thy glory is terrible, and Thy beauty is wonderful. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 1, Day 6

Fear Not: The Mystery of the Stars

Scripture Focus: Revelation 1:17-20

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw

in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Falling as Though Dead:** This is the standard, terrified human reaction to a "theophany" (a full-on vision of God's glory). The original readers would be reminded of their greatest prophets. This reaction showed the *holiness* of the one John saw.
- **"He laid his right hand on me":** This is a gesture of comfort, commissioning, and impartation of strength. The same Christ whose glory is terrifying is also the one who is gentle to His servants.
- **"Keys of Death and Hades":** In the Roman world, the emperor held the power of life and death. In the pagan world, various gods (like Hades/Pluto) were thought to control the afterlife. This statement is a direct theological and political challenge: a crucified Jewish man, not Caesar and not a pagan god, holds the *true* keys. He alone has the ultimate authority over life, death, and eternity.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The things... that are and those that are to take place":** This phrase (v. 19) is a key to the book's structure for some.
 1. **Futurist View:** Sees this as a divine outline.
 1. "The things that you have seen" = The vision of Christ (Chapter 1).
 2. "Those that are" = The Church Age (Chapters 2-3).
 3. "Those that are to take place after this" = The end-times events (Chapters 4-22). The Greek for "after this" (*meta tauta*) is the same phrase used in 4:1.
- **"The angels of the seven churches":** This is a major point of discussion. What is the "angel"?
 1. **Literal Angel:** Each church has a literal guardian angel assigned to it, and the message is sent to them.
 2. **The Pastor/Bishop:** The Greek word *angelos* also just means "messenger." This view holds that the "angel" is the primary leader (pastor/bishop) of each church, who is the "messenger" responsible for delivering the letter.
 3. **The "Spirit" of the Church:** A more symbolic view that the "angel" represents the prevailing spirit, character, or ethos of each individual congregation.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Fell at his feet" (v. 17):** This is exactly what happened to **Ezekiel** ("I fell on my face," Ezek 1:28) and **Daniel** ("I... fell into a deep sleep," Dan 10:9). John is placed squarely in the tradition of Israel's greatest prophets.
- **"I am the first and the last" (v. 17):** This is one of the most powerful claims in the Bible. This title belongs *only* to Yahweh. **Isaiah 44:6**, "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel... 'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.'" Jesus is taking the very name and identity of God upon himself.
- **"The living one" (v. 18):** This contrasts with the dead, lifeless idols of the Roman Empire that the churches were tempted to worship.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Greatest Fear:** The ultimate human fear is death—the fear of non-existence, of finality. Christ's message to John is the answer to that fear. He says, "Fear not," because He is "the living one" who *died* and *conquered* it. He holds the keys. This means death is not a period; it's a doorway that He controls.
- **He Holds Your Church:** Verse 20 provides an incredible comfort. Jesus holds the "stars" (the church messengers/leaders) in His "right hand" (the position of power and protection) and walks "among" the "lampstands" (the churches). When your church is struggling or you see flaws in its leadership, this is a vital image: that church is *His*, and He is holding it.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John's reaction to the glorious Christ was to fall "as though dead." Our modern reaction is often to sing, "He's my best friend." How can both be true? How do we hold the *holiness* of Christ and the *intimacy* of Christ in proper balance?
2. Jesus's solution to John's terror was not to *diminish* His glory but to *identify* Himself ("I am..."). Why is *His identity* the only true antidote to our fear?
3. Practically, what does it mean to you that Jesus "holds the keys of Death and Hades"? How does that change how you view your own death or the death of a loved one?
4. Jesus commands John to "Write" (v. 19). His response to this overwhelming vision was to be obedient. What is one thing you feel God has asked you to do that you may be delaying out of fear?

Call to Action

Jesus said, "Fear not." Identify one specific fear in your life right now. It could be a fear of the future, a fear for your family, a fear of failure, or a fear of death. Write it down, and then write Revelation 1:17-18 over it. Verbally declare that Jesus, the First and the Last, holds the keys to that situation.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. John Chrysostom (c. 347–407 AD), a renowned bishop and preacher.)

"O Lord, Thou who art the First and the Last, in whom all things are held together: Thou hast conquered death and art alive forevermore. We know not what a day may bring forth, but we know that Thou holdest all our days in Thy hand. Banish from our hearts all fear and anxiety. Grant us to abide in the confidence of Thy perfect love, and to serve Thee with a quiet mind; for Thou art our King and our God, and to Thee, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Week 2 (Chapter 2): Letters to the Embattled Churches

Revelation Bible Study: Week 2, Day 1

To the Church That Left Its Love

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2:1-3

¹ “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

² “‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.’

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Ephesus:** This was the most important city in Roman Asia. It was a massive, wealthy, and influential center of trade and politics. It was also home to the Temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- **The Church's History:** This church had an *incredible* heritage. It was founded by Paul (Acts 19), who stayed there for three years. It was later pastored by Timothy. The Apostle John himself lived and ministered there. If there was a "flagship" church in 1st-century Christianity, this was it.
- **The "Apostles":** Jesus (via John) praises them for "testing" false apostles. In this era, many charlatans traveled from city to city, claiming to be apostles to gain money, power, or influence. The Ephesian church was a "watchdog" for doctrinal purity.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Prophetic Application (Historicist View):** An older view, popular in the 19th and 20th centuries, saw the seven churches as seven *eras* of church history. In this view, Ephesus represents the **Apostolic Church (c. 30-100 AD)**, which was full of hard work, toil, and a focus on doctrinal purity but which, by its end, had begun to cool in its initial passion.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"I know your works, your toil...":** This sounds exactly like Paul's description of his *own* ministry in **2 Corinthians 11:27-28**, "...in **toil** and hardship... I am on guard for all the churches." The Ephesians had learned this "gospel work ethic" from the best.
- **"Tested those who call themselves apostles":** This was a direct fulfillment of Paul's warning *to the Ephesian elders* in **Acts 20:29-30**, "I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you... and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things." The church had listened to Paul and had been successfully "on guard."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Successful" Church/Christian:** Ephesus looks like the perfect church on the outside. It's busy ("works," "toil"), it's persistent ("endurance"), and it's doctrinally pure ("cannot bear evil," "tested false apostles"). This is the resume of a highly "successful" ministry or a very "disciplined" Christian.
- **The Danger of Good Things:** This church's strength *became* its weakness. They were so focused on *defending* the faith and *working for* the faith that they were in danger of forgetting the *object* of the faith. It's a profound warning for us today. It's possible to be a great program manager, a great father, a great website builder for ministry, and to be so busy *doing* "good" things that you drift from the *love* of the One you're doing it for.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Jesus introduces Himself as the one "who walks among the lampstands" (v. 1). What does it mean for you, today, that Jesus is *actively* "walking around" in your church and in your life, observing?
2. Look at the list of commendations in verses 2-3. If Jesus wrote a "performance review" for your spiritual life, which of these would He be able to say about you? ("works," "toil," "endurance," "testing falsehood").
3. The Ephesians "could not bear with those who are evil." In our culture, "tolerance" is the highest virtue. How is *biblical* intolerance for evil and false teaching different from the unloving "intolerance" the world condemns?
4. Notice how "endurance" is mentioned twice (v. 2, v. 3). What's the difference between "enduring" and "enduring *for my name's sake*"?

Call to Action

Take 10 minutes and make an "Ephesian list." Write down all the "good things" you are doing: your work, your family responsibilities, your ministry service, your Bible study. Thank God for giving you the strength for that "toil." Then, honestly ask Him, "Am I doing these things *for You*, or just because I'm *supposed to*?"

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380–1471), who wrote "The Imitation of Christ".)

"O Lord, give me a true love for Thee, a love that is not lukewarm, but a burning, ardent love. Grant that I may love Thee, not only in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth. Let my love be so strong and so fervent that it may make me despise all earthly things. And grant, Lord, that my love for Thee may grow daily, so that I may be all on fire with Thy love, and find my rest in Thee alone. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 2, Day 2

The Diagnosis: Love Abandoned

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2:4-7

⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. ⁶ Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Abandoned the love you had at first":** This is the heart of the message. The Greek is *agapē ten protēn*—the "first love." This isn't just "less-enthusiastic." It's a relational abandonment. They had shifted from a "love" relationship to a "duty" relationship.
- **"Remove your lampstand":** This was a terrifying threat. It doesn't mean the *people* would lose their salvation. It means the *church* would lose its status and function. The lampstand's job is to hold the light. Jesus warns, "If you stop being a source of light-from-love, I will shut you down." This is not a failure of a *building*, but a failure of *identity*. (Historically, the church in Ephesus did eventually die out).
- **"The Nicolaitans":** We don't know much about them for sure. The early church fathers (like Irenaeus) describe them as a heretical sect that followed a man named Nicolas. Their "works" (which Jesus hates) seem to involve compromise with pagan culture, specifically advocating for "Christian liberty" to eat food sacrificed to idols and to engage in sexual immorality. They were the *opposite* of the doctrinally-pure Ephesians.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Three-Step "Cure" (v. 5):** This is a timeless model for both personal and corporate revival.
 1. **Remember:** Look back to "from where you have fallen." Remember the intimacy, the joy, the passion you once had.
 2. **Repent:** This is *metanoia* (a change of mind). It means to agree with God that your current state is wrong and to turn around.
 3. **Do (the first works):** Notice, He doesn't say "feel the first feelings." He says "do the first works"—the simple, primary acts of devotion that you did *when* you were in that state of first love (e.g., prayer, fellowship, simple acts of service). The feelings often follow the actions.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Abandoned the love you had at first":** This is the same charge God brought against Israel. **Jeremiah 2:2**, "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness..." The "first love" is "bride" language. God is saying, "Our relationship used to be a marriage; you've turned it into a joyless job."
- **"Tree of Life... Paradise of God" (v. 7):** This is a direct reference back to the Garden of Eden. **Genesis 3:24** says that after Adam and Eve sinned, God "drove out the man; and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword... to guard the way to the **tree of life**." Jesus is promising that what humanity *lost* in Genesis, the "conqueror" (the faithful Christian) will *regain* in Him.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Christian "Grind":** This is the message for the "burnt-out" Christian. It's for the person who is still serving, still showing up, still "bearing up"... but is just empty inside. Jesus's diagnosis is that this isn't just "burnout"; it's a *relational* problem. We've replaced intimacy with activity.
- **"Hating" the Right Thing:** It's not fashionable to "hate" anything. But Jesus says He *hates* the works of the Nicolaitans—works of compromise that led people to sin. This shows us that true love for Christ *must* include a hatred for the things that dishonor Him and destroy His people. Love and holiness are not opposites; they are two sides of the same coin.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. What's the difference between "loving Jesus" and "loving the *work* of Jesus"? Where do you see that line blur in your own life?
2. Jesus says "Remember... from where you have fallen." What was a time in your life when your "first love" for Christ was strongest? What did your "first works" (your daily habits) look like then?
3. The threat is to "remove the lampstand." What do you think a "church" or a Christian looks like when their "lampstand" has been removed, even if they still meet?
4. The promise is "to eat of the tree of life." How does this promise (eternal, intimate life with God in paradise) motivate you to "conquer" the "grind" of loveless duty?

Call to Action

Focus on the "R" of "Do the first works." Choose one *simple* "first work" that you have let slip. Maybe it's 10 minutes of uninterrupted prayer, writing a note of encouragement, reading a chapter in the Bible with no agenda, or playing a worship song and just *listening*. Do that one thing today.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090–1153), known for his writings on love for God.)

"Jesus, Thou art the joy of my heart; the great, the true, the only sweetness. What art Thou, Lord, to those who love Thee? Thou art He whom I desire to love. I have sought Thee, I have found Thee, I have loved Thee. But I have not loved Thee enough. I have been slow to love Thee. Kindle in me a greater love, Lord. Let me remember from whence I have fallen. Let me repent, and do the first works, that I may love Thee with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 2, Day 3

To the Church That Is Rich in Poverty

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2:8-11

⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of him who is the first and the last, who died and came to life.

⁹ “‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Smyrna:** This was a beautiful, wealthy, and fiercely loyal Roman city. It was a major center for the "imperial cult" (emperor worship) and even competed for the title "Worshiper of the Emperor."
- **Economic Squeeze:** For Christians in Smyrna, refusing to participate in the imperial cult or the local trade guilds (which had their own pagan gods) meant economic exclusion. They couldn't get good jobs. Their businesses were boycotted. This is why they were in "poverty" despite living in a rich city.
- **"Synagogue of Satan":** This is harsh language. There was a large, influential Jewish population in Smyrna that was hostile to the new Christian church. They likely saw Christians as heretics who were damaging their own reputation with the Romans. The "slander" (v. 9) probably involved the local Jews reporting the Christians to the Roman authorities, accusing them of being atheists (for not worshiping pagan gods) and traitors (for not worshiping Caesar).
- **"Faithful unto death":** This was not a metaphor. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna and a disciple of the Apostle John, was martyred in this very city, burned at the stake for refusing to say "Caesar is Lord."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **A Church with No Rebuke:** Notice what is missing from this letter: **There is no criticism.** Along with Philadelphia, Smyrna is one of only two churches that receive *only* commendation from Jesus.
- **"Ten Days":** What does this mean?
 1. **Literal:** A literal, short, but intense period of persecution.
 2. **Symbolic (Short Time):** In the Bible (like in Daniel 1), "ten days" often just means a specific, limited period set by God. The message is: "This persecution will be sharp, but it won't be long."
 3. **Symbolic (Complete):** The number 10 can represent completion. It's a "full and complete" test, but one that is still measured and controlled by God.
- **Historicist View:** Sees Smyrna as the **Persecuted Church (c. 100-313 AD)**, representing the era from the death of the apostles to the conversion of Emperor Constantine, when the Roman Empire actively and violently persecuted Christians (e.g., under emperors like Domitian, Diocletian, etc.).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Jesus's Introduction (v. 8):** Jesus introduces himself as "the first and the last, who died and came to life." He *perfectly* tailors his title to their situation. He is saying, "You are facing *death*? I am the one who

conquered death. You are being crushed by the *temporal* power of Rome? I am the *eternal* First and Last."

- **"Crown of Life" (v. 10):** This is a brilliant pun. Smyrna was famous for its "Crown of Smyrna," a ring of beautiful temples and buildings on its acropolis. Jesus says, "This city offers you a crown of buildings, but I will give you the *crown of life*." (See also **James 1:12**).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Persecuted Church:** This letter is the primary word of comfort for the modern persecuted church around the world. Christians in nations like North Korea, Afghanistan, and Nigeria are living the reality of Smyrna *today*—facing poverty, slander, imprisonment, and death for their faith.
- **"Rich in What Matters":** This church had the great reversal. The world said they were "poor." Jesus said they were "rich" (v. 9). Ephesus (yesterday) was "rich" in works but spiritually "poor" in love. Smyrna was "poor" in possessions but "rich" in faith. It's a stark question for us: In which currency are we measuring our wealth?
- **"Second Death":** The "first death" is physical. The "second death" (v. 11) is spiritual, eternal separation from God (see Rev 20:14). Jesus's promise is profound: "If you are faithful through the first death, the second death *cannot even touch you*."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Jesus gives no criticism to Smyrna, only comfort and encouragement. What do you think this church was "doing right" that kept them so spiritually healthy, even in poverty?
2. Jesus says they are "rich" (v. 9). What are some examples of "spiritual riches" that a person can have, even when they have no money?
3. The command is "Do not fear what you are about to suffer" (v. 10). Why do you think He commands them *not to fear*, rather than promising to *remove* the suffering?
4. "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (v. 10). What does "faithful unto death" look like for you, in your life, in a place without (likely) martyrdom?

Call to Action

Smyrna's story is the story of the persecuted church. Your call to action is to *pray* for them. Find one story from a ministry like "Voice of the Martyrs" or "Open Doors." Read it, and then spend 5 minutes praying for that specific person or country, asking God to give them the same faithfulness, endurance, and eternal perspective as the church in Smyrna.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(The actual prayer of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, as he was being tied to the stake to be burned, c. 155 AD.)

"O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of Thee... I bless Thee that Thou hast granted me this day and hour, that I may share in the number of the martyrs, in the cup of Thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and of body, in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. May I be received among them in Thy sight this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice... I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 2, Day 4

To the Church on Satan's Street

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2:12-17

¹² "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

¹³ "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. ¹⁵ So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Pergamum:** This city was the *official capital* of Roman Asia. While Ephesus was the commercial center, Pergamum was the *political* and *religious* center.
- **"Where Satan's Throne Is":** What was this?
 - **The Altar of Zeus:** Pergamum had a gigantic, 40-foot-high altar dedicated to Zeus, shaped like a throne on the acropolis.
 - **The Imperial Cult:** Pergamum was the first city in Asia to build a temple to the living emperor. It was the absolute *center* of emperor worship, the "throne" of the god-emperor.
 - **Asclepiion:** It was home to a massive healing center dedicated to Asclepius, the serpent-god of healing (his staff, the caduceus, is still a symbol of medicine). People came from all over the world to be healed by this "savior" god.
 - **Conclusion:** This city was the headquarters for *all* forms of pagan idolatry.
- **Antipas:** We know nothing about him other than this verse, which is all that matters. He was a "faithful witness" (a *martyr*, or martyr) who was killed for his faith in the most dangerous city in Asia.
- **The "Compromise":** The church's problem wasn't persecution; it was *compromise*. They were "holding fast" (v. 13) but also "holding" (v. 14, 15) false teaching. They were a mixed church.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Teaching of Balaam:** This is the key. They were tolerating a "doctrine" of compromise.
 - **Cross-Reference:** In **Numbers 22-25**, the prophet Balaam couldn't *curse* Israel (God wouldn't let him). So, he gave King Balak a new strategy: send in Moabite women to *seduce* the Israelite men, draw them into pagan feasts ("eating food sacrificed to idols"), and get them to commit sexual immorality. It worked.
 - **The Application:** The "teaching of Balaam" is the idea that "we can blend in." It's the seductive whisper that says, "You can be a good Christian *and* still participate in the pagan culture's idolatry and immorality. God understands. Just be 'relevant'."
- **Nicolaitans (v. 15):** The problem from Ephesus is back. It seems the "teaching of Balaam" and the "teaching of the Nicolaitans" were very similar: a doctrine of "liberty" that led to compromise with idolatry and immorality. Ephesus *hated* this teaching; Pergamum *tolerated* it.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Jesus's Introduction (v. 12):** Jesus introduces Himself as the one with the "sharp two-edged sword." Why? The Roman governor in Pergamum held the *ius gladii* ("right of the sword"), the authority to execute. Jesus is saying, "You think the governor has the sword? I am the *true* judge, and *my* sword (my Word) is coming for you."
- **"Hidden Manna" (v. 17):** Manna was the food God gave Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 16). A portion was kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Hebrews 9:4). Jesus is the *true* Manna, the Bread of Life (John 6). He is promising, "You compromised by eating *their* idol-food, but if you conquer, I will give you *My* secret, life-giving, heavenly food."
- **"White Stone":** This had several meanings: a white stone was used for acquittal in a trial (versus a black stone for condemnation), or it was used as a ticket for entry to a special feast. Either way, it's a symbol of personal *acceptance, vindication, and invitation* from Christ.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Living in "Satan's City":** We all, in a sense, live "where Satan dwells." We live in a culture that is hostile to our faith. This letter is for the Christian who works in a toxic, godless environment or who lives in a highly progressive or atheistic city. Jesus's first words are: "I know *exactly* where you dwell."
- **The Danger of "Tolerance":** Pergamum's sin was not *doing* evil; it was *tolerating* evil. They allowed "some" to hold false teaching, and that "some" was poisoning the whole. This is a massive challenge to modern churches that, in the name of "love," refuse to call sin "sin" or to exercise church discipline.
- **A "New Name":** The ultimate promise is one of intimacy. The "new name" that "no one knows" is a sign of a personal, intimate relationship with God, like a nickname between a husband and wife. This is the reward for *not* compromising.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Jesus says "I know where you dwell." How does the simple fact that *Jesus sees* your specific, difficult environment (your job, your neighborhood) encourage you?
2. Pergamum was praised for "holding fast" but condemned for "holding" false teaching. Where in your life are you "holding fast" (good) while also "holding" (tolerating) a sin or compromise?
3. The "teaching of Balaam" was about "blending in" to be "relevant." Where are you most tempted to compromise your faith to "fit in" with the culture around you?

4. Jesus promises "hidden manna" and a "white stone." Why are these *intimate, personal* rewards the perfect antidote to the *public, cultural* pressure to compromise?

Call to Action

Jesus's command is simple: "Therefore repent" (v. 16). Identify one specific area of "Balaam's teaching" in your life—one area where you are "blending in" or "compromising" with the world. Repent. Confess it to God, and ask Him for the strength to "hold fast" to His name, just like Antipas.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Søren Kierkegaard (c. 1813–1855), a philosopher who wrote on the "offense" of Christianity and the cost of non-conformity.)

"Father in Heaven, grant us the courage to be honest, the courage to be true to ourselves and to Thee; the courage to dare to be a 'witness.' Help us to understand that it is not what the multitude says that is right, but what Thou sayest. Give us the strength not to compromise, not to bow to the pressures of the age, but to hold fast to Thy name, and in the end, to receive the new name, the secret of which we shall share with Thee alone. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 2, Day 5

To the Tolerant Church (Part 1)

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2:18-23

¹⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

¹⁹ "'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Thyatira:** This was a blue-collar, manufacturing city. It was known for its powerful and numerous trade guilds (dyers, tanners, potters, weavers, etc.). Lydia, the first convert in Philippi, was a "seller of purple" from Thyatira (Acts 16:14).
- **The "Jezebel" Problem:** To be a part of a trade guild in Thyatira, you *had* to participate in the guild's "fellowship" meetings. These meetings were held at pagan temples and involved two main things: (1) a feast, where you ate meat that had first been "sacrificed to idols," and (2) rampant "sexual immorality," often with temple prostitutes.
- **"That Woman Jezebel":** This was likely not her real name. It was a "code name" for a specific, influential woman (a "prophetess") in the church. This woman was actively *teaching* that it was "okay" for Christians to go to the guild meetings. She was probably saying, "An idol is nothing (as Paul says in 1 Cor 8). Just go, eat the food, do what you have to do—it's just 'business.' God will understand." She was "seducing" them to compromise for the sake of their careers.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Jesus's Introduction (v. 18):** This is the *only* time in Revelation He is called "the Son of God." He also uses the most *terrifying* parts of his vision: "eyes like a flame of fire" and "feet like burnished bronze." Why? Because He is about to *judge*. His "eyes of fire" see right through Jezebel's false teaching, and His "feet of bronze" are about to "crush" this rebellion.
- **"Jezebel" (v. 20):**
 - **Cross-Reference:** The original Jezebel (see **1 & 2 Kings**) was a pagan queen who married an Israelite king (Ahab). She systematically *imported* her pagan idolatry (Baal worship) into Israel and tried to *destroy* the true prophets of God.
 - **Application:** This "new Jezebel" is doing the *exact same thing*: she is a powerful woman *inside* the church, importing *pagan* practices and *seducing* God's servants.
- **Historicist View:** Sees Thyatira as the **Papal Church (c. 600-1517 AD)**, the "Dark Ages." This view sees the church as externally "good" ("latter works exceed the first") but internally corrupted by a "Jezebel"—a system of idolatry (worship of saints/relics) and spiritual adultery, which God gave "time to repent" before the Reformation.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"I Know Your Works..." (v. 19):** This is the most *glowing* commendation yet! This church was *growing*. Their "love, faith, service, and endurance" were *increasing*. Their "latter works exceeded the first" (the exact *opposite* of Ephesus). This was a healthy, active, growing, loving church!
- **...But One Thing:** Their sin was *tolerance*. They were so "loving" and "inclusive" that they tolerated a "prophetess" who was leading people straight into idolatry and sin. This is the deadliest sin of a "nice" church.
- **"Jezebel" Today:** The "Jezebel" spirit is any teaching *inside the church* that "seduces" believers into worldly compromise. It's the voice that says, "That's not really sin... That's just 'love'... God just wants you to be happy... You have to do this to get ahead in your career."
- **"I gave her time to repent" (v. 21):** This is a terrifying and merciful verse. God is patient... but not forever. His judgment, when it comes, is severe and *public* ("all the churches will know").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This church's "latter works exceeded the first" (v. 19). They were growing in every good area. How could such a "good" church tolerate such a "bad" teacher?
2. The "Jezebel" problem was about compromising faith for a *career* (staying in the trade guild). What are the biggest "trade guilds" today that tempt Christians to compromise? (e.g., in business, politics, academics, social media).
3. This "Jezebel" was a *teacher* and *prophetess*. Why is false teaching *inside* the church so much more dangerous than attacks from the *outside*?
4. Jesus's judgment is severe: "I will strike her children dead." (This may mean her "spiritual children" who follow her teaching). Why does Jesus take this kind of "spiritual seduction" so seriously?

Call to Action

Jesus "searches minds and hearts" (v. 23). Ask Him to search yours. Are there any "Jezebel" teachings you are tolerating in your own life? Is there a voice (from a podcast, a book, a friend) that is "seducing" you to compromise? Repent, and "hold fast" to what you know is true.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Martin Luther (c. 1483–1546), who stood against the "Jezebel" of his own day.)

"Almighty God, merciful Father, Thou hast given us Thy holy Word. Grant us the power of Thy Holy Spirit to read, to hear, and to understand it. Keep us from all false teachers, and suffer us not to be seduced from the simplicity of the Gospel. Give us strength to stand against the wiles of the devil, and to hold fast to Thy Word, until we are saved, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 2, Day 6

To the Church That Holds Fast

Scripture Focus: Revelation 2:24-29

²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Rest of You":** After the harsh judgment in the previous verses, Jesus turns to the faithful *remnant* within the compromised church. This is a critical moment. He doesn't command them to *leave* the church; He commands them to "hold fast" *within* it.
- **"The Deep Things of Satan":** This is likely a sarcastic jab by Jesus. "Jezebel" and her followers were probably claiming they had "deep spiritual knowledge" (Gnosticism). They may have argued, "We are so 'spiritually strong' that we can go to the pagan feasts and lie with the temple prostitutes... we can explore the 'deep things' and it won't even affect us." Jesus re-labels their "deep wisdom." He says, "You're not exploring the 'deep things of God'; you're exploring the 'deep things of Satan'."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"Hold fast what you have until I come" (v. 25):** This is the first *explicit* reference to the Second Coming in the letters to the churches. It gives the faithful remnant their timeline: "Your job is to endure and stay faithful. The end of the story is not *you* defeating Jezebel; it's *Me* returning."
- **The Promises (v. 26-28):** These are some of the most staggering promises in the Bible, given to regular Christians in a blue-collar town.
 1. **"Authority over the nations":** They will *share* in Christ's rule. This is a direct promise of co-regency in the Millennial Kingdom (or the New Earth).
 2. **"Rule them with a rod of iron":** This is not about being a tyrant. It's about participating in Christ's *perfect, righteous judgment*. The "earthen pots" represent the fragile, corrupt nations of the world being broken and replaced by Christ's unbreakable kingdom.
 3. **"I will give him the morning star":** The "morning star" is a symbol of the dawn, of hope, of the coming new day. But more importantly, in **Revelation 22:16**, Jesus identifies *Himself* as "the bright morning star."
- **The Ultimate Promise:** The ultimate reward for "conquering" is not just *power* or *a thing*; it's *Jesus Himself*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Rule them with a rod of iron" (v. 27):** This is a direct quote from the messianic psalm, **Psalms 2:8-9**: "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage... You shall break them with a **rod of iron** and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
- **Significance:** This promise, originally given to God's *Anointed Son* (the Messiah), is now being given *to the church*. Jesus is saying, "What the Father gave to Me, I will now *share with you*." This is the doctrine of our union with Christ in its most powerful form.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Faithful Remnant:** This message is for every Christian who feels spiritually "stuck" in a compromised church, a difficult family, or a godless workplace. The command is not (necessarily) to flee, but to "hold fast." You are the "rest of you" in your Thyatira. Jesus sees you, and He is not "laying on you any other burden" than to simply *be faithful* right where you are.
- **The "Deep Things" Trap:** We see the "deep things of Satan" today. It's any teaching that says "sin to get grace," or "you need a 'new' secret revelation," or "you have to 'experience' darkness to understand

light." Jesus calls this what it is: satanic. The Christian life is not about "deep" secrets; it's about holding fast to the *simple, public* truth of the Gospel.

- **Your Future Authority:** When you feel powerless in the world, this promise is your anchor. The "one who conquers" (the faithful, patient, enduring Christian) will one day be given "authority over the nations." Our current "light and momentary troubles" are preparing us for an "eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17) that includes *shared rulership*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Jesus tells the faithful remnant, "I do not lay on you any other burden" (v. 24). Why is the simple command to "hold fast" (v. 25) such a comfort in a complex situation?
2. Have you ever encountered a version of the "deep things of Satan"? A teaching that sounded "spiritual" but was really just an excuse for sin or compromise?
3. The promise is to "rule... with a rod of iron" (v. 27). This sounds harsh. How does Psalm 2 help us understand this as an act of *righteous judgment* rather than *petty tyranny*?
4. The ultimate promise is the "morning star" (Jesus Himself). How is the promise of *more of Jesus* a better motivation than a promise of *stuff from Jesus*?

Call to Action

Your call is "hold fast" (v. 25). Identify the *one thing* you need to "hold fast" to this week. Is it your integrity at work? Your patience with your family? Your commitment to prayer? Write it down, and then pray, "Lord, I will hold fast to this. Give me your strength 'until you come'."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Ignatius of Loyola (c. 1491–1556), founder of the Jesuits, on "holding fast".)

"Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that I do Thy will. O my God, give me Thy love and Thy grace, which are sufficient for me, and I will hold fast until the end. Amen."

Week 3 (Chapter 3): Letters to the Compromised & Faithful Churches

Revelation Bible Study: Week 3, Day 1

To the Church That Is Dead

Scripture Focus: Revelation 3:1-3

¹ “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, therefore, what you received and heard; keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Sardis:** This was a city with a glorious past and a pathetic present. It was once the capital of the mighty Lydian empire (home of the fabulously wealthy King Croesus). It was built on an "invincible" acropolis, a sheer-sided plateau 1,500 feet high.
- **The "Invincible" City:** Sardis had a fatal flaw: **arrogance**. It was so "invincible" that it had been conquered *twice* (by Cyrus in 549 BC and Antiochus in 218 BC) because its defenders failed to guard a "secret path" up the cliff. They were so confident in their reputation that they "fell asleep" and were destroyed.
- **Jesus's Message:** The church in Sardis was exactly like its city. It had a *reputation* for being alive—it was probably big, had a great history, and looked "successful." But inside, it was spiritually dead and "asleep." Jesus's warning, "If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief," was a *direct* jab at their city's history of being conquered by a "thief in the night" due to their own arrogance.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Jesus's Introduction (v. 1):** He introduces Himself as the one "who has the seven spirits of God" (the fullness of the Holy Spirit) and "the seven stars" (the churches/messengers). This is a direct rebuke. He's saying, "You are 'dead' because you are disconnected from *Me*, the very source of spiritual life and leadership."
- **"Reputation of being alive, but you are dead":** This is the most terrifying diagnosis of any of the churches. It's worse than being persecuted (Smyrna) or compromised (Pergamum). It's a church of "zombies"—it has all the outward forms of religion (services, programs, "works") but none of the spiritual life of Christ.
- **Historicist View:** Sees Sardis as the **Reformation Church (c. 1517-1700s)**. This view sees the Reformation as a "wake up" call that "strengthened what remains." However, it argues that the Protestant churches soon became rigid, state-controlled, and spiritually "dead" in their own forms of "dead orthodoxy" (faith without works).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Wake up" (v. 2):** This is the same language Paul uses. **Ephesians 5:14**, "Wake up, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."
- **"Come like a thief" (v. 3):** This phrase is *always* used in the New Testament to refer to the suddenness of Christ's second coming (the *Parousia*). See **Matthew 24:43** and **1 Thessalonians 5:2**. By applying this to a *local* judgment, Jesus is showing that the way He "comes" in final judgment is the same way He "comes" in temporal judgment against an unfaithful church.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Country Club" Church:** Sardis is the "country club" church. It's the church people attend because it's socially respectable, the music is professional, and the building is beautiful. It has a great *reputation*. But if the Holy Spirit were removed, 90% of the programs would continue without anyone noticing.
- **Personal Diagnosis:** This is also a deeply personal warning. It's for the Christian who is "coasting." You're living on your *reputation*. You still "look" like a Christian. You know all the right answers, but there's no real, vital, living relationship with Jesus. You are "dead."
- **The 3-Step Cure:** The cure is the same as for Ephesus, but with a twist:
 1. **Remember:** (v. 3) ...what you *received and heard* (the gospel).
 2. **Keep it:** (v. 3) ...hold fast to that truth.
 3. **Repent:** (v. 3) ...change your mind and turn back to it.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. What is the difference between having a "reputation for being alive" and *actually* being alive? How can you tell the difference in your own life?
2. Jesus says "I have not found your works complete" (v. 2). What do you think a "complete" work (one that is "alive") looks like to God, as opposed to a "dead" work?
3. The warning "I will come like a thief" (v. 3) was a direct reference to their city's history. What is a specific warning from Scripture that feels especially relevant to *our* culture's "blind spots"?
4. "Wake up, and strengthen what remains" (v. 2). What is one small spark ("what remains") of spiritual life in you that you feel God is asking you to "strengthen" right now?

Call to Action

Do a "pulse check." Spend 5 minutes in total silence. Don't pray, don't read, don't listen to music. Just be still before God and ask this one question: "Lord, am I alive?" Listen for His answer. Then, "strengthen what remains" by acting on the *first* small thing He brings to mind.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from A.W. Tozer (c. 1897–1963), who often warned against "dead orthodoxy".)

"O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has made me thirsty for more. I am painfully aware of my need for Thy greater grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin O God, a new work of grace in my soul. Save me from the sin of possessing a 'reputation for being alive' while I am dead. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 3, Day 2

To the Remnant in a Dead Church

Scripture Focus: Revelation 3:4-6

⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot out his name from the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Soiled their garments":** Sardis was a major center for wool dying and textile manufacturing. The imagery of "clean" vs. "soiled" garments would be powerful. In a spiritual sense, "soiled garments" meant any participation in the pagan, idolatrous culture. The "few names" in Sardis were those who had kept themselves spiritually pure and separate from the "deadness" of the church and the paganism of the city.
- **"Walk with me in white":** In the ancient world, "walking in white" was a sign of three things: (1) **Purity** (as from a temple priest), (2) **Victory** (as from a triumphant general), and (3) **Joy** (as from a person at a feast). It was the ultimate picture of honor and celebration. Jesus promises this to the faithful few.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This passage contains three of the most powerful promises for the "conqueror" (the faithful Christian).

1. **"Clothed in white garments":** This is a symbol of *imputed righteousness*. It's the righteousness of Christ given to the believer. They are declared "worthy" (v. 4) not because of their own perfection, but because they have *remained* in Christ, who *is* their perfection.
2. **"I will never blot out his name from the book of life":** This is a hugely debated verse.
 - **Context:** In a Roman city, your name being in the "city register" meant you were a citizen with full rights. To have your name "blotted out" (e.g., for a crime or by death) meant you lost your citizenship.
 - **Interpretation 1 (Eternal Security):** This is a *promise of assurance*. The "book of life" is the register of the saved. Jesus is saying, "To the one who conquers (i.e., shows true, saving faith), I *promise* I will never, ever erase your name. Your citizenship is secure."
 - **Interpretation 2 (Conditional):** This is a *warning*. It implies that it *is* possible for a name to be blotted out, and that only the "conqueror" is safe.
 - **Note:** The grammar in Greek (*ou me*) is a "double negative," the most emphatic way possible of saying "I will *not* ever... *no, never...*" blot your name out. It is a statement of profound security.
3. **"I will confess his name...":** This is the ultimate honor. The citizen *register* (the book) is one thing; a *personal endorsement* from the King's Son to the King is another.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Book of Life:** This is an Old Testament concept. **Psalm 69:28**, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled with the righteous." **Daniel 12:1**, "...everyone whose name shall be found written in the book."
- **"I will confess his name":** This is a direct quote from Jesus during His earthly ministry. **Matthew 10:32**, "So everyone who **acknowledges me before men**, I also will **acknowledge before my Father** who is in heaven." The faithful "remnant" in Sardis was acknowledging Jesus in a dead/hostile culture, and He promises to do the same for them.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Power of the "Remnant":** This passage is for the person who feels alone in their faith. You might be the only true believer in your workplace, your family, or even (in a "Sardis" church) your own small group. Jesus's message is: **I see you**. You are the "few names." You are the one who "has not soiled their garments." And your reward will be *immense*.
- **A "Reputation" vs. "A Name":** The church in Sardis had a *reputation* (v. 1). The faithful remnant had their *name* (v. 5) known and spoken by Christ. This is the great choice we all have: Do we want to be well-known by the *world* ("a reputation"), or do we want to be personally *confessed by Christ* before the Father?
- **Assurance of Salvation:** This is one of the most comforting passages in the Bible. For the believer who is "conquering" (i.e., pressing on in faith, repenting of sin, and "holding fast"), your salvation is not in question. Your name is in the book, and Jesus *Himself* guarantees He will *never* blot it out.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to "soil your garments" in the 21st century? What are the main cultural "stains" that tempt you?
2. "They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy" (v. 4). What makes a person "worthy" of this? (Hint: See "clothed in white" - v. 5).
3. Why is the promise "I will never blot out his name" so important? How does this promise give you boldness to live as a "conqueror"?
4. Think about the promise: "I will confess his name before my Father" (v. 5). Imagine that moment. How does that future *honor* from Christ change the way you view present *hardships* for Christ?

Call to Action

Your call is to "not soil your garments." Identify one "soiled" habit, attitude, or compromise that you have been tolerating. Confess it as "soiled" (the way God sees it), repent, and ask Him to clothe you in His "white garments" of righteousness today.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430 AD) on being clothed in Christ.)

"O Lord, my God, let me be clothed with Thee. Let my old self be crucified, and my new self be raised to life in Thee. Clothe me in the white garments of Thy righteousness. Let my sins, which are like scarlet, be made white as snow. Let me not be ashamed at Thy coming, but grant that my name may be found written in Thy book of life, and that Thou mayest confess me before Thy Father and the holy angels. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 3, Day 3

To the Church of the Open Door

Scripture Focus: Revelation 3:7-11

⁷ "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

⁸ "'I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut. I know that you have but little strength, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Philadelphia:** This was a smaller, less prominent city than Ephesus or Sardis. It was located in an active volcanic and earthquake zone; in AD 17, it was so devastated by an earthquake that it was "re-founded" by the emperor.
- **"Little Strength" (v. 8):** This was their reality. They were not a large, wealthy, or influential "megachurch" like Sardis. They were a small, struggling congregation.
- **"Synagogue of Satan" (v. 9):** Like the church in Smyrna, the Philadelphians were facing intense persecution and slander from the local Jewish community, who were trying to have them shut down.
- **A Church with No Rebuke:** This is the second and last church (along with Smyrna) that receives **zero criticism** from Jesus. They were a model church.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Jesus's Introduction (v. 7):** He introduces Himself with His most powerful titles of *sovereignty* and *authority*.
 1. **"Holy One, the True One":** Titles of deity, belonging to Yahweh (see Isaiah 40:25).
 2. **"Key of David":** This is the key. In **Isaiah 22:22**, God gives Eliakim the "key of the house of David," giving him total *authority* over the kingdom—to "open and no one will shut." Jesus is

saying, "I am the *true* heir of David. I alone hold the keys to the Kingdom of God. I decide who gets in."

- **"An Open Door" (v. 8):** What is this door?
 1. **Opportunity for Ministry:** The most common view. Jesus opened a door for them to spread the gospel, and no one (not the Romans, not the "synagogue of Satan") could stop it.
 2. **The Door to the Kingdom:** Jesus *is* the Door (John 10:9). Because they were faithful, He has opened the door to salvation and the coming Kingdom for them, and no one can take it away.
- **Historicist View:** Sees Philadelphia as the **Missionary Church (c. 1700s-early 1900s)**. This was the era of the Great Awakenings and the explosion of world missions (William Carey, Hudson Taylor). It was a time of "little strength" (small groups) but an "open door" for the gospel that no one could shut.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"I will make them... bow down" (v. 9):** This is a stunning reversal. It's a quote from **Isaiah 60:14** and **Isaiah 49:23**, where God promised that the Gentiles would one day bow down to *Israel*. Here, Jesus applies that promise to the *Gentile church in Philadelphia*—and says their *Jewish* persecutors will be the ones bowing down (in repentance and recognition) to acknowledge God's love for the church. This is a profound statement about the church now being the true people of God.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Little Strength" Model:** This is the most encouraging letter for the "small" Christian or the "small" church. Our culture worships size, influence, and "big numbers." Jesus's approval has *nothing* to do with that. This church had "little strength" but *huge* faithfulness.
- **The Key to Success:** The "secret" to Philadelphia's success is simple (v. 8):
 1. They had "little strength" (they were humble and dependent).
 2. They "kept my word" (they were obedient).
 3. They "have not denied my name" (they were faithful under pressure). This is the model Jesus blesses.
- **God-Opened Doors:** When God opens a door for you (a new job, a ministry opportunity, a conversation with a neighbor), *no one* can shut it. And, just as importantly, if He "shuts" a door (you don't get the job, the ministry fails), no amount of pushing will open it. Our job is not to *create* doors, but to *walk through* the ones He opens.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This church had "little strength" (v. 8). Why do you think Jesus sees that as a *good* thing, not a failure? In what areas of your life do you feel you have "little strength," and how can you see that as an opportunity for God's power?
2. What is the "open door" (v. 8) that you feel Jesus has set before you right now? Is it a ministry, a relationship, a new challenge?
3. The promise in verse 9 is that their persecutors will one day "learn that I have loved you." How does the "long-term" view of God's final justice and vindication help you "patiently endure" present-day slander or mistreatment?
4. The command is "Hold fast what you have" (v. 11). What do you "have" from God (a promise, a truth, a calling) that you need to "hold fast" to today?

Call to Action

Stop trying to be "strong." Identify one area where you have "little strength" and have been trying to "muscle through" on your own. Today, stop and confess that you *can't* do it, and ask Jesus (the one with the "Key of David") to open the door for you in His power, not yours.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from D.L. Moody (c. 1837–1899), a man of "little strength" (uneducated) whom God used to open doors worldwide.)

"Lord, I am weak. I have but little strength. But Thou art the Holy One, the True One. Thou hast the Key. Open doors for us into the hearts of men. Give us boldness to keep Thy Word and not deny Thy Name. And when Thou dost come, may we be found holding fast, that we may receive the crown. Help us to be faithful today. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 3, Day 4

The Promises to a Faithful Church

Scripture Focus: Revelation 3:12-13

¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Pillars in a Temple:** This imagery was deeply personal for Philadelphians. Their city was constantly rocked by earthquakes. The *one thing* you'd see remaining after a major quake was the massive *pillars* of the temples, standing firm while the walls crumbled.
- **"Never shall he go out of it":** When an earthquake hit, everyone *fled* the city and lived in the open country for fear of aftershocks. The "conqueror" is promised the *opposite*: a position of ultimate stability and security. They will be a permanent "pillar" in God's eternal temple and will *never* have to "flee" again.
- **Writing on Pillars:** It was a common practice in Philadelphia to honor a great citizen or hero by chiseling their name into a *new* temple pillar. Jesus is saying, "You will be so honored in my Kingdom that you *will be* the pillar, and I will write on you the name of God Himself."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This verse is a "trinity" of promises, all centered on **eternal security and identity**.

1. **"A Pillar in the Temple"**: This is a promise of **Permanence** and **Position**. You are not just *visiting* the New Jerusalem; you are a permanent, structural, load-bearing part of God's new creation.
2. **"I will write on him..."**: This is a promise of **Ownership** and **Identity**. In the ancient world, a "name" meant "nature" or "ownership." We are given a *triple* identity:
 - **"The name of my God"**: We *belong* to the Father. We are His.
 - **"The name of the city... the new Jerusalem"**: We are *citizens* of heaven. This is our true home.
 - **"My own new name"**: This is the most intimate. A "new name" signifies a new relationship. Just as God changed Abram's name to Abraham, Jesus gives us a "new name" that reflects our new, intimate, eternal relationship with Him. We *belong* to Christ.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **A "Pillar" in the Church**: The "pillar" metaphor was used by Paul to describe the most steadfast leaders. In **Galatians 2:9**, he calls "James and Cephas (Peter) and John... **pillars**" of the church in Jerusalem. Jesus extends this high honor to *every* "conquering" Christian in Philadelphia.
- **The New Jerusalem**: This is a direct link to the end of the book. The promise made here in chapter 3 is *fulfilled* in **Revelation 21:2**, "And I saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God." Jesus is giving them a "sneak peek" of their final reward.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Security in an "Earthquake" World**: We live in a world of constant "earthquakes." Our finances, our health, our relationships, and our culture can all be "shaken" at any moment. We feel unstable and insecure. This promise is the antidote. In Christ, we are offered *absolute permanence*. We will be a "pillar" in a temple that can *never* be shaken (see Hebrews 12:28).
- **Your True Identity**: We spend our lives trying to "make a name for ourselves." We build our identity on our job title (Program Manager), our family role (husband, father), our salary, or our hobbies. Jesus says this is all temporary. The *true* identity, the *permanent* one, is the one *He* gives you:
 1. Child of God
 2. Citizen of Heaven
 3. Belonging to Christ
- When you "conquer" (hold fast to Him), you don't *find* your identity; you *receive* it.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The Philadelphians lived in constant fear of "shaking." What are the biggest "earthquakes" in your life that cause you to feel unstable or insecure?
2. How does the promise of being a permanent "pillar" (v. 12) speak directly to those fears?
3. We are given "three names" (of God, of the City, of Christ). Why do you think He gives us all three? What does each "name" tell you about *who you are*?
4. This promise is for the "conqueror." How does "holding fast with little strength" (the command) lead to becoming an "unshakeable pillar" (the reward)?

Call to Action

Today, when you are tempted to find your identity in your *work* or your *performance*, stop and "read the pillar." Remind yourself of the *three names* that will be written on you: "I belong to God. I am a citizen of Heaven. I belong to Christ." Let your *future* identity define your *present* actions.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Patrick (c. 385–461 AD), known as "St. Patrick's Breastplate," about identity in Christ.)

"Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me. Christ on my right, Christ on my left. Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise. Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. I am a pillar in the temple of my God, and His name is written upon me. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 3, Day 5

To the Church That Is Sick

Scripture Focus: Revelation 3:14-19

¹⁴ "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

¹⁵ "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may be ableA. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be zealous and repent.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Laodicea:** This was the *wealthiest city* in the region. It was a massive banking center ("I am rich, I have prospered"). It was famous for its textile industry, specifically a "glossy black wool" ("naked"). It was also famous for its medical school, which produced a popular "Phrygian eye-salve" ("blind").
- **The "Lukewarm" Water:** This is the most brilliant and devastating part of the letter. Laodicea had a *terrible* water supply.

- The nearby city of **Colossae** (to which Paul also wrote) had **cold**, fresh, life-giving mountain streams.
- The nearby city of **Hierapolis** had famous **hot** mineral springs, which were healing and therapeutic.
- Laodicea had *neither*. They had to pipe in their water from miles away. By the time it arrived, it was lukewarm, full of mineral deposits (calcium carbonate), and known to be *disgusting* and *emetic* (it made you want to vomit).
- **Jesus's Message:** When Jesus says, "You are lukewarm... I will spit you out of my mouth," *every single citizen* would have physically recoiled. He was saying, "You are as disgusting and useless to me as your own city's water."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Jesus's Introduction (v. 14):**
 - **"The Amen":** He is the "Amen" (the "so be it," the "truth"). This contrasts with the Laodiceans, who were *not* true or real.
 - **"Faithful and True Witness":** They were *unfaithful* witnesses.
 - **"The Beginning of... God":** The Greek is *arche*, meaning "the origin" or "the source." This is a powerful claim to divinity (see John 1:1-3, Col 1:15-18). He is the *Source* of all creation, which contrasts with the Laodiceans, who thought *they* were the source of their own wealth.
- **"Neither Cold nor Hot" (v. 15):**
 - **Common (Wrong) View:** "Hot" is a passionate Christian, "Cold" is a hardened atheist, "Lukewarm" is the apathetic person in the middle.
 - **Correct Contextual View:** "Hot" (like the springs) is *good* (healing, therapeutic). "Cold" (like the streams) is *good* (refreshing, life-giving). "Lukewarm" is *disgusting and useless*. Jesus isn't saying, "I wish you were an atheist." He's saying, "I wish you were *useful* (hot or cold), but you are *useless*."
- **Historicist View:** Sees Laodicea as the **Apostate Church (c. 1900s-Present)**. This is the "end-times" church, which is wealthy, materialistic, self-satisfied, and believes it "needs nothing," but is spiritually dead.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Prosperity Gospel" Church:** Laodicea is the church of the 21st-century West. It's the church that measures its success by its bank account, its building size, and its cultural influence. It's the "I am rich... and I need nothing" church. It's the "Prosperity Gospel."
- **The Great Reversal (v. 17):** This is the most crucial verse. Jesus holds up a "mirror" to them.
 - **Their View:** "I am rich."
 - **Jesus's View:** "You are... poor."
 - **Their View:** "I have prospered" (in clothing).
 - **Jesus's View:** "You are... naked."
 - **Their View:** "I need nothing" (we make eye-salve).
 - **Jesus's View:** "You are... blind."
- **The True "Market" (v. 18):** Jesus uses their own language. "You're bankers and merchants? Okay, let's do business. I 'counsel' (advise) you to 'buy' from Me..."
 - ...**Gold refined by fire** (true, saving faith)
 - ...**White garments** (His righteousness, not their "black wool")
 - ...**Eye-salve** (His spiritual truth, not their "Phrygian powder")

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Laodicea's problem was "self-sufficient" wealth. What are the biggest dangers of financial prosperity and "having it all" for a Christian?
2. Jesus says, "You are... poor, blind, and naked." In what specific areas of your life are you tempted to "need nothing," when in reality you are spiritually poor?
3. The water was "useless." Jesus wants to be *useful* (hot or cold). In what *practical* ways can a Christian be "hot" (healing, comforting) or "cold" (refreshing, life-giving) to the world?
4. "Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline" (v. 19). Why is this harsh letter *actually* a sign of Jesus's *love* for this church?

Call to Action

Your call is to "be zealous and repent." Pick one of the three areas: "poor, blind, or naked." In what area do you feel most "self-sufficient"? Confess that self-sufficiency as sin, and "buy from Him" today by spending time asking Him for *His* riches, *His* clothing, or *His* sight.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226), who gave up immense wealth to follow Christ.)

"O Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring Thy love. Where there is injury, Thy pardon. Where there is doubt, Thy faith... Grant, O Divine Master, that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive... and in dying that we are born to eternal life. Save me from the illusion that 'I am rich,' and show me that I am truly rich only in Thee. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 3, Day 6

The God Who Knocks

Scripture Focus: Revelation 3:20-22

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹ The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"I stand at the door and knock":** This is one of the most famous verses in the Bible, and it is almost *always* misunderstood.
 - **Common (Mis)use:** This is used as an evangelistic text, picturing Jesus knocking on the "heart's door" of a *sinner*.
 - **Actual Context:** This verse is **not** written to unbelievers. It's written to the *church* in Laodicea.
- **The Shocking Image:** The lukewarm, self-sufficient church had done the unthinkable: **they had locked Jesus out of His own church.** He is on the *outside*, knocking to be let *in*. The "Amen, the Faithful and True Witness" has been kicked out of the meeting, replaced by wealth, self-sufficiency, and "glossy black wool."
- **"Eat with him":** This was the *pinnacle* of intimacy and fellowship in the ancient world. It wasn't just "grabbing a bite." It was a symbol of peace, acceptance, and deep relationship. Jesus is saying, "You've kicked me out. But if *anyone* (this is now a personal, individual call) will just open the door, I will come back in and restore the most intimate fellowship."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **From "Vomit" to "Throne":** This passage shows the most extreme "zero to sixty" in the Bible. The church that *makes Jesus sick* (v. 16) is the *same church* that He offers the most staggering promise to.
- **"Sit with me on my throne" (v. 21):** This is the final, greatest promise to the "conqueror" in all seven letters.
 - Ephesus: Eat from the tree.
 - Smyrna: Receive the crown.
 - Pergamum: Get the white stone.
 - Thyatira: Get authority over nations.
 - Sardis: Be confessed by name.
 - Philadelphia: Be a pillar.
 - Laodicea: **Sit on His throne.**
- He offers the highest possible reward—co-regency, shared rulership, ultimate authority—to the most *pathetic, failing, wretched* church. This is the ultimate picture of grace.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"I will come in to him and eat with him":** This is a direct echo of Jesus's promise to His disciples. **John 14:23**, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**"
- **"Sit with me on my throne":** This is the fulfillment of what Jesus promised the apostles. **Matthew 19:28**, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world... **you will also sit on twelve thrones...**" Here, that promise is *democratized*—it's offered to *every* "conqueror," even in Laodicea.
- **"As I also conquered...":** Jesus models *how* to get to the throne. He "conquered" (through His life, death, and resurrection) and *then* "sat down." He only asks us to do what He Himself has already done.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Is Jesus "Outside" Your Church/Life?** This is the question for the modern, "successful" church and the modern, "successful" Christian. Have we become so busy, so self-sufficient, so *prosperous* that we've "locked Jesus out"? Is He on the outside of our decision-making, our finances, our schedules... "knocking" to be let back in?

- **The Individual Call:** Notice the shift in language. The letter is to the "church," but the call is to "if **anyone** hears." Even in a dead, lukewarm church, the individual can have an intimate, "supper-table" relationship with Christ. Your church's temperature doesn't have to be *your* temperature.
- **The Hope of Grace:** This is the greatest "bad-to-good" story. The *worst* church is offered the *best* promise. This shows us that no matter how "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked" we are, if we will "hear" and "open the door," the path is not just to "recovery" but to the *throne*. Grace doesn't just "fix" us; it *exalts* us.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Think about the image: Jesus is *outside* His own church, knocking. What kinds of "church activities" or "personal habits" do we fill our lives with that might "drown out" the sound of His knocking?
2. "I will... eat with him, and he with me" (v. 20). What does that kind of deep, personal, "supper-table" fellowship with Jesus look like in a practical, day-to-day way?
3. The *worst* church (Laodicea) is offered the *best* promise (the throne). What does this tell you about the nature of God's grace?
4. Jesus says He "conquered" and then "sat down" (v. 21). What did Jesus "conquer"? And what "conquering" is He calling *you* to do in order to share that throne?

Call to Action

His call is to "hear" and "open the door." Go to a quiet place, close your eyes, and just *listen*. Imagine Jesus knocking. What is He saying? What is the "door" He's at (your finances, your schedule, your pride)? Verbally tell Him, "I hear you. I am opening the door."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision," a collection of Puritan prayers, adapted.)

"My Lord, Thou art the 'Amen,' the faithful and true witness. I am lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. I am poor, but I say 'I am rich.' I am blind, but I say 'I see.' I am naked, but I am proud of my garments. I hear Thee stand at the door and knock. Thy voice is the voice of love, Thy knock is the knock of grace. I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, yet Thou wouldst eat with me. Open the door of my heart, Lord, from the *inside*. Come in, and sup with me. Be my guest, be my host, be my all. And grant me, by Thy grace alone, to be a conqueror, that I may sit with Thee on Thy throne. Amen."

Week 4 (Chapter 4): Before the Throne: Worship in Heaven

Revelation Bible Study: Week 4, Day 1

The Door in Heaven

Scripture Focus: Revelation 4:1-2a

¹ After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in the Spirit...

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"After this...":** The Greek is *meta tauta*. This is a crucial transition. John has finished recording the messages "that are" (the churches in chapters 2-3) and is now being shown "what must take place after this" (the things that are to come). His 1st-century audience would understand that the scene is *shifting* dramatically, from earth to heaven.
- **"A door standing open":** In the ancient world, especially in pagan temples, the inner sanctuary was hidden and forbidden. Roman emperors claimed to be "gods" but were hidden behind palace walls. John sees the *opposite*: the true throne room of the universe is not hidden; a door is *held open*, and a voice says, "Come up here." This is a vision of *divine invitation*, not exclusion.
- **"Like a trumpet":** This is the same voice from Chapter 1—the authoritative voice of Christ.
- **"In the Spirit":** This is the same language John used in 1:10. It's his "signal" that a new, divine vision is beginning.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This passage is a major dividing line for prophetic interpretation.

- **Futurist View:** Sees this as a literal, chronological shift. "After this" means after the *church age* (represented by chapters 2-3) is complete.
 - **Pre-Tribulation Rapture:** Many (not all) Futurists see John being "called up" ("Come up here") as a symbolic picture of the **Rapture of the Church**. They argue the church is not mentioned again on earth until chapter 19.
- **Preterist View:** Sees this not as a future event, but as a symbolic vision of heaven's *perspective* on the judgment about to fall on Jerusalem (AD 70). John is being "called up" to see the "command center" from which the judgment will be orchestrated.
- **Idealist View:** Sees "Come up here" as a call for *all* Christians in *all* ages to see their earthly "tribulation" from a heavenly perspective. It's a call to rise above circumstances and see the reality of God's sovereign throne.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"I looked, and behold, a door...":** This is a direct echo of **Ezekiel 1:1**, "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God."
- **"Come up here":** This is the same divine summons Moses received. **Exodus 19:20**, "the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, saying, 'Come up...'"

- **Significance:** John is being placed in the same category as Israel's greatest prophets, Moses and Ezekiel. He is being called up to receive a covenantal revelation from God Himself, just as they were.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Open Door:** We often feel that heaven is distant, closed off, and silent. This verse is the antidote. It declares that *right now*, for the believer, there is a "door standing open in heaven." Through Christ, we have "confidence to enter the holy places" (Hebrews 10:19).
- **"Come Up Here":** This is God's invitation to us *every day*. When we are consumed by the "Breaking News" on earth, God's voice says, "Come up here. Let me show you what's *really* going on. Let me show you My perspective." Worship and prayer are our way of accepting that invitation.
- **"In the Spirit":** We cannot understand spiritual reality with a "fleshly" mind. We must, like John, ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see what is *truly* real.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The voice said, "Come up here." What things in your daily life (worries, tasks, media) keep you from accepting that "upward" call and focusing on heaven's perspective?
2. John had to be "in the Spirit" to see this. What does it *practically* mean for you to get "in the Spirit" before you read your Bible or pray?
3. Some see John "coming up" as a picture of the rapture. Whether you agree or not, how does the *hope* of one day being "called up" to heaven change how you live *today*?
4. Why is it significant that the door John sees is already "standing open"? What does that tell you about God's posture toward His people?

Call to Action

Accept the invitation. Find 5 minutes today to *physically* "come up here." Stop what you're doing, put your phone down, and "go up" (perhaps to a different room, or just by closing your eyes). In prayer, say, "Lord, I'm here. Show me *Your* perspective on [name one problem you're facing]."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430 AD) on seeking the heavenly perspective.)

"O Lord God, let our hearts, we pray Thee, be set on fire by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may serve Thee with a chaste body and please Thee with a pure mind. Grant that we may turn our eyes from vanity. Call us 'up here,' that we may see the world as Thou seest it, and that we may look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 4, Day 2

The One on the Throne

Scripture Focus: Revelation 4:2b-4

² ...and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A Throne:** For John's 1st-century audience, the "throne" was in Rome, and *Caesar* sat on it. This vision is a direct political and theological challenge. John sees the *real* throne, the *real* center of all power, and it is not in Rome; it is in heaven.
- **No Description of God:** Notice John doesn't say "God looked like..." He describes God only in terms of *light reflected off jewels*. This is a sign of deep reverence, in line with the Old Testament command not to make a "graven image." God is un-drawable, un-describable pure glory.
- **"White Garments" & "Golden Crowns":** This is the attire of *victors* and *kings*. The 24 elders are portrayed as a royal, victorious, and pure assembly.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Jasper and Carnelian:**
 1. **Jasper:** A clear, diamond-like jewel. Represents *holiness, purity, brilliance*.
 2. **Carnelian (Sardius):** A fiery red jewel. Represents *judgment, wrath, fire*.
 3. **The Picture:** The One on the throne is simultaneously pure Holiness and fiery Justice.
- **The Emerald Rainbow:** A rainbow is God's sign of *covenant faithfulness* (the promise to Noah in Genesis 9). But this one is *emerald green*. It's a rainbow of *grace and mercy* that *completely surrounds* the throne of judgment. The message: God's judgment is real, but His throne is encircled by mercy.
- **Who are the 24 Elders?**
 1. **The Church:** This is the most common Futurist/Dispensational view. "24" represents the 12 tribes of Israel (Old Covenant) + the 12 apostles (New Covenant). They are the *redeemed, glorified church*, wearing the "white garments" of righteousness and the "golden crowns" of victory (the *stephanos*, or victor's crown).
 2. **Angelic Beings:** This view sees them as a high order of angels who serve as God's "heavenly council" or "cabinet."
 3. **Both:** A combination view that they *represent* the complete, unified people of God (both OT and NT) in heaven.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Vision of the Throne:** This is **Ezekiel 1:26-28**. Ezekiel also saw a throne, "a likeness with a human appearance... and there was a brightness around him... Like the appearance of the **bow that is in the cloud** on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around." John is seeing the same throne Ezekiel saw.

- **The 24 Elders:** This could be a reflection of the 24 "divisions of the priests" that King David set up to serve in the temple around the clock (**1 Chronicles 24**). The elders represent a new, royal priesthood serving in the *heavenly* temple.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Central Reality:** The most important fact about your life is not your job, your health, or your family. The most important fact is that **"a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne."** (v. 2). This means history is not random. The world is not "out of control." A sovereign, holy (jasper), and just (carnelian) God is in charge, and His rule is encircled by a covenant of *mercy* (emerald rainbow).
- **Your Future:** If the 24 elders represent the redeemed, this is a picture of *our* future. We are not just "saved *from* hell"; we are "saved *to*" a position of honor. We are destined to be kings and priests, crowned and clothed in white, seated in the very presence of God.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John first sees a "throne," and *then* the "one seated on it." Why is the *fact* of the throne (its existence and stability) so important to establish first?
2. God is described as "jasper" (holiness) and "carnelian" (judgment). We love to focus on God's love. Why is it *also* a comfort to know that God is a God of perfect holiness and justice?
3. The "throne of judgment" is surrounded by a "rainbow of mercy." How does this picture help you balance the "fear of God" with the "love of God"?
4. If the 24 elders are the glorified church, what does their *posture* (seated, crowned, near God) tell you about your *identity* as a believer?

Call to Action

The world wants you to believe the "throne" is in Washington D.C., or on Wall Street, or in your own heart. Today, whenever you feel anxious about a world event or a personal problem, stop and *re-center* your mind on the central fact of reality: "A throne stands in heaven, and *One* is seated on it."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Arthur Bennett (c. 1915–1994), from "*The Valley of Vision*".)

"Sovereign Ruler of the skies, Ever gracious, ever wise! All my times are in Thy hand, All events at Thy command. ...Thy decree, who fram'd the earth, Fix'd my first and second birth; Parents, native place, and time, All appointed were by Thine. ...Thee, Thy righteousness, I own; Justice, love, are Thy throne. In Thy throne I trust, O Lord, And Thy never-failing word. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 4, Day 3

The Sounds and Sights of the Throne

Scripture Focus: Revelation 4:5

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God...

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Lightning and Thunder:** For any 1st-century reader with a Jewish background, this imagery meant one thing: **Mount Sinai**. When God descended on Mount Sinai to give the Ten Commandments, there were "thunder and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain" (Exodus 19:16).
- **The Message:** The One on the throne is not a "new God." He is the *same God* who revealed Himself at Sinai. This is the God of *holiness, power, and law*. His throne is not "safe" or "tame"; it is a place of awesome, terrifying, and active power. This is a far cry from the silent, stone idols of Ephesus or Sardis.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"Flashes of lightning... rumblings... peals of thunder":**
 - **Preterist View:** Sees this as the "command center" for the coming judgment on Jerusalem. The storm is "gathering" in heaven before it is unleashed on Judea.
 - **Futurist View:** Sees this as the "command center" for the coming end-times "storm" of the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl judgments. This is the source of the judgments that will soon be unleashed on the whole earth.
 - **Idealist View:** This is a timeless, symbolic picture of God's awesome power and majesty. His throne is *always* the source of all power and righteous judgment.
- **"Seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God":**
 - This is the same image from Revelation 1:4 ("the seven spirits"). This is almost universally seen as a symbolic representation of the **Holy Spirit** in His seven-fold fullness (drawing from Isaiah 11:2).
 - **Why "torches of fire"?** Fire represents *purity, illumination, and judgment*. The Holy Spirit is not a gentle, passive "force." He is an active, fiery presence. He is "before the throne," ready to be sent forth to accomplish God's will. He *illuminates* the mind, *purifies* the believer, and *consumes* sin.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Sinai: Exodus 19:16**, "On the morning of the third day there were **thunders and lightnings** and a thick cloud..."
- **Ezekiel's Vision: Ezekiel 1:13**, "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like **burning coals of fire**, like the appearance of **torches** moving to and fro... and out of the fire went forth **lightning**."
- **Daniel's Vision: Daniel 7:9**, "As I looked, thrones were placed... His throne was **fiery flames**; its wheels were **burning fire**."

- **Conclusion:** John, Daniel, and Ezekiel all saw the *same thing*. The throne of God is a throne of *fire*, *power*, and *judgment*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **A God to Be Feared:** We have a very "soft" image of God. We prefer the "emerald rainbow" (mercy) to the "lightning and thunder" (judgment). This verse is a necessary corrective. The God we worship is *awesome*. His power is terrifying. He is "a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). This truth shouldn't make us run *from* Him; it should make us run *to* Him in reverence, awe, and humble gratitude that He *invites* us near.
- **The Fiery Spirit:** We often think of the Holy Spirit as a "comforter" (which He is). But He is also pictured here as "seven torches of fire." He is the one who brings *conviction* of sin, who *burns away* our impurities, and who *illuminates* the truth. We should not just ask the Spirit to "comfort" us; we should ask Him to "ignite" us.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Our modern picture of heaven is often "fluffy clouds and harps." How does this verse (lightning, thunder, fire) challenge that image?
2. Why is it important to remember that the God of Grace (New Testament) is the *same* God of Sinai (Old Testament)?
3. We like the "rainbow" (mercy) more than the "lightning" (judgment). Why do we *need* both to have a true picture of God?
4. How does thinking of the Holy Spirit as "torches of fire" change the way you might pray to Him? What would you ask a "fiery" Spirit for?

Call to Action

Today, take a moment to practice "reverence." We are very casual in our approach to God. For just one minute, sit in silence and awe. Meditate on the image of "lightning, thunder, and fire" coming from His throne. Then, thank Him that because of Jesus, you can "draw near with confidence" (Heb 4:16) to this awesome, fiery throne of grace.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) on the Holy Spirit.)

"Grant, O merciful God, that I may ardently desire, prudently search out, truly acknowledge, and perfectly fulfill all that is pleasing to Thee. But above all, grant me the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, and fill me with the Spirit of holy fear. Let Him be as a fire within me, to consume my sins and to ignite my heart with love for Thee. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 4, Day 4

The Sea of Glass & The Four Creatures

Scripture Focus: Revelation 4:6

⁶ ...and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind:

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Sea of Glass, Like Crystal":** This is a stunning image.
 - **Contrast with the Sea:** To the ancient world, the "sea" was a place of *chaos, terror, and separation* (like the sea John was exiled on). It was the realm of "Leviathan," the unknown.
 - **Contrast with the Temple:** In Solomon's Temple, there was a large bronze "sea" (1 Kings 7:23), a giant basin of water used by the priests for *cleansing*.
- **The Heavenly Sea:** The "sea" in heaven is the *opposite* of the earthly sea. It's not chaotic; it's perfectly calm ("of glass"). It's not murky; it's perfectly clear ("like crystal"). This symbolizes God's *transcendent holiness and peace*. It is the "calm at the center of the storm." It also suggests that the need for "cleansing" is past; in God's presence, all is pure.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Sea of Glass:**
 - **Symbol of God's Holiness:** It represents the vast, unbridgeable "separation" of God's perfect holiness. It is calm and clear, showing that from *God's perspective*, there is no chaos.
 - **The "Laver" of Heaven:** Some see it as the heavenly fulfillment of the bronze laver (sea) in the temple. It represents the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5), now perfected and complete.
 - **A "Pavement":** Ezekiel 1:22 describes a "gleaming crystal" *firmament* over the creatures' heads, which was the *floor* of the throne. John may be describing the "floor" of heaven as a vast, crystal-clear pavement.
- **The Four Living Creatures:**
 - These are not "angels" in the traditional sense. These are a unique, high order of created beings whose entire existence is to "guard" the throne of God and *lead* all of creation in worship.
 - **"Full of eyes in front and behind":** This symbolizes *ceaseless vigilance and intelligence*. Nothing escapes their notice. They see all things, at all times. They see "in front" (the future) and "behind" (the past). They are the perfect "watchmen."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Bronze Sea: 1 Kings 7:23**, "Then he made the 'sea' of cast metal... it was round." This was the massive water basin for priestly cleansing.
- **The Four Living Creatures:** This is a direct, undeniable reference to **Ezekiel 1**.

- **Ezekiel 1:5-6**, "And from the midst of it came the likeness of **four living creatures**... each had four faces, and each of them had four wings."
- **Ezekiel 10:12**, "And their whole body, their backs, their hands, and their wings, and the wheels were **full of eyes** all around."
- **Seraphim**: The creatures also echo the "seraphim" from **Isaiah 6:2**, who were "above" the throne and had "six wings."

Key Point: John is seeing the *same* throne-guardians that Isaiah and Ezekiel saw. He is being shown the unchangeable, central reality of the universe.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Peace in the Chaos:** Our lives feel like a *stormy* sea. The news, our finances, our health—it's all chaos, turmoil, and "murky water." This vision is the anchor. It tells us that from God's perspective, before His throne, there is a "sea of *glass*." There is no chaos. There is no panic. There is only perfect, crystal-clear peace and holiness.
- **God Sees Everything:** The creatures are "full of eyes." This is a picture of God's *omniscience*. There is no part of your life He does not see. There is no "behind" (your past sins and regrets) and no "front" (your future anxieties) that He is not *fully aware of*. This is both terrifying and comforting. You can't hide from Him, but you also *never* have to "catch Him up" on what's going on. He already sees.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. How does the image of a "sea of glass" (perfect calm) contrast with the "stormy sea" of your daily life?
2. How can you "stand" on that "sea of glass" (rest in God's peace) even when your *circumstances* feel like a storm?
3. The creatures are "full of eyes." How does the idea of God's "ceaseless vigilance" comfort you? How does it challenge you?
4. These are "living" creatures, meaning they are *alive* with God's energy. How does this contrast with the "dead" idols we are tempted to worship (money, success, etc.)?

Call to Action

Today, when you feel overwhelmed by the "chaos" of your to-do list or a difficult situation, take 60 seconds. Close your eyes and picture the "sea of glass, like crystal" before the throne. Take a deep breath and "stand" on that sea, reminding yourself that God's *reality* is peace, not the *illusion* of chaos.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Patrick (c. 385–461 AD) about God's all-seeing presence.)

"I arise today Through God's strength to pilot me: God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me... God's host to save me From snares of devils, From temptation of vices, From every one who shall wish me ill, Afar and anear, Alone and in a multitude. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 4, Day 5

The Faces of the Creatures & The Never-Ending Song

Scripture Focus: Revelation 4:7-8

⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Four Faces:** John's audience would have understood this as a picture of *all creation*.
 - **Lion:** The noblest of *wild* animals. The "king of the beasts."
 - **Ox:** The strongest of *domestic* animals. The "servant of beasts."
 - **Man:** The *pinnacle* of creation, made in God's image.
 - **Eagle:** The noblest of *flying* creatures. The "king of the birds."
- **Conclusion:** All of creation—the wild, the tame, the human, and the heavenly—is represented before God's throne, worshiping Him. This is God's *entire* created order in perfect harmony.
- **Six Wings:** This connects them to the *seraphim* (the "burning ones") from Isaiah's vision.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Four Faces (Symbolism):**
 1. **The Four Gospels (A popular traditional view):** For centuries, the church has associated these four faces with the four Gospels.
 - **Matthew (Man):** Shows Christ's *humanity* and genealogy.
 - **Mark (Ox):** Shows Christ as the suffering *servant*.
 - **Luke (Lion):** Shows Christ as the *King* (Lion of Judah).
 - (Note: Some traditions swap Luke/Mark/Matthew, but the most common is Matthew=Man, Mark=Servant/Ox, Luke=King/Lion, John=Eagle)
 - **John (Eagle):** Shows Christ's *divinity* (the "eagle" that soars into heaven).
 2. **All of Creation:** The most likely meaning is that these creatures are the *representatives* of all creation, leading the cosmic choir.
- **"Day and night they never cease to say...":** This is their *entire* existence. They are a perpetual "motion machine" of worship. Their unceasing song is the "soundtrack" of the universe, the "background radiation" of all reality.

- **"Holy, holy, holy":** The *trisagion* (three-holy). Why three times?
 1. **Emphasis:** In Hebrew, repetition is the *ultimate* emphasis. To say "holy" three times is to say "Holy to the uttermost, absolute, infinite degree."
 2. **The Trinity:** Most theologians see this as an Old Testament glimpse of the Trinity: Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Four Faces: Ezekiel 1:10**, "As for the likeness of their faces, each had a **human face**. The four had the face of a **lion** on the right side, the four had the face of an **ox** on the left side, and the four had the face of an **eagle**."
 - **Difference:** In Ezekiel, *each creature* had *all four faces*. In Revelation, *each creature* has *one of* the faces. The vision is similar but distinct.
- **The Six Wings & The Song:** This is a direct quote from **Isaiah 6:2-3**, "Above him stood the **seraphim**. Each had **six wings**... And one called to another and said: '**Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts**; the whole earth is full of his glory!'"
- **Conclusion:** John is combining the visions of *Ezekiel* (the four faces) and *Isaiah* (the six wings and the song) into one, unified vision of the throne room.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Soundtrack of Reality:** We think *our* worries, *our* plans, and *our* news are the "main event." This verse tells us we are wrong. The "main event" of the universe, the thing that is happening *right now* and has *never stopped*, is this song: "Holy, holy, holy."
- **Worship is Our "Why":** These creatures, the highest beings, have one job: worship. This reveals our *own* purpose. We were not created primarily to "work," or "succeed," or "be happy." We were created to *worship*. Everything else is secondary.
- **The "Trisagion":** When we are "stuck" in prayer and don't know what to say, we can *always* start here. "Holy, holy, holy." It's the one prayer that is *always* being prayed, *always* appropriate, and *always* true. It re-aligns our hearts from our *problems* to God's *character*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The four creatures represent all of creation. What does it mean that *all* of creation (not just humans) is designed to worship God?
2. The creatures "never cease" their song. How does the knowledge that *this song is happening right now* change your perspective on whatever "crisis" you are facing?
3. The song is simple: "Holy, holy, holy." Why is God's *holiness* (His "other-ness" and perfection) the primary theme of heaven's worship?
4. The song also praises God as the one "who was and is and is to come." How does this "eternal" view of God help you deal with your "temporary" problems?

Call to Action

Join the song. Set a reminder on your phone for three different times today. When it goes off, stop for just 15 seconds, and join the "soundtrack of the universe" by praying (out loud or in your head): "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(The "Te Deum," an ancient Christian hymn, c. 4th century.)

"We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting. To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the Powers therein. To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy glory. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 4, Day 6

The Worship of the Elders

Scripture Focus: Revelation 4:9-11

⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

¹¹ "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Casting Crowns":** This is the climax of the vision. In the Roman Empire, a subservient king or governor, when entering the presence of Caesar, would *remove* his own crown and *lay it at Caesar's feet* as a sign of total submission, acknowledging that Caesar was the "king of kings" and that his own authority was *derived* from Caesar.
- **The Scene:** John's audience would be stunned. He sees *24 kings* (the elders) casting *their* "golden crowns of victory" before God's throne.
- **The Message:** This is the ultimate political statement. **God, not Caesar, is the true Emperor.** All other authority, all other "victories," all other "crowns" are *nothing* compared to Him. He is the *source* of all power.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Worship Loop":** This passage describes the *responsive* nature of heaven's worship.
 1. **Initiation (v. 9):** The *Living Creatures* (representing Creation) give glory to God.

2. **Response (v. 10):** The *Elders* (representing the Redeemed People of God) see this, and they *respond* by falling down and casting their crowns.
- **"They Cast Their Crowns":**
 1. **If the Elders are the Church:** This is a picture of our eternal posture. The "crowns" (the *stephanos*) are the rewards for faithful service that Christ *gives* us (see 2 Tim 4:8). The first thing we will do with those rewards is *give them right back*, acknowledging that we only "conquered" because of *His* grace. All glory goes to Him.
- **The Reason for Worship (v. 11):** Their song gives the *reason* for all this. Why is He worthy?
 1. **"You created all things" (The Creator):** He is worthy because He is the *origin* of everything.
 2. **"By your will they... were created" (The Sustainer):** He is worthy because His *will* is the only thing that holds reality together. If He stopped "willing" it, the universe would cease to exist.
- **This chapter is the **"Worship of the Creator."** (Chapter 5 will be the **"Worship of the Redeemer."**)

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **God as Creator:** This song is a direct echo of the first verse of the Bible. **Genesis 1:1**, "In the beginning, God **created** the heavens and the earth."
- **God as Sustainer:** This echoes Paul's speech in Athens. **Acts 17:28**, "In him we live and move and have our being."
- **Bowing in Worship:** This is the posture of all saints. **Psalm 95:6**, "Oh come, let us **worship and bow down**; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Source of Your Success:** We all have "crowns." They are our achievements, our successes, our talents, our families, our careers. We are very proud of them. This vision asks us the ultimate question: What are you *doing* with your crowns? Are you *wearing* them (taking the credit for yourself), or are you *casting* them before the throne (giving the glory to God)?
- **"Worthy Are You...":** This is the "why" behind everything. Why should we obey Him? Why should we trust Him? Why should we worship Him? **Because He created you.** He *owns* you. He is the *reason* you exist. This is the foundation of all theology. Before we can understand "Redemption" (Ch. 5), we *must* understand "Creation" (Ch. 4).
- **"By Your Will":** The reason you exist, the reason the atoms in your hand are holding together, is because God is *actively willing* it. This means your life is not an accident. You were created *for His will*. Our purpose is found not in *ourselves*, but in *Him*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The elders' worship is a *response* to the creatures' worship. How does worshiping *with others* (like in a group or church) help fuel your *personal* worship?
2. What is a "crown" in your life? (A success, a talent, an achievement you're proud of). What does it look like, in practice, to "cast that crown" before Jesus?
3. The elders worship God simply because He is the *Creator*. How often do you stop to thank God just for *creating* you, or for creating the world around you?
4. Verse 11 says all things "existed and were created" by God's "will." How does knowing you were *willed* into existence by a purposeful God change how you view your own value?

Call to Action

"Cast a crown" today. Pick one "crown" in your life—one thing you are proud of. (e.g., "I'm a good program manager," "I'm a good father," "I finished that project"). Go before God in a 1-minute prayer and *verbally* "cast it" at His feet. Say, "Lord, thank you for this. I only have it because of You. *You* are worthy of the glory for this, not me."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by St. Clement of Rome (c. 35–99 AD), a contemporary of John.)

"Thou, O Master, didst create the world by Thy almighty power and ineffable wisdom. Thou art the Lord of all, compassionate and merciful... We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give Thee thanks for all Thy wonderful works. Thou art the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. Worthy art Thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and by Thy will they existed and were created. To Thee be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen."

Week 5 (Chapter 5): The Scroll and the Worthy Lamb

Revelation Bible Study: Week 5, Day 1

The Scroll and The Crisis

Scripture Focus: Revelation 5:1-4

¹ Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, ⁴ and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A "Scroll... Sealed":** A 1st-century reader would immediately recognize this. This was a **Roman Last Will and Testament**. By Roman law, a will had to be witnessed and sealed *seven times* (by the seven witnesses). It could *only* be opened by the legal, worthy heir.

- **"Written within and on the back":** This meant the scroll was *full*. There was no more room. It was the "full and final" testament.
- **The Crisis:** John sees the "Will of God"—His final plan for all of creation, His "title deed" to the earth—and it's sealed. A "mighty angel" (a powerful authority) bellows, "Who is the rightful heir? Who can execute God's will?"
- **"No one was able to...":** The silence is deafening. No angel, no elder, no human, no demon ("under the earth") is "worthy." The entire created order is disqualified.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **What is the Scroll?**
 - **God's Plan of Judgment:** Most common view. The scroll *contains* the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl judgments. Opening each seal *unleashes* the next phase of God's plan to reclaim the earth.
 - **The Title Deed to Creation:** This is the "deed" to the earth, which Adam forfeited to Satan in the Garden of Eden. The scroll is God's plan to *redeem* and *reclaim* His stolen creation. Only the "Kinsman-Redeemer" is worthy to open it.
 - **The "Book of Lamentations":** A Preterist view might see this as the "scroll of lament" from Ezekiel 2, containing the judgment *against Jerusalem*.
- **John's Weeping (v. 4):** John weeps "loudly" (a desperate, profound grief). Why? Because if no one can open the scroll, God's will *cannot be done*. Satan *wins*. Creation *remains* fallen. The martyrs *remain* un-avenged. God's promises *fail*. All hope is lost. This is the ultimate "dark night of the soul."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Sealed Scroll:** This is a direct parallel to **Ezekiel 2:9-10**: "And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a **scroll**... was in it. And he spread it before me, and it had **writing on the front and on the back**, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe."
- **The Sealed Book:** This also echoes **Daniel 12:4**, "But you, O Daniel, **shut up the words and seal the book**, until the time of the end."
- **Conclusion:** The time is *now*. The scroll that Daniel was told to "seal" is now being *opened*. The "lamentation" that Ezekiel saw is now ready to be *executed*. But there is a problem: no one is worthy.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Who is Worthy?":** This is the cry of all human history. We look at our broken world—at war, famine, injustice, and death—and we cry out, "Who can *fix* this? Who is *worthy* to take charge?"
- **The Disqualification of Humanity:** This vision shows us the "bad news" before the "good news." "No one... was able to." No president, no scientist, no political movement, no new technology, and *not even you* can fix the world or even your own heart. All of creation is *disqualified* from being its own savior.
- **The Reason for Weeping:** John's weeping is the *proper* response to the "bad news." It's the "blessed are those who mourn." We *should* weep over our sin, our helplessness, and the brokenness of the world. Acknowledging our total unworthiness is the *first step* to recognizing the One who *is* worthy.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John wept because God's plan was "stuck." When you look at the world's problems (war, poverty, etc.), do you ever feel that same "grief" that God's will is "not being done"?
2. "No one... was able to open the scroll." Why is it so important for us to *first* understand that *we are not worthy* before we can understand who *is*?

3. The scroll is God's "will." What is one area of your life where you are trying to "write your own will" instead of submitting to His?
4. The "mighty angel" searched *everywhere* for a worthy person. Why do we keep *thinking* we will find a "worthy" human leader, when this verse makes it clear no one exists?

Call to Action

Embrace verse 4. Today, take a moment to "weep" (or at least *mourn*) over your own unworthiness. Confess to God the specific ways you "fall short" and are "not worthy" to execute His will. Acknowledge your total *need* for a savior, setting the stage for tomorrow's lesson.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision," a collection of Puritan prayers.)

"O Lord, I am a sinful man, not worthy to raise my eyes to heaven, not worthy to be called thy son, not worthy of the least of thy mercies. I have no plea to offer, no excuse to make, no righteousness of my own. I weep, for I am undone. My only hope is thy free grace, my only plea is thy promised mercy. Lord, I am not worthy. Show me the One who is. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 5, Day 2

The Lion Who is a Lamb

Scripture Focus: Revelation 5:5-7

⁵ And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Paradox:** This is the *central* paradox of the entire book.

1. John is told to look for a **"Lion"** (v. 5). This is a Jewish, royal, *messianic* title of *power, kingship, and conquest*.
2. John *looks* and sees a **"Lamb"** (v. 6). This is an image of *sacrifice, innocence, and weakness*.
- **The Message:** How did the Lion *conquer*? By *becoming* the Lamb. His *victory* was in His *victimhood*. His *conquest* was the *cross*. This would have been a staggering, culture-shattering idea for a 1st-century audience (Jewish or Roman) that equated power with brute force.
- **"As though it had been slain":** This is the heart of the Gospel. He is not a "slain" (dead) Lamb. He is a *standing* (alive) Lamb, who *bears the marks* of His slaying. He is the resurrected *and* crucified one.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (v. 5):**
 - These are pure Old Testament messianic titles.
 - **"Lion of Judah":** From **Genesis 49:9-10**, "Judah is a **lion's cub**... The scepter shall not depart from Judah..."
 - **"Root of David":** From **Isaiah 11:1**, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a **branch from his roots**..."
 - The elder is saying, "The *Messiah* has come! The King has conquered!"
- **The "Lamb" (v. 6):**
 - The Greek word is *arnion*, a "little lamb."
 - **"Seven horns":** "Horns" are an OT symbol of *power* (see Daniel 7). "Seven" is the number of *perfection*. This Lamb has *perfect power* (omnipotence).
 - **"Seven eyes... which are the seven spirits of God":** "Eyes" are a symbol of *knowledge*. This Lamb has *perfect knowledge* (omniscience) and possesses the *fullness of the Holy Spirit* (the "seven spirits") to send out into the world.
- **Conclusion:** This "slain Lamb" is simultaneously *all-powerful* and *all-knowing*. He is *God*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Lamb:** This imagery is all over the Old Testament.
 - **Exodus 12:** The **Passover Lamb**, whose blood saved Israel from judgment.
 - **Isaiah 53:7:** The **Suffering Servant**, "like a **lamb** that is led to the slaughter."
- **John's Gospel:** This connects to **John 1:29**, when John the Baptist sees Jesus and cries, "Behold, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!" The Gospel of John *starts* with this title; the "Revelation" of John *climaxes* with it.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Paradox of Power:** This is the "upside-down" nature of the Kingdom of God. The world says, "Conquer by *crushing*." God says, "Conquer by *sacrificing*." The world says, "Power is a *sword*." God says, "Power is a *cross*."
- **"He Took the Scroll" (v. 7):** This is the *turning point* of the vision, and perhaps all of history. The crisis is over. The *only one* in the universe who is worthy—the God-Man, the Lion-Lamb—steps forward. His qualifications? Not his "Lion" power, but his "Lamb" scars.
- **Your Worthiness:** Our "worthiness" comes from the same place. We don't come to God as "lions" (showing our strength, our "works," our goodness). We come as "lambs" (identifying with the *slain* Lamb, admitting our weakness, and covered by His blood). His *slaying* is our *standing*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John was told "look, a Lion," but he "saw a Lamb." Why is this "bait-and-switch" the most important summary of the Gospel?
2. How did Jesus "conquer" (v. 5) by being "slain" (v. 6)?
3. The Lamb has "seven horns" (perfect power) and "seven eyes" (perfect knowledge). Which of those two attributes (His power or His knowledge) is more comforting to you right now, and why?
4. The Lamb "took the scroll." He is now in control of the future. How does the knowledge that a *slain Lamb* is executing God's plan (and not a "ruthless lion") change how you view the "scary" judgments to come?

Call to Action

Embrace the paradox. Today, when you are tempted to act like a "lion" (to win by force, to argue, to assert your "rights"), consciously choose to act like the "Lamb" (to be patient, to sacrifice, to serve). This is how the Lion *truly* conquered.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the "Agnus Dei," an ancient Christian liturgy.)

"O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace. Thou, O Lion of Judah, hast conquered. Thou, O slain Lamb, art worthy to receive all power. To Thee be glory. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 5, Day 3

The Worship of the Redeemed

Scripture Focus: Revelation 5:8

⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A New Worship:** In Chapter 4, the creatures and elders worshiped God as *Creator* ("Worthy are you... for you created..."). Now, as soon as the *Lamb* takes the scroll, a *new song* (as we'll see tomorrow) breaks out. This is the worship of the *Redeemer*.
- **Harps:** In the Old Testament, harps were the primary instrument of *joyful praise* and *prophecy*. This is the sound of *celebration*. The weeping (v. 4) has "turned to dancing" (Psalm 30:11).
- **Golden Bowls of Incense:** This is *Temple* imagery. In the Jerusalem Temple, the High Priest would burn *incense* on a golden altar, and the smoke would rise up as a "pleasing aroma" to God, symbolizing the *prayers* of the people ascending to heaven (**Psalm 141:2**).
- **"Which are the prayers of the saints":** John doesn't let his audience guess. He explicitly *defines* the symbol.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"Fell down before the Lamb":** This is a *scandalous* act of worship. In Chapter 4, they fell before "Him who sat on the throne." Here, they fall before the *Lamb*. This is one of the clearest proofs of Christ's divinity in the Bible. The highest beings in heaven are worshipping the Lamb as *God*.
- **The "Prayers of the Saints":**
 - This is an incredibly beautiful and comforting image. Our prayers are not "lost." They don't "bounce off the ceiling."
 - They are *collected*.
 - They are *precious* (in "golden bowls").
 - They are *pleasing* to God (like "incense").
 - And they are *present* in the throne room, right at the center of the action.
- **Prayers & The Scroll:** There is a direct link here. The "prayers of the saints" (especially the martyrs crying "how long?" in 6:10) are the very *impetus* for the opening of the scroll. God's judgment is, in part, His *answer* to the prayers of His people.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Harps: Psalm 33:2,** "Give thanks to the LORD with the **harp**; make melody to him with the **lyre** of ten strings!" This is the posture of joyful, thankful praise.
- **Incense & Prayers: Psalm 141:2,** "Let my **prayer** be counted as **incense** before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!"
- **Priestly Elders:** If the 24 Elders are the redeemed church, this verse shows us our dual role in heaven: we are **Kings** (with crowns, 5:4) and **Priests** (holding bowls of incense, 5:8). This is the fulfillment of God's promise in **Exodus 19:6** and **1 Peter 2:9**.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Your Prayers Have "Weight":** This is the single greatest encouragement to pray. Your prayers *matter*. When you pray, you are "filling the golden bowls" in heaven. They are not forgotten. They are *accumulating* before God as a "precious aroma."
- **Don't Stop Praying:** When you pray for "Thy kingdom come" or for "justice" for the persecuted, you are adding "incense" to the bowl. This vision shows that one day, those bowls will be "full," and God's answer (the opening of the scroll) will come. Your prayers *hasten* the Day.
- **Worship with Joy:** The *harps* are a reminder that our worship shouldn't be a funeral dirge. The Lion has conquered! The Lamb has taken the scroll! The crisis is *over*. Our posture should be one of profound, celebratory *joy*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The elders hold *both* a harp (praise) and a bowl (prayer). Why is it important to have both of these in your relationship with God? Which one do you "lean" on more?
2. How does the image of your prayers being "incense in a golden bowl" change the way you feel about praying?
3. The elders fell down before the *Lamb*. What does this tell you about Jesus's identity?
4. This worship *starts* the moment the Lamb takes the scroll. What does this tell you about the "centrality" of the cross and Christ's redemption to all of heaven?

Call to Action

"Fill the bowl" today. Set aside a specific 5 minutes to pray *only* for "big picture" kingdom things, not your personal needs. Pray for the persecuted church. Pray for justice in the world. Pray, "Come, Lord Jesus." As you do, picture yourself adding "precious incense" to the golden bowls before the throne.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by St. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430 AD).)

"O Lord our God, King and Priest, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee. Let our prayers rise before Thee as incense, and our praise as a joyful song on the harp. We worship Thee, O Lamb of God, who wast slain for us. To Thee, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and honor, now and forever. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 5, Day 4

The New Song of Redemption

Scripture Focus: Revelation 5:9-10

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A "New Song":** In the Old Testament, a "new song" was written and sung *after* God performed a new, mighty act of salvation or deliverance (e.g., after crossing the Red Sea). This is the *ultimate* "new song" because it celebrates the *ultimate* act of deliverance: the redemption of humanity by the blood of the Lamb.
- **"Ransomed":** This is a marketplace term. It means "to buy back," specifically to buy a slave out of the market to set them free. The price of this "ransom" was not gold or silver, but "your blood."
- **"Tribe and language and people and nation":** This was *revolutionary*. The 1st-century world was deeply divided. There was Jew vs. Gentile, Roman vs. Barbarian. This song declares that God's new kingdom is *not* based on ethnicity, geography, or language. It is a single, new people, "ransomed" from every group. This is the death of all racism and nationalism.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Song of the Church:** If the 24 Elders are the redeemed church, this is *our song*. Notice the lyrics.
 - **Chapter 4 Song (Creation):** "Worthy are you... for you *created* all things." (v. 4:11)
 - **Chapter 5 Song (Redemption):** "Worthy are you... for you were *slain*." (v. 5:9) This is the great shift. Creation worships God as *Creator*. The Church worships God as *Creator AND Redeemer*.
- **"They shall reign on the earth" (v. 10):** This is a key verse for prophetic views.
 - **Pre-Millennial View (Futurist):** Sees this as a literal, *future* 1,000-year reign of the saints (the Church) *on this earth* with Christ after He returns.
 - **A-Millennial View (Idealist/Preterist):** Sees this as a *spiritual* reign. We are "reigning" *now*, in a spiritual sense, seated with Christ in the "heavenly places" (Eph 2:6). Or, it refers to our eternal reign in the "New Earth" (Rev 21).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Sing a new song":** This is a command all through the Psalms. **Psalms 96:1**, "Oh, **sing to the LORD a new song**; sing to the LORD, all the earth!" Now, in heaven, that command is finally and perfectly fulfilled.
- **"A Kingdom and Priests":** This is the fulfillment of the promise to Israel at Mount Sinai. **Exodus 19:6**, "you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests** and a holy nation." This promise, which national Israel failed to fulfill, is now perfectly *accomplished* by the blood of the Lamb for the *global church*.
- **"Every tribe... nation":** This is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. **Genesis 12:3**, "in you *all the families of the earth* shall be blessed."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is Your "Why":** This song is the "lyric sheet" for the Christian life. *Why* is He worthy?
 1. **His Slaying:** "you were slain."
 2. **His Purchase:** "you ransomed people."
 3. **His Creation:** "you have *made* them..."
 4. **His Purpose:** "...a kingdom and priests... and they shall reign."
- **The Cure for Division:** This song is the *only* antidote to the "tribe and language and people and nation" division that plagues our world. In Christ, there is *one* identity that supersedes all others: **Ransomed**. Our unity is not in our *origin* (our earthly tribe), but in our *destination* (our heavenly kingdom) and our *price* (His blood).

- **You Have a Royal Purpose:** You were not just "saved" from hell. You were "ransomed" *for* God. You were "made" into something new: a "priest" (to minister to God) and a "king" (to "reign on the earth"). Your life has a royal and eternal purpose.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is a "new song." What is "new" about it compared to the song in Chapter 4?
2. The word is "ransomed." How does thinking of your salvation as a "ransom" (a purchase from slavery) change how you view your freedom in Christ?
3. The song celebrates diversity ("every tribe") and unity ("a kingdom"). How well does your local church reflect *both* of these heavenly realities?
4. Verse 10 says you are a "priest" (to serve God) and will "reign" (to rule with Christ). Which of those two identities is harder for you to grasp or "live out" today?

Call to Action

Sing (or read) a "new song" today. Find a hymn or worship song that *specifically* talks about the *blood of Christ* (e.g., "In Christ Alone," "There is a Fountain," "Worthy is the Lamb"). As you listen or sing, thank Him *specifically* for "ransoming" you.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033–1109), on the "ransom".)

"O Lord my God, I am Thy servant, ransomed by Thy blood. I am Thy creation, remade by Thy grace. Thou didst die for me, that I might live through Thee. Thou hast made me a priest to Thee, to offer up a sacrifice of praise. Thou hast made me a king, to reign with Thee. I have no worthiness but what Thou hast given me. I have no song but the one Thou hast taught me: Worthy art Thou, O Lamb of God, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 5, Day 5

The Angelic Chorus

Scripture Focus: Revelation 5:11-12

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Myriads of myriads...":** A "myriad" was 10,000. John is saying, "I heard 10,000 x 10,000 (100 million) and 1,000 x 1,000 (1 million)..." This was not a literal count. It was the largest number he could describe. The point is: **an innumerable, overwhelming, countless host of angels.**
- **The "Concentric Circles" of Worship:** John's vision is expanding.
 1. **Center:** The Throne & The Lamb
 2. **Circle 1:** The 4 Living Creatures (All Creation)
 3. **Circle 2:** The 24 Elders (The Redeemed Church)
 4. **Circle 3:** The "Myriads" of Angels
- **The Angels' Song:** The angels *join* the song, but their song is *different*. The Elders sing, "you ransomed *us*..." (a personal song). The angels, who were not "ransomed," sing a song of *third-person adoration*: "Worthy is the Lamb... to receive..." They are the "audience" who are blown away by the "play" of redemption.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Seven-Fold Doxology (v. 12):** The angels list *seven* attributes that the Lamb is worthy to "receive." Seven is the number of perfection and completeness. This is the *perfect* praise.
 1. **Power:** He has all authority.
 2. **Wealth:** He owns all things.
 3. **Wisdom:** He knows all things.
 4. **Strength:** He can do all things.
 5. **Honor:** He deserves all respect.
 6. **Glory:** He has all beauty and weight.
 7. **Blessing:** He is the source of all good.
- **Why "Receive"?** Does He not *already* have these things? Yes. But by His *slaying* (His humiliation), He *earned* the right to *receive* this praise as the God-Man, the Redeemer. He is being "re-crowned" after his sacrificial "uncrowning" at the cross.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Angelic Host:** This is the *heavenly army* that was present at all of God's great acts.
 - **Daniel 7:10:** "A thousand thousands served him, and **ten thousand times ten thousand** stood before him." (This is the *exact* number John uses).
 - **Luke 2:13:** At Christ's *birth*, "suddenly there was with the angel a **multitude of the heavenly host** praising God..."
- **The "Worthy" Doxology:** This is a *divine* ascription of praise, similar to what David gave.
 - **1 Chronicles 29:11:** "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the **power** and the **glory** and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours... you are exalted as head above all. Both **riches** and **honor** come from you..."
- **Conclusion:** The praise that is due to "Yahweh" (the LORD) in the Old Testament is here given *directly* to the "Lamb" (Jesus) in the New.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **You are Not Worshipping Alone:** This is a massive encouragement. When you praise God—even when you are alone in your car, or in your room, or in a church service that feels "dead"—you are *not* alone. At that very *second*, you are joining a choir of "hundreds of millions" of angels who are singing the *exact same song*.
- **The Wonder of the Angels:** The angels, who never *sinned* and never *needed* redemption, are in *awe* of it. They are "looking on" in wonder (1 Peter 1:12). This should challenge us. Do *we*, who were *actually* redeemed, take it for granted? Are the *angels* more excited about your salvation than *you* are?
- **His "Worthiness" List:** This seven-fold list is a great "checklist" for our own praise. When you don't know what to praise Him for, praise Him for His *power* (over your situation), His *wealth* (His provision), His *wisdom* (His plan), His *strength* (His ability), His *honor* (His reputation), His *glory* (His character), and His *blessing* (His goodness).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The vision is expanding, from the Elders to "myriads of myriads" of angels. How does the *scale* of this worship service make you feel?
2. The angels, who are "sinless," are obsessed with worshipping the *Lamb who was slain for sinners*. Why do you think they are so amazed by this?
3. Look at the 7-fold list in verse 12. Which of those seven attributes of Jesus do you "lean on" the most in your daily life?
4. Which of those seven attributes do you *forget* about, or praise Him for the *least*?

Call to Action

"Join the choir." Put on a powerful worship song. As you listen, consciously picture the "concentric circles" of worship: the creatures, the elders, and the "myriads of myriads" of angels. See yourself as *one* more voice in that *massive*, countless choir, singing the same song.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397 AD).)

"O Lord, who hast mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of Thy Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore Thee, a heart to delight in Thee, to follow Thee, and to enjoy Thee. I join my voice with the myriads of angels: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, and wealth, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 5, Day 6

The Cosmic Chorus and The "Amen"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 5:13-14

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Final Circle:** The vision of worship has now expanded to its absolute limit.
 1. Circle 1: 4 Living Creatures (v. 8)
 2. Circle 2: 24 Elders (v. 8)
 3. Circle 3: Myriads of Angels (v. 11)
 4. **Circle 4: "Every Creature" (v. 13)**
- **"Every Creature":** John uses a four-fold "list of everything" to describe the entire universe: in heaven, on earth, under the earth (the dead), and in the sea. There is *nothing* and *no one* left out. This is the "cosmic chorus."
- **"And to the Lamb":** This is the climax. All of creation gives a four-fold praise (*blessing, honor, glory, might*) to *two* figures: **"Him who sits on the throne AND to the Lamb."** This is the ultimate, final, undeniable declaration of the full divinity of Jesus Christ. He is worshipped *equally* with the Father, *by* all of creation.
- **"Amen!":** The four living creatures (who *represent* all creation) shout the great "Amen!" ("So be it! It is true!"). The elders (who *represent* the redeemed) have no words left. They just "fell down and worshiped."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Is this "Universalism"?** Does "every creature" mean that *everyone*, including Satan, will be saved?
 - **No.** This is not a song of *salvation*; it's a song of *lordship*.
 - This is the fulfillment of **Philippians 2:10-11**, "...at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and *every tongue confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord..."
 - This vision is a "proleptic" (future) glimpse of the end, when *every created being*—saved or unsaved, angel or demon—will be *forced* to acknowledge the worthiness and lordship of the Father and the Lamb. For the redeemed, it will be a shout of joy. For the unredeemed, it will be the "wail" of forced submission (Rev 1:7).
- **The Final "Amen":** The worship that began in 4:8 finally comes to its crashing crescendo. The "new song" is complete. The crisis of the scroll is over. The Lamb is declared worthy by all creation. The scene is now *set* for the opening of the seals.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Every Knee Bows: Isaiah 45:23**, "By myself I have sworn... 'To me **every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.**'" Paul quotes this in **Romans 14:11** and **Philippians 2:10-11**, applying this "Yahweh-only" text *directly to Jesus*. Revelation 5 is the *vision* of that prophecy being fulfilled.
- **The "Amen"**: This is the historic response of God's people. **Nehemiah 8:6**, "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, '**Amen, Amen!**' lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground." The elders are doing the *exact* same thing.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Inevitable End**: This is the end of the story. You are reading the "spoiler." This *will* happen. "Every creature" *will* confess that Jesus is Lord.
- **Two Ways to Confess**: This gives us all a choice. We can "confess Him" *now*, in joy, as the Elders do. Or we can "confess Him" *later*, in terror, as a "conquered foe." But make no mistake: *every knee will bow*. This gives us incredible boldness in evangelism, knowing the outcome is secure.
- **Your "Amen"**: The living creatures shout "Amen!" ("I agree! It is true!"). This is our job as well. When we read Scripture, when we hear a sermon, when we see God at work, our hearts should cry, "Amen!" It is our "YES!" to God's reality.
- **The Posture of "No Words"**: After this cosmic song, the elders "fell down and worshiped." Sometimes, praise is *silent*. Sometimes, the only "word" we have left is the *posture* of total submission and awe.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision now includes "every creature," even those "under the earth." Why is it important that *even God's enemies* will one day be forced to acknowledge His worthiness?
2. The praise is given *equally* "to him who sits on the throne AND to the Lamb." Why is this "equal billing" so critical to our understanding of who Jesus is?
3. The two responses are "Amen!" (speaking) and "fell down and worshiped" (silence). When are times in your life for "shouted praise," and when are times for "silent awe"?
4. This *entire chapter* (all 14 verses) takes place in the "pause" *between* the Lamb *taking* the scroll (5:7) and *opening* the first seal (6:1). Why do you think God inserted this massive "worship service" *before* the judgment begins?

Call to Action

Be the "Amen!" today. As you go through your day, look for "glimpses" of God's glory (a beautiful sunset, a kind word, a provision). In your heart, respond with a firm "Amen!"—a "YES!" to God's goodness. And at the end of the day, take 60 seconds to "fall down and worship" in silence.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(The "Gloria Patri," an ancient Christian doxology.)

"Glory be to the Father, **and to the Son**, and to the Holy Spirit; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen."

Week 6 (Chapter 6): The Opening of the Six Seals: Cosmic Upheaval Begins

Revelation Bible Study: Week 6, Day 1

The First Seal: The White Horse

Scripture Focus: Revelation 6:1-2

¹ Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Lamb Opens the Seals:** The worship of Chapter 5 is over. Now, the *action* begins. The *slain Lamb* (Christ) is the one who *initiates* the judgment. This is key: God's judgment flows *from* the cross.
- **"Voice Like Thunder":** This is the voice of the *first living creature* (the "Lion"), whose cry of "Come!" (or "Go!") unleashes the judgment.
- **The Rider:** A 1st-century reader might have been terrified by this image. A "white horse" symbolized *victory* or *royalty*. The "bow" was the signature weapon of the *Parthians*, the Roman Empire's most feared enemy to the east. They were famous for "conquering" on horseback. This rider looked like an *invader*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This is one of the *most debated* passages in Revelation. **Who is this first rider?**

- **View 1: The Antichrist.** This is the most common Futurist view.
 - **Why:** He is an *imitation* of Christ. Christ (in Rev 19) also rides a white horse, but He has "many crowns" and a "sword." This rider has *one* crown (a *stephanos*, or victor's crown, not a *diadema*, or royal crown) and a "bow" (a weapon of deception or distant conquest). He "conquers" not with the *blood* of the red horse, but with *diplomacy, false peace, and political conquest*. He is the "false messiah" who rises to power.
- **View 2: Christ or the Gospel.** An older, Historicist view.
 - **Why:** The color "white" is always associated with Christ and righteousness in Revelation. This is the "triumphant advance of the Gospel" throughout the world.
- **View 3: Military Conquest (in general).** An Idealist/Preterist view.

- **Why:** This is not a *person*, but a *force*. It is the spirit of *conquest, war, and empire-building* that is the "first" horseman to ride through all of human history. The "bow" with no arrow might symbolize a "cold war" or a "bloodless" conquest.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Four Horsemen:** This imagery comes *directly* from **Zechariah 1:8-11** and **Zechariah 6:1-8**. In Zechariah, the prophet also sees colored horses (red, black, and white) who are sent out to "patrol the earth."
- **John's Message:** John is taking Zechariah's "scout" horses and transforming them into "judgment" horses. They aren't just *patrolling*; they are *unleashing*.
- **A "Bow":** This connects to **Ezekiel 39:3**, where God says He will strike the "bow" from the hand of Gog (an invader from the north).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Spirit of Antichrist:** If we take View 1 (the most common), this is a "sign of the times." Before the *end* comes, there will be a "spirit of conquest." We see this in ruthless dictators, in "peace" treaties that are just covers for more conquest, and in the "conquering" spirit of "self-first" ideology.
- **"Conquering, and to Conquer":** This is the "addictive" nature of power. The rider doesn't just "conquer" and stop. His entire *purpose* is "to conquer." This is a perfect picture of sin, of ambition, and of worldly power. It is *never satisfied*. It must always have *more*.
- **A Warning:** This rider is *deceptive*. He rides a "white horse," the color of peace and purity. This is a profound warning that the most *dangerous* evil often *looks* good, peaceful, and "righteous" at first.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This judgment is *unleashed* by the *Lamb*. Why is it important (and difficult) to understand that God's "judgments" are not random, but are under the control of Christ?
2. The rider "looks" like Christ (white horse) but is *not* Christ. What are some "white horse" ideologies in our world today that "look" good but are actually "anti-Christ"?
3. The rider's mission is "conquering, and to conquer." Where do you see this *insatiable hunger for "more"* in your own life or in our culture?
4. If this rider is "false peace," how can we discern the *true* peace of Christ from the *false* peace of the world?

Call to Action

"Test the spirits." Today, when you hear a "good" idea (from the news, a book, or a leader), practice "discerning the rider." Ask: Is this *truly* from Christ? Does it lead to *His* peace (self-sacrificial), or the *rider's* peace (self-conquering)?

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the *Didache*, a 1st-century Christian document.)

"Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh. Let the world not deceive us. Let the 'conqueror' on the white horse not lead us astray. May Thy grace come, and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David! Our Lord, come. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 6, Day 2

The Second Seal: The Red Horse

Scripture Focus: Revelation 6:3-4

³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴ And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Bright Red":** The color *pyrrhos* (fiery red) was the color of blood and war.
- **"Take peace from the earth":** This was a direct assault on the Roman Empire's greatest boast: the *Pax Romana*, or "Roman Peace." The empire prided itself on having ended the constant civil wars and bringing "peace" to the world. This seal declares that God's judgment will shatter this man-made, enforced peace.
- **"Slay one another":** This is not just a "foreign war." This is the language of *civil war, insurrection, and internal collapse*. It's neighbor turning on neighbor.
- **"A Great Sword":** The *machaira megale*. This was not the *gladius* (a soldier's short sword) but a *great sword* symbolizing widespread violence, judgment, and the power to execute.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Four Horsemen (Progression):** The four horsemen are a "quartet" of judgment, and they follow a logical order.
 1. **White Horse (Conquest/False Peace):** The political "conquering" of the first rider inevitably *leads* to conflict.
 2. **Red Horse (Warfare):** The false peace breaks down into open, bloody warfare.
- **Jesus's Introduction:** This horseman is the *opposite* of Jesus's title, "Prince of Peace." He is the spirit of *war*.
- **Whose Permission?** "Its rider was *permitted* (or 'was given')." This is a key theological point. This rider does not have his *own* authority. He is *unleashed* by the Lamb. God is sovereign even over the wars of mankind, using them as an instrument of judgment.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Olivet Discourse:** This is a *direct parallel* to what Jesus prophesied in **Matthew 24:6-7**: "And you will hear of **wars and rumors of wars**... For **nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom." This is the "beginning of the birth pains."
- **Zechariah's Horses:** This again echoes **Zechariah 1:8** and **Zechariah 6:2**, which both mention "red horses" sent to patrol the earth.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The End of Peace:** We live in a world that constantly teeters on the brink of war. We have global conflicts, "rumors of wars," and, just as prophesied, intense *internal* division—"people should slay one another." Political violence, polarization, and civil strife are all manifestations of the red horse's power.
- **God's Sovereignty in Chaos:** It is difficult, but this passage teaches that God is not "absent" during wartime. He is "permitting" it as a judgment on a world that has rejected the *Prince of Peace*. He remains sovereign over the "great sword."
- **The Call of the Peacemaker:** This vision should horrify us, driving us to be "peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This rider "takes peace from the earth." What are the things that *you* rely on for your "peace" (financial security, political stability, a safe neighborhood)? What happens when that "peace" is taken away?
2. The text says he was "permitted." Why is it both difficult and comforting to know that war and chaos are *permitted* by a sovereign God, rather than just being *random*?
3. The text describes "slaying one another" (civil strife). Where do you see the *spirit* of this red horse (division, hatred, violence) in our own culture today?
4. How should a Christian, who follows the "Prince of Peace," live in a world "at war"?

Call to Action

Be a peacemaker. The rider "takes peace"; you must "bring" it. Find one relationship in your life that has conflict or division. Today, take one *proactive* step to bring peace, whether it's sending an apology, offering a kind word, or just *praying* for that person instead of being angry.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the Book of Common Prayer.)

"O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom: Defend us, thy humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord, the Prince of Peace. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 6, Day 3

The Third Seal: The Black Horse

Scripture Focus: Revelation 6:5-6

⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard what seemed to be a voice from the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and the wine!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Black Horse":** The color of *famine* and *mourning*.
- **"A Pair of Scales":** A symbol of commerce, but here it's a symbol of *rationing*. It's the careful "weighing" of food when it becomes scarce.
- **"A Quart of Wheat for a Denarius":** This was a *devastating* economic statement.
 - A **Denarius** = A typical soldier's or common laborer's wage for a *full day's work*.
 - A **Quart of Wheat** = *Just enough* food (bread) for *one person for one day*.
- **The Message:** This is *hyperinflation* and *famine*. It means a man would have to work all day just to feed *himself*, with nothing left over for his wife, his children, his rent, or anything else.
- **"Do not harm the oil and the wine!":** This is the cruelest part. Wheat and barley (staples, the "bread of life") are impossibly expensive, but the *luxuries* (oil for anointing, wine for celebration) are untouched. This is a judgment that creates a *massive* gap between the rich and the poor, who are left to starve.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Progression of Judgment:**
 1. **White Horse (Conquest)**
 2. **Red Horse (War)**
 3. **Black Horse (Famine)**
- This is a natural, logical progression. War (red horse) *causes* famine (black horse). Armies burn fields, trample crops, and cut off supply lines. The "scales" represent the resulting economic collapse.
- **The Voice "from the midst":** This is a voice of divine *authority* (likely God or Christ), showing that this economic judgment is precisely *controlled*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Famine as Judgment:** Famine was one of God's covenant curses. **Ezekiel 4:16**, "I will break the supply of bread... they shall **eat bread by weight** (the "scales") and with anxiety."
- **Olivet Discourse:** This directly parallels **Matthew 24:7**, "...and there will be **famines** and earthquakes in various places."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Inflation and Scarcity:** While most of us are not in a full-blown famine, we live in a world that understands *inflation, scarcity, and supply chain collapse*. We see the "scales" at work every time the price of gas, groceries, and housing makes it harder for a family to "make ends meet."
- **The Rich and the Poor:** This vision is a powerful picture of economic *injustice*. The rich (with their "oil and wine") are insulated, while the poor (who need "wheat") are crushed. This is a constant feature of a fallen world.
- **What We Rely On:** This judgment attacks our "Prosperity." It's a "Laodicean" judgment (Rev 3:17), reminding a world that says "I am rich and need nothing" that it cannot even provide its *own daily bread* without God's common grace.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. A "denarius" was a full day's wage. How would your life change *immediately* if you had to spend 100% of your income on *just enough* food for *yourself*?
2. What does the command "do not harm the oil and the wine" tell you about the *nature* of this judgment? Who does it hit the hardest?
3. War (red horse) leads to famine (black horse). Where do we see this link (war affecting food/gas prices) in our world today?
4. How should this vision of *famine* change our attitude toward *feasting*, or our habits of *generosity*?

Call to Action

Be grateful and be generous. First, *thank God* specifically for the "daily bread" He has given you that you did not "spend a denarius" on. Second, "share your bread" with the poor. Give to a local food pantry, or find a way to *be generous* with the "wheat" God has given you.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for social justice by St. Basil the Great (c. 330–379 AD).)

"The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of him who is naked. The shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money that you keep locked away is the money of the poor. O Lord, forgive us our greed and our comfort. Make us, like You, to have compassion on the hungry, and give us a heart of generosity, for your name's sake. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 6, Day 4

The Fourth Seal: The Pale Horse

Scripture Focus: Revelation 6:7-8

⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸ And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Pale Horse":** The Greek word is *chloros*. This is not "white." It is the sick, *greenish-yellow-pale* color of a *corpse* or a person dying of plague.
- **The Rider is Named:** This is the *only* rider who is explicitly named: **Death** (*Thanatos*).
- **"And Hades followed him":** "Hades" is the *grave*, the realm of the dead. This is a terrifying "tag team." **Death** is the one who *kills* the body; **Hades** is the one who *collects* the soul.
- **A "Fourth of the Earth":** This is a *massive* but *limited* judgment. God's judgment is both vast and *restrained*.
- **The "Four Horsemen" United:** This rider's mission is to kill with the *results* of the previous riders:
 1. "Sword" (from the Red Horse of War)
 2. "Famine" (from the Black Horse of Scarcity)
 3. "Pestilence" (plague/disease, the natural result of war and famine)
 4. "Wild beasts" (the breakdown of all "civilization," allowing the wild to "reclaim" the earth)

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Climax of the Horsemen:** This is the logical end of the "birth pains."
 1. Conquest -> 2. War -> 3. Famine -> 4. **Death & Pestilence.**
- This rider is the "clean-up crew" for the first three. He is the personification of the *consequences* of sin.
- **A "Fourth" of the Earth:** This shows that these judgments, while terrifying, are *not* the final end. They are a "warning shot." The Trumpet judgments (Chapter 8) will affect a "third," and the Bowl judgments (Chapter 16) will be *total*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **God's Four Judgments:** This is a *direct quote* from **Ezekiel 14:21**: "Thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I send my **four disastrous acts of judgment** upon Jerusalem: the **sword** and **famine** and **wild beasts** and **pestilence**, to cut off from it man and beast!"
- **The Message:** John is showing that the "covenant curses" God warned Israel about are now being unleashed, in a limited way, on the *entire world* that has rejected Him.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Four Horsemen" in Our News:** We see all four of these "killings" *today*:
 1. **Sword:** War, terrorism, civil strife.
 2. **Famine:** Mass starvation, food shortages.
 3. **Pestilence:** Pandemics, plagues, and disease (like COVID-19, AIDS, etc.).
 4. **Wild Beasts:** This can be literal, or symbolic of the "beastly" nature of man when law and order completely collapse.

- **Death is a "Person":** Our culture tries to "tame" death, to make it a "natural process." The Bible *personifies* it as an *enemy* ("the last enemy to be destroyed is death," 1 Cor 15:26). This rider is *real*, and he is *coming* for everyone.
- **The Only Hope:** The *only* hope against this rider is the One who *conquered* him. Jesus is the One who *already* defeated Death and who "holds the keys of Death and Hades" (Rev 1:18).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the only rider *named*. Why is it important to personify "Death" as an active *enemy* rather than a passive "process"?
2. The "four disastrous acts" are "sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts." Where have you seen these forces at work in the world recently?
3. This judgment is *limited* to a "fourth of the earth." What does this "limitation" tell you about God's character, even in judgment?
4. "Hades followed him." This is a vision of both physical *and* spiritual death. How does this vision intensify the "good news" that Jesus "holds the keys" (Rev 1:18)?

Call to Action

"Death" has a name, but Jesus has the *victory*. Today, your call is to *share* that victory. Talk to one person about the *hope* you have in Christ. You don't have to be morbid, but you can share the *assurance* you have that "Death" does not have the final say.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on 1 Corinthians 15.)

"O Lord God, Death rides on a pale horse, and Hades follows him. But we thank You, O Father, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 'O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He has conquered. He holds the keys. And because He lives, we shall live also. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 6, Day 5

The Fifth Seal: The Souls of the Martyrs

Scripture Focus: Revelation 6:9-11

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A Shift in Location:** The first four seals were *judgments on earth*. The fifth seal is a *scene in heaven*. John is pulled "behind the curtain" to see the *reason* for the judgments.
- **"Under the Altar":** In the Jerusalem Temple, the *altar of sacrifice* was where the blood of the animal was poured out at its base (Leviticus 4:7). John sees the "souls" of the martyrs in this place of honor. Their *death* was not a "tragedy" or a "loss"; it was a "sacrifice" and a "drink offering" (2 Tim 4:6) *seen* by God at His own altar.
- **"Slain for the word of God":** This was the *exact* reason John himself was on Patmos (Rev 1:9). This was a direct, powerful comfort to the 1st-century church *facing* persecution.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"How long, O Sovereign Lord...?":** This is the great cry of the ages. It is not a cry for *personal revenge*. It is a cry for *divine justice*. They are asking God to *vindicate His own name* and to prove that He is, in fact, "holy and true" by *judging* sin.
- **God's Three-Part Answer:**
 1. **A White Robe:** They are *vindicated* and *honored* personally. God gives them the robe of purity and victory *now*.
 2. **"Rest a little longer":** God's timing is not their timing. The judgment is *coming*, but not yet.
 3. **"Until the number... was complete":** This is a profound and mysterious doctrine. It implies that God, in His sovereignty, has *ordained a specific number* of martyrs. The full end will not come *until* that number is "complete." This means *every* martyr's death is seen, counted, and *significant* in God's plan.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Blood "Crying Out":** This is a direct echo of **Genesis 4:10**, where God says to Cain, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's **blood is crying to me** from the ground." The blood of the martyrs, like Abel's, cries out for justice.
- **Imprecatory Psalms:** This "cry for vengeance" is the same as in many Psalms. **Psalms 79:10**, "Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Let the **avenging of the outpoured blood** of your servants be known..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Persecuted Church:** This is *the* chapter for the modern persecuted church. More Christians have been martyred in the last 100 years than in all previous centuries combined. This verse tells us:
 1. Their death is not in vain; it's a *sacrifice* at God's altar.
 2. Their souls are *alive* and *conscious* ("I saw the souls... they cried out").

3. Their prayers are *heard* ("How long?").
 4. God *will* bring justice.
- **"How Long, O Lord?":** We can all cry this out. When we see injustice, when we see sin "winning," when we see the wicked prosper, we can join this cry: "How long, O Lord?" It is a *righteous* prayer.
 - **God's Sovereign "Number":** This is a hard, but comforting, truth. Even the most "senseless" tragedy—the martyrdom of a believer—is not "senseless" to God. It is "counted." It is *part* of His plan, and He *will* fulfill it.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The first four seals were "horsemen." The fifth is "souls." Why does the vision *shift* from the "earthly" judgment to the "heavenly" perspective?
2. What is the difference between *personal revenge* and *crying out for divine justice*?
3. The martyrs are given a "white robe" and told to "rest." What do these two gifts (honor and rest) tell us about God's *immediate* care for them?
4. What does it mean to you that God has a "complete number" of martyrs? How does this speak to His sovereignty, even over evil?

Call to Action

Your call is to *remember* the martyrs. Go to a website like "Voice of the Martyrs" or "Open Doors." Read *one* story about a persecuted Christian. Then, join your prayers with theirs: "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long? Avenge your servants' blood. And give them rest."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the persecuted church.)

"O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, we hear the cries of our brothers and sisters around the world who are slain for the word of God. We cry out with them, 'How long?' We pray for their vindication. We ask for Your justice. Give them their 'white robe' of honor today. Give them Your peace and 'rest.' And, Lord, make us who are free, 'worthy' to be partners with them in the gospel. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 6, Day 6

The Sixth Seal: The Great De-Creation

Scripture Focus: Revelation 6:12-17

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as a fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Apocalyptic Language:** A 1st-century Jewish reader would *immediately* recognize this. This is "de-creation" language, drawing *directly* from the Old Testament prophets.
 - "Sun black... moon blood... stars fall" = the entire *cosmos* (the created order) is coming apart.
 - "Sky vanished like a scroll" = the "firmament" itself is being unmade.
 - "Mountains and islands... removed" = the most "permanent" and "stable" parts of the earth are gone.
- **The Great Equalizer (v. 15):** The list is *universal*. "Kings... great ones... generals... rich... powerful... slave... free." In this moment of judgment, all of humanity's "classes" are *equalized*. They are all *terrified*.
- **The Ultimate Terror (v. 16):** Their terror is *not* of the "earthquake" or the "falling stars." Their terror is of *God*. They prefer *annihilation* ("Fall on us") to *accountability* ("hide us from the face...").

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The Wrath of the Lamb" (v. 16):** This is the *central paradox* of the entire Bible. The **Lamb** (the image of meekness, grace, and sacrifice) is the *same one* who has **Wrath** (divine, holy judgment). His wrath is not a "tantrum"; it is the *holy burning* of His love *against* sin.
- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Futurist View:** Sees this as a *literal* description of the cosmic disturbances that will happen on earth during the "Great Tribulation," just before Christ's final return.
 - **Preterist View:** Sees this as *symbolic* "apocalyptic language" for a *political* collapse. In OT prophecy, "sun darkened" = the king falls; "moon falls" = the religious system falls; "stars fall" = the generals/nobles fall. They see this as the "cosmic collapse" of the *nation of Israel and Jerusalem* in AD 70.
- **The Great "Cliffhanger" (v. 17):** Chapter 6 *ends* with the ultimate question: **"Who is able to stand?"**
 - The *entire* world is asking this. They are all hiding, because they *know* the answer is "no one."
 - This question sets the stage *perfectly* for Chapter 7, which is a "pause" or "interlude" to *answer* this very question.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Jesus's Prophecy:** This is a *direct quote* of Jesus in the Olivet Discourse: **Matthew 24:29**, "Immediately after the tribulation... the **sun will be darkened**, and the **moon will not give its light**, and the **stars will fall** from heaven..."
- **Old Testament Prophets:**

- **Joel 2:31:** "The **sun shall be turned to darkness**, and the **moon to blood**, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes." (Quoted by Peter at Pentecost).
- **Isaiah 34:4:** "All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the **heavens roll up like a scroll.**"
- **Isaiah 13:10:** "For the **stars... will not give their light**; the **sun will be dark...**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Great "Apocalypse-Obsession":** Our culture is *obsessed* with "apocalypse" movies and "end-of-the-world" scenarios. This is the *real* one. It shows that all of our "heroes" (the "kings, generals, rich, and powerful") will be just as terrified as everyone else.
- **"Wrath of the Lamb":** We live in a culture that has "created" a "gentle Jesus" who is *only* loving and *never* judgmental. This verse is the correction. The *same* Jesus who *died* for us is the *same* Jesus whose holiness *burns* against sin. True love *hates* evil.
- **"Who is able to stand?":** This is the most important question a human can ask. The implied answer is "No one." *Unless...* (This is the "cliffhanger" that Chapter 7 will answer). The only ones who can "stand" are those who are *hidden in the Lamb* now, so they don't have to *hide from the Lamb* later.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision is "cosmic de-creation." Why does God's judgment involve the *physical* world, not just "spiritual" punishment?
2. The "great ones" and "slaves" are all hiding together. What does this "great equalizer" tell you about the "value system" of heaven?
3. "The wrath of the Lamb" (v. 16). How do you reconcile these two "opposite" ideas (Lamb and Wrath) in your mind? Why are they *both* necessary?
4. The chapter ends with a question: "Who is able to stand?" (v. 17). How would *you* answer that question?

Call to Action

Your call is to *answer the question*. The world is crying, "Who can stand?" The answer is "Those who are sealed by God." (Spoiler for Chapter 7). Today, thank Jesus that because you are *hidden in Him*, you are one of the ones who *will* be "able to stand"—not in your own righteousness, but in His.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(The "Kyrie Eleison," an ancient Christian prayer.)

"Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. From the great day of Your wrath, hide us. From the face of Him who sits on the throne, hide us. Not in the rocks, not in the mountains, But in the wounds of the Lamb who was slain. O Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us Your peace. For in You alone, we are 'able to stand.' Amen."

- e blood." *Because* they are washed...
- **"They are before the throne... and serve him":** This is the fulfillment of the *Priest's* role (from 5:10).
- **"Shelter them with his presence":** The Greek is *skenosei*, "He will *tabernacle* over them." This is the *exact* same word used in John 1:14 ("The Word... *tabernacled* among us"). This is the fulfillment of the Feast of *Tabernacles*. God Himself *is* the "shelter."
- **The "No More" List:** This list is a *direct reversal* of the *curses* of the world and the *judgments* of the seals:
 - "Hunger no more..." (Reverses the Black Horse of Famine).
 - "Sun shall not strike... scorching heat..." (Reverses the coming "scorching" judgments, e.g., 16:8).
 - "Wipe away every tear..." (Reverses the "weeping" of 5:4 and the "tribulation" of 7:14).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The Lamb... will be their shepherd":** This is the *ultimate* paradox.
 - The **Lamb** (*arnion*, the sacrifice)
 - ...is the **Shepherd** (*poimanei*, the leader, the King).
- The One who *died* for the sheep is the One who *leads* the sheep. His *past* sacrifice is the *source* of His *eternal* authority.
- **"Springs of Living Water":** This is the final fulfillment of *all* of God's promises. It is eternal *life* and eternal *satisfaction*.
- **"God will wipe away every tear":** This is the final act of *personal* intimacy. The "Sovereign Lord" of the universe (v. 10) is also the *personal Comforter* who *personally* dries the eyes of His children.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Shepherd:** This is a *direct* echo of **Psalm 23:1-2**, "The LORD is my **shepherd**; I shall not want... He leads me beside **still waters** (*living water*). The "LORD" (Yahweh) of Psalm 23 is *identified* as the "Lamb" (Jesus) in Revelation 7.
- **"No More Hunger":** **Isaiah 49:10**, "They shall **not hunger or thirst**, neither **scorching wind nor sun shall strike them**, for he who has pity on them will **lead them**, and by **springs of water** will he **guide them**."
- **"Wipe away tears":** **Isaiah 25:8**, "He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will **wipe away tears from all faces**."
- **Conclusion:** John is showing his audience that *every* one of the Old Testament's *greatest promises* of the "messianic age" is *literally* and *personally* fulfilled by *Jesus the Lamb* for the *Great Multitude* in heaven.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is "Why":** This is the *end* of the story. This is *why* we "come out of the great tribulation." This is *why* we "wash our robes." This is the *hope* that we "hold fast" to.
- **The "No More" List for You:** This is a promise for *your* future.
 - Every tear you cry *will be* wiped away.
 - Every "hunger" (physical, emotional, spiritual) *will be* satisfied.
 - Every "scorching heat" of trial *will be* over.
- **"The Lamb is the Shepherd":** This is our "leadership model." The only One "worthy" to lead is the One who was "slain." This is true in the church, in the home, and in our lives. We "lead" by "serving" and "sacrificing."

- **The Answer to 6:17:** Chapter 6 ended: "Who is able to stand?"
 - Chapter 7 answers: **The one who is "sealed" (7:3) and "washed" (7:14).**
 - *That* is who can stand.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This passage is a list of "reversals" (no more hunger, no more tears). What is the *biggest* "curse" of this world that you are *most* looking forward to being "reversed" in heaven?
2. The "Lamb" (sacrifice) is the "Shepherd" (leader). How does this *one* image summarize the entire "upside-down" nature of God's Kingdom?
3. The promise is not just "no more tears," but that "God will *wipe away* every tear." Why is this *personal, intimate* action from God so comforting?
4. After 7 weeks of study, how has your view of "Revelation" changed?

Call to Action

Your call is to "be a shepherd." The Lamb *leads* His people "to springs of living water." Today, *you* be a "little shepherd." Find *one person* in your life who is "hungry, thirsty, or weeping," and do *one small thing* to "guide them" to the "living water" (Christ). (This could be a text, a prayer, a kind word, or sharing this very verse).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the promises of Revelation 7.)

"O Lord our God, O Lamb in the midst of the throne, our Shepherd. We are in the "great tribulation" of this world. We are hungry. We are thirsty. We are weeping. But we *trust* in Your promise. Thank You that You *will* shelter us. Thank You that You *will* lead us to springs of living water. And we *long* for the Day when You, our God, will *personally* wipe away every last tear from our eyes. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

Week 7 (Chapter 7): Interlude: God Seals His People & The Great Multitude

Revelation Bible Study: Week 7, Day 1

The Four Angels and the Seal of God

Scripture Focus: Revelation 7:1-3

¹ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. ² Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Four Corners of the Earth":** This is a common ancient expression (like our "north, south, east, and west") for the *entirety* of the world.
- **"Holding back the four winds":** In Old Testament prophecy, "wind" is almost always a symbol of God's *judgment* (e.g., a "scorching wind," Jeremiah 4:11). These four angels are holding back the full, chaotic, destructive power of God's wrath, which is ready to be unleashed.
- **"The Seal of the Living God":** In the Roman world, a **seal** (*sphragis*) was everything. It was a wax impression from a signet ring that marked **ownership**, **authenticity**, and **protection**. A document with Caesar's seal was authentic. A granary with the governor's seal was protected.
- **"Sealed... on their foreheads":** This was a public, visible mark of *identity*. Slaves were sometimes branded on the forehead to show *who owned them*. John's audience would understand this: God is about to visibly and permanently mark His *own servants* as *His property* to *protect* them from the coming judgment.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **A Divine "Pause":** Chapter 6 ended with the *start* of the great cosmic collapse (the 6th seal). Chapter 7 is a "time-out." The angels are literally holding back the judgment. God *pauses* the entire apocalypse for one reason: to **secure His people**.
- **"The Rising of the Sun" (East):** The "east" is the direction of hope and new beginnings. In the Bible, it's often the direction from which God's glory comes (Ezekiel 43:2).
- **The Seal's Purpose: Protection from *What*?**
 - This seal does **not** protect them from *martyrdom* or *tribulation* (as we'll see, the great multitude *comes out of* tribulation).
 - It *does* protect them from **divine wrath**. They are sealed *against* the judgments of God that are about to be poured out on "those who dwell on the earth." They are marked as "His" so that the "destroyer" will *pass over* them (like the blood on the doorposts in Exodus).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Mark on the Forehead:** This is a *direct* echo of **Ezekiel 9:3-6**. In Ezekiel's vision, God is about to judge Jerusalem. But first, He sends a man with a "writing case" and says, "Go... and **put a mark on the foreheads** of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations..." Then, God tells the executioners, "Slay... but **do not touch anyone on whom is the mark**." Revelation 7 is the *exact* same pattern: God marks His faithful remnant *before* He unleashes judgment.
- **The "Seal" of the Spirit:** Paul uses this exact same language for the *church*. **Ephesians 1:13**, "In him you also... were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance." The Holy Spirit *is* the "seal" that marks us as God's property *right now*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's Top Priority:** In the midst of the most terrifying collapse of history, God's first priority is *not* "fixing the climate" or "stopping the war." His first priority is *sealing His people*. His main concern is the *protection* of His church.
- **You Are "Sealed":** If you are a believer, Paul says you are *already sealed* by the Holy Spirit. You are marked as God's property. This is your "guarantee." It means, no matter what "judgment" (political, economic, physical) happens in the world, your *soul* is protected. You *belong* to Him, and no one can snatch you from His hand.
- **"Do Not Harm... Until":** This is a powerful picture of God's *sovereignty*. The angels *cannot* act until God gives the word. The judgment *waits* on the salvation and sealing of God's people.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Chapter 7 is a "pause" in the judgment. Why do you think God *shows* John this "interlude" right at this moment?
2. What is the difference between being "sealed" (protected *from God's wrath*) and being *exempt* (protected *from all suffering*)?
3. In the 1st century, a "seal" meant "ownership." What does it *practically* mean in your daily life to know that you are "owned" by God?
4. If you are *already* "sealed with the Holy Spirit" (Eph 1:13), how does that give you boldness to face the "winds of judgment" (chaos, trouble) in the world?

Call to Action

Your call is to *live like you're sealed*. You are God's protected property. Identify *one fear* about the future (your finances, your family, the world) that is "blowing" on you. Now, in prayer, hold that fear up to God and declare, "I am *sealed*. I am *Your* property. This 'wind' cannot harm my soul."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the "seal" of the Spirit.)

"O Living God, who commands the angels, thank You for pausing the winds of judgment to seal Your servants. Thank You that, in Christ, You have already sealed me with Your Holy Spirit as a guarantee. I am *Yours*. I am Your property. Give me the confidence to live as one who is owned and protected by You, no matter what winds may blow. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 7, Day 2

The 144,000 Sealed

Scripture Focus: Revelation 7:4-8

⁴ And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

⁵ 12,000 from the tribe of Judah, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, sealed, ⁶ 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, sealed, ⁷ 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, sealed, ⁸ 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin, sealed.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A "Strange" List:** Any 1st-century Jewish reader would find this list of tribes *very strange*.
 - **Judah is first:** Reuben was the *firstborn*, but **Judah** (the tribe of the "Lion," the tribe of King David and Jesus) is listed first. This is a *Christ-centered* list.
 - **Dan is missing:** The tribe of Dan (infamous for its *idolatry*, see Judges 18) is completely *omitted*.
 - **Ephraim is missing:** Ephraim (also infamous for idolatry) is also *omitted*.
 - **Joseph & Levi are in:** Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh's father) is listed, as is Manasseh. And Levi (the priestly tribe, which *never* received a land inheritance) is *included* here.
- **The Message:** This is *not* a standard, "clean" genealogical record. It is a *theological* list. It's a list of the *new, redeemed, and purified* "Israel" with the idolatrous tribes *removed* and the "King" (Judah) placed at the head.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

Who are the 144,000? This is one of the biggest debates in the book.

- **View 1: Literal, Ethnic Israel (Dispensational/Futurist).**
 - This is a literal 144,000 *ethnic Jews* (12,000 from each tribe) whom God will seal and protect *during* the future Great Tribulation. They are a "remnant" of faithful Jews who will be saved and will likely be powerful evangelists during that time. The "Church" (View 2) is a *separate* group, seen in the next vision.
- **View 2: Symbolic of the Church (Idealist/Amillennial).**
 - This is not a literal number, but a *symbolic* one.
 - **12** = The number of God's people (12 tribes, 12 apostles).
 - **1000** = The number of "completeness" or a "vast multitude."
 - **12 x 12 x 1000** = The "perfect and complete number" of *all* of God's redeemed people, the "Church Militant" (the church on earth).
 - In this view, the "144,000" (the church on earth) and the "Great Multitude" (the church in heaven, seen next) are *the same group* viewed from two different perspectives. "Israel" is used as a *title* for the church (see Gal 6:16, "the Israel of God").

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Military Census:** In the Old Testament (e.g., **Numbers 1**), a census was taken to "count" the *fighting men* or the *army* of Israel. This "144,000" has the feel of a *military roster*. They are the "sealed" *army of God* on earth, ready for the "holy war" of the Tribulation (a war they "fight" by bearing witness).
- **The "Remnant":** Throughout the Old Testament, God *always* preserved a "faithful remnant" of Israel, even in times of great apostasy (e.g., **Isaiah 10:21-22**). This vision shows that God *still* has a faithful, sealed remnant.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God is *Specific*:** Regardless of which view you take, the *point* is that God is *specific* and *orderly*. He doesn't just "save a bunch of people." He *knows the number*. He *knows the name* of every tribe. He *knows you*. You are not "one of many" to Him; you are *counted* and *sealed* by name.
- **The "Army of God":** If this is a military census, it's a reminder that we are the "Church Militant." We are not in a "playground"; we are in a "battleground." We are sealed *for* protection, but also *for* service.
- **The Primacy of Jesus:** The list *starts* with **Judah**. This is a critical reminder. Our identity as "God's people" doesn't begin with *us* (our "firstborn" status, like Reuben); it begins with *Him* (our "King," like Judah).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John "heard" the number 144,000 (v. 4). In the next section, he will "see" a multitude. Why the difference between "hearing" (a specific number) and "seeing" (an innumerable crowd)?
2. Which view of the 144,000 (Literal Israel or Symbolic Church) makes more sense to you, and why?
3. The list is "strange" (Dan and Ephraim are missing). What does this "editing" of the list tell you about God's values (e.g., His hatred of idolatry)?
4. If this is a "military roster" of God's army, what "battle" are *you* fighting today? How does knowing you are "sealed" for this army give you courage?

Call to Action

Your call is to "remember your tribe." Your identity is *not* "American," "Nebraskan," or "Program Manager." Your *primary* identity is as a member of the "sealed" people of God, under the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." Live in *that* identity today.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the "Church Militant".)

"Lord God, our King, You are the Lion of Judah. We are Your people, the "Israel of God." You have counted us. You have sealed us. You have called us into Your army. Forgive us when we "go AWOL" through sin or fear. Give us the courage to stand for You today, knowing that we are Your sealed, protected, and chosen servants. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 7, Day 3

The Great Innumerable Multitude

Scripture Focus: Revelation 7:9-10

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"After this I looked...":** This is a *new* vision. John *heard* a specific number (144,000). Now he *looks* and *sees* an *innumerable* crowd.
- **"From every nation...":** This is the fulfillment of the "new song" in Chapter 5 ("ransomed from every tribe..."). This is the *global* church.
- **"White Robes":** The "garment of victory" and *imputed righteousness*.
- **"Palm Branches":** This is a *specific* symbol. Palm branches were used in Israel for *one* main festival: the **Feast of Tabernacles** (*Sukkot*). This was the *joyful* celebration of the *end* of the harvest, where they "dwelt" in booths to remember how God *delivered* them from the wilderness and *brought them into* the Promised Land.
- **The Message:** John is seeing the ultimate "Feast of Tabernacles." The great "harvest" of souls is *over*, and the redeemed are *celebrating* their final *deliverance* from the "wilderness" of the world.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Who is this Multitude? (Connecting to the 144,000)**
 - **View 1 (Dispensational/Futurist):** The 144,000 (v. 4-8) are the *Jewish remnant* on earth. The Great Multitude (v. 9-17) is the *Gentile Church* in heaven, many of whom have been martyred during the Tribulation. They are two *different* groups.
 - **View 2 (Symbolic):** The 144,000 and the Multitude are *the same group* (the complete Church). John *hears* the number of the "Church Militant" on earth (144,000 - specific, counted, an "army"). Then he *sees* the "Church Triumphant" in heaven (a "great multitude" - innumerable, celebrating, at rest). It's two different perspectives on the same people.
- **Their Song (v. 10):** "Salvation belongs to our God... and to the Lamb!"
 - This is the *theme* of heaven. It is the "cry" of the redeemed.
 - They are *not* celebrating *their own* victory ("Look, we made it!"). They are celebrating *God's* victory ("Salvation belongs to Him!").
 - And, once again, they give *equal praise* to "God who sits on the throne AND to the Lamb."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Feast of Tabernacles: Leviticus 23:40**, "And you shall take... **branches of palm trees**... and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days."

- **Palm Sunday:** This also echoes **John 12:13**, when the crowds "took **branches of palm trees** and went out to meet him [Jesus], crying out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...'" The "Palm Sunday" procession on earth is now fulfilled in the "Palm Sunday" *celebration* in heaven.
- **Abrahamic Covenant:** This is the ultimate fulfillment of **Genesis 12:3** ("all peoples on earth will be blessed") and **Genesis 22:17** ("your offspring will be as numerous as the stars... and the sand...").

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Face" of the Church:** This is what the *global* church looks like. It is not *one* color, *one* language, or *one* culture. It is "every nation... tribes... peoples... languages." This is a *direct refutation* of any kind of racism, nationalism, or cultural "superiority." If your "heaven" doesn't look like *this*, it's not the *biblical* heaven.
- **The "Why" of Missions:** This verse is the *fuel* for global missions. God's *will* is that this "multitude" be gathered. Our job is to *be* the instruments He uses to "ransom" them from "every tribe."
- **The "Harvest" is Coming:** This is a vision of *hope*. It's a "spoiler" of the end. It shows that God *wins*. The "harvest" *will* be gathered in. This *will* be the final celebration.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This multitude is "from every nation, tribe, people, and language." How does this *specific, diverse* description challenge the way you *picture* "the Church"?
2. The "palm branches" symbolize the Feast of Tabernacles (celebrating *deliverance* and *harvest*). What "wilderness" are you in right now, and how does this "end-of-harvest" vision give you hope?
3. The cry is "Salvation belongs to our God!" How is this different from the cry "Salvation belongs to *me* (because I believed)"?
4. If this *is* the future of the Church, what is *one thing* you could do *this week* to better *embrace* or *support* the "every nation" aspect of your faith?

Call to Action

Your call is to "wave a palm branch." Take 5 minutes to celebrate the "Feast of Tabernacles" *now*. Put on a joyful, loud worship song. Stand up, and (even if it feels silly) *raise your hands* (your "palm branches") and "cry out with a loud voice," thanking God for *His* salvation.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the global church.)

"O God, our Father, we praise You for the vision of this Great Multitude. We praise You that You are gathering a people from every nation, tribe, people, and language. Break our small-minded, tribal hearts. Give us Your global vision. Use us to bring in the harvest, so that we may one day

stand with them, waving our palms and crying 'Salvation belongs to our God, and to the Lamb!' Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 7, Day 4

The Angelic "Amen" Chorus

Scripture Focus: Revelation 7:11-12

¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Concentric Circles" Again:** We are back to the full "throne room" scene from Chapter 5.
 1. **Center:** The Throne (God) and the Lamb.
 2. **Multitude:** The "Great Multitude" (the Church) is now "before the throne" (v. 9).
 3. **Circle 1:** The Elders (v. 11).
 4. **Circle 2:** The 4 Living Creatures (v. 11).
 5. **Circle 3:** "All the angels" (v. 11).
- **The "AMEN!" (v. 12):** The angels "overhear" the shout of the Great Multitude ("Salvation belongs to our God!"). Their response is a resounding "AMEN!" ("It is true! So be it!").
- **The Angels' Song:** The angels then *add* their *own* seven-fold doxology. This is *pure* worship. It's the "angels' song" from Chapter 5 (5:12) but with "thanksgiving" added. They are *giving thanks* for the *salvation* they have just witnessed.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Worship Loop":** This is another *responsive* worship loop.
 1. **The Redeemed (Multitude) Shout:** "Salvation belongs to our God!" (v. 10).
 2. **The Angels (Creation) Respond:** "AMEN!" (v. 12).
 3. **The Angels (Creation) Add:** "Blessing and glory and wisdom..." (v. 12).
- **The Angels' Fascination:** This scene is the fulfillment of **1 Peter 1:12**, which says that the "gospel" is "things into which *angels long to look*." The angels, who never *needed* salvation, are in *awe* of it. They see the "harvest" of redeemed humans, and they *erupt* in praise.
- **The Seven-Fold Praise (v. 12):**
 1. **Blessing:** All "good" comes from Him.
 2. **Glory:** His "weight" and "character."
 3. **Wisdom:** His "plan" (of salvation) is perfect.
 4. **Thanksgiving:** *This* is the "new" word. They are *thanking* God for *our* salvation.
 5. **Honor:** His "reputation" is perfect.
 6. **Power:** His "ability" is perfect.
 7. **Might:** His "strength" is perfect.

- **"Amen... Amen!":** The song is "bookended" with "Amen." It is *doubly* true and *eternally* sealed.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Posture of Worship:** "Fell on their faces" (v. 11). This is the *ultimate* posture of submission and awe, reserved *only* for God. This is what Abraham did (Gen 17:3) and what the elders do (Rev 4:10).
- **Angelic Worship:** This is the *same song* the angels sang in **Revelation 5:12** ("Worthy is the Lamb... to receive..."), but now *redirected* to "our God" in *thanksgiving* for the *completion* of that salvation.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Your Salvation Amazes the Angels:** This is a profound, mind-bending truth. Your *personal* salvation—the fact that God ransomed *you*—is a source of *amazement and worship* for the entire angelic host. We are often "bored" with the gospel, but the *angels* are *fascinated* by it.
- **Worship Includes "Thanksgiving":** The angels add "thanksgiving" to their list. Our worship should *never* be divorced from *gratitude*. We are not just "stating facts" about God (He is wise, He is powerful); we are *thanking* Him for *applying* those facts *to us* (His *wisdom* in saving us, His *power* in redeeming us).
- **The "Amen" of Agreement:** The angels hear the song of the redeemed and say, "AMEN!" This is our job *with each other*. When a fellow believer shares a "praise report," our first response should be a heartfelt "Amen!" ("I agree! God is good!").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The angels "fell on their faces" (v. 11). What is the *posture* of your heart in worship? Is it "casual" or "in awe"?
2. The angels, who are "sinless," *add their praise* to the song of *redeemed sinners*. What does this tell you about the "unity" of heaven?
3. The angels add "thanksgiving" (v. 12). What is *one specific thing* about your *salvation* that you are *thankful* for today?
4. How does it make you *feel* to know that "all the angels" are *celebrating* your redemption?

Call to Action

Your call is to "amaze the angels." Take 3 minutes. Do *not* ask God for *anything*. Instead, just *thank* Him. List out, one by one, the "seven-fold" praise. "God, I give You *thanksgiving* for... I praise You for Your *wisdom* in... I praise You for Your *power* over..." Join the angels' song.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(The "Te Deum," an ancient Christian hymn.)

"We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting. To Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!' ...The glorious company of the apostles praise Thee. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise Thee. The noble army of martyrs praise Thee. The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 7, Day 5

The "Who" and "How" of the Multitude

Scripture Focus: Revelation 7:13-14

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know."

And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **A "Rhetorical" Question:** The elder (one of the 24, representing the "redeemed") asks John a question, not because he *doesn't* know the answer, but to *prompt* the revelation.
- **"Sir, you know":** This is John's humble response. He is not a "prophetic expert"; he is a *recipient* of the vision. He defers to the "glorified" elder.
- **"The Great Tribulation":** The Greek is *tes thlipseos tes megales*. This is a *specific* phrase. It is "The Tribulation, the Great One."
- **"Washed their robes... in the blood":** This is a *paradox*. How do you wash a white robe *in blood* and make it *whiter*? This would be a *shocking* image. It's *theologically* brilliant. It shows that our "righteousness" (the white robe) is not *our own*. It is *acquired* and *cleaned* only by the *sacrificial blood* of Christ.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

Who are they, and when did they "come out"?

- **The "Great Tribulation":** What is this?
 - **A Future, 7-Year Period (Dispensational/Futurist):** This is a *specific*, future "Great Tribulation" (often 7 years) after the rapture. This "Great Multitude" is therefore made up of *Gentile believers* (and *not* the 144,000) who are *saved and martyred during* that period.
 - **The Entire Church Age (Idealist/Amillennial):** "The Great Tribulation" is the *entire period* between Christ's first and second comings. The "church" is *always* in "tribulation" (see John 16:33, "In this world you *will have tribulation*"). This "multitude" is therefore the *entire Church Triumphant* in heaven, from all ages, who have "come out of" the world's tribulation.

- **The Fall of Jerusalem (Preterist):** This was the *specific*, intense "tribulation" of AD 66-70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. This "multitude" is the *Jewish-Christian remnant* who *escaped* that judgment and were vindicated.
- **The "Blood-Washed" Robe:**
 - This is the *heart* of the Gospel. It is *not* "They washed their robes." It is "They washed their robes *in the blood of the Lamb*."
 - Our "white robes" are not from *our* good works or *our* "sin-avoidance." Our *only* source of cleansing is His *sacrifice*. We are clean *because* He was slain.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Great Tribulation":** Jesus prophesied this in **Matthew 24:21**, "For then there will be **great tribulation** (*thlipsis megalē*), such as has not been from the beginning of the world..."
- **Washed in Blood:** This is the language of *redemption*. **1 John 1:7**, "if we walk in the light... the **blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us** from all sin."
- **White Robes:** This is the *fulfillment* of the promise to the faithful in *Sardis*. **Revelation 3:5**, "The one who conquers will be clothed thus in **white garments**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Cost" of the Robe:** This is the *answer* to "Who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:17).
 - **Question:** "Who are these?"
 - **Answer:** "The ones who 'came out of the great tribulation.'"
 - **Question:** "How did they 'stand'?"
 - **Answer:** "They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
- **The *Only* Way:** This verse is a powerful summary of salvation. It is *not* "Jesus + our good works." It is *not* "Jesus + our suffering." It is *only* the **blood of the Lamb**. Our suffering ("tribulation") is the *context* in which we live, but His *blood* is the *source* of our cleansing.
- **No "Clean" Robes:** There is no one in heaven (except Christ) who has a *naturally* clean robe. *Everyone* in the multitude is a "sinner" who has been "washed." Heaven is a "hospital for sinners," not a "museum for saints."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The elder asks John a question he *already knows* the answer to. Why do you think God (or His messengers) often teaches us by *asking questions*?
2. What is the "great tribulation" *you* are facing right now (a trial, a temptation, a suffering)?
3. How does the "paradox" of "washing robes in blood" to make them "white" explain the Gospel?
4. This verse *answers* "Who can stand?" How does it feel to know that the *only* reason you will "stand" is because your robe is "washed in His blood"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "wash your robe." This is the language of **1 John 1:9**. Take 3 minutes to *confess* your sins to God. Don't just "say" them; *picture* yourself "dipping" your "soiled robe" into the "blood of the Lamb" and, by His grace, see it as *white*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the hymn "Nothing But the Blood.")

"What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

O precious is the flow That makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood
of Jesus.

Lord, I thank You for this cleansing. I stand only in Your righteousness. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 7, Day 6

The "No More" Promises of Heaven

Scripture Focus: Revelation 7:15-17

¹⁵ "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Therefore...":** This is the *result* of being "washed in the blood." *Because* they are washed...
- **"They are before the throne... and serve him":** This is the fulfillment of the *Priest's* role (from 5:10).
- **"Shelter them with his presence":** The Greek is *skenosei*, "He will *tabernacle* over them." This is the *exact* same word used in John 1:14 ("The Word... *tabernacled* among us"). This is the fulfillment of the Feast of *Tabernacles*. God Himself *is* the "shelter."
- **The "No More" List:** This list is a *direct reversal* of the *curses* of the world and the *judgments* of the seals:
 - "Hunger no more..." (Reverses the Black Horse of Famine).
 - "Sun shall not strike... scorching heat..." (Reverses the coming "scorching" judgments, e.g., 16:8).
 - "Wipe away every tear..." (Reverses the "weeping" of 5:4 and the "tribulation" of 7:14).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The Lamb... will be their shepherd":** This is the *ultimate* paradox.
 - The **Lamb** (*arnion*, the sacrifice)
 - ...is the **Shepherd** (*poimanej*, the leader, the King).
- The One who *died* for the sheep is the One who *leads* the sheep. His *past* sacrifice is the *source* of His *eternal* authority.
- **"Springs of Living Water":** This is the final fulfillment of *all* of God's promises. It is eternal *life* and eternal *satisfaction*.
- **"God will wipe away every tear":** This is the final act of *personal* intimacy. The "Sovereign Lord" of the universe (v. 10) is also the *personal Comforter* who *personally* dries the eyes of His children.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Shepherd:** This is a *direct* echo of **Psalm 23:1-2**, "The LORD is my **shepherd**; I shall not want... He leads me beside **still waters** (*living water*).¹ The "LORD" (Yahweh) of Psalm 23 is *identified* as the "Lamb" (Jesus) in Revelation 7.
- **"No More Hunger":** **Isaiah 49:10**, "They shall **not hunger or thirst**, neither **scorching wind nor sun shall strike them**, for he who has pity on them will **lead them**, and by **springs of water** will he **guide them**."
- **"Wipe away tears":** **Isaiah 25:8**, "He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will **wipe away tears from all faces**."
- **Conclusion:** John is showing his audience that every one of the Old Testament's *greatest promises* of the "messianic age" is *literally* and *personally* fulfilled by *Jesus the Lamb* for the *Great Multitude* in heaven.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is "Why":** This is the *end* of the story. This is *why* we "come out of the great tribulation." This is *why* we "wash our robes." *This* is the *hope* that we "hold fast" to.
- **The "No More" List for You:** This is a promise for *your* future.
 - Every tear you cry *will be* wiped away.
 - Every "hunger" (physical, emotional, spiritual) *will be* satisfied.
 - Every "scorching heat" of trial *will be* over.
- **"The Lamb is the Shepherd":** This is our "leadership model." The only One "worthy" to lead is the One who was "slain." This is true in the church, in the home, and in our lives. We "lead" by "serving" and "sacrificing."
- **The Answer to 6:17:** Chapter 6 ended: "Who is able to stand?"
 - Chapter 7 answers: **The one who is "sealed" (7:3) and "washed" (7:14).**
 - *That* is who can stand.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This passage is a list of "reversals" (no more hunger, no more tears). What is the *biggest* "curse" of this world that you are *most* looking forward to being "reversed" in heaven?
2. The "Lamb" (sacrifice) is the "Shepherd" (leader). How does this *one* image summarize the entire "upside-down" nature of God's Kingdom?
3. The promise is not just "no more tears," but that "God will *wipe away* every tear." Why is this *personal*, *intimate* action from God so comforting?
4. After 7 weeks of study, how has your view of "Revelation" changed?

Call to Action

Your call is to "be a shepherd." The Lamb *leads* His people "to springs of living water." Today, *you* be a "little shepherd." Find *one person* in your life who is "hungry, thirsty, or weeping," and do *one small thing* to "guide them" to the "living water" (Christ). (This could be a text, a prayer, a kind word, or sharing this very verse).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the promises of Revelation 7.)

"O Lord our God, O Lamb in the midst of the throne, our Shepherd. We are in the "great tribulation" of this world. We are hungry. We are thirsty. We are weeping. But we *trust* in Your promise. Thank You that You *will* shelter us. Thank You that You *will* lead us to springs of living water. And we *long* for the Day when You, our God, will *personally* wipe away every last tear from our eyes. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

Week 8 (Chapter 8): The Seventh Seal & The First Four Trumpets: Judgment on Creation

Revelation Bible Study: Week 8, Day 1

The Seventh Seal: Silence in Heaven

Scripture Focus: Revelation 8:1-2

¹ When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Cliffhanger" Resolved:** The seven seals (Chapter 6) unleashed the "birth pains" (the horsemen) and showed the cosmic collapse. The seventh seal was the "end" of the scroll. The 1st-century audience would be on the *edge of their seat*. What happens when the *last seal* is broken?
- **"Silence in Heaven":** This is *shocking*. Heaven, which has been *filled* with the unceasing, thunderous worship of creatures, elders, and angels (Chapters 4 & 5), suddenly goes *completely silent*.

- **"About half an hour":** This is a *specific* and *eerie* timeframe. It's not a "moment" of silence; it's a *prolonged, agonizing, dreadful hush*. This is the "calm before the storm." The silence is the sound of heaven *holding its breath* in awesome dread of the judgments that are about to be unleashed.
- **"Seven Angels... Seven Trumpets":** Trumpets, in the Old Testament, were used to:
 1. **Sound an alarm** for war (Jeremiah 4:19).
 2. **Announce a king's** coronation (1 Kings 1:39).
 3. **Call an assembly** for worship (Leviticus 23:24, Rosh Hashanah).
- Here, they are clearly an *alarm for war*. These are the *battle trumpets* of God's judgment.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The 7th Seal is the 7 Trumpets:** The seventh seal is not a *separate* judgment. The seventh seal *opens to reveal* the next *series* of judgments: the seven trumpets. The "scroll" (the seals) contained the *entire plan*.
 - **Seals 1-6:** The "birth pains."
 - **Seal 7:** The "hard labor" begins, which *contains* the 7 Trumpets and the 7 Bowls.
- **The "Seven Angels Who Stand Before God":** This is traditionally identified as a special "archangel" class, possibly the "seven angels of the presence" mentioned in non-biblical Jewish texts (like 1 Enoch). They are God's "generals," His *chief messengers* of judgment.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Silence":** This is a sign of *dread* and *awe* before God's judgment.
 - **Habakkuk 2:20:** "But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth **keep silence** before him."
 - **Zephaniah 1:7:** "**Be silent** before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near..."
- **"Seven Trumpets":** This is a direct echo of the **Battle of Jericho (Joshua 6:4-5)**. In that story, *seven priests* with *seven trumpets* marched around the city for *seven days*, and on the seventh day, they blew the trumpets and the *walls fell down*.
- **Message:** The Trumpet Judgments are God's "Jericho" march against the *walls* of the rebellious world.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Hush" of Awe:** We are a "noisy" people. Our lives are filled with podcasts, music, TV, and "alerts." We are terrified of silence. This verse shows that the *proper* response to the holiness and judgment of God is not "noise," but *awed silence*.
- **God's Judgment is Orderly:** This is not chaos. God's judgment is a *structured, orderly, and escalating* plan. He gives the trumpets to *His* angels. He is in *complete control* of the "storm."
- **The Calm Before the Storm:** This "half-hour" of silence is a *pause of mercy*. It is the "deep breath" before the plunge. It gives (or at least signifies) one last, silent moment for repentance before the *real* judgments begin.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Heaven, the place of *constant* worship, went silent for "half an hour." Try to imagine that. What kind of *dread* or *awe* does that image produce in you?
2. Why do you think "silence" is the *prelude* to this next, harsher set of judgments?
3. The judgments are "trumpets," just like at Jericho. What does this tell you about *how* God "fights" His battles? (It was the *trumpets* and the *shout* that brought the walls down, not a battering ram).

4. When was the last time *you* were truly "silent before the Lord" for even 5 minutes? How hard is that for you?

Call to Action

Your call is to *practice the silence*. For just **five minutes** today, do what heaven did. Go somewhere with *no noise*. No phone, no music, no podcasts. Just sit in *total silence* and "be silent before the Lord," meditating on His holiness and awesome power.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by Søren Kierkegaard.)

"Teach me, O God, not to torture myself, not to make a martyr out of myself through distracting thoughts, but to be simple and to be quiet. For the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him. Grant me the grace of this silence. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 8, Day 2

The Altar, the Incense, and the Fire

Scripture Focus: Revelation 8:3-5

³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Temple Imagery:** This is a *direct* vision of the Jerusalem Temple worship.
 - **"The Golden Altar":** This was the **Altar of Incense**, which stood *inside* the Holy Place, right *before* the veil that led to the Holy of Holies (where the throne/ark was).
 - **"Golden Censer":** The priest would take this censer, fill it with *coals from the sacrificial altar* outside, and then *add incense* on the golden altar inside.

- **"Prayers of all the saints":** This *connects back* to 5:8 (the "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints"). It also *connects back* to the "souls under the altar" (6:10) crying, "**How long, O Lord?**"
- **The "Fire... Threw it on the earth":** This is the climax. The angel takes the *same censer* that held the *prayers*... fills it with the *fire* of God's judgment (from the *same altar*)... and *hurls it at the earth*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **God's Judgment is His Answer to Prayer:** This is the *central point* of this passage.
 1. The saints (especially the martyrs) cry out, "How long... avenge our blood!" (6:10).
 2. Those prayers *ascend* to God, mixed with *incense* (a "pleasing aroma"), at the golden altar (8:3-4).
 3. God *answers* those prayers by taking *fire* from that *same altar* and casting it to the earth (8:5).
- **Conclusion:** The trumpet judgments are not a "random" act of rage. They are God's *specific, holy, and just answer* to the prayers of His persecuted people. **Prayer moves the hand of God.**
- **The "Storm" Returns:** The "peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" (v. 5) are the *same sounds* that came *from the throne* in 4:5. The "dreadful silence" is now *over*. The judgment, *fueled by the prayers of the saints*, is beginning.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Incense Altar: Exodus 30:1, 7-8,** "You shall make an altar to burn incense on... And Aaron shall burn... fragrant incense every morning..."
- **Fire from the Altar:** This is *exactly* what happened in **Ezekiel 10:2**. God tells an angel, "Go in... and **fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim**" (from the altar) "and **scatter them over the city**" (Jerusalem) as an act of judgment.
- **Casting Fire:** In **Leviticus 16:12**, the High Priest *brought* the censer of fire *into* the Holy of Holies. Here, the angel *casts* the censer of fire *out* in judgment.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Your Prayers Have Power:** This vision should *revolutionize* your prayer life. Your prayers are not "lost." They are "collected" at God's *altar*. They "go up before God."
- **Our "Vengeance":** The *only* "vengeance" a Christian is allowed to take is *prayer*. We "avenge" the innocent and the persecuted *not* by "taking up swords" (like the red horse), but by *praying* to the "Sovereign Lord, holy and true" and asking *Him* to bring His justice.
- **God's "Strange Work":** God's judgment is His "strange work" (Isaiah 28:21). He is a God of mercy. But this vision shows that His *justice* is just as *holy* as His mercy. He *will* answer the cries of the oppressed.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision *connects* "the prayers of the saints" (v. 4) *directly* to the "fire thrown on the earth" (v. 5). How does this change your view of "imprecatory" prayers (prayers for God's justice)?
2. The angel uses the *same* censer for *prayers* and for *judgment*. What does this symbolism tell you about God?
3. The "silence" (v. 1) is broken by "thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" (v. 5). This is the *start* of the judgment. How do these *sounds* prepare you for what is to come?
4. When you pray, do you *believe* your prayers are "going up before God" with this kind of *significance*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "add incense to the altar." Today, follow the example of 6:10. Pray *specifically* for *justice* for the persecuted church. Pray, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long? Avenge the blood of your servants." Join your prayers to the "prayers of all the saints."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Psalm 141.)

"O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You! Let my prayer be counted as incense before You, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! But my eyes are toward You, O GOD, my Lord; in You I seek refuge. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 8, Day 3

The First Trumpet: Hail, Fire, and Blood on the Earth

Scripture Focus: Revelation 8:6-7

⁶ Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Hail and fire, mixed with blood":** John's audience would *immediately* recognize this. This is the **Seventh Plague of Egypt**.
- **"Thrown upon the earth":** This is the *same* "throwing" action from verse 5. The "fire from the altar" is now *manifesting* as this first plague.
- **The "Target":** This judgment is *not* against *people* (directly). It's against the *earth* itself.
 - "Trees" (source of shelter and fruit).
 - "Green grass" (source of food for livestock).
- This is an *ecological* and *economic* disaster. It's an attack on the *food supply* and the *stability* of the planet.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **A "Third": The Judgment is *Limited*:** This is the *key* to the trumpet judgments.
 - **Seals (Horsemen):** Affected a "fourth" of the earth (6:8).
 - **Trumpets:** Affect a "third" of the earth.
 - **Bowls (Chapter 16):** Will be *total* and *complete*.
- **The escalation is clear.** This is a *severe warning*, but it is *still* held in check. It is "de-creation," but not *total* de-creation. It is God's *restrained* wrath, designed to *warn* and *lead to repentance*.
- **Symbolic vs. Literal:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** This will be a *literal*, catastrophic, supernatural event—a fiery, bloody hail storm that causes *global* devastation, burning up 1/3 of the world's forests and grasslands.
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** This was *symbolic* language for the *Roman invasion* of Judea. The "hail and fire" was the "scorched earth" tactic of the Roman armies, who "burned up" the "trees" (leadership) and "grass" (common people) of Israel.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Seventh Plague of Egypt: Exodus 9:23-24,** "Then Moses stretched out his staff... and the LORD sent thunder and **hail**, and **fire ran down to the earth**... there was **hail, and fire mixed with the hail**, very severe..."
- **The Message:** God is using the *same judgments* He used to *liberate His people from Egypt* to *judge the world* that has enslaved itself to sin.
- **Ezekiel's Judgment: Ezekiel 38:22,** "With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him [Gog], and I will rain upon him... **hailstones, fire, and sulfur.**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Ecological Catastrophe:** We live in an age that *understands* this imagery. We see *massive, unprecedented wildfires* (like in Australia, California, the Amazon) that "burn up" 1/3 of a region's "trees" and "all green grass." We see ecological collapse.
- **Our "God" of Nature:** This judgment is a *direct assault* on a "god" of the modern world: **"Mother Earth."** The world worships "creation" rather than the "Creator" (Romans 1). God shows His sovereignty over creation by *commanding* it to *de-create*.
- **Our "Source" of Life:** This plague attacks the very *source* of earthly life (food, shelter). It's a terrifying reminder that *God* is the one who provides "every good and perfect gift," and He can *just as easily* withhold it.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This judgment directly attacks the "earth" (trees, grass). Why do you think God's judgments often begin with *creation*?
2. The judgment is precisely "a third." What does this "limitation" (it's not "all") tell you about God's purpose in this judgment?
3. This is a direct echo of the plagues of Egypt. What is the *link* between God's "saving" His people (Exodus) and "judging" the world (Revelation)?
4. We see "wildfires" and "ecological disasters" all the time. How is *this* judgment (the 1st trumpet) *different* from a "natural disaster"?

Call to Action

Your call is to *thank the Creator*. Go outside for 60 seconds. Look at a "tree" or "green grass." Thank God *specifically* for that *one thing*. Thank Him for His common grace that *restrains* this judgment, for the food you eat, and for the "shelter" He provides.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Psalm 104.)

"O Lord, my God, You are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty... You make grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth...

When You hide Your face, they are dismayed; when You take away their breath, they die...

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 8, Day 4

The Second Trumpet: The Burning Mountain in the Sea

Scripture Focus: Revelation 8:8-9

⁸ The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood, ⁹ and a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Something like...":** John is struggling to *describe* what he's seeing. It's not *literally* a mountain; it's *like* a mountain—a *massive, fiery object* from the sky.
- **"Thrown into the sea":** The "sea" (the Mediterranean) was the *lifeblood* of the Roman Empire. It was the "Roman Lake." All of its *commerce, communication, and military power* depended on the sea.
- **The "Target":** This judgment is a *direct attack* on the *sea* (the source of commerce and empire).
 1. "A third of the sea became blood" (poisoned, dead).
 2. "A third of the living creatures... died" (ecological collapse).
 3. "A third of the ships were destroyed" (economic collapse).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Progression of Judgment:**
 - **1st Trumpet:** Judgment on the **Land** ("earth").
 - **2nd Trumpet:** Judgment on the **Sea**.
- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** This is a *literal* asteroid or "volcanic" mass that plunges into the ocean (perhaps the Atlantic or Mediterranean), causing a *catastrophic* poisoning of the water, a mass "die-off," and a *massive* tsunami ("a third of the ships destroyed").
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** This was *symbolic* of a great, "burning" *kingdom* (a "mountain" in OT prophecy) that "fell." Many see this as the "fall" of the *Roman Empire* itself, the "beast from the sea," and the *destruction* of its commerce.
 - **Symbolic (Idealist):** This is a *timeless* symbol of *political and economic chaos* that God uses as judgment.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The First Plague of Egypt:** This is the **First Plague**. **Exodus 7:20-21**, "...all the water in the Nile... was **turned into blood**. And the **fish in the Nile died**, and the Nile stank..."
- **The "Burning Mountain":** In the Old Testament, a "mountain" was a symbol for a *great kingdom* or *empire* (like Babylon).
 - **Jeremiah 51:25:** "Behold, I am against you, O **destroying mountain** [Babylon], ... I will... make you a **burnt mountain**."
- **The Message:** God is *again* using the plagues of Egypt. He is "turning the sea to blood" and "burning" the great "kingdoms" of the world that depend on it.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Fragility of "Global Commerce":** This is a *direct* hit on our modern world. Our *entire* global economy runs on "ships." 90% of all trade travels by sea. We are *obsessed* with "commerce."
- **One "Asteroid":** This vision shows that God can *destroy* one-third of the *entire* global economy with *one* "burning mountain." It's a reminder of our *total* economic fragility. We saw a *tiny glimpse* of this when "one ship" (the *Ever Given*) got stuck in the Suez Canal and crippled global trade. This vision is *that* crisis, multiplied by a *billion*.
- **Ecological "Die-Off":** We see *literal* "red tides" and *massive* "dead zones" in the oceans (like the Gulf of Mexico) where the "living creatures... die" due to pollution. This vision shows God *commanding* what we are *causing*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This judgment targets the "sea," the heart of *commerce*. Why do you think God *specifically* targets the *economy* as a form of judgment?
2. John says it was "something *like* a great mountain." He's *struggling* to describe it. Why is it important that these visions are *beyond* our normal experience?
3. Again, the judgment is a *limited* "third." If God *wanted* to, He could destroy *all* ships. Why does He *restrain* His wrath? What is the *purpose* of a "warning shot"?
4. How much of your *personal peace* and *security* is tied to the *global economy* ("your 401k," "gas prices," "supply chains")? How does this verse *challenge* that?

Call to Action

Your call is to *re-align your security*. Our "ships" are our "investments" (our 401k, our house, our savings). Today, *verbally confess* to God that *He* is your security, *not* your "ships." Pray, "Lord, my *true* treasure is in heaven, not in the 'sea' of this world's economy."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by St. Augustine of Hippo.)

"Thou, Lord, art my hope. Thou art my security. Thou art my riches. This world's economy is a 'stormy sea,' and its ships are fragile. But You are the 'rock that is higher than I.' Let me not trust in uncertain riches, but in You, the living God, who gives us all things. My trust is not in my 'ships,' but in the 'Architect' of the heavens and the earth. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 8, Day 5

The Third Trumpet: The Star "Wormwood"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 8:10-11

¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Great Star... Blazing Like a Torch":** This is another "celestial" object, like the "burning mountain." It's likely a *comet* or *asteroid* ("a star that *falls*").
- **"Rivers and Springs":** This is the *third target*.
 1. **1st Trumpet:** The Land.
 2. **2nd Trumpet:** The Sea (salt water).
 3. **3rd Trumpet:** The **Inland Waters** (fresh water).
- **The Message:** There is *no escape*. God is poisoning the *source* of drinking water.
- **"Wormwood":** This was *not* a "cute" name. **Wormwood** (*apsinthos*) was a *well-known* desert shrub in the ancient world. It was the *symbol of extreme bitterness, poison, and sorrow*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The name of the star is Wormwood":** This is *symbolic*. The "star" (the judgment) is "Bitterness."
- **"Many people died...":** This is the *first* trumpet where people *die* as a *direct* result (the famine of the black horse was indirect). The judgment is *escalating*.
- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** A literal *comet* or *asteroid* (or the *fragments* of one) will break up in the atmosphere and *poison* 1/3 of the world's *freshwater* sources (lakes, rivers, aquifers) with a *toxic, bitter* substance.
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** A "star" is a "ruler" or "angel." This was a *demonic/political* "star" (like a false teacher or a rebellious ruler) who "fell" and "poisoned" the "spiritual water" (the "teaching") of the people, leading to *spiritual* death.
 - **Symbolic (Historicist):** Some have pointed to "Wormwood" (which is *Chernobyl* in Ukrainian) and the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster (which poisoned the "waters") as a *fulfillment* of this.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Plague of Egypt:** This *also* echoes the **First Plague** (Exodus 7), where the *fresh* water of the Nile was *poisoned* ("turned to blood") and became *undrinkable*.
- **"Wormwood" as a Curse:** This is *all over* the Old Testament as a symbol of *God's judgment on idolatry and apostasy*.
 - **Jeremiah 9:15:** "Behold, I will feed this people with **wormwood** and give them **poisoned water** to drink."
 - **Jeremiah 23:15:** "...from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out... I will feed them with **wormwood** and give them **poisoned water** to drink."
 - **Deuteronomy 29:18:** A warning against *idolatry*, which is a "root bearing **poisonous fruit and wormwood**."
- **The Message:** This judgment is the *result of idolatry*. The world has "drunk" the "poison" of false gods, so God gives them "poison" to drink *literally*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Poisoned Water:** We are *acutely* aware of this. We live in a world of *polluted rivers, toxic-algae blooms, and industrial runoff* that *poison* our "springs of water." We see *literal* towns (like Flint, MI) where "many people" get sick "from the water, because it had been made bitter."
- **Spiritual "Wormwood":** This is also a powerful metaphor for the *poison of false teaching*. A "great star" (a famous pastor, a "blazing" celebrity, a "torch" of a movement) can "fall" into *apostasy* and "poison" the "living water" of the Gospel, making people "spiritually sick."
- **The "Bitter" Fruit of Sin:** "Wormwood" is what sin *always* produces. It *looks* appealing, but the "aftertaste" is *bitterness* and *death* (see "the woman Folly" in Proverbs).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This plague attacks "fresh water." What is the *difference* in horror between the *sea* (commerce) being poisoned and the *drinking water* (survival) being poisoned?
2. The star's name is "Wormwood," the symbol of *bitterness* from *idolatry*. What "idols" in our culture produce "bitter" fruit?
3. We see *literal* water pollution today. How is *this* plague different from a "man-made" disaster?
4. If this can also be *spiritual* ("poisoned teaching"), what is the *antidote* to the "wormwood" of false doctrine? (Hint: The *true* "living water").

Call to Action

Your call is to "drink the *true* water." "Wormwood" is bitter poison, but Jesus offers "living water" (John 4:10). Take a 60-second "pause" today. Get a literal glass of *clean water*. As you drink it, *thank* Jesus for being the *true* "spring of living water" who *never* becomes "bitter" and *never* fails.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on John 4.)

"Lord Jesus, the world is full of 'bitter water' and 'wormwood'—sin, idolatry, and false teaching. But You are the 'living water.' You said, 'Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.' Lord, give us this water, so that we may not be 'poisoned' by the world. You are our source. You are our life. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 8, Day 6

The Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck & The "Woe" Eagle

Scripture Focus: Revelation 8:12-13

¹² The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Fourth Judgment:** This is the *climax* of the "natural" judgments.
 - Land
 - Sea
 - Fresh Water
 - Heavens
- **"A Third of the Sun... Moon... Stars":** This is a *cosmic* judgment. It's an attack on the *light* itself, the *calendar*, the *seasons*—the very *order* of creation (Genesis 1:14-18).

- **"An Eagle":** The Greek could be "eagle" or "vulture."
 - **Eagle:** A *Roman* symbol. The "Roman Eagle" was the *standard* of the legions. This could be a *subversive* image: the "eagle" of Rome is now *crying "Woe"* to the earth.
 - **Vulture:** A symbol of *death* and *doom* ("Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather," Matt 24:28).
- **"Woe, woe, woe":** One "woe" for each of the *three remaining trumpets* (5, 6, 7).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "De-Creation" Continues:** God *created* the "sun, moon, and stars" on the *fourth day* of creation (Gen 1:14-19). This *fourth trumpet* is a *direct reversal* of the *fourth day of creation*. It's a "partial un-creation."
- **"Those who dwell on the earth":** This is a *key phrase* in Revelation. It is *not* just "people." It's a *technical term* for *unbelieving, rebellious humanity* who are "at home" on this earth and have *rejected* their heavenly citizenship.
- **The "Woe" Trumpets:** The eagle's cry marks a *major shift* in the judgments.
 - **Trumpets 1-4:** Were "natural" plagues against *creation* (the "set").
 - **Trumpets 5-7 (The "Woes"):** Will be *demonic* and *supernatural* plagues *directly* on *humanity* (the "actors"). The "horror" is about to be "cranked up."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Ninth Plague of Egypt:** This is the **Ninth Plague**. **Exodus 10:21-22**, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be **darkness over the land of Egypt**, a darkness to be felt.'"
- **Old Testament Prophets:** This is *classic* "Day of the Lord" language.
 - **Isaiah 13:10:** "For the **stars... will not give their light**, the **sun will be dark** at its rising, and the **moon will not shed its light**."
 - **Ezekiel 32:7:** "When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their **stars dark**; I will cover the **sun with a cloud**, and the **moon shall not give its light**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Lights Going Out":** We take "light" for granted. This judgment is on *light itself*. It's a "cosmic blackout." It's a picture of a world *literally* getting *darker*.
- **Spiritual Darkness:** This is a *physical picture* of a *spiritual reality*. When a "third of the sun" is struck, it's a picture of "spiritual darkness" covering the earth. When humanity *rejects* the "Light of the World" (Jesus, in John 8:12), the *result* is *actual darkness*.
- **A "Woe" is a "Warning":** The eagle's "woe" is *both* a *curse* and a *warning*. It's a *cry* of *grief* over the *horror* to come. Even in this "Woe," there is a *mercy*—an "alarm" to "wake up" before the *final* "woes" hit.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This judgment is a "partial un-creation" of the 4th day. Why is a "cosmic blackout" (darkness) such a *terrifying* judgment?
2. The judgment *shifts* here. Trumpets 1-4 were on "nature." Trumpets 5-7 (the "woes") will be on "mankind." Why do you think God *escalates* His judgments in this way?

3. The eagle cries "Woe, woe, woe" for the *next three* trumpets. How does this "warning" show both God's *severity* (it's bad) and His *mercy* (He's warning you)?
4. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). How is *this* plague the *literal* result of a world that *rejects* that Light?

Call to Action

Your call is to "walk in the Light." Jesus said, "Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you" (John 12:35). Today, identify *one area of "darkness"* in your life (a secret sin, a "bitter" attitude, a "dark" habit). Confess it, and *bring it into the Light* by talking to God (or a trusted friend) about it.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on John 8 & 12.)

"Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the world. Whoever follows You will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The world is dark, and the judgment is coming. The sun, moon, and stars are failing. But You are the 'bright morning star' (Rev 22:16) that *never* fails. Help me to 'walk in the light' as You are in the light. Do not let the darkness overtake me. Amen."

Week 9 (Chapter 9): The First Two Woes: Demonic Torment & Destruction

Revelation Bible Study: Week 9, Day 1

The Fifth Trumpet (First Woe): The Bottomless Pit

Scripture Focus: Revelation 9:1-3

¹ And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. ² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The First "Woe":** The eagle in 8:13 warned that the next three trumpets would be "Woes." This is the first one. The judgment is shifting from *ecological* (Trumpets 1-4) to *demonic and supernatural*.
- **"A Star Fallen":** In the ancient world (and the Old Testament), "stars" were often symbols for *angels* or *rulers*. Since this "star" *has* agency (he is "given a key" and "he opened"), this is not a literal star. It's a powerful angelic being.
- **"The Bottomless Pit" (The Abyss):** The Greek is *abyssos*. This was the "nightmare realm" of the ancient world. It was a place of *chaos, darkness, and imprisonment* for the most evil and unruly demons. It was *not* Hades/hell, but a *celestial prison*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Who is the "Fallen Star"?**
 1. **Satan:** This is a common view. He "fell from heaven" (Luke 10:18, Isaiah 14:12) and is "given the key" (given permission by God) to unleash his demonic hordes.
 2. **A Fallen Angel (Demon):** A powerful demonic prince, but not Satan himself.
 3. **A Good Angel:** Some (a minority view) see this as a *good* angel sent *from* heaven, who is "given" the key by God to *unleash* a judgment, just as the other angels blow trumpets.
- **The Smoke:** This is a physical manifestation of a spiritual reality. The "smoke" from the pit is so thick with *evil* that it *darkens the sun*. This is a *supernatural* darkness, an evil that blots out God's "light" (the sun, from 8:12).
- **The "Locusts":** These are not normal locusts. They come *from the Abyss*, they have the *power of scorpions*, and (as we'll see) they are intelligent. These are *demonic beings* given physical (or quasi-physical) form to enact a specific, terrifying judgment.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Eighth Plague of Egypt:** This is the **Eighth Plague. Exodus 10:12-15**, "Then the LORD said to Moses, '...that they [locusts] may come upon the land of Egypt...' ...so that the land was **darkened**." God is again using a "plague" from Exodus as His judgment.
- **The Prophet Joel:** This is a *direct* and *terrifying* echo of **Joel 1 & 2**.
 - **Joel 2:2:** "a day of darkness and gloom... like **locusts**..."
 - **Joel 2:10:** "The earth quakes... the **sun and the moon are darkened**, and the stars withdraw their shining." John's vision is the ultimate fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of a demonic "locust army."
- **The Abyss:** This is the same place the demons begged Jesus not to send them. **Luke 8:31**, "And they [the legion of demons] begged him not to command them to depart into the **abyss**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Reality of the Demonic:** Our modern, "sophisticated" world mocks the idea of a "bottomless pit" and "demonic locusts." This vision is a stark, terrifying reminder that the demonic realm is *real*.
- **"Supernatural" Evil:** The "smoke" that "darkens the sun" is a perfect picture of how evil *works*. It's not just "bad choices"; it's a *spiritual darkness* that *obscures the truth* and *blots out the light*. We see this in ideologies of hate, addiction, and despair that "cover" a culture.
- **God Holds the Key:** The most important point: the "star" (Satan or a demon) was "**given the key**." He does not *own* the key. He cannot "unlock" the Abyss *unless God permits it*. God is *still sovereign*, even over the "bottomless pit."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the first "Woe." The judgment shifts from "natural" (trees, sea) to "demonic" (locusts). Why do you think this "escalation" is necessary?
2. The "star" (Satan?) was "given the key." Why is it so important to remember that Satan is *on a leash* and can only do what God *permits*?
3. The "smoke" (evil) "darkened the sun" (truth). Where do you see "demonic smoke" (lies, despair, hate) "darkening" the "light" in our culture today?
4. How does the *reality* of a "bottomless pit" and "demonic locusts" change the *urgency* of the Gospel message?

Call to Action

Your call is to "walk in the Light." The *smoke* from the *pit* causes darkness, but Jesus is the *Light of the World* (John 8:12). Take 3 minutes today to **read John 1:1-5**. Thank God that the "Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Patrick's Breastplate.)

"I arise today Through the strength of Christ... I bind unto myself today The strong Name of the Trinity... I bind unto myself today The power of God to hold and lead...

Against the snares of devils, Against the incantations of false prophets, Against the black laws of paganism, Against the spells of witches and smiths and wizards, Christ to protect me today Against poison, against burning, Against drowning, against wounding, That I may come to abundant reward. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 9, Day 2

The Commission: Torment, Not Kill

Scripture Focus: Revelation 9:4-6

⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Not to harm the grass...":** This is *shocking*. These are "locusts" whose *one job* in nature is to *eat grass and trees*. This proves they are *not* natural. Their commission is supernatural.
- **"The Seal of God":** This is the *payoff* from **Chapter 7**. God *paused* the judgment (7:3) to *seal* His servants. Now, the demonic "locusts" are unleashed, and their "target list" *specifically excludes* "those people who have the seal of God." God's "seal" is a *real, effective* spiritual protection.
- **"Five Months":** This is a *specific* and *limited* time. It's also the *natural lifespan* of a locust. This judgment, though demonic, is *doubly limited* by God (He limits *who* they can harm, and for *how long*).
- **"Torment of a Scorpion":** A scorpion sting was not (usually) fatal, but it was *legendarily* painful—a burning, throbbing, relentless agony.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Purpose: Torment, Not Repentance (Yet):** The purpose of this plague is *not* (yet) to *kill*, but to *inflict agony*. It's to give "those who dwell on the earth" a *foretaste* of "hell on earth." It's a "severe mercy" designed to "shake them" from their rebellion.
- **"People will seek death...":** This is the *horror* of the plague. The "torment" (spiritual, mental, and/or physical) will be so *unbearable* that annihilation ("death") will seem like a *merciful escape*. But they will be *denied* that escape.
- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** A literal, future 5-month period where demonic beings are unleashed and inflict *physical, scorpion-like pain* on all unsealed people.
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** This was the "torment" of the *Jewish-Roman War* (AD 66-70). It was a 5-month period of *agony* (famine, siege, civil war) where the unfaithful Jews were "tormented" by the "demonic" (ruthless) Roman armies.
 - **Symbolic (Idealist):** This is a *timeless* picture of the *spiritual and mental torment* that sin *itself* unleashes (addiction, despair, anxiety, depression). It's the "hell" people create for themselves by *rejecting* God, and from which they *cannot escape*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Do Not Harm":** This is the *fulfillment* of the promise from **Ezekiel 9:6**, where the "executioners" of God are told: "...do not **touch anyone on whom is the mark** [the 'seal']".
- **"Seek Death":** This is the *curse* of the unrighteous.
 - **Jeremiah 8:3:** "Death shall be **preferred to life** by all the remnant..."
 - **Job 3:20-21:** "Why is light given to him who is in misery...? ...who **long for death, but it comes not...**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Real Protection:** This is one of the *greatest promises* for the believer. The "seal of God" (the Holy Spirit) is *not* a "magic bubble" that protects us from *all suffering* (martyrs are still killed). But it is an *absolute shield* against the *demonic wrath* of God's judgment. We are *safe* from *this* torment.
- **The "Hell" of Sin:** We see a *glimpse* of this torment today. The "torment" of a person in the *depths of drug addiction*, the *agony of total despair*, the *mental anguish of crippling anxiety*—these are all *foretastes* of a "torment" from which you "long to die, but death flees." It is the *natural* result of a world *separated* from its Creator.

- **God's Limited Judgment:** Even in *this* horror, God is *merciful*. He *limits* the time (5 months) and the *outcome* (torment, not death). He is *still* giving the world a *chance* to "wake up" before the *final* "Woe."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *first* command to the demons is *who not to harm* (those with the "seal"). What does this tell you about God's *priorities*?
2. The "seal" protects from *demonic torment*, but *not* necessarily from *martyrdom* (see 6:11). Why is this distinction important?
3. The torment is so bad that "people will seek death." What kind of *spiritual or mental* torment (that we see today) does this remind you of?
4. How does *knowing* that you are "sealed" (if you are a believer) give you *peace* and *boldness*, even when the world seems to be "unleashing hell"?

Call to Action

Your call is to *thank God for your seal*. Take 60 seconds. Close your eyes and *picture* the "seal of God on your forehead." Thank God *specifically* that this "seal" (the Holy Spirit) *protects you* from *this* demonic torment. Thank Him that you are *His* and *safe* from His wrath.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for protection.)

"Lord God, our Shield and our Defender, The world is full of torment and despair, a foretaste of the 'woe' to come. But You have *sealed* us with Your Holy Spirit. You have *marked* us as Your own. Hide us under the shadow of Your wings. Protect us from the 'stings' of the enemy. Let us not live in fear, but in the *peace* and *security* of Your seal. For we belong to You. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 9, Day 3

The Demonic Locust Army Described

Scripture Focus: Revelation 9:7-11

⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails and stings like

scorpions, and their power to torment people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Like... Like... Like...":** John is *struggling* to describe these "un-creatures." He is piling up similes. These are *not* literal (a horse with women's hair). They are *hybrid monsters*, a "nightmare" army, designed to be *terrifying* and *unnatural*.
- **The Description:**
 - "Horses prepared for battle": Symbol of *war* and *power*.
 - "Crowns of gold": Symbol of *victory* and *authority*.
 - "Human faces": Symbol of *intelligence* and *reason*.
 - "Women's hair": Symbol (perhaps) of *seduction* or *deception*.
 - "Lions' teeth": Symbol of *savagery* and *ruthlessness*.
 - "Iron breastplates": Symbol of *invulnerability*.
 - "Sound of... chariots": Symbol of *unstoppable, terrifying* force.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **A Demonic "Mockery" of Creation:** This army is a *demonic perversion* of the "four living creatures" from Chapter 4. Instead of a Lion, Ox, Man, and Eagle (God's perfect creation), we get this *monstrous hybrid* of a horse, human, lion, and scorpion (Satan's "de-creation").
- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** These are *literal demonic beings* that will be unleashed, and this is what they *will look like*.
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** This was a *symbolic* description of the *Roman army*. They were "like horses" (cavalry), had "crowns" (helmets), "iron breastplates," and the "sound of chariots."
 - **Symbolic (Modern):** Some have *wildly* speculated this is a "vision" of *attack helicopters* ("horses," "iron breastplates," "sound of wings," "stings in their tails"). This is *highly* unlikely, as it would have meant *nothing* to the 1st-century audience.
- **Their King (v. 11):** This is the *climax* of the description. This army is *not* a mindless "swarm." It has a *king*.
 - **Proverbs 30:27:** "the locusts have no king, yet all of them march in rank."
 - **Revelation 9:11:** These "locusts" **DO** have a king.
- **"Abaddon" / "Apollyon":**
 - **Hebrew (Abaddon):** Means "Destruction."
 - **Greek (Apollyon):** Means "Destroyer."
 - This is the *angel of the Abyss*. This is the *king of the demons*. Many see this as *Satan himself*, whose *entire purpose* is to "steal, kill, and **destroy**" (John 10:10).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Joel's Locusts:** This *elaborates* on **Joel 2:4-7**: "Their **appearance is like the appearance of horses**... Like the **rumbling of chariots**... they rush on... They are like **mighty men**; like **soldiers** they mount the wall..."
- **"Abaddon" (Destruction):** This is an Old Testament word for the *grave* or the *pit*.

- **Job 26:6:** "Sheol is naked before God, and **Abaddon** has no covering."
- **Psalms 88:11:** "Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in **Abaddon**?"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Face" of Evil:** This is what *organized evil* looks like. It is *intelligent* ("human faces"), *invulnerable* ("iron breastplates"), *ruthless* ("lions' teeth"), and *unstoppable* ("sound of chariots"). We see this in *organized crime, human trafficking rings, and oppressive regimes*.
- **Evil Has a Leader:** Evil is not just a "random force" or a "human mistake." It has a *leader*. It has a *king*. His name is "Destroyer." When we "fight" against sin, we are not just fighting "bad habits"; we are fighting *against* this "king" and his "dominion" (Ephesians 6:12).
- **The "De-Creation" of Man:** This *hybrid monster* is what *humanity* looks like when it *gives itself over* to the "Destroyer." We become *less than human*—a mix of *beast* (lion) and *intelligent evil* (human face).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John uses "like" over and over (v. 7-10). He *can't* perfectly describe these things. Why is it *more* terrifying that these are *indescribable* "nightmare" creatures?
2. This army is a "perversion" of God's creation. Where do you see *beauty* (God's creation) being *perverted* into *ugliness* (sin) in the world today?
3. The locusts have a king named "Destroyer." Jesus is a King named "Savior." How does this "battle of two kings" summarize the *entire* spiritual war?
4. If *this* is the "king" of the "bottomless pit," what does that tell you about the *nature* of the *place* he rules?

Call to Action

Your call is to "know your King." The *enemy's* king is "Apollyon" (Destroyer). *Your* King is *Jesus* (Savior). Take 60 seconds. *Thank* Jesus for being your "Savior," for *rescuing* you from the "kingdom of the Destroyer" and *transferring* you to "the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.")

"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath
willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 9, Day 4

The Sixth Trumpet (Second Woe): The Four Angels Released

Scripture Focus: Revelation 9:12-15

¹² The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The First Woe has passed":** A *pause* to build the *dread*. As horrible as the 5-month *torment* was, it's *over*. But now, the *second woe* (which *kills*) is coming.
- **"Voice from the... Golden Altar":** This is *critical*. The "golden altar" is the **Altar of Incense**, which holds the "prayers of the saints" (8:3). The *command* to unleash the *next* judgment comes *from the altar*. God is *again* answering the martyrs' prayer: "How long, O Lord?"
- **"The Great River Euphrates":** To a 1st-century Roman, the Euphrates was "the border." It was the *eastern boundary* of the Roman Empire. *Beyond* the Euphrates was the "unknown" and *feared* enemy: **Parthia**. This was the "staging ground" for *invasion*.
- **"Four Angels... Bound":** These are *not* the "good" angels from 7:1. These are *evil, bound* angels, so powerful and malevolent that God has kept them "in chains" (see 2 Peter 2:4) at this *specific* location, waiting for this *specific* moment.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Second "Woe":**
 - **First Woe (Locusts):** *Tormented* mankind.
 - **Second Woe (Cavalry):** *Kills* "a third of mankind."
- The judgment is *escalating* in *severity*.
- **"Prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year":** This is the *most specific* time-stamp in Revelation. It shows the *absolute sovereignty* and *meticulous planning* of God. This is *not* random. This event is "on God's calendar" down to the *exact hour*.
- **"To kill a third of mankind":**
 - **Seals (4th):** Killed a "fourth" (6:8).
 - **Trumpets (6th):** Kills a "third" (of those who are *left*).
 - If the 4th seal killed 1/4, 3/4 are left. This plague kills 1/3 of the remaining 3/4. ($1/4 + 1/3 \cdot 3/4 = 1/4 + 1/4 = 1/2$). By the end of this *one* plague, *half* of all mankind is dead.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Euphrates:** This is the *staging ground* for Israel's *enemies*.
 - It's the border of the *Promised Land* (Gen 15:18).
 - The *Assyrians* (who *destroyed* the Northern Kingdom) came from *beyond* the Euphrates.
 - The *Babylonians* (who *destroyed* Jerusalem) came from *beyond* the Euphrates.
- **The Message:** God is "releasing" the *ultimate enemy* from the *ultimate enemy staging ground*.

- **Bound Angels: 2 Peter 2:4**, "For if God did not spare **angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell** [Tartarus] and **committed them to chains** of gloomy darkness to be **kept for judgment...**" This is *that* judgment.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's "Calendar"**: We live by *our* calendar (Google Cal, Outlook). This verse is a *stunning* reminder that God has *His own* calendar. *All* of history—including its most *terrifying* moments—is "prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year." *Nothing* is late. *Nothing* is a surprise to Him.
- **The "Enemy" is Bound**: This is a *comfort*. The *most terrifying* demonic forces, the "four angels" at the Euphrates, are *currently* "bound." They *cannot* act without God's *permission*. Our "enemy" (Satan) is on a *leash*.
- **Prayer Matters**: The "voice" came *from the altar*. The *prayers* of the saints *unleashed* this. This shows (in a terrifying way) that *prayer is not passive*. It is *actively* involved in bringing about God's *final justice* and the *end of the world*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The command to unleash this *horrible* woe comes *from the altar* (the place of *prayer*). How does this *terrify* you, and how does this *embolden* you in your prayers for justice?
2. The "four angels" were "bound" *until* the exact "hour, day, month, and year." How does this *extreme specificity* change your view of God's *sovereignty* over world events?
3. This plague is *released* from the "Euphrates," the historic "enemy border." What is the "Euphrates" in *your* life? (A "border" of sin or fear that "binds" a great enemy).
4. The judgment *escalates* from "a fourth" to "a third." Why does God use *escalating* warnings instead of just "one and done"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "trust God's calendar." Take 60 seconds. Think about the *one thing* you are *most anxious* about in the *future*. Now, *surrender* that "timing" to God. Pray, "Lord, I am anxious about [X], but You have *my* 'hour, day, month, and year' in Your hands. I trust *Your* sovereignty."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by St. Patrick.)

"I bind unto myself today The strong Name of the Trinity... I bind unto myself today The power of God to hold and lead, His eye to watch, His might to stay, His ear to hear my need...

God's hand to guard, God's way to lie, God's shield to ward... He is my King. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 9, Day 5

The Demonic Cavalry

Scripture Focus: Revelation 9:16-19

¹⁶ The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Twice ten thousand times ten thousand":** $2 \times 10,000 \times 10,000 = 200,000,000$ (Two Hundred Million).
- **The Number:** This number would have been *incomprehensible*. The *entire* Roman army at its *peak* was maybe 500,000 (a half-million). This army is *400 times* larger.
- **The Message:** This is *not* a human army. This is a *supernatural, demonic* army. John *hears* the number (v. 16), which confirms its *supernatural* origin.
- **The "Troops":**
 - They have "breastplates of fire (red), sapphire (blue), and sulfur (yellow)"—the colors of *fire and brimstone*.
 - The *horses* (not the riders) are the main weapon.
 - "Heads like lions' heads": Symbol of *savagery* (like the locusts).
 - "Fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths": This is *hell's artillery*.
 - "Tails... like serpents": They are *doubly* deadly. They kill from the *front* (fire) and *wound* from the *back* (serpent-tails).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** This is a *literal army* of 200 million *demonic beings* who will *manifest* on earth and *literally* kill 1/3 of mankind with *literal* fire, smoke, and sulfur.
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** This was the *Roman cavalry* and *Parthian "hordes"* that *came* from the Euphrates to *destroy* Jerusalem. The numbers are symbolic of an "overwhelming force," and the "fire/smoke/sulfur" is a symbol of their *total destructive power*.
 - **Symbolic (Historicist):** This was seen as the *Muslim/Turkic* armies that "invaded" from the East (beyond the Euphrates) and *conquered* 1/3 of the "Christian" Roman Empire.
- **The "Source" of Death:** The *plague* is "fire, smoke, and sulfur." This is the "smoke" from the *Abyss* (9:2) and the "fire" from the *altar* (8:5) now *weaponized* and coming from the *mouths* of these demonic horses. This is *literally* "hell on earth."

- **"Tails are like serpents":** This *unmistakably* identifies the *source* of this army. The "serpent" is *Satan* (the "dragon" of Rev 12). This is *Satan's army*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Number: Psalm 68:17**, "The **chariots of God** are **twice ten thousand**, thousands upon thousands..." John's vision is a *demonic mockery* of the *armies of God*.
- **Fire, Smoke, and Sulfur:** This is the *exact* description of the *judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah*.
 - **Genesis 19:24:** "Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah **sulfur and fire** from the LORD out of heaven."
 - **Genesis 19:28:** "...and he looked... and behold, the **smoke of the land** went up like the **smoke of a furnace**."
- **The Message:** The *localized* judgment of Sodom is now being *globalized* against *all* of unrepentant mankind.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Arsenal" of Hell:** This is a *vision* of the *true nature* of *demonic power*. It is *fiery, destructive, toxic (sulfur), deceitful (serpent-tails), and savage (lions' heads)*. When we "sin," we are "siding" with *this*.
- **The Scale of the Spiritual Battle:** We often think of the "demonic" as "one little demon" tempting us. This vision shows a *200-million-strong* army. The *scale* of the *spiritual battle* is *vastly* larger than we can imagine.
- **"Hell on Earth":** We use this phrase casually ("My job is hell on earth"). *This* is "hell on earth." It's a world given over to the *Destroyer*, where the *very air* is "fire, smoke, and sulfur." This vision is *meant* to terrify us, to show us the *true horror* of what the world is *asking for* when it *rejects* God.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The number is 200 million. Why is the *scale* of this demonic army so *important* to the vision?
2. The "plague" is "fire, smoke, and sulfur" (v. 18)—the *same* judgment as Sodom and Gomorrah. What is the *link* between the "sin of Sodom" and *this* judgment?
3. The horses kill from the *front* ("mouths") and *wound* from the *back* ("tails"). What does this *deceptive, "coming-and-going"* nature tell you about *how* evil works?
4. If *this* is the "army of the enemy," how *powerful* does that make *our* King, who *defeats* this army?

Call to Action

Your call is to "respect the enemy, but trust the King." This enemy is *real* and *terrifying*. Your *only* defense is your King. Today, "put on the full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11-18). *Verbally* (or in your heart) *pray* through the "armor": the *belt of truth*, the *breastplate of righteousness*, the *shoes of the gospel*, the *shield of faith*, the *helmet of salvation*, and the *sword of the Spirit*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for protection.)

"Lord God, Your enemy is real. His army is vast. His nature is fire, smoke, and sulfur. I am *not* able to stand against him. But You, O Lord, are my *shield*. You are my *strong tower*. You are my *King*. Clothe me in Your armor. Cover me with Your blood. Fill me with Your Spirit. For 'greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world.' Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 9, Day 6

The Response: No Repentance

Scripture Focus: Revelation 9:20-21

²⁰ The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their moral impurity or their thefts.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The rest of mankind...":** This is the "surviving" portion of humanity that has *witnessed* the "locust-torment" *and* the "demonic-cavalry" *kill 1/3 of the world*.
- **"Did not repent":** This is the *single most terrifying* verse in the chapter. After *all this...* after *supernatural* plagues, *demonic* torment, and *half the world* being *killed...* the human heart is *still* so *hard* that it *refuses* to repent.
- **The "Four-Fold" Sin List:** Their sin is summarized in two parts:
 1. **Religious Sin (v. 20): Idolatry.** They "worshiped demons" and "idols of gold, silver..." (the *very things* that are *useless* against the plagues).
 2. **Moral Sin (v. 21):** A "list of vices" that *defines* a society given over to sin.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Hardness" of the Human Heart:** This is the *point* of the judgment. The "trumpet judgments" (which are *warnings*) *fail*. They *do not* produce repentance. They *only* produce *hardening*.
- **The Lesson:** Suffering does *not* automatically "turn people to God." For a heart *set against* God, suffering *only* makes it *harder* and *more bitter*.
- **The "Works of their Hands" (v. 20):**
 - This is *why* their idols can't save them. They are *worshiping* things *they made*.
 - "Cannot see or hear or walk": This is a *direct jab*. They are *praying* to idols that are *deaf, blind, and paralyzed...* while *their world is ending*.
- **The "Sin List" (v. 21):**
 - "Murders": (The "red horse" spirit).

- "Sorceries": The Greek is *pharmakeia*. This is *not* "magic wands." It is *drug use* (pharmacy), often *specifically* related to *witchcraft*, "*magic*," and "*casting spells*".
- "Moral impurity": The Greek is *porneia* (from which we get "pornography"). It is *all* sexual sin outside of marriage.
- "Thefts": (The "black horse" spirit of "taking").

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Hardness of Pharaoh:** This is the *exact* same response as **Pharaoh**.
 - **Exodus 9:27:** (After the 7th plague of hail/fire), "Pharaoh said... 'I have sinned...'"
 - **Exodus 9:34:** "But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, **he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart...**"
- **The Uselessness of Idols:** This is a *classic* "prophetic rant" against idols.
 - **Psalms 115:4-7:** "Their idols are **silver and gold**, the **work of human hands**. They have mouths, but do not speak; **eyes, but do not see**; ears, but do not hear... **feet, but do not walk...**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Failure of "Rock Bottom":** We have a "myth" that if things just "get bad enough," people will "hit rock bottom" and "turn to God." This verse *shatters* that myth. "Rock bottom" (half the world dead) *without* the *grace* of God *only* produces a *harder heart*.
- **Our "Idols":** Our idols are *exactly* the same.
 - "Gold and silver": Our *economy*, our 401k, our "wealth."
 - "Bronze and stone": Our *buildings*, our "power," our military.
 - "Wood": Our "naturalism," our *worship of creation*. We *still* worship "the works of our hands."
- **Our "Sin List":** This list *is* our modern culture.
 - "Murders": (Abortion, violence...)
 - "Sorceries" (*pharmakeia*): (The *drug-culture* epidemic, "escapism" through substances...)
 - "Moral Impurity" (*porneia*): (The *normalization* of all sexual sin, the *epidemic* of pornography...)
 - "Thefts": (Greed, injustice...)
- **The "Warning" is Now:** This chapter *is* the "warning trumpet." It's *meant* to show us the *end result* of our *current path*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is (for me) the *scariest* verse in Revelation. Why is the fact that they "did not repent" *more* terrifying than the "200 million horsemen"?
2. After *all this*, the survivors *still* "clung" to their "idols." Why is *idolatry* so *powerful* and *addictive*? What "idols" do *you* cling to?
3. The sin list is "murders, sorceries, immorality, thefts." How does this "sin list" *create* the *very judgment* (the "woes") that they are *experiencing*?
4. If *these* judgments *don't* cause repentance, what *does*? (Hint: See Romans 2:4, "God's *kindness* is meant to lead you to repentance.")

Call to Action

Your call is to "do the opposite." The *world* responds to judgment with a *hard heart*. *You* are called to respond with a *soft heart*. *Repent of one thing* on that sin list (v. 20-21) that you *tolerate* in your life. Don't "harden your heart" to the "trumpet sound" of this chapter.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of repentance.)

"O Lord God, My heart is hard, just like theirs. I have seen Your warnings, and yet I still cling to my 'idols'—my security, my pride, the 'works of my hands.' I confess my 'murders' (my anger), my 'immorality' (my lust), my 'thefts' (my greed). Do not let me be one of those who 'does not repent.' By Your *kindness*, Lord, break my heart. By Your *grace*, Lord, lead me to repentance. Amen."

Week 10 (Chapter 10): Interlude: The Mighty Angel and the Bittersweet Scroll

Revelation Bible Study: Week 10, Day 1

The Mighty Angel with the Little Scroll

Scripture Focus: Revelation 10:1-2

¹ Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ² He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land,

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Mighty Angel":** This is *not* one of the "trumpet" angels. The description is so glorious and full of divine attributes that many theologians believe this is a "Christophany"—a vision of *Jesus Christ Himself* in angelic form.
- **The Description:** The audience would recognize every element as a symbol of *God's* glory, not a "normal" angel's.
 - **"Wrapped in a cloud":** How God *traveled* and *revealed* His presence (Exodus 16:10, Mark 14:62).
 - **"Rainbow over his head":** The sign of God's *covenant* and *mercy* (from Rev 4:3 and Genesis 9).

- **"Face was like the sun":** The *same* description as the glorified Christ in **Rev 1:16**.
- **"Legs like pillars of fire":** Symbol of *judgment* and *unwavering strength* (similar to Rev 1:15).
- **"Right foot on the sea... left foot on the land":** This is a *colossal* being. His stance is a *symbol of total dominion*. He is staking His claim over the *entire planet*—both the sea (chaos/nations) and the land (stability/earth).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Little Scroll" (*biblaridion*):** This is *different* from the "big" scroll (*biblion*) with the seven seals in Chapter 5.
 - **Chapter 5 Scroll:** Was *sealed*. It contained God's full plan of judgment and redemption.
 - **Chapter 10 Scroll:** Is *little* and, most importantly, **"OPEN."**
- **What is this "little scroll"?**
 - It likely contains a *specific portion* of God's plan that is *now being revealed*. Given the context of verse 11 ("You must prophesy *again*..."), this scroll is the *content* of John's *new prophetic commission*. It's the "message" for the *next phase* of the prophecy (especially Chapters 11-14).
- **This is an "Invasion":** After the horror of the demonic trumpets (Ch. 9), *heaven invades earth*. This "mighty angel" (Christ) comes *down* from heaven to *personally intervene* and stake His claim on the world.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Angel of the LORD:** This vision echoes the "Angel of the LORD" in the Old Testament, who was often a "theophany" (an appearance of God).
- **Daniel's Vision:** This strongly resembles the "man clothed in linen" in **Daniel 10:5-6**, who also had a "face like lightning" and "legs like burnished bronze."
- **Ezekiel's Scroll:** This sets the stage for a parallel with **Ezekiel 2-3**, where Ezekiel is also given a "scroll" to eat.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Christ's Dominion:** We live in a world that *looks* like it's owned by "Apollyon" (the "Destroyer" from 9:11). This vision is the *truth*. Christ *owns* it all. His "feet" are planted *firmly* on *both* the "sea" (the chaos of our politics and culture) and the "land" (our "stable" lives). He is in *total control*.
- **An "Open" Scroll:** The "sealed" scroll is God's *sovereign* plan. The "open" scroll is God's *revealed* Word (the Bible). He *wants* us to know His plan. His message is not *hidden* from His people; it is *open* for us to "take."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Look at the *divine* attributes of this angel (cloud, rainbow, sun-face, fire-legs). Why do you think this *isn't* a "normal" angel? What's the *comfort* in seeing *Christ Himself* step into the vision?
2. The angel's *stance* (foot on sea, foot on land) shows *total dominion*. What "chaotic sea" or "unstable land" in *your* life do you need to *remember* that Christ has His "foot" on?
3. The scroll is "little" and "open." What does this tell you about how God *communicates* with His people (in "bite-sized," *open* revelations)?
4. This vision comes *right after* the worst "woe" (Ch. 9). Why is it *at the darkest moment* that God sends this *most glorious* messenger?

Call to Action

Your call is to "recognize His stance." Find a *globe* or a *world map* (on your phone or computer). Look at it. *Picture* this mighty Angel with one foot on the Pacific Ocean and one on North America. Pray, "Lord Christ, this is *Your* world. You have *dominion* over it all. I trust Your authority."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the hymn "This Is My Father's World".)

"O Lord Christ, This is Your world, and to my listening ears, All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres. This is Your world: The battle is not done. The *Destroyer* from the pit appears; But You have come, with Your face like the sun. This is Your world: Oh, let me ne'er forget That Your feet are on the sea and land, And You are *King*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 10, Day 2

The Seven Thunders Sealed

Scripture Focus: Revelation 10:3-4

³ and he gave a great shout, like a lion roaring. When he shouted, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴ And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Like a Lion Roaring":** This is the *voice* of the *King*. In the Old Testament, God's voice is often compared to a lion's roar, a sound of *power* and *judgment*. The audience would *immediately* connect this to the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5).
- **"The Seven Thunders":**
 - "Seven" = Completeness.
 - "Thunder" = The voice of *God* (see Rev 4:5, 8:5).
- This is the "complete voice of God" speaking. It's a *new revelation*, a *new judgment*, or a *new message*.
- **"I was about to write...":** John is a *faithful* servant. His *job* is to "Write what you see" (Rev 1:11, 1:19). His *instinct* is to *record* this new revelation.

- **"Seal up... Do not write it down":** This is the *only time* in the entire book of Revelation that John is *forbidden* from writing something.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **What are the Seven Thunders?**
 1. We don't know.
 2. And that is *exactly the point*.
- **The "Sealed" Message:** This is a *profound* lesson in God's *sovereignty*. We, like John, are *curious*. We want to "know everything." We want to "decode" the *whole* plan.
- God *intentionally* includes this detail to *humble* us. He is teaching John (and us) two things:
 1. **God Doesn't Tell Us Everything:** His "revealed" will (the Bible) is *all we need*. His "secret" will (the *thunders*) belongs *only to Him*.
 2. **Our Job is Obedience, Not Speculation:** John's *job* was not to *understand* the thunders; his *job* was to *obey* the voice ("do not write").
- **Why "Thunders"?** Some speculate this was a *final, terrible* series of judgments (worse than the Trumpets) that God *withheld* in an act of *mercy*. Others, that it was a *message of comfort* just for John. We *cannot* know.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **God's Roar: Amos 3:8,** "The **lion has roared**; who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?"
- **God's Thunder: Psalm 29:3,** "The **voice of the LORD** is over the waters; the God of glory **thunders...**"
- **The "Secret Things":** This is the fulfillment of **Deuteronomy 29:29**, "The **secret things** belong to the LORD our God, but the **things that are revealed** belong to us and to our children forever, that we may *do* all the words of this law."
 - The *thunders* are the "secret things."
 - The *little scroll* is the "things that are revealed."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Mystery-Box" Obsession:** We live in a culture (especially in "prophecy" circles) that is *obsessed* with "figuring out" the *secrets*. "What is the *date* of the rapture?" "Who *is* the Antichrist?" "What *are* the 'seven thunders'?"
- **The Humility of "I Don't Know":** This verse gives us *divine permission* to say, "I don't know." It is *not* a "failure" of our faith to *not* have an answer for everything. It is a *mark of humility* to trust that God *knows*, and that He has told us *exactly* what we *need* to know.
- **Stop Decoding, Start Obeying:** This is a *corrective* for this *entire* Bible study. Our *goal* is not to "decode" every symbol perfectly. Our *goal* is to "hear what the Spirit says to the churches" and *obey*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This mighty angel (Christ) "roars like a lion." What does this "roar" tell you about His *emotion* in this moment? (It's *not* a passive "meek and mild" whisper).
2. John *heard* the thunders and was "about to write." He was *ready* to obey. Then he was told "do not write." Which command do you think was *harder* for him to obey?
3. Why is it *important* for our faith that God *intentionally* keeps some things "secret"?

4. What is one "secret thing" (a "Why, God?" question) in your *own* life that you are *struggling* with? How does this verse *help* you *trust* God, even without an answer?

Call to Action

Your call is to "embrace the mystery." Identify *one* "unanswerable" question about your life or the future that you "spin your wheels" on. Today, *release* it. *Verbally* tell God, "This is one of *Your* 'seven thunders.' I don't *need* to know. I just *trust You*."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Deuteronomy 29:29.)

"Lord God, The secret things belong to You. The things revealed belong to me. Forgive me for when I get those two confused. Forgive me for my *arrogance* in demanding to know the "secrets." Forgive me for my *apathy* in not *obeying* the "revealed." Give me the *humility* to "seal up" what You have sealed. Give me the *courage* to *live out* what You have "opened." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 10, Day 3

The Angel's Oath: No More Delay!

Scripture Focus: Revelation 10:5-7

⁵ And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven
⁶ and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, ⁷ but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants the prophets.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Lifted up his right hand... and swore":** This is the *most solemn* and *legally binding* oath in the ancient world. The Angel (Christ) is *swearing* by the *highest possible authority*: **God the Creator**.
- **"He who lives forever... who created...":** This is a *direct* echo of the *Elders' Song* in **Rev 4:11** ("Worthy are you... for you created all things..."). The Angel is swearing by the *Sovereign Creator* of all.
- **"That there would be no more delay":** The Greek is *chronos ouketi estai* ("Time no longer will be").

- This does *not* mean "time itself will end."
 - It means the "time of *waiting*" is *over*. The "delay" is *finished*.
- **The "Why":** The martyrs under the altar cried, "**How long, O Lord?**" (6:10). The angel's oath is the *answer*. The time is **NOW**.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The Mystery of God would be fulfilled":**
 - **What is "the mystery of God"?**
 - In the New Testament (especially Paul), the "mystery" (*mysterion*) is the *long-hidden plan of God* that is *now being revealed*.
 - It is the *full plan of salvation*: the inclusion of the *Gentiles* (Eph 3:6), the *Gospel* itself (1 Tim 3:16), and the *final triumph* of Christ over *all evil* (Col 1:26-27).
- **The "Trumpet Call... by the Seventh Angel":**
 - This oath is the *introduction* to the **Seventh Trumpet** (which comes in 11:15).
 - The Angel is swearing, "When that *seventh trumpet* blows, it's *over*. The 'delay' is *done*. The *full mystery* of God's entire plan will be *finished* (fulfilled)."
- This entire *interlude* (Chapter 10) is a "dramatic pause" to *build the tension* for the *final trumpet*—the *final woe*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Angel's Oath:** This is a *direct parallel* to **Daniel 12:7**.
 - **Daniel 12:7:** "And I heard the man clothed in linen... he **lifted his right hand and his left hand to heaven** and **swore by him who lives forever** that it would be for a *time, times, and half a time*..."
- **The "Difference":**
 - In **Daniel**, the Angel *swore* that there *would be* a *long delay* ("a time, times, and half a time").
 - In **Revelation**, the Angel *swore* that the "delay" is **OVER**.
- John is *intentionally* showing that the "countdown" that *started* in Daniel is *now hitting zero*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's "Delay" is *Mercy*:** We all cry, "How long, O Lord?" "How long" will evil win? "How long" will there be suffering? This "delay" that we are *living in right now* is *not* "God being slow."
 - **2 Peter 3:9:** "The Lord is not slow... but is **patient** toward you, **not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance."
- **"No More Delay":** This is a *promise* and a *warning*.
 - **Promise (to the Saints):** Justice *is* coming. Hold on. The end *is* on its way.
 - **Warning (to the World):** God's "delay" (His patience) *will* run out. The "day of the trumpet call" *will* come. The time to repent is *now*, because the "delay" *will end*.
- **The "Mystery" is *Fulfilled*:** Our "hope" is not just "we die and go to heaven." Our "hope" is the *fulfillment* of the *mystery of God*: the *defeat* of evil, the *end* of sin, the *redemption* of *creation*, and the *triumph* of the Lamb.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This Angel *swears* by the *Creator*. Why is it so *important* that the one *judging* the world is the *same one* who *created* it?

2. The angel's oath is the *answer* to the martyrs' cry of "How long?" (6:10). How does this *comfort* you when *you* are crying, "How long?"
3. We are *living* in the "delay" that the angel says *will end*. How does "2 Peter 3:9" (God's patience) help you *understand* this "delay"?
4. If you *knew* the "delay" was ending *next week*, what *one thing* would you do *differently*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "live in the 'no-delay' zone." *Act* as if the "delay is over." Do the *one thing* you answered for Question #4. Don't "delay" your *obedience*. Don't "delay" your *witness*. Live with the *urgency* of the Angel's oath.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the "delay".)

"O Lord our Creator, You live forever and ever. We cry, 'How long?' You are 'patient,' 'not wishing that any should perish.' Thank You for this 'delay.' Thank You for this 'time' of 'grace.' But we *know* the Angel has sworn, 'No more delay.' Help us to live with *urgency*. Help us to live with *hope*. For in that final day, the *mystery* will be *fulfilled*. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 10, Day 4

Eating the Scroll

Scripture Focus: Revelation 10:8-9

⁸ Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹ So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Go, take the scroll...":** This is a *test of obedience*. John is no longer a *passive spectator* (like in 9:1). He is now an *active participant*. He has to "cross the sea/land" (symbolically) and *approach* this *terrifying, sun-faced* Angel.

- **"So I went... and told him...":** John *obeys*.
- **"Take and eat it":** This is the *second* command. It's not enough to *see* the Word (the open scroll). It's not enough to *take* the Word. John must *internalize* it. He must *consume* it. It must *become part of him*.
- **"Sweet... Bitter...":** The Angel *warns* him what will happen. This "Word" has a *dual nature*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Open" Scroll is the *Prophetic Word*:** This is the *Word of God* (specifically, the "prophecy" John is about to give in Ch. 11-14).
- **"Eating" the Word:** This is a *symbol* for *receiving, understanding, and assimilating* God's message so *completely* that it *becomes* a part of the prophet.
- **This is the "Prophetic Commission":** Before John can *prophesy again* (10:11), he *must* "eat the scroll." He cannot *speak* God's Word until he has *internalized* God's Word.
- **The "Warning":** The Angel *prepares* John. He's saying, "This *job* of being My prophet... it's not what you think. It's *not* all 'glory.' It's going to be *both* 'sweet' and 'bitter'."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Ezekiel's Commission:** This is a *direct, intentional* parallel to the commission of the prophet **Ezekiel**.
 - **Ezekiel 2:8-9:** "But you, son of man, hear what I say... **Open your mouth and eat** what I give you... And I looked, and behold, a hand... and in it was a **scroll**."
 - **Ezekiel 3:1-3:** "And he said to me, 'Son of man, **eat this scroll**... So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, '...fill your stomach with this scroll...' Then I ate it, and it was in my **mouth as sweet as honey**."
- **The "Difference":** In *Ezekiel*, the scroll is *only* "sweet" (because it was the *Word of God*). In *Revelation*, the scroll is *both* "sweet" and "bitter"—showing the *dual nature* of the *Gospel message*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **From "Spectator" to "Participant":** This is the "jump" for *every* Christian. We *start* as "spectators," just *watching* the "story." But at some point, the "voice" says, "Go, *take* the Word." We have to *act*. We have to *personally* "go" to Christ and "take" the Bible for ourselves.
- **"Eating" the Bible:** This is a *powerful* metaphor for *how* we should "read" the Bible.
 - We *don't* just "taste" it (a verse here or there).
 - We *don't* just "hold" it (carry it to church).
 - We **"EAT"** it. We *consume* it. We *meditate* on it. We *digest* it, so that it *becomes* our "bone and marrow."
- **The "Cost" of the Word:** The Angel *warns* him. This is a *warning* for *us*. Truly "eating" God's Word *will* be "sweet," but it *will* also be "bitter." (We will see *why* tomorrow).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John had to *leave* his "safe" spot and *approach* the *mighty Angel*. What "fear" do *you* have to overcome to "approach" Christ and "take" His Word?
2. What is the *difference* between "reading" the Bible and **"EATING"** it?
3. Which one do you *do* more often?
4. The Angel *warned* John *before* he ate. God *never* "sugar-coats" the *cost* of following Him. Why is this "honest advertising" so important?

Call to Action

Your call is to "eat the scroll" today. Don't just "read" your Bible. *Take one verse* from today's study (like 10:9). "Eat" it. This means:

1. **Read it** (Sweet).
2. **Memorize it** (Consume it).
3. **Meditate on it** for 5 minutes (Digest it).
4. **Pray it** back to God. *Internalize* the Word.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Psalm 119.)

"Lord God, Your voice commands me to 'Go, take the scroll.' Give me the courage to approach You. Give me the *hunger* to 'eat' Your Word. 'How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!' Let me not just 'taste' it, but 'fill my stomach' with it. Prepare me for whatever 'sweet' and 'bitter' things come from *truly* internalizing Your truth. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 10, Day 5

Sweet as Honey, Bitter as Gall

Scripture Focus: Revelation 10:10

¹⁰ And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"And I took... and ate it":** This is John's *obedience*. He *heard* the command (v. 8), he *asked* (v. 9), and now he *acts*.
- **The "Two-Fold Experience":** The angel's warning (v. 9) comes *true exactly* as he said.
 - **"Sweet as honey in my mouth":** The *first taste* of God's Word (His presence, His promises, His salvation) is *indescribably sweet*.
 - **"My stomach was made bitter":** The *digestion* of the Word is *painful*.
- **Why "Bitter"?**

- In Ezekiel, the scroll was *only* sweet. But Ezekiel's scroll was "lamentation, mourning, and woe" (Ezek 2:10) *against Israel*.
- John's scroll is *also* full of "judgment." As John "digests" this (internalizes it), he is *filled with the "bitterness" and "grief" of God's own heart over the judgment that is coming on the "peoples and nations"* (v. 11).
- **This is "Prophetic Grief":** To *be* a prophet, John must *feel* what God *feels*. God takes *no pleasure* in the death of the wicked (Ezek 33:11). The *message* of judgment is "bitter" to the one who has to *deliver* it.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Sweetness" of the Gospel:**
 - "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your word was to me the *joy* and *rejoicing* of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).
 - "How *sweet* are your words to my taste, *sweeter than honey!*" (Psalm 119:103).
 - The *taste* of God's truth, His *grace*, His *promises*, and His *intimacy* is *sweet*.
- **The "Bitterness" of the Gospel:**
 - **1. It's a Message of Judgment:** The "scroll" contains the *rest of the prophecy*, which is full of "woes" and "plagues." It is a *bitter* thing to have to *pronounce judgment* on the world.
 - **2. It's a Message of Persecution:** This "bitter" stomach is a *foretaste* of the *persecution* John (and the Church) will *receive* for *speaking* this message (as we'll see in Ch. 11). The *world hates* the "bitter" truth.
- **This is the "Dual Nature" of the *entire* Christian message.** It is "sweet" for those who are *saved* by it, but "bitter" (an "aroma of death," 2 Cor 2:16) for those who *reject* it.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Ezekiel 3:3:** "it was in my mouth **as sweet as honey.**" (John *starts* here).
- **Jeremiah 15:16-18:** "Your word was... the *joy*..." **BUT** "...Why is my pain... unceasing...? ...I sat alone, for you have filled me with **indignation.**" (Jeremiah *also* experienced the "sweet/bitter" combo).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Sweet" Christian Life:** This is the *first experience* of faith. The *joy* of *forgiveness*, the "sweet hour of prayer," the *comfort* of the promises, the *joy* of *worship*. We *love* this part.
- **The "Bitter" Christian Life:** But as we *mature* (as we "digest" the *whole* Word), it *must* become "bitter."
 - **Grief:** We "digest" the reality of *sin*, the *brokenness* of the world, the *holiness* of God, and the *reality* of *judgment* and *hell*. This *should* make our "stomachs bitter." It *should* give us *grief* over the lost.
 - **Cost:** We "digest" the *commands* of *self-denial*, *sacrifice*, and *suffering*. We *realize* that "eating this scroll" *will* lead to *persecution* from a world that *hates* its message.
- **The "Warning" for "Sweet-Only" Christianity:** This is a *direct rebuke* to any "gospel" that is *only* "sweet" (a "prosperity" gospel, a "God just wants you to be happy" gospel). If your "gospel" has *no bitterness*, *no cost*, and *no grief* over sin... it is *not* the *full* "scroll" of God.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John *obeyed* the command, *even though* he was *warned* it would be "bitter." How "willing" are you to *obey* God, even when He *warns* you it will be *painful*?
2. What parts of the "Gospel message" are "sweet as honey" to *you*?
3. What parts of the "Gospel message" are "bitter" for your "stomach"? (e.g., Hell, judgment, self-denial, persecution).
4. Why is a "Christianity" that is *only* "sweet" a *false* Christianity?

Call to Action

Your call is to "embrace the bitter." We *love* the "sweet." Today, *choose* to "digest" a "bitter" truth.

- **Pray for a *lost person*** in your life, and *truly grieve* (feel the "bitterness") for their *lostness*.
- OR, *read a "bitter" passage* (like Matt 10:16-22, on persecution), and *ask God* for the *grace* to "digest" that *cost*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer by St. Thomas Aquinas.)

"Grant me, O Lord my God, A mind to know you, A heart to seek you, Wisdom to find you, A life to please you, Perseverance to wait for you, And a hope to finally embrace you. Grant me to be *sweetened* by Your promises, And to be made *bitter* by Your call to holiness, That I may not just *taste* Your Word, But *live* it. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 10, Day 6

The Commission: Prophecy Again!

Scripture Focus: Revelation 10:11

¹¹ And I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"And I was told...":** The *commission* comes *after* the "sweet and bitter" experience.
- **"You must prophesy *AGAIN*...":**

- **"Again":** John's *first* commission was in 1:19 ("Write what you have seen..."). Now, *after* the "interlude," he is *re-commissioned* for the *second half* of the book.
- **"You must":** This is *not* a suggestion. It is a *divine necessity*.
- **"Peoples and nations and languages and kings":** This is *global*. This is the *same* "four-fold" list of *humanity* that is *redeemed* (5:9, 7:9) and *judged* (11:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15).
- **The Message:** John's "little scroll" (the *content* of his prophecy) is *not* just "for the churches" (Ch. 2-3). It is a message *for the whole world* (the *kings* and *nations*).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Flow" of Prophetic Calling:** This *one verse* gives us the *entire pattern* of a "prophetic" (or "Christian") life:
 - **Vision:** (10:1) John *sees* the *glory* of Christ.
 - **Obedience:** (10:9) John *takes* the *Word*.
 - **Internalization:** (10:10) John *eats* the *Word*.
 - **Experience:** (10:10) John *experiences* the "sweet and bitter" *cost* of the *Word*.
 - **Commission:** (10:11) *Because* of all that, John is *commanded* to *speak* the *Word*.
- **The "Bitter" Stomach Fuels the Commission:**
 - The "bitterness" (the *grief* over judgment, the *cost* of the message) is the *fuel* for the *urgency* to "prophecy again."
 - John *cannot* be *silent*. Because his "stomach is bitter" with this *truth* (this "fire" in his bones, Jer 20:9), he *must* speak it.
- **This Verse is the "Hinge":**
 - It *ends* the "interlude" of Chapter 10.
 - It *launches* the *entire next section* of Revelation (Ch. 11-14), which is *exactly* what the verse says: a prophecy "about many peoples and nations and languages and kings" (e.g., the "two witnesses," the "beast from the sea," "Babylon," etc.).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Jeremiah's Commission:** This is the *exact* commission of **Jeremiah 1:10**: "See, I have set you this day *over nations and over kingdoms*, to pluck up and to break down, to *destroy* and to *overthrow*..."
 - Jeremiah's "sweet/bitter" experience (Jer 15) *also* led to his *commission* to speak a "bitter" message to the *nations*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is *Our* Commission:** This is *not* just for "John." This is for every Christian who "eats" the "scroll" (the Bible).
- **You Can't *Just* "Eat":** This is a *warning* against a "hoarding" Christianity. We *cannot* just "eat the scroll" (go to Bible studies, get "sweet" feelings) and *stop* there.
- **"Eating" Leads to "Prophesying":** "Prophesying" here just means "speaking God's truth."
 - The "sweetness" (God's grace) *compels* us to *share* the "Good News."
 - The "bitterness" (God's judgment) *compels* us to *warn* the "nations."
- **The "Cost" is the "Qualification":** You are not *truly* "commissioned" until you have "digested" the "bitter" part. You cannot *truly* warn of "judgment" if you have not *grieved* over it. You cannot *truly* speak of "sacrifice" if you have not *felt the cost*. The "bitter stomach" is *part of the job description*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John is "re-commissioned" *half-way* through the book. Why do we *need* to be "re-commissioned" by God in *different seasons* of our lives?
2. The *command* (v. 11) comes *after* the *bitter stomach* (v. 10). Why is the *painful "digestion"* of the Word a *prerequisite* for *speaking* the Word?
3. The prophecy is "about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings." This is a "global" and "political" message. Why is the *Gospel always* "bigger" than just "my personal salvation"?
4. What is the *difference* between "prophesying" (speaking God's truth) *before* you eat the scroll (as "opinion") vs. *after* (as "commission")?

Call to Action

Your call is to "prophesy again." You have "eaten" the scroll (you've "tasted" God's Word). Now you *must* speak.

- Identify *one person* in your "nation/people" (your *family, work, or neighborhood*) who needs to hear the "sweet" (hope) or "bitter" (warning) part of the Gospel.
- *Pray* for an opportunity *this week* to "prophesy" (speak God's truth in love) to them.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Ezekiel 3.)

"Lord God, You have given me Your 'scroll' to eat. It is 'sweet' in my mouth—Your grace is amazing. It is 'bitter' in my stomach—Your holiness is terrifying, and the cost is high. Do not let me be a *hoarder* of Your Word. Do not let me be *silent*. Fill my mouth with Your truth, and give me the *courage* of John to "prophesy again" to the "peoples and nations" You have placed in my life. I *must* speak. Amen."

Week 11 (Chapter 11): The Two Witnesses & The Seventh Trumpet: God's Kingdom Comes

Revelation Bible Study: Week 11, Day 1

The Temple, the Court, and the City

Scripture Focus: Revelation 11:1-2

¹ Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple;

leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.”

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Measuring Rod":** A measuring rod was a symbol of *ownership, preservation, and judgment*. When a king or builder "measured" a city, it was either to *plan its construction/preservation* or to *mark it for destruction*.
- **"The Temple of God":** This is a *major* point of debate that impacts the *dating* of the book.
 - **Preterist View (Early Date, c. 68 AD):** Believes the *literal, physical* Herod's Temple was *still standing* in Jerusalem when John wrote. This was a command to "measure" (evaluate) the *true* worshipers (the Jewish-Christians) and "leave out" (condemn) the outer court, which would be "trampled" by the Romans (the "nations") in AD 70.
 - **Futurist View (Late Date, c. 95 AD):** Believes the Temple was *already destroyed*. Therefore, this is either (1) a *future, rebuilt* literal Temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation, or (2) a *symbolic* "Temple" representing the *Church* or *all true believers*.
- **"Do not measure the court...":** The "Court of the Gentiles" was the large, outer area of the temple. By "leaving it out," God is symbolically *abandoning* the "outward" (visible, apostate) part of religion to be judged.
- **"Forty-two months":** This timeframe (3.5 years, 1260 days, "time, times, and half a time") appears *repeatedly* in Revelation and Daniel. It is the *symbolic* length of the "end-times" period of tribulation and persecution.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Measuring" (The Act):**
 - This is an act of **preservation**. God is "measuring" His *true* people ("those who worship there") to *seal* and *protect* them, just like He did with the 144,000 in Chapter 7. He is separating the *true believers* (the inner "temple") from the *apostate* or *unbelieving world* (the "outer court").
- **The "Temple" (The Object):**
 - If the "Temple" is the **Church** (as Paul says in 1 Cor 3:16, "you are God's temple"), then this is a "measuring" of the *true Church*. The "outer court" represents *professing* believers or the *visible* church institution, which is "given over" to the world ("the nations") to be "trampled."
- **The "Forty-Two Months" (The Time):**
 - This is the "clock" for the Great Tribulation. It's the period of time God *allows* the "nations" (the unbelieving world, led by the Beast) to have *dominion* and *persecute* the "holy city" (God's people).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Ezekiel's Measuring:** This is a *direct* parallel to **Ezekiel 40:3-5**. Ezekiel is *also* given a "measuring rod" by an angel and is told to *measure* the new, future Temple. Ezekiel's vision is about *restoration*. John's vision is about *preservation* in the midst of judgment.
- **Zechariah's Measuring:** In **Zechariah 2:1-5**, Zechariah sees a man with a "measuring line" going to "measure Jerusalem." God stops him and says Jerusalem *won't* have a wall, because "I myself will be a wall of fire around it."

- **Trampling the City:** This echoes Jesus's prophecy in **Luke 21:24**, "Jerusalem will be **trampled underfoot by the Gentiles** [the "nations"], until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God "Measures" the Worshiper, Not the Building:** This is a *powerful* message for us. God is *not* "measuring" our *church buildings*, our *budgets*, or our *attendance numbers*. He is measuring the *altar* (our sacrifice) and the *worshippers*. He is looking at the *heart*.
- **The "Outer Court" vs. The "Temple":** This is a call to *self-examination*. Is my Christianity just an "outer court" religion? Is it just *outward motions*, "going to church," and "looking" the part? Or am I a *true worshiper* in the "inner temple," at the "altar"?
- **The "Trampling" is Real:** The Church *will* be "trampled." Persecution and "tribulation" are *part* of the "42 months" (the church age). We are *not* promised an *escape* from this, but we *are* promised *preservation* ("measuring") *through* it.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John is given the "measuring rod." He is an *active participant*. How is God calling *you* to "participate" in His work, not just "watch" it?
2. God "measures" (protects) the "temple" but "leaves out" (abandons) the "outer court." What is the *difference* between "outer court" Christianity and "inner temple" worship?
3. Where do you see the "holy city" (the Church) being "trampled by the nations" (the world) today?
4. If God "measured" *your* worship today, what would He find?

Call to Action

Your call is to "move to the inner court." *Stop* one "outer court" (empty, external) religious habit you have. *Replace* it with *one* "inner court" (heartfelt, sacrificial) act of worship. (e.g., *Instead of* just "listening" to a worship song, *stop* and *actually engage* your heart and "worship at the altar").

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Psalm 51.)

"Lord God, You do not delight in 'outer court' sacrifice. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. 'Measure' me, Lord. Search my heart. Do not leave me in the 'outer court' to be 'trampled.' Bring me into the 'temple.' Make me a *true worshiper* at Your *altar*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 11, Day 2

The Two Witnesses Introduced

Scripture Focus: Revelation 11:3-4

³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"My Two Witnesses":** In Jewish law (**Deuteronomy 19:15**), "a charge must be established *by the evidence of two or three witnesses*." God is sending His *two legal witnesses* to "establish the charge" against the rebellious earth.
- **"1,260 days":** This is the *exact same* timeframe as the "42 months" from verse 2. (42 months x 30 days = 1,260 days).
 - **The "Nations"** trample the city for **42 months**.
 - **The "Witnesses"** prophesy for **1,260 days**.
 - **The Message:** During the *entire time* of the world's "trampling," God *never* leaves Himself without a **witness**. His *prophecy* goes out for the *exact same duration* as the world's *persecution*.
- **"Clothed in sackcloth":** This is the *uniform* of the Old Testament prophet. It is the garment of *mourning, grief, and repentance*. Their *message* is not "God loves you and has a wonderful plan"; their *message* is "Repent, for the judgment is here."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

Who are the Two Witnesses? This is a *massive* debate.

- **View 1: Two Literal Individuals (Futurist).**
 - They are two *literal* people who will appear in Jerusalem during the future Great Tribulation.
 - Because of their *powers* (see tomorrow's study), they are almost universally identified as **Moses** (who turned water to blood and sent plagues) and **Elijah** (who called down fire and stopped the rain). This also fulfills the prophecy that *Elijah will return* "before the great and awesome day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5).
- **View 2: Two Symbolic Groups (Idealist/Historicist).**
 - They are *symbols*, not people.
 - **Symbol of the Church:** "Two" represents the *witness* of the Church (both Jew and Gentile). The Church is the "witness" that "prophesies" to the world throughout the "1,260 days" (the entire church age).
 - **Symbol of the Word:** They represent the "Law" (Moses) and the "Prophets" (Elijah), which is the *Old Testament* itself, "witnessing" alongside the *New Testament*.
- **View 3: Two Literal Individuals (Preterist).**

- They were two *specific* leaders in the 1st-century Jerusalem church who were *martyred* by the Jewish authorities *before* the fall of AD 70 (e.g., James the brother of Jesus, or the High Priest Ananus).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"The Two Olive Trees and the Two Lampstands" (v. 4):**
- This is a *direct quote* and *vision* from **Zechariah 4:2-3, 11-14**.
 - In Zechariah's vision, he sees **two olive trees** (representing Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Governor) who are *supplying oil* to a **golden lampstand** (representing Israel/the Temple).
 - The message in Zechariah was: "Not by *might*, nor by *power*, but by **my Spirit**, says the LORD" (Zech 4:6).
- **The Message:** These Two Witnesses are the *fulfillment* of this. They are the "anointed ones." Their "prophecy" (their "lampstand") is not *fueled* by *human power* ("might"); it is *supernaturally fueled* by the *endless supply* of "oil" (the **Holy Spirit**) from God.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's "Witness" is Never Silenced:** This is the *central truth*. In the *darkest* of times, when the "nations" are "trampling" *everything*, God *always* has His "witnesses." The "light" of His prophecy *always* shines. The "lampstand" *never* goes out.
- **The "Sackcloth" of Mourning:** The *posture* of the true witness is "sackcloth." It is *grief*. It is *mourning* over the sin of the world. A "witness" who is *not* "grieved" by the world's sin is *not* wearing the right "uniform."
- **Fueled by the "Olive Trees":** Our "witness" (our "lampstand") *cannot* run on *our* energy. It *will* burn out. We *must* be connected to the "olive trees"—the *supernatural, endless* supply of the *Holy Spirit*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "trampling" (v. 2) and the "prophesying" (v. 3) happen *at the same time* for the *same duration*. How does this "duality" (persecution *and* prophecy) describe the *entire* Christian age?
2. What is the *difference* between a "witness" (v. 3) and a "judge" (v. 2)?
3. The witnesses wear "sackcloth." Why is *mourning* over sin a *necessary part* of "prophesying" (speaking God's truth)?
4. The witnesses are "lampstands" *fueled* by "olive trees" (the Holy Spirit). How have you been *trying* to "*burn*" your "lamp" (your witness, your work) using *your own "oil"*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "be a witness." You *are* one of God's "two witnesses" (symbolically) in *your* world.

1. **Put on "sackcloth":** *Grieve* over *one specific sin* you see in the world around you.
2. **Be a "lampstand":** *Speak one word* of God's *truth* (in love) to *one person* today.
3. **Check your "oil":** *Pray* for the *Holy Spirit* to *fuel* your witness.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Zechariah 4.)

"O Lord of the earth, It is 'not by my might, nor by my power,' that I can be Your witness. My 'lamp' is burning low. My 'oil' is gone. Forgive me for trying to 'burn' on my own strength. Connect me to You, the 'olive tree.' Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Give me Your 'sackcloth' (Your grief) and Your 'voice' (Your truth), That I may be a faithful 'lampstand' for You in a dark world. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 11, Day 3

The Power of the Two Witnesses

Scripture Focus: Revelation 11:5-6

⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Fire pours from their mouth":** This is *not* "natural" fire. This is the *supernatural fire* of God's spoken Word and judgment.
- **The "Powers" (v. 6):** As mentioned yesterday, this is *why* the witnesses are identified as **Elijah** and **Moses**.
 - **Elijah:** He "shut the sky, that no rain may fall" for... *3.5 years* (1 Kings 17:1, James 5:17)! (The exact duration of their prophecy). He also *called down fire from heaven* (2 Kings 1:10-12).
 - **Moses:** He had "power over the waters to turn them into blood" (the *first* plague of Egypt) and "to strike the earth with *every kind of plague*."
- **The Message:** These *are* the "New Moses" and the "New Elijah." They represent the *full power* of the **Law (Moses)** and the **Prophets (Elijah)**, *combined* and *unleashed* on the earth.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"Fire from their mouth":** This is the *power* of the *prophetic Word of God*. The "Word" they *speak* is what "consumes their foes."
 - **Jeremiah 5:14:** "Behold, I am making **my words in your mouth a fire**, and this people wood, and the **fire shall consume them**."
- **Their "Power":**

- If **Literal (Futurist)**: These two men will *literally* perform *these specific miracles* in Jerusalem. They will stop the rain *and* turn water to blood.
- If **Symbolic (Idealist)**: This describes the *spiritual power* of the **Church** (the Witness).
 - **"Shut the sky" (No rain)**: The Church's *preaching* (when rejected) *stops* the "rain" of God's *blessing* from falling on a rebellious nation.
 - **"Turn waters to blood"**: The Church's *message* (the "blood of the Lamb") *exposes* the "waters" (the "wisdom") of the world as *dead* and *poisonous*.
 - **"Strike... with plagues"**: The *prayers* of the saints (like the incense from the altar, 8:5) *unleash* God's judgments (plagues) on the earth.
- **"As often as they desire"**: This shows their *complete alignment* with the *will of God*. Their "desire" *is* God's "desire."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Elijah (Fire): 2 Kings 1:10**, "But Elijah answered... 'If I am a man of God, let **fire come down from heaven and consume you...**'"
- **Elijah (Drought): 1 Kings 17:1**, "...there shall be neither dew nor **rain these years**, except by my word."
- **Moses (Blood): Exodus 7:17**, "...I will strike the water... and it shall be **turned to blood**."
- **Jeremiah (Fire-Mouth): Jeremiah 5:14** (see above).
- **The "Word" as a Weapon: Revelation 1:16**, "...from his [Christ's] mouth came a *sharp two-edged sword*." The witnesses *share* in Christ's *own weapon*: the *spoken Word of Judgment*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Power of the "Word"**: This is *our* "power." The *Word of God* (the Bible) that *we* speak is not "just words." It is "fire." It *consumes* falsehood. It *is* "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12).
- **The "Offensive" Gospel**: The *true* Gospel message *has* this "plague-like" power.
 - It *is* a "drought" to those who *reject* its "living water."
 - It *does* "turn the water to blood," showing that all *other* "saviors" (money, power, self) are *dead*.
- **We Are *Invulnerable*... Until We're *Done***: The *most* comforting message: "**If anyone *would* harm them... he is *doomed to be killed***." These witnesses are *invincible*. They *cannot* be "harmed" or "stopped" ... *until* their "1,260 days" are *finished*.
- **This is *our* promise**. As a believer, you are *immortal* and *invulnerable* ... *until* God says your "testimony is finished." No *demon*, no *government*, and no *plague* can "harm" you *until your work is done*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The witnesses have the *exact* powers of *Moses* and *Elijah*. Why *these two* men? What do "the Law" (Moses) and "the Prophets" (Elijah) *represent*?
2. The "fire" *comes from their mouth*. How is the *Word of God* a "fire"?
3. The witnesses are *completely protected* (invulnerable) *during* their "1,260 days" of prophesying. How does this *boldness* (knowing you can't be "harmed" until your "job is done") change *how* you "witness"?
4. If *this* is the "power" of the "Church's witness" (to "shut the sky," etc., symbolically), are we *using* that power? Or are we *afraid* of it?

Call to Action

Your call is to "use the fire." Your "mouth" *also* has "fire" (the Word of God). *Speak* (or *text* or *write*) one "fiery" (but *loving*) truth of the Gospel to someone *today*. (e.g., "Sin *is* real, but *so is* the blood of Jesus," "Judgment *is* coming, but *so is* grace.") *Be* the witness, and *trust* in God's protection.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for boldness.)

"Lord God, You are the God of Moses and Elijah. You are the God of fire and plagues. Put *Your* Word in *my* mouth. Make *my* tongue Your "sword." Make *my* testimony Your "fire." Give me the *invincible* boldness of the Two Witnesses, To *prophesy* Your truth, To *mourn* in 'sackcloth,' And to *fear no one* but You. For I am *immortal* until my *work is done*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 11, Day 4

The Death of the Two Witnesses

Scripture Focus: Revelation 11:7-10

⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze on their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will gloat over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to them.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"When they have finished their testimony":** This is the *key*. They *cannot* be killed *until* their "1,260 days" are *over* and their *divine purpose* is *complete*. God's *sovereignty* is absolute.
- **"The Beast... from the Bottomless Pit":** This is the *first time* "The Beast" (*Therion*) is mentioned. He is the *king* of the "locusts" (9:11, "Apollyon") and the *arch-enemy* of God. He is the *Antichrist*.
- **"Their dead bodies will lie in the street":** This was the *ultimate* "post-mortem" humiliation. To *refuse burial* was to *curse* the dead, to *deny* their humanity, and to *declare* them *unworthy* of any rest or *honor*.
- **"The Great City":** This *must* be **Jerusalem**.
 1. It is *symbolically* called "**Sodom**" (for its *immorality* and *rebellion* - see Isaiah 1:10).

2. It is *symbolically* called "**Egypt**" (for its *enslavement* of God's people and its *idolatry*).
 3. It is *literally* "where their Lord was crucified."
- **"Make merry and exchange presents":** This is a *perverse, demonic* "Christmas." The *entire world* ("peoples... nations") *celebrates* the *death* of God's "prophets."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Beast (Antichrist):** He is "unleashed" from the *Abyss* (the "bottomless pit"). He is the *personal* and *political* embodiment of the *demonic* power from Chapter 9.
- **The "Torment" (v. 10):** *Why* does the world *celebrate*? Because the "prophets" had been a **"torment"** to them.
 - The "fire" of their *truth* (v. 5) was a "torment."
 - The "plagues" of their *message* (v. 6) were a "torment."
 - The *conviction of sin* is *agony* to a world that *loves* its sin.
- **The "Three and a half days":** This is a *symbolic, short* period of *Satan's "apparent" victory*. It is "half" of the "seven" (the "holy number"). It is a *broken, incomplete* "victory."
- **The "Global" Celebration:** This is a *chilling* vision of a *future, global* media event. The *whole world* ("peoples... tribes... languages") will *gaze* on their bodies. This was *impossible* in 95 AD, but *is possible now* with *global satellite TV* and the *internet*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Refused Burial:** This was the *curse* of the wicked king. **Jeremiah 22:18-19**, "They shall not lament for him... 'With the burial of a *donkey* he shall be buried, *dragged and dumped* beyond the gates of Jerusalem.'" The world *inflicts* this "curse" on God's *prophets*.
- **Jesus's Body:** This is a *direct mockery* of *Christ's* death.
 - *But...* Jesus's body was *not* left in the street. It was "placed in a tomb" (John 19:41-42).
 - *But...* Jesus *also* was "gazed" upon, "gloated" over, and *killed* by the *same* "great city."
- **Psalms 79:** **Psalm 79:2-3**, "The **dead bodies of your servants** they have given... to the beasts of the earth... They have poured out their blood... and there was **no one to bury them.**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The World *Hates* the "Torment" of Truth:** This is the *heart* of the matter. The world *does not* hate the "Witness" because the "Witness" is "mean." The world *hates* the "Witness" because the "Witness" is a **"torment."**
- **The "Gospel of Truth" is a "Torment" to a "Culture of Lies."**
 - When we say "God's *judgment* is real" (the "plagues"), it is a *torment*.
 - When we say "God's *Word* is fire" (moral absolutes), it is a *torment*.
- **The "Gloating" World:** We see this "gloating" spirit *every day*. When a "Christian leader" *falls*, or a *church closes*, the "Twitter-verse" *rejoices*. They "make merry" over the *silencing* of God's "tormenting" voice.
- **God's "Leash":** The Beast *cannot* act *until* the witnesses **"have finished their testimony."** This is *still* our *comfort*. Satan *only* wins a "victory" when God has "finished" His *purpose* for us.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The Beast *conquers* and *kills* them *only* "when they have finished their testimony." How does this *one phrase* show *both* the *cost* (they die) and the *comfort* (God's sovereignty) of the Christian life?

2. The "great city" is called "Sodom" (immorality) and "Egypt" (slavery/idolatry). Why is *Jerusalem* (the "holy city") given these *terrible* names?
3. Why does the *world* "rejoice" and "exchange presents" when the "truth-tellers" are *silenced*?
4. When *you* hear God's *truth* (a "tormenting" sermon, a "convicting" verse), is your *first* reaction "rejoicing" (like the world) or "repenting"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "embrace the torment." The *world* "gloats" when the *truth* is silenced. *You* must *not*. *Welcome* the "torment" (the *conviction*) of the Holy Spirit. Ask God, "What 'truth' have I been *silencing* because it 'torments' me?" ... and then *repent* of it.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the "unburied" church.)

"Lord Jesus, You were *crucified* in that "great city." Your *witnesses* are *killed* in that same "city" (the world). The world *gloats* and *refuses* to "bury" them. Give us *courage* to *be* the "prophets" who are a "torment." Give us the *faith* to know that *even if* we are "killed" and "gloated over," We are *invincible* until our *testimony is finished*. We would rather be *Your* "dead witnesses" than the world's "merry-makers." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 11, Day 5

The Resurrection & The Second Woe Passes

Scripture Focus: Revelation 11:11-14

¹¹ But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³ And at that very hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is coming soon.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"After the three and a half days":** The "broken" 3.5-day "victory" of the Beast is *over*.
- **"A Breath of Life from God":** This is *resurrection*. This is *not* "reanimation"; this is *divine creation* ("breath of life" from God).
- **"They stood up... great fear fell...":** The *party* (v. 10) comes to a *screeching halt*. The "merry-makers" are now *terrified*. Their "victory" was a *sham*.
- **"Come up here!":** This is the *public vindication*. This is the *Rapture/Ascension* of the witnesses.
- **"Their enemies watched them":** This is the *ultimate* defeat for the "Beast." He *killed* them, but he *could not hold them*. His "conquest" (v. 7) is *publicly undone* by God.
- **The Earthquake (v. 13):** This is the *immediate judgment* on the "great city" that *celebrated* the murders.
 - A "tenth" (a "tithe" of judgment).
 - "Seven thousand" (a *specific, symbolic* number: 7 x 1000 = the "complete" judgment).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Pattern of Christ:** The "life" of the Two Witnesses *perfectly mirrors* the "life" of **Christ**:
 - They "prophesy" (like Christ's *ministry*).
 - They are "killed" by the "Beast" (like Christ's *crucifixion*).
 - They lie "dead" for a "short time" (like Christ's *three days*).
 - They are *Resurrected* by God (like Christ's *resurrection*).
 - They *Ascend* to heaven (like Christ's *ascension*).
- **The "Witness" IS Christ's Life:** The "witness" of the Church *is* the "re-living" of the "pattern" of Christ: **Ministry -> Suffering -> Death -> Vindication.**
- **"The rest... gave glory to the God of heaven" (v. 13):** This is *huge*. This is the *first time* in Revelation that a *judgment* leads to *worship*.
 - After the "Trumpets" (9:20-21), they "did *not* repent."
 - But *after* the "Witness/Resurrection" *and* the "earthquake," the *survivors* ("the rest") are "terrified" and "gave glory."
 - **This shows that God's *judgment* (earthquake) *combined with* God's *witness* (the resurrection) is what *finally* brings (some) people to repentance.**

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Breath of Life": Ezekiel 37:10** (The "Dry Bones"): "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the **breath [of life]** came into them, and they **lived and stood on their feet...**" This is the "Dry Bones" vision *fulfilled*.
- **The "Cloud" (Ascension): Acts 1:9**, "And when he [Jesus] had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a **cloud** took him out of their sight."
- **"Come Up Here":** The *same* "rapture" call that *John* received in **4:1**.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Friday is Over. Sunday is Coming.":** This is the *hope* of the Church. The "Beast" (the world, our "enemy") *will* have its "three and a half days." It *will* "kill" us (metaphorically or literally). It *will* "gloat." It *will* "make merry" over our "defeat."
- **...BUT...**
- **"The breath of life *is coming*."**

- The "cloud" *is coming*."
- Our *vindication* is **public** and **total**.
- "Great Fear" is the End-Game: The *world* that *gloated* will be *struck with "great fear."* This is our *confidence*. The "enemy" *does not* get the last laugh.
- "Giving Glory": This is *why* we "witness." We "witness" (and are "persecuted" for it) so *that* "the rest" might be "terrified" by God's power and "give glory" to Him. Our *suffering* is *part* of God's *plan of salvation* for *others*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "party" of the world (v. 10) turns to "great fear" (v. 11) in *one instant*. What does this *sudden reversal* tell you about the "victory" of the world?
2. The "life" of the "Witnesses" *perfectly* mirrors the "life" of *Christ* (ministry, death, resurrection, ascension). How is *your* life *supposed* to be a "mirror" of Christ's life?
3. This is the *first* time a "judgment" *leads to* "giving glory to God." Why do you think the *resurrection* (v. 11) *had* to be *added* to the *earthquake* (v. 13) to cause this?
4. The *enemies* (v. 12) *had to watch* the *ascension* of the witnesses. Why is the *public vindication* of God's people *so important* to His "justice"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "live in the 'But after...'" (v. 11). The world may be "gloating" over *your* "defeat" (a failure, a sin, a hardship) right *now*. That is "Friday." *Today*, live in the *confident hope* of "Sunday." *Thank God* for the "breath of life" (the Holy Spirit) that is *already* in you, and *trust* Him for your *final, public vindication*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the Resurrection.)

"Lord Jesus, You are the 'Resurrection and the Life.' Like Your witnesses, the world 'kills' us. It 'gloats' over us. But 'Friday' is not the end of the story. Thank You that 'after the three and a half days,' the 'breath of life' comes. Thank You that *our* 'enemies' *will* see *our* 'vindication.' Help us to *live* in that *resurrection power* and *hope* today. Let the world be 'terrified' and 'give glory' to You. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 11, Day 6

The Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Has Come!

Scripture Focus: Revelation 11:15-19

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying,

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. ¹⁸ The nations raged, but your wrath came, ... and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Seventh Trumpet:** This is it. This is the *climax*. This is the *Third Woe* (11:14). This is the *fulfillment* of the Angel's *oath* (10:7) that the "mystery of God" would be *finished*.
- **"Loud Voices in Heaven":** The "silence" of 8:1 is *shattered* by a *universal shout of victory*.
- **"The kingdom of the world HAS BECOME...":** This is a *proleptic* "it is finished." This trumpet *inaugurates* the *final end*. It is *so certain* that heaven *already declares it as past tense*.
- **"Lord God Almighty, who is and who was":** ...Wait. Something is *missing*.
 - In 1:8 and 4:8, the title was "who is, and who was, and **who is to come**."
 - Why is the "is to come" *gone*?
 - **Because He has come!** The "delay" is *over* (10:6). The "future" is *now*.
- **"The Ark of His Covenant" (v. 19):** This is the *most holy* object in Judaism, the *throne of God's presence*, *lost* for 600+ years. John sees it. The message: God's *presence* and *covenant faithfulness* are *revealed* and *secured* in heaven.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This Trumpet is the End:** The 7th Trumpet *unleashes* the *final act*. Many believe the 7th Trumpet *contains* the "Seven Bowl" judgments (Ch. 16), which *are* the "wrath" (v. 18).
- **The Elders' Song (v. 17-18):** This song is the "Table of Contents" for the *rest of the book of Revelation*.
 - "You have... begun to reign" (The *Millennial Kingdom*, Ch. 20).
 - "The nations raged" (The "Beast" and "Armageddon," Ch. 13, 16, 19).
 - "Your wrath came" (The "Bowl Judgments," Ch. 16).
 - "The time for the dead to be judged" (The "Great White Throne," Ch. 20:11-15).
 - "Rewarding your servants" (The "New Jerusalem," Ch. 21-22).
 - "Destroying the destroyers" (The "Lake of Fire," Ch. 19-20).
- **The Ark is Seen (v. 19):** This is the *climax* of the "Temple" theme (11:1). The "Temple" is *opened*, and the Ark (the *presence of God*) is *revealed*.
- **The Storm (v. 19):** The "lightning, thunder, earthquake, hail" (the "Sinai" judgments) show that the *revelation* of God's *Covenant* (the Ark) is *simultaneously* "salvation" for His people and "terror-judgment" for His enemies.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Kingdom: Daniel 7:27**, "And the **kingdom** and the dominion... shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; **his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom...**"
- **The Nations Raged: Psalm 2:1-2**, "Why do the **nations rage** and the peoples plot in vain? The **kings of the earth set themselves...** against the LORD and against his Anointed..."
- **The Ark of the Covenant:** The Ark was *lost* when Babylon (the "destroyer") destroyed the temple (c. 586 BC). Its *re-appearance* in heaven shows that God's *covenant* was *never* lost; it was *safe in heaven* all along.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "End" is *Declared*:** This is our *hope*. The *end of the story* has *already been written*. We are *living* in the "rage" of the nations (v. 18), but we *know* that the "kingdom of our Lord" *has come* (v. 15).
- **He "Is and Who Was":** We *live* in the "is to come" part. But this *vision* pulls back the curtain and shows us the *finality* of His *coming*. He *will* "begin to reign" *visibly*.
- **The "Ark" is Jesus:** The *ultimate* "Ark of the Covenant" (the "place where God's presence *meets* man") is *Jesus Christ*. Because *He* is "in heaven," our *covenant* is *secure*.
- **The "Destroyers" *Will Be "Destroyed"*:** This is the *promise of justice*. God sees the "destroyers of the earth" (those who "destroy" His *creation* and His *people*). Their *judgment* is *set*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The 7th Trumpet blows, and heaven *shouts* (v. 15). *Why* is the "kingdom of the world" *becoming* Christ's kingdom such "Good News"?
2. The Elders' song *drops* the phrase "and who is to come" (v. 17). What does this "missing phrase" *tell you* about *this* "moment" in history?
3. The song (v. 18) is a "Table of Contents" for the *rest of the book* (judging, rewarding, destroying). How does *knowing the "agenda"* give you *confidence*?
4. The "Ark of the Covenant" (God's *presence*) is *seen* (v. 19)... and it *immediately* causes "lightning, hail, and an earthquake." Why is the "holy presence of God" *both* "good news" (for saints) and "bad news" (for the world)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "live in the 'Has Become'." The world *looks* like it's owned by the "nations" (v. 18). But heaven *declares* it "has become" the kingdom of Christ (v. 15). *Today*, find *one situation* that *looks* like "the nations are raging" (a news story, a personal conflict) and *declare* heaven's *truth* over it: "This *looks* like 'your' kingdom, but the *truth* is, it *has become* the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the "Kingdom".)

"Lord God Almighty, Who is, and who was... The nations are raging. The destroyers are destroying. But *we give You thanks...* For You *have* taken Your great power. You *have* begun to reign. The *kingdom of this world* (my job, my nation, my heart) *has become* the Kingdom of You, our Lord, and of Your Christ. And You *shall* reign, forever and ever. Amen."

Week 12 (Chapter 12): Cosmic Conflict: The Woman, The Dragon, and the War

Revelation Bible Study: Week 12, Day 1

The Woman Clothed with the Sun

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:1-2

¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ² She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Great Sign":** The "curtain" has been pulled back (after the 7th trumpet). John is now seeing the *spiritual meaning* behind the *physical events*. This is a "sign" (*semeion*), meaning it is *symbolic* and points to a deeper reality.
- **The "Woman":** A 1st-century Jewish-Christian audience would *immediately* recognize this imagery.
 - **"Clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars..."**
- This is a *direct* echo of **Joseph's dream** in **Genesis 37:9**, where the "sun" (his father Jacob/Israel), the "moon" (his mother), and "eleven stars" (his brothers) bow to *him* (the 12th "star").
- **Conclusion:** This "Woman" is **Israel**—the faithful, covenant people of God, from whom the Messiah comes.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Who is the Woman?** This is a key symbolic figure.
 1. **Israel:** This is the *primary* meaning. She has "12 stars" (the 12 tribes). She is the "people" God chose, who *gave birth* to the "male child" (the Messiah, v. 5).
 2. **Mary:** A secondary, Roman Catholic view, sees this as Mary, the *literal* mother of Jesus. While she *is* the "woman" who gave birth, the "12 stars" and "fleeing for 1,260 days" (v. 6) make this *larger* than just Mary.
 3. **The People of God (Israel + Church):** The *best* view. She *starts* as Israel (who gives birth to Christ) and *expands* to include the "rest of her offspring" (v. 17, the Church). She is the *faithful, covenant people of God* in all ages.

- **"Crying out in birth pains":** This is the "messianic woe." It represents *all the suffering and longing* of Israel (in slavery, in exile, under Rome) *waiting* for the "Messiah" to be born.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Genesis 37:9:** (Joseph's dream) "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the **sun and the moon and eleven stars** were bowing down to me." (He is the 12th).
- **Isaiah 66:7:** "Before she [Zion/Israel] was in **labor** she **gave birth**; before her **pain** came upon her she **delivered a male child**."
- **Micah 5:2-3:** "...from you [Bethlehem] shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler... therefore he shall give them up *until the time* when she **who is in labor has given birth**..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's "People" are the Center of the Story:** This "cosmic" war *begins* with the *people of God*. The *entire* story of Revelation (and the Bible) is about *God's faithfulness* to His "Woman" (His people) and the *enemy's hatred* for her.
- **The "Pain" of Waiting:** We, too, are "in labor." The *Church* (the "Woman" now) is "groaning" (Romans 8:23) as we "wait eagerly" for our *final* adoption, the *redemption* of our bodies. We are in the *same* "birth pains," waiting for the *end* of the story.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is a "sign" (*symbol*). Why do you think God uses *symbolic* "women" and "dragons" to tell this story, instead of just "names and dates"?
2. The "Woman" is "Israel." How does *remembering* the *Jewish roots* of our faith (that the *Messiah* came *from* Israel) change how you view the Old Testament?
3. The "Woman" was "crying out in birth pains." What "birth pains" (longing, suffering, waiting) is the *Church* (the "Woman" now) experiencing *today*?
4. How does it feel to know *you* (as part of the Church) are *part* of this "great cosmic sign"—the "Woman" God has clothed in glory?

Call to Action

Your call is to "remember the Woman." *Thank God* for the "Woman" (Israel). *Thank Him* for the thousands of years of *faithful Jewish people* who "waited" in "birth pains" for the Messiah *you* now worship. *Thank God* for your "roots."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for Israel and the Church.)

"Lord God, You clothed Your 'Woman'—Your covenant people—with the 'sun' of Your glory. You put the 'moon' of Your 'law' under her feet. You 'crowned' her with the 'twelve' tribes. Thank You for her faithfulness. Thank You for the *pain* she endured to *bring forth* our Messiah. Help us, the Church, to *be* the "faithful Woman" today, As we *wait* for the *end* of our "labor." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 12, Day 2

The Great Red Dragon

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:3-4

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ⁴ His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Sign":** Here is the *second* "player" in the cosmic drama: the *antagonist*.
- **"A Great Red Dragon":**
 - **"Great":** He is *powerful*.
 - **"Red":** The color of *blood, fire, and murder* (like the "Red Horse" of War, 6:4).
 - **"Dragon" (Serpent):** This is the *ultimate* symbol of *chaos, evil, and death*. This is "Leviathan," the "ancient serpent" (v. 9).
- **"Seven Heads and Ten Horns":** This is the imagery of *empire* and *total power*, taken *directly* from Daniel 7. This Dragon is the *source* of the *evil empires* of the world (like Rome).
- **"Seven Diadems":** "Diadems" are *royal* crowns. This Dragon *claims* to be the *king* of the world. (Note: In Ch. 13, the *Beast* has the "crowns on his *horns*" (his *power*), but the *Dragon* has them on his *heads* (his *authority*)).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"His tail swept down a third of the stars":**
 - This is *not* a "natural" event. This is a *symbolic* vision of the *ancient, pre-human* past.
 - The "stars" are *angels* (see 1:20).
 - This "sweeping" is the *original fall* of the angels. This is **Satan's rebellion**, when he *deceived* and *led* "a third" of the *angels* (now *demons*) in his revolt against God.
- **"The Dragon stood before the woman... to devour it":**
 - This is the "war" *on* the "seed" (Gen 3:15).
 - This is the *entire Old Testament story* summarized: Satan *constantly* tried to *wipe out* the "covenant line" (the "Woman") to *prevent* the "child" (the Messiah) from being born.
 - This *culminated* in a *literal* event: **Herod the Great** (empowered by the "Dragon") *trying to kill* the baby Jesus in **Matthew 2**.
- **The "Battle" is Ancient:** This vision shows that the "war" on Jesus *didn't* "start" with Pilate. It *started* in *heaven* before "time began" and *played out* through all of history.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Serpent": Genesis 3:15**, "I will put *enmity* between you and the **woman**, and between *your* offspring and *her offspring*..." This chapter is the *cosmic picture* of that "enmity."
- **The "Fallen Star": Isaiah 14:12**, "How you are **fallen from heaven**, O Day Star, son of the Dawn! ...You said... 'I will raise my throne *above the stars of God*...'"
- **The "Dragon" (Leviathan): Isaiah 27:1**, "In that day the LORD... will punish **Leviathan the fleeing serpent**... the **dragon** that is in the sea."
- **Herod's Slaughter: Matthew 2:16**, "Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked... became *furious*, and he sent and **killed all the male children** in Bethlehem..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Enemy is *Real***: This is not a "metaphor" for "bad choices." Our enemy is a *real, powerful, intelligent, and ancient* being. He is a "Great Red Dragon." We *must* "respect the enemy."
- **Our Enemy is "Fallen"**: He *already* "fell." He *already* "lost" the "war in heaven" (v. 8). His "tail swept 1/3," *not* "all." He is *powerful*, but he is *not* "all-powerful."
- **His "One Goal"**: The Dragon's *entire* strategy is to *stop* God's plan. He "stands and waits" to *devour*. He *still* does this. He "stands and waits" to *devour* a *new believer*, a *new ministry*, a *new work* of God. He is *relentless*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The Dragon is "Red" (murder) and has "Diadems" (royal authority). How does this *perfectly* describe Satan as the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31)?
2. The vision "flashes back" to the "fall of 1/3 of the stars." Why is it *important* for us to know "how this *all started*"?
3. The Dragon's *one goal* was to "devour the child." How did *Herod* (in Matthew 2) *literally* act this "Dragon-role" out?
4. If the Dragon's *one purpose* is to "devour" God's "children," how does this *change* how you *pray* for *protection* (for your family, your church, new believers)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "be sober-minded." **1 Peter 5:8** says, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the **devil** prowls around like a **roaring lion** [a *dragon*], seeking someone to **devour**."

- *Acknowledge the enemy today. Verbally (in prayer) ask God for protection from the "Dragon" for you and your family.*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for protection.)

"Lord God, You have revealed our enemy: the Great Red Dragon, Satan. He is *real*. He is *powerful*. He is *ancient*. He is *waiting* to "devour" us. But You, O Lord, are *greater*. You are the "Woman" He could not *stop*. You are the "Child" He could not *devour*. Protect us today from his 'fiery darts.' Hide us in the 'blood of the Lamb.' Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 12, Day 3

The Birth, The Ascension, and The Escape

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:5-6

⁵ She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, ⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Male Child...":** This is the *Messiah*.
- **"Rule all the nations with a rod of iron":** This is a *direct quote* from the *Royal Messianic Psalm* (Psalm 2:9). This *proves* the "child" is the *King* that God promised.
- **"Her child was caught up to God...":** This is *stunning*. John *skips* the *entire* 33-year life of Jesus. He *skips* the "cross" and "resurrection" (for a moment).
- **Why?** Because from *heaven's perspective*, the *entire life of Christ* (birth, life, death, resurrection) was *one, single, victorious event* that *culminated* in His **Ascension** ("caught up," *harpazo*).
- **The "Dragon" Failed:** The Dragon "waited to devour" the child (v. 4), but he *couldn't*. The child *finished* His work and was "snatched" (*harpazo*) to the *safety* and *authority* of God's *throne*, where the Dragon *cannot touch Him*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Life of Christ" in One Verse:**
 - **"She gave birth..."** (The Incarnation, Matthew 1-2).
 - **"...to rule..."** (His *identity* and *mission*).
 - **"...was caught up..."** (The Ascension, Acts 1:9).
- This is the "turning point." The Dragon's *first plan* (devour the child) has *failed*. The *King* is *on the throne*.
- **"And the woman fled..." (v. 6):**
 - Now that the *King* is *ascended*, the Dragon *turns his rage* on the "Woman" (God's people) who is *left behind* on earth.
 - **"Into the wilderness":** This is the "place" of *testing* (Israel's 40 years) *and* of *divine protection*.
 - **"A place prepared by God":** God *Himself* has *prepared* a place to *protect* His people.
 - **"1,260 days":** This is the *exact same "tribulation" timeframe* (42 months, 3.5 years) from **11:2** (the "trampling") and **11:3** (the "witnesses").

- **The Message:** The *entire church age* (the "1,260 days" *between* Christ's *ascension* and His *return*) is a time where the "Woman" (the Church) is **both hunted by the Dragon and protected by God** in the "wilderness" of this *world*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Rod of Iron": Psalm 2:9**, "You [God's Anointed Son] shall **break them with a rod of iron...**" (This is *also* the promise *given to the Church* in **Rev 2:27**).
- **The Ascension: Acts 1:9**, "he was *lifted up* [caught up], and a *cloud* took him..."
- **The "Wilderness" (Protection):** This is the *Exodus* story.
 - **Exodus 19:4:** "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I **bore* you on **eagles'** wings [see Rev 12:14!] and brought you *to myself* [in the **wilderness**]."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Christ is on the Throne:** This is the *fact* that *governs* our *reality*. The "Dragon" *lost*. The "Child" is *not* a "helpless baby"; He is the *King*, "caught up to God and to His throne."
- **This is *Our* "1,260 Days":** We are *living* in *this* *verse*. We are the "Woman" (the Church) in the "wilderness" (the world) *right now*.
- **And in this "wilderness"...**
 1. We are **hunted** by the Dragon. (Life is *hard*).
 2. We have **"a place prepared by God."** (We are *safe*).
 3. We are being **"nourished."** (God *provides* for us, *feeds* us with His Word).
- This *one verse* is the *perfect summary* of the *Christian life* in *this* age. It is *both* "persecution" and "divine protection."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John *summarizes* Jesus's *entire* life/death/resurrection into *one event*: His *Ascension*. Why is the *Ascension* (Jesus *on the throne*) the *central "victory"* of the Gospel?
2. The Dragon's *first plan* (kill the child) *failed*. How does this *past* victory of Christ give you *confidence* for the *current "war"* (v. 6)?
3. We are *living* in the "1,260 days" *right now*. In what *specific* ways have you *felt* like you were "fleeing in the wilderness" (hunted, in a 'barren' place)?
4. In what *specific* ways have you *also* felt "nourished" in a "place prepared by God" (protected, provided for)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "eat in the wilderness." You are *living* in the "1,260 days," and God has *promised* to "nourish" you (v. 6). Your "nourishment" is the "little scroll" (the Word). *Acknowledge* that you are "in the wilderness" and *thank God* for His "Manna" (the Bible) that "nourishes" you *today*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the "Church in the Wilderness".)

"Lord Jesus Christ, You are the 'male child' who was 'caught up to the throne.' You *reign* with a 'rod of iron.' We, Your 'Woman' (Your Church), are *left* in the 'wilderness' of this world. The Dragon *hunts* us. But You have *prepared a place* for us. You *nourish* us here. Thank You for Your *protection* and Your *provision*. Feed us *today* with Your Word. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 12, Day 4

The War in Heaven & The Accuser Cast Down

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:7-11

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"War in Heaven":** This "flashback" explains *why* the Dragon *turned* on the "Woman" (v. 6, v. 13).
- **When is this "War"?**
 - **View 1 (Primeval):** This was the *original* "fall" of Satan (the "1/3 of stars" from v. 4).
 - **View 2 (The Ascension):** This is the *result* of Christ's *Ascension* (v. 5). When Christ was "caught up to God and to his throne," He *invaded* heaven as the *victorious King*. His *first act* was to *evict* the "squatter" (Satan).
- **This (View 2) fits the context best.** The *Ascension* of Christ (v. 5) *triggers* this "war."
- **Michael:** The "archangel" and the *sworn protector* of *Israel* (the "Woman").
- **Satan's "Job" (v. 10):** Before this, Satan *had* access to heaven. His *job* was **"Accuser."** He "accused them day and night," just like he *accused Job* (Job 1-2).
- **The "Loud Voice" (v. 10):** Heaven *rejoices* because *that job is GONE*. The "courtroom" is *closed*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Satan Explicitly Identified (v. 9):** John *stops* all "symbol" guessing. He gives a *four-fold* identification:
 1. **"Great Dragon":** His *power* and *terror*.
 2. **"Ancient Serpent":** His *history* (Genesis 3).
 3. **"Devil":** (Greek: *diabolos*, "slanderer").
 4. **"Satan":** (Hebrew: *ha-satan*, "the accuser").
- **"He was DEFEATED" (v. 8):** The war was *not* a "close call." He *lost*.
- **"Now the salvation... has come" (v. 10):** The *Ascension of Christ* (v. 5) and the *Casting-out of Satan* (v. 9) is what *inaugurated* the "Kingdom of God."
- **HOW They "Conquered Him" (v. 11):** This is the *most important* verse for us. This is the *Saints' Battle-Plan*. How do we (the "brothers") *conquer* the "Accuser"?
 1. **"By the Blood of the Lamb":** This is our *Legal Defense*. When Satan "accuses" us ("You sinned!"), we do *not* say "I'm a good person." We say, "I am *guilty*, BUT I am *covered* by the **Blood**." This *silences* the Accuser.
 2. **"By the Word of their Testimony":** This is our *Offensive Weapon*. We *speak* what Christ has *done*. We "bear witness" to His *power*.
 3. **"They loved not their lives...":** This is our *Attitude*. We *have no fear*. The "Dragon" *cannot* "threaten" us... not even with *death*. Our "life" is *already* "hidden with Christ" (Col 3:3).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Michael: Daniel 12:1**, "At that time shall **Michael** arise, the **great prince who has charge of your people...**"
- **Satan "Cast Out": Luke 10:18**, (when the 72 returned from *their* "witness"), Jesus said, "I saw **Satan** fall like lightning from heaven."
- **John 12:31:** (Speaking of His *cross*), Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world; *now* will the **ruler of this world be cast out**."
- **The "Accuser": Job 1:9**, "Then Satan answered the LORD, 'Does Job fear God for no reason?...'"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Accuser" is Your Enemy:** Satan's *primary weapon* against *you* (the believer) is *not* "temptation" (that's his *first* tool), but **ACCUSATION**.
- He *stands* before God (or *in your own "head"*) and *accuses* you "day and night":
 - "You're a *failure*."
 - "You're a *hypocrite*."
 - "You *sinned again*."
 - "You are *unforgivable*."
- **Verse 11 is Your Only Defense.**
 - **1. "The Blood":** You do *not* "argue" with the Accuser. You *agree* ("Yes, I *am* a sinner...") and then you "apply the Blood" ("...*but I am forgiven*.").
 - **2. "Your Testimony":** You *speak* the *truth* of what God says about you ("I *am* a child of God," "I *am* righteous in Christ").
 - **3. "Your Life":** You *surrender* your "life" (your *rights*, your *pride*, your *fear of death*) to *Him*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This "war" *in heaven* was *triggered* by Christ's *Ascension*. How does this show that *Christ's "victory"* *causes* "Satan's" downfall?

2. Satan's *old job* was "Accuser." How has "accusation" (either *from* others, or *your own* "self-talk") *paralyzed* you?
3. Read the *three weapons* (v. 11) again. Which of those *three* is the *hardest* for you to "wield"? (The Blood? The "speaking" of your testimony? Or the "not loving your life"?)
4. How *exactly* does the "Blood of the Lamb" *silence* the "Accuser"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "use the 3 weapons." *Right now*, the "Accuser" is "accusing" you of *something* (a sin from yesterday, a "failure" from this morning).

1. **Stop.**
2. *Verbally* pray: "Satan, you are *right* to accuse me... **BUT** I conquer you *by the Blood of the Lamb*, which *cleanses* me. My *testimony* is that I *am* a child of God. And I *will not* 'love my life'—I *surrender* this *shame* to Jesus."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of "Conquest".)

"Lord Jesus, Thank You that 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God... have come.' Thank You that the "Accuser" has been *thrown down*. Today, when he "accuses" me, Help me to *not* listen. Help me to *conquer* him: By *your Blood*, my *only plea*. By the *word* of my *testimony*, my *only truth*. And by *not loving my life*, my *only sacrifice*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 12, Day 5

The Woe on the Earth & The Eagle's Wings

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:12-14

¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Rejoice, O heavens... Woe to the earth":** This is the *great exchange*.
 - Heaven *rejoices* because the "Accuser" (Satan) is *gone*.
 - Earth *gets a "Woe"* (the *Third Woe*, in fact) because the "Accuser" is *now "stuck"* on earth.
- **Satan's "Emotion":** "Great Wrath" (*thumos* - "fury," "hot anger").
- **Satan's "Motive":** "He knows that his time is short."
 - This is *critical*. Satan is *not* "all-knowing," but he *is* "smart." He *knows* the "prophecies" (like Daniel's). He *knows* his "clock" is ticking.
 - He is a "cornered animal." He is *desperate*, and that *makes him* (and the world) *more dangerous*.
- **"The Two Wings of the Great Eagle":** This is a *direct, unmistakable* symbol of the **Exodus**. God *Himself* is the "Eagle" who *supernaturally delivers* His people.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "War" Shifts:**
 - **Plan A:** "Devour the Child" (v. 4) -> **FAILED** (v. 5, Ascension).
 - **Plan B:** "War in Heaven" (v. 7) -> **FAILED** (v. 8, Cast Out).
 - **Plan C (New):** "Pursue the Woman [Israel/Church]" (v. 13).
- **The "War" on Earth is the "Devil's Woe":** Satan *cannot* "get" to *Christ* (who is on the "throne"). So, he *attacks* the *body* of Christ (the "Woman").
- **"Time, and times, and half a time":**
 - This is the *exact* phrase from **Daniel 7:25**.
 - "Time" = 1 year
 - "Times" = 2 years
 - "Half a time" = 0.5 years
 - **Total = 3.5 years.**
 - This is the *exact same* timeframe as the **1,260 days** (v. 6) and the **42 months** (11:2).
 - **It is the symbolic period of the Church's "wilderness" (persecution) and "nourishment" (protection).**

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Eagle's Wings:** **Exodus 19:4**, "You yourselves have seen... how I *bore you on eagles' wings* and brought you to myself."
- **"Nourished in the Wilderness":** **Deuteronomy 8:2-3**, "And you shall remember... these *forty years* in the *wilderness*... He... *fed you with manna*..." (God *nourishes* His people *in* the place of trial).
- **"Time is Short":** This *fulfills* the *Angel's Oath* from **10:6**, "There would be *no more delay*." The *Devil* "knows" this, and it *enrages* him.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- This is *Why* the World is **"Crazy"**: This verse *explains* our world. Why is there *so much rage*? Why is everything *so intense* and *desperate*?
- **"Woe to the earth... for the devil has come down... in great WRAITH, because he knows his time is SHORT."**
- We are *living* in the "Woe." We are *living* in the "fury" of a *defeated* enemy who is *lashing out* in his *death throes*.

- **The "Eagle's Wings" are *For Us*:** When the *world* gets "furious," God *gives us* "Eagle's Wings."
 - He *supernaturally* "lifts us up" *out of* the "fray."
 - He *carries us* to our "place of nourishment" (His Word, His Church, His Presence).
 - He *protects us from* the "Serpent."
- **Satan is "Furious" *and* "Defeated":** We must hold *both* truths. He is *dangerous* (furious), but he is *defeated* ("time is short").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Heaven "rejoices" (v. 12) *because* the "Accuser" is *gone*. But this "rejoicing" *causes* the "Woe on earth." How does this "great exchange" explain the *tension* of the Christian life?
2. Satan's "fury" is *because* "his time is short." How does *knowing* that our "enemy" is *desperate* and "on a 'timer'" *change* how we *view* his "attacks"?
3. The "Woman" is *given* "Eagle's Wings." This is *divine deliverance*. What "Eagle's Wings" (a 'way of escape,' a 'protection') has God *given you* in *your* "wilderness"?
4. The "time" is 3.5 years (symbolic). God *always* sets a *limit* on our "tribulation." How does this *hope* (it *will end*) help you *endure*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "fly on the Eagle's Wings." *Today*, when the "Dragon" (the "Woe," the "fury" of the world) *pursues* you (with *anxiety, news, fear*)... *do not* "fight" him. *Flee* to your "prepared place." *Fly* "on the Eagle's Wings" by *running to God's Word* (your "nourishment") for 5 minutes.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God".)

"The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His *rage* we can endure, For lo, his *doom is sure*: One little word shall fell him.

Lord, be our "Eagle's Wings" today. Carry us. Nourish us. Protect us. For *Your* time is *eternal*, and *his* time is *short*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 12, Day 6

The Serpent's Flood and the War on the Saints

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:15-17

¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Water like a river... out of his mouth":** This is *not* a "natural" flood. This is a *supernatural, demonic* attack.
- **"Flood" as an "Army":** In the Old Testament (Isa 8, Jer 46), a "flood" or "river" is a *common symbol* for an *invading, overwhelming army* (like Assyria or Egypt).
- **"The Earth Helped the Woman":** God's *creation* (the "earth") *obeys God* and *disobeys* the "Dragon." This is *divine, "common grace"* protection. God can use *anything*—even "natural" events or *pagan* people (the "earth")—to *protect* His Church.
- **"The Dragon Became Furious...":** (His *second* "fury" - 12:12, 12:17).
- **His "New" Target:**
 1. **Plan A:** Devour the Child (v. 4) -> **FAILED**.
 2. **Plan B:** Pursue the "Woman" [Israel] (v. 13) -> **FAILED** (v. 16, "earth helped").
 3. **Plan C (New):** "Make war on the *rest of her offspring*."
- **"The Rest of Her Offspring":** This is *us*. This is the **Church**. This is the *Gentile* (and *all other*) believers who are the "offspring" of the *original* "Woman."
- **The "Two-Part" Definition of a Christian (v. 17):**
 1. "Keep the commandments of God" (Obedience / "The Law")
 2. "Hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Faith / "The Gospel")

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Flood" (v. 15):**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** A *literal* "flood" of *something* (water? an army?) that the Dragon *unleashes*.
 - **Symbolic (Preterist):** The "flood" was the *Roman army* (the "river") that *came* to "sweep away" the "Woman" (Jewish-Christians), but the "earth" (they *fled* to Pella, *outside* the "city") "swallowed" them.
 - **Symbolic (Idealist):** This is a "flood" of *lies, deception, and false teaching* that the "Serpent" *spews* "out of his mouth" to *destroy* the Church. But the "earth" (common sense, God's providence) "swallows" it.
- **The "War" Shifts:** This verse is the *turning point* for the *Church*. The *direct* "war on Israel" (the Woman) is "protected." So, the Dragon *shifts* his *full attention* to the *new* "target": **the global Church**.
- **The "Cliffhanger":** Chapter 12 *ends* with the "enraged" Dragon *going off* to *start* this "new war." (The *last line* of 12:17 in many manuscripts is, "And *he* [the Dragon] *stood on the sand of the sea...*")
- ****This sets the stage for Chapter 13.** The Dragon *stands on the sand*, and *summons* his "Beast" *out of* the "sea" (13:1).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Flood" of Armies: Isaiah 59:19**, "...he will come *like a rushing stream* [a 'flood'], driven by the *wind of the LORD*." (God *also* uses "floods" as judgment).

- **The "Seed" of the Woman: Genesis 3:15**, "...enmity between... *your* offspring and *her* offspring." This is the *war* that *was* prophesied *in the Garden*.
- **The "Testimony of Jesus":** This is *John's* "key phrase." **Rev 1:9**, "I, John... was on the island... on account of the *word of God* and the *testimony of Jesus*."
- (v. 17 and 1:9 are *identical* descriptions of a "believer".)

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This *is* Our "War"** (v. 17): This is *our* "job description." We *are* "those who keep the commandments... and hold the testimony." *Therefore*, the Dragon *is* "furious" with *us* and *is* "making war" on *us*.
- **The "War" is *Personal*:** This *explains* your *life*. The "Dragon" is *personally* "furious" with *you*.
- **The "Flood" of Lies:** We are *living* in the "Serpent's flood." The "river" of *lies, deception, and filth* that "pours from the mouth" of the *internet, media, and culture* is *designed* to "sweep the Church away."
- **"The Earth Helped":** We *trust* in God's *providence*. God *can* (and *does*) use *anything* to *protect* us. He can use a "natural" event, a "secular" government, or a "lucky break" (the "earth") to *swallow* the "flood" meant for us. *Nothing* happens *outside* His control.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The Dragon's "Plan B" (pursue the Woman) *failed* (v. 16). How does *Satan's "failure rate"* give you *confidence*?
2. The *new* "target" is "the rest of her offspring" (v. 17). That's *us*. How *seriously* do you *take* the fact that the "Dragon" is *personally* "at war" with *you*?
3. A Christian is defined as (1) "keeps commandments" and (2) "holds testimony." Why are *both* (obedience *and* faith) *necessary*? What happens if you *only* have *one*?
4. How have *you* seen the "earth help the woman" in your *own* life? (A "random" event that *protected* you from a "flood" of trouble).

Call to Action

Your call is to "Stand for War." (The Dragon *is* at war with *you*).

- **Review your "Armor"** (Eph 6).
- **Review your "Identity"** (v. 17): (1) "Am I *keeping* His commandments?" (2) "Am I *holding* His testimony?"
- *Confess* where you are *failing* in *either* area, and *re-commit* to the "battle."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the "War".)

"Lord God, The Dragon is "furious." He has "declared war" on *me*. He has "unleashed his flood" to *sweep me away*. But *You* are my "Eagle's Wings." *You* are the "earth" that *swallows* his flood. *You* are the "Lamb" whose *blood* I stand in. Give me the *grace* today to *both* "Keep Your commandments" (Obedience) and "Hold Your testimony" (Faith). For the *Dragon* is *defeated*, and the *Kingdom* is *Yours*. Amen."

Week 13 (Chapter 13): The Beasts Emerge: The Dragon's Earthly Powers

Revelation Bible Study: Week 13, Day 1

The Beast from the Sea

Scripture Focus: Revelation 13:1-2

¹ And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. ² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Sea":** In the Jewish mind, the "sea" was a symbol of *chaos, the unknown, and the Gentile nations*. The Beast (the Antichrist) rises from the "sea" of *human, political, and Gentile chaos*.
- **The "Beast":** The Greek is *Therion* (wild, savage beast). This is a *monster*.
- **"Ten horns and seven heads":** This is the *same* description as the **Dragon** in 12:3... but *inverted*.
 - **Dragon (12:3):** 7 heads, 10 horns, 7 diadems (crowns) on his *heads* (authority).
 - **Beast (13:1):** 7 heads, 10 horns, 10 diadems on his *horns* (power).
- **The Message:** The **Dragon (Satan)** is the "authority" behind the scenes. The **Beast (Antichrist)** is the *political/military power* ("horns") that *carries out* Satan's authority on earth.
- **"Like a leopard... bear... lion":** A 1st-century Jewish reader would *immediately* recognize this. This "Beast" is a *hybrid monster* made of the *four beasts* from **Daniel 7**.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Unholy Trinity":** This chapter introduces the "unholy trinity," a demonic mockery of the true Godhead.
 - **The Dragon (Satan):** The "Anti-Father" (12:3).
 - **The Beast from the Sea (Antichrist):** The "Anti-Son" (13:1).
 - **The Beast from the Earth (False Prophet):** The "Anti-Spirit" (13:11).
- **The Beast is an Empire AND a Person:**
 - **An Empire:** It's the *culmination* of all *evil, godless human government*. It's a "revived Roman Empire" (in the Futurist view) or *all* godless empires (in the Idealist view).
 - **A Person:** This "Empire" is embodied in a *final, single ruler*: the **Antichrist**.

- **"To it the dragon gave his power..." (v. 2):** This is the *key*. The Beast's "power" is *not his own*. It is a *demonic power, delegated* by Satan. The Antichrist is the *puppet*; Satan is the *puppeteer*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Daniel 7:** This is a *direct quote* and *summary* of **Daniel 7:3-7**.
 - **Daniel 7** saw *four* separate beasts:
 1. A **Lion** (Babylon)
 2. A **Bear** (Medo-Persia)
 3. A **Leopard** (Greece)
 4. A "Terrifying Beast" with **10 horns** (Rome)
- **John's Vision:** John sees *one, final Beast* that is a *composite* of *all four*. This "Antichrist" *embodies* the *savagery* (bear), *speed* (leopard), *arrogance* (lion), and *power* (10 horns) of *all* evil empires *combined*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Spirit" of Antichrist:** Before the *final* "Beast" (a person) comes, the "spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3) is *already at work*.
- **The "Beast" is Any Human System that...**
 1. Rises from "chaos."
 2. Is *empowered by the Dragon* (Satan).
 3. Demands *total allegiance*.
 4. Has "blasphemous names" (e.g., "We are the 'savior'," "We are the 'truth'").
- We see this "Beast" in *totalitarian governments* and *godless political movements* that demand *worship* and *persecute* the Church.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The Beast *rises from the sea* (chaos/Gentiles). The "Woman" *fled to the wilderness* (protection). How does this "geography" (sea vs. land) show the *conflict* between the "world" and the "church"?
2. The Beast is a *hybrid* of *all* the beasts from Daniel 7. What does this tell you about the *nature* of this *final* evil?
3. The Beast's "power" is *given* to him by the "Dragon" (v. 2). Why is it *critical* to remember that *evil* is *demonic*, not just "human"?
4. Where do you see the *spirit* of this "Beast" (a *system* that demands *worship* and *blasphemes* God) at *work in the world today*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "identify the source." When you see a *powerful, godless* "system" (in media, politics, or culture) that *demands allegiance*, practice "seeing" the *Dragon* (Satan) *behind it*, giving it "his power and his throne." *Name the true enemy.*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for discernment.)

"Lord God, The Dragon *still* gives his "power and throne" to the "Beasts" of this world. He *still* raises up *systems* of "blasphemy." Give me *Your* "eyes" to see *past* the "leopard and the lion" and to *recognize* the *Dragon* who *pulls the strings*. My *allegiance* is not to *any* "Beast," but to the *Lamb*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 13, Day 2

The "Fatal Wound" and the World's Worship

Scripture Focus: Revelation 13:3-4

³ One of its heads seemed to have a fatal wound, but its fatal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. ⁴ And they worshiped the dragon, because he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Fatal Wound... was Healed":** This is the *event* that *causes* the "whole earth" to *worship* the Beast.
- **The "Nero Redivivus" Myth?**
 - This is the *most likely* 1st-century *context*.
 - Emperor **Nero** was the *first* emperor to *persecute* the Church. He was *infamously* evil. He *killed himself* (a "fatal wound") in 68 AD.
 - *Immediately* after, a *powerful legend* (the *Nero Redivivus* myth) *spread like wildfire* across the empire: "Nero is *not really* dead. He is 'hiding' in Parthia [the 'enemy'] and he *will return* with an army to 're-take' his throne."
- **John's "Twist":** John *takes* this *pagan, political* myth and *applies* it to the *Antichrist*. He is *using* their *own "fake news"* to describe the "real" end-times enemy.
- **The Message:** The "Beast" (the *empire* or the *man*) will *seem* to be "fatally wounded" (collapse), but will *supernaturally "revive"*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Mockery" of Christ:** This "healing" is a *demonic imitation* of the *death and resurrection* of *Jesus Christ*.
 - **Christ:** *Truly* died (fatal wound) and *Truly* resurrected (healed). This leads to *true worship*.
 - **Antichrist:** *Seems* to die (fatal wound) and *supernaturally "revives"*. This leads to *false worship*.
- **The "Worship" (v. 4):** This is the *goal* of the Dragon.
 - They "worshiped the **dragon**" (*indirectly*... because he's the "power source").

- And they "worshiped the **beast**" (*directly*).
- The "**Worship Song**" of Hell:
 - **Heaven's Song (Exodus 15:11)**: "Who is *like you*, O LORD...?"
 - **Earth's Song (Rev 13:4)**: "**Who is like the beast...?**"
- This is the *ultimate* "blasphemy." The world *takes* the *praise* that belongs *only to God* and *gives it* to the *Beast*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- The "**Fatal Wound**": **Genesis 3:15**, "he [the 'seed'] shall *bruise your head...*" This *could* be the "fatal wound" on the *Serpent* that *appears* to "heal" (in the "Beast") for a *short time*.
- The "**Mocking**" Song: **Exodus 15:11**, "Who is **like you**, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness...?"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- The "**Resurrection**" of Evil: We see this "fatal wound" *all the time*.
 - We *think* an "evil" (like *Nazism* or *Communism*) is "fatally wounded" (defeated in WW2, the Cold War).
 - But then it *revives* in a *new form* (neo-Nazism, new forms of "totalitarianism").
- The "**Cult of Personality**": The world "*marvels*" at "power." They *flock* to a "strong man" who seems *invincible*. They *love* a "comeback story." The Antichrist will be the *ultimate* "comeback king."
- "**Who can fight against it?**": This is the *cry of despair* and *cynicism*. It's the "pragmatism" that *gives up* and *joins* the "winning side," *even if it's evil*.
- **We Worship What We Marvel At**: This is a *warning*. What do you "marvel" at? (Wealth? Power? Celebrity? Technology?) Be *careful*, because the *step* from "marveling" to "worshipping" is *very short*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "healing" of the "fatal wound" is a *demonic mockery* of *Christ's resurrection*. Why is "imitation" *Satan's greatest tool*?
2. The world's worship song is: "**Who is like the beast?**" The Church's song is: "**Who is like you, O LORD?**" Which "song" is *your heart tempted* to sing?
3. The *reason* they "followed" was *power* ("Who can fight against it?"). They *joined* the "unbeatable" team. Where are you "tempted" to *compromise* just to be on the "winning" (or "popular") side?
4. They "worshiped the *dragon*" (Satan) *indirectly*, by *worshipping the "beast"* (the "system"/the "man"). Where do we *indirectly worship Satan* today, by *worshipping* the "systems of power" (money, fame, politics) that he "gives authority to"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "sing the right song." *Today*, when you are *tempted* to "marvel" at *worldly power* (a "billionaire," a "powerful politician," a "huge company")... *Stop*.

- *Consciously* "change the song" in your *head*.
- Pray, "Who is *like You*, O LORD? *You* are majestic in holiness. *You* are the *only* one "unbeatable." My "marvel" is for *You*."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Exodus 15.)

"O Lord God, The world *marvels* at the 'Beast.' They cry, 'Who is like him?' But *we* , Your people, *know* the truth. **Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?** Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? You are the *only* one. Our *worship* is for *You* and the *Lamb* alone. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 13, Day 3

The Beast's Blasphemy and War

Scripture Focus: Revelation 13:5-7

⁵ And the beast was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies":** This is *another* "fatal" clue for a 1st-century Jewish reader. This is a *direct quote* from **Daniel 7**.
- **"Blasphemies against God... his name... his dwelling...":** This is the *nature* of the Beast.
 1. **"Blaspheming His Name":** (Claiming *his own name* is "God").
 2. **"Blaspheming His Dwelling (Heaven)":** (Mocking "heaven" as "irrelevant" or "powerless").
 3. **"Those who dwell in heaven":** (The *saints* and *angels*).
- **"Forty-two months":** *There it is again*. This is the *third* time this *exact timeframe* is used.
 1. The "Nations" *trample* the "Holy City" (11:2).
 2. The "Witnesses" *prophesy* (11:3).
 3. The "Beast" *exercises authority* (13:5).
- **Conclusion:** The *entire "end-time" period* is *simultaneously* a time of (1) Worldly *Triumph* (trampling), (2) Church *Witness* (prophesying), and (3) Demonic *Authority* (the Beast).
- **"Allowed to make war... and to conquer them":** This is *terrifying*. The "saints" (the Church) are *not* protected from *physical* harm. The Beast *will* "win" (militarily, politically). He *will* "conquer" them (i.e., *martyr* them).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Beast's "Authority" (*exousia*):**
 - "Was given..." (v. 5)
 - "Was allowed..." (v. 7)
 - "Was given..." (v. 7)
- **This is *critical*.** The Beast's "reign" is *not* a "mistake." It is *not* "God losing control." It is *divinely "allowed"* and *permitted* by God, for *His own sovereign purpose*, for a *limited time* (42 months).
- **"Conquer the Saints":**
 - **Futurist View:** This is a *literal, future* "Great Tribulation," where the *Antichrist* will *literally hunt down and kill all* believers ("saints") on earth.
 - **Idealist/Historicist View:** This is the *timeless* "war" of the *world* (the "Beast") against the *Church* (the "saints"). This is the "persecution" that has *always* happened (under Rome, under Communism, in the "persecuted church" *today*).
- **"Authority over every tribe...":** This is a *global* authority. The "Beast" is the *first* (and *last*) *truly global "empire"* of *unbelief*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Mouth": Daniel 7:8**, "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up... a horn... with eyes... and a mouth **speaking great things**." (This is the "little horn" from Daniel 7).
- **"War on the Saints": Daniel 7:21**, "As I looked, this horn **made war with the saints and prevailed over them** ['conquered them']."
- **The "Time Limit": Daniel 7:25**, "...and he shall *wear out the saints*... and they shall be given into his hand for a '**time, times, and half a time**'" (42 months / 1260 days).
- **Conclusion:** John is *showing* his audience that the "final enemy" *prophesied by Daniel* is *this "Beast"*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Mouth" of the "Beast":** We *hear* this "mouth" *every day*.
 - Any voice that "speaks great things" (e.g., "We can solve all problems," "Humanity is God").
 - Any voice that "blasphemes" God, His *Name* (mocks Him), His *dwelling* (mocks "heaven"), and His *people* (mocks the "saints").
- **"Allowed to Conquer":** This is the *hardest truth* for the "prosperous" Church. We are *not* promised *political victory*. We are *not* promised a "Christian Nation." We *are* promised that the *Beast* will "make war" on us... and (on *earthly terms*) "conquer" us.
- **The "But...":** *But...* this "conquering" is *only* "allowed." *And* it is *only* for "42 months" (a *limited time*). *And* (as 12:11 said), the *saints* "conquer" *him*... by *letting* him "conquer" *them* ("they loved not their lives...").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This "Beast" comes *directly* from the *prophecies of Daniel*. How does *knowing* that God "prophesied" this *hundreds of years in advance* give you *confidence* in His "plan"?
2. The Beast's "power" is "allowed" and "given" *by God*. Why is it so *hard* for us to *believe* that "evil" is on a "*leash*" held *by God*?
3. The Beast *physically* "conquers" the *saints*. But *spiritually*, the *saints* "conquer" the *Beast* (12:11). *Explain* this "paradox."
4. Where do you *hear* the "blasphemous mouth" of the "Beast" *speaking* in our *culture* today?

Call to Action

Your call is to "remember the 'leash'." The Beast is "allowed" to act. *His power is "given". His time is "limited".*

- Today, when you see the "Beast" *seemingly* "winning" (on the *news*, in *culture*), *remind yourself* of the "leash."
- Pray: "Lord, I see the 'Beast' raging. But I *know* he is *Your* "Beast." He is 'allowed,' and his 'time is short.' *I trust You.*"

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Martin Luther.)

"The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His Kingdom is forever.

Lord, the 'nations rage.' The 'Beast' is 'making war' and *seems* to 'conquer' us. But *we know* he is 'allowed.' We *know* his 'time is short.' We *know* that *Your* "Kingdom is forever." Give us the *faith* of the "saints" to *endure*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 13, Day 4

The "Book of Life" and the "Warning"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 13:8-10

⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"All who dwell on earth...":** This is the *bad news*. The "worship" of the Beast will be *universal*. It will *look like the entire world* has "followed" him (13:3).
- **"Everyone... (except)":** This is the *good news*. There is an *exception*.
- **"The Book of Life of the Lamb":** This is the "city register" of *Heaven*. It's the *list* of God's "citizens."
- **"Written before the foundation of the world":** This is *stunning*. This is the doctrine of **Election / Predestination**.
 - Your "citizenship" was *not* "written in" when you "believed."
 - It was "written in" *before* "time began."
- **The Message:** The *only thing* that *stops* a person from "worshipping the Beast" is *not* their "moral fiber" or "strong will." It is *only* the *sovereign, eternal grace* of God, who *wrote their name in His book* before the "world was even made."
- **"If anyone has an ear...":** This is the *same* "warning" that Jesus gave to the 7 Churches (Rev 2-3). It's a "wake-up call." *Listen!*

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Poem" (v. 10):** This verse is *critical*. It's a *direct command* to the "saints" (the Church) on *how to respond* to the "Beast's war" (v. 7).
- **"If anyone is to be taken captive...":** This is *not* a "threat." It is a *statement of destiny*.
- **"If anyone is to be slain...":** This is *also* a statement of *destiny*.
- **The Implied Command:** The Beast is "making war *with the sword*" (v. 7). The Church's response is *NOT* to "take up the sword" *against* him.
- **The Message:** "Do *not* resist evil with *evil*. Do *not* start a *physical war* with the 'Beast.' Your "destiny" is "captivity" and "death." *Embrace* your "martyrdom."
- **"Here is a call for... endurance and faith":** This is the *summary* of the *Christian life* in the "42 months." Our "weapons" are *not* "swords"; our "weapons" are **Endurance** (passive resistance) and **Faith** (trust in God).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Book of Life": Daniel 12:1**, "...at that time your people shall be delivered, *everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.*" (This is *that* "book").
- **The "Slaying" Command:** This is a *direct quote* and *reversal* of **Jeremiah 15:2**, "And when they ask... 'Where shall we go?'... 'Those who are for *pestilence*, to pestilence, and those for the *sword*, to the sword, and those for *famine*, to famine, and those for *captivity*, to captivity.'"
- **The "Warning":** This is also a *warning from* Jesus in **Matthew 26:52**, "Put your sword back... for all who *take the sword* will *perish by the sword*."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Your "Eternal Security":** This is the *anchor* of the "saints." The *only reason* you will *not* "fall" for the "Beast" (the "spirit of the age") is because *your name is already written down*. Your *perseverance* is *guaranteed* by God's *eternal election*.
- **The Hardest Command (v. 10):** This is the *opposite* of what our *flesh* wants.
 - Our "flesh" (especially in a "fight for your rights" culture) wants to "take up the sword" and *fight* the "culture war."
 - Jesus's command (v. 10) is: "No. Your *destiny* is to be 'conquered' (v. 7). Your *job* is to *endure* and *have faith*."

- **Our "Victory" is *Martyrdom*:** The "faith of the saints" is *not* "faith that we *win* the political battle." It is "faith that *even if* we *lose* the political battle (captivity/sword), we *win* the *eternal* one."
- **This is the *true* "spiritual warfare."**

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This verse *separates* "all humanity" into *two groups*: (1) Those who "worship the Beast," and (2) Those "whose names are written in the book." How *simple* (and *terrifying*) is this "two-group" reality?
2. Your *name* was written "before the foundation of the world." How does this "eternal predestination" give you *both* "humility" (I didn't *earn* this) and "confidence" (I *can't lose* this)?
3. Verse 10 is a *command* to *not* "fight back" (with a "sword"). Why is *this* (passive endurance) the *hardest* command for a *Christian* to follow?
4. What *is* the "endurance and faith of the saints"? What does that *look like* in *your* life *this week*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "check the book." You *can't* "read" the "book of life." *But...* you *can* "read" your *own* heart.

- **Ask yourself:** "Who am I worshipping? The 'Beast' (power, money, self) or the 'Lamb' (sacrifice, humility)?"
- *Re-affirm* your allegiance *today*. Pray: "Lord, *by Your grace*, my name *is* in that book. *Help me* to *live* like it. Give me the *endurance* and *faith* of the 'saints'."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for endurance.)

"O Lamb of God, who was slain, Your 'Book of Life' holds *my* name. You *chose* me before the "foundation of the world." This "Beast" has "come to make war." He *will* "conquer" our *bodies*. But he *cannot* "conquer" our *souls*. He *cannot* "erase" our *names*. Give me the "endurance" to *not fight back*. Give me the "faith" to *trust* in "captivity" and "sword." For *this* is our *victory*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 13, Day 5

The Beast from the Earth (The False Prophet)

Scripture Focus: Revelation 13:11-13

¹¹ Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Beast... out of the Earth":**
 - **First Beast (Political):** Came from the "Sea" (chaos, Gentiles).
 - **Second Beast (Religious):** Comes from the "Earth" (the "land" - often a symbol of *Israel* or *civilized, religious* society).
- **The "Unholy Trinity" (Part 3):**
 - **Dragon (Satan):** The "Anti-Father."
 - **Beast from Sea (Antichrist):** The "Anti-Son."
 - **Beast from Earth:** The "Anti-Spirit."
- **His "Appearance" (v. 11):** "Two horns **like a lamb**."
 - This is *key*. He *looks* "gentle," "Christian-like," "religious," and *like the Lamb* (Jesus).
- **His "Voice" (v. 11):** "It **spoke like a dragon**."
 - His *appearance* is "Lamb." His *message* (his "doctrine") is "Dragon" (Satan).
- **This is the *False Prophet* (see Rev 19:20).** He is the *religious* leader who *looks* like "Christ" but *speaks* for "Satan."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Anti-Holy Spirit":** Look at his "job description" (v. 12):
 - **Holy Spirit's Job:** "Exercises all the authority" of the *Son* (Christ), and "makes the earth... worship" the *Son* (John 15:26, 16:14 - "He will glorify *Me*").
 - **False Prophet's Job:** "Exercises all the authority" of the *first beast* (Antichrist), and "makes the earth... worship" the *first beast*.
- **This is a *perfect* demonic mockery.**
- **"Performs Great Signs" (v. 13):**
 - This is *how* he *deceives* people. He *has* "supernatural" (demonic) *power*.
 - **"Making fire come down from heaven":** This is the *ultimate* "sign." It's a *direct* mockery of the "Two Witnesses" (11:5, who had "fire... from their mouth") and *especially* **Elijah** (who *called fire down* on Mt. Carmel, 1 Kings 18).
- **The Message:** The "False Prophet" will *look* like "Elijah" (the *true* prophet), *sound* like a "Lamb" (the *true* Christ), but *be* a "Dragon" (the *true* Satan). He is the *ultimate* *deceiver*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Elijah on Mt. Carmel: 1 Kings 18:38,** "Then the **fire of the LORD** fell and consumed the burnt offering..." The *False Prophet* *mimics* this *miracle*.
- **False Prophets: Deuteronomy 13:1-3,** "If a **prophet**... gives you a **sign or a wonder**, and the sign... *comes to pass*, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods'..." (i.e., *worship the Beast*) "...you shall *not* listen..."
- **Jesus's Warning: Matthew 24:24,** "For **false christs** and **false prophets** will arise and perform **great signs and wonders**, so as to *lead astray*, if possible, *even the elect*."

- This *is* the "false prophet" Jesus *warned* about.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Religious" Face of Evil:** This is *critical*. The *first* "Beast" (Antichrist) is *political* and *military*. The *second* "Beast" (False Prophet) is *religious*.
- **Satan's "One-Two Punch":**
 1. He *conquers* with *Power* (the *State*, Ch. 13:1-10).
 2. He *deceives* with *Religion* (the *Church*, Ch. 13:11-18).
- **This is the *ultimate* "insider" threat.** A "prophet" who *looks* "like a lamb" (a "pastor," a "Christian leader") but *speaks* "like a dragon" (a *false* "gospel" of *power, wealth, or "Beast-worship"*).
- **"Signs" are *Not* Enough:** This is a *terrifying* warning. "Miracles" do *not* "prove" that someone is from God. Satan can do "*miracles*" too.
- **The *Real* "Test":** The *real test* is *not* "Do they do *signs*?" The *real test* is "Who do they *tell* you to *worship*?" (Deut 13). Do they "point to the *Lamb* (Jesus)"? Or do they "point to the *Beast* (Antichrist/Self/Power)"?

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This "Beast" *looks* "like a lamb" but *speaks* "like a dragon." Why is this "religious" deception *more dangerous* than the "obvious" *political* "Beast"?
2. This "False Prophet" *perfectly mocks* the *Holy Spirit*. (He "glorifies" the *Beast*, not the *Lamb*). Where do you see "religious" leaders *today* "glorifying" *worldly power* (the "Beast") *instead* of "Christ"?
3. This "prophet" *uses* "great signs" (like "fire") to *deceive*. How does our *culture's "obsession"* with *miracles, signs, and wonders* make it "ripe" for *this* deception?
4. Jesus *warned* that this *would happen* (Matt 24:24). How can you "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1) to *know* if a "prophet" is *from God* or *from the Dragon*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "test the message." *Today*, when you *hear* a "religious" leader (a *pastor, podcast, or TV evangelist*)... *Listen* to their *message*.

- Are they *speaking* "like a Lamb" (humility, the *Cross*, repentance)?
- Or are they *speaking* "like a Dragon" (pride, *power, wealth, "worship this 'system'"*)?
- Be a "fruit inspector" (Matt 7:16).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for discernment.)

"O Lord Jesus, our *True* Lamb, O Holy Spirit, our *True* Fire, The *enemy* sends his *false prophets*. They *look* like 'lambs.' They *call down* 'fire.' But they *speak* like 'dragons.'

Give me *Your* "discernment." Let me *not* be "fooled" by "signs." Let me *only* "follow" the "voice" that *glorifies* You, O *Lamb of God, who was slain*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 13, Day 6

The Image and the Mark of the Beast

Scripture Focus: Revelation 13:14-18

¹⁴ and it deceives those who dwell on earth with the signs it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on their right hand or their forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and its number is 666.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"An Image for the Beast":** This is *idolatry*.
- **"Wounded... and yet lived":** This *again* links back to the "Nero Redivivus" myth.
- **"An Image... might even speak":** In the 1st century, pagan priests *regularly* used "ventriloquism" or "speaking tubes" to make their "idols" *appear* to "speak." This is a *demonic, supernatural* version of that *same* "religious deception."
- **"Cause... to be slain":** The *religion* (False Prophet) *gives* the "kill list" to the *State* (the Beast).
- **The "Mark" (Charagma):**
 - **A "Seal":** This is the *demonic mockery* of the "Seal of God" (Rev 7:3). God "seals" His people (for *protection*). Satan "marks" *his* people (for *commerce*).
 - **An "Imperial Stamp":** This was the *exact* "mark" (*charagma*) that was on *every Roman coin* (Nero's *face*), or on the "receipt" (a *libellus*) you *got* for *sacrificing to Caesar*.
 - **The Message:** In 95 AD, you *could not* "buy or sell" (participate in the *economy*) unless you *used the "mark"* (the *coin* with the "image") or *got the "mark"* (the *receipt* from the *idol sacrifice*).
- **"Right Hand or... Forehead":** This is a *demonic mockery* of **Deuteronomy 6:8** (the *Shema*): "You shall bind [God's Word]... on your **hand**, and they shall be as *frontlets* between your **eyes** [forehead]."
 - God's people "mark" themselves with *God's Word* (on hand/forehead).
 - The Beast's people "mark" themselves with the *Beast's Name*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Mark" (v. 16-17):** This is the *ultimate "culture war"*.
 - It is *not* "just" "worship." It is *economics*.
 - The "Beast" (State) and "False Prophet" (Religion) *conspire to create a new economic system*.
 - The "ticket" to *participate* (to "buy or sell," to *have a job*, to *buy food*) is *worship*.
 - **The "Choice":** *Worship the Beast... or Starve*.
- **"666" (v. 18):**
 - **"It is the number of a man":** This is the *key*.
 - **Gematria:** In Greek and Hebrew, "letters" *also* have "numerical values."
 - **The "Nero" Solution:** The *most likely* 1st-century meaning. The Greek letters for **"Neron Kaisar"** (Emperor Nero) *add up to 666* when *transliterated into Hebrew*.
 - **The "Symbolic" Solution:**
 - 7 = God's *perfect* number (completion).
 - 6 = Man's number (created on Day 6), *short* of perfection.
 - **666** = "Falling-short, falling-short, falling-short." It is *man* (6) *trying to be God* (7). It is the *ultimate "humanism," the ultimate "failure"*.
- **Conclusion:** The "Beast" is the *new "Nero"*. He is the *ultimate "666"* (man *pretending to be God*).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Choice" is *Coming*:** We are *not* (yet) in this *literal* system. But we are in the *prelude*.
- **"Cancel Culture" is the *Spirit* of "13:17":**
 - "If you *do not* 'worship' (agree with) our 'image' (our ideology)..."
 - "...we will 'slay' you" (socially, financially).
 - "...you *cannot* 'buy or sell'" (you *lose your job*, you get *de-platformed*).
- **The "Mark" (Literal or Symbolic):**
 - *Will* it be a "microchip"? A "digital currency"? A "vaccine pass"?
 - *Maybe*. But that is *not the point*.
 - The "Mark" is *any* system that *forces* you to *choose* between **Allegiance to Christ** and **Participation in the Economy**.
- **"This calls for wisdom":** Our *job* is *not* to "get obsessed" with "666." Our *job* is to have the *wisdom* to *recognize the spirit* of the "Beast" and *refuse* to "worship" his "image"... *no matter the cost*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *False Prophet* (religion) *tells* the people to *make* the "image" of the *Beast* (the state). How does "bad religion" *always* end up "partnering" with "bad politics"?
2. The "mark" is a *mockery* of the "Shema" (Deut 6) and the "Seal of God" (Rev 7). Why does *Satan* *always* "mock" God, rather than "create" something *new*?
3. The "choice" is "Worship... or Starve" ("no one can buy or sell"). *If* (or *when*) that "choice" comes... *what will you do*?
4. The "number" (666) is the "number of *man*." It is *man* (6) *trying to be God* (7). Where do you see "666" (this *spirit* of "man-as-God") in our *world* today?

Call to Action

Your call is to "calculate." "This calls for wisdom."

- *Wisdom is not "figuring out who the '666' is."*
- *Wisdom is recognizing the "Beast's" system.*

- Today, "calculate" the *cost*. Ask yourself: "What "comforts" (my "job," my "ability to buy") am I *willing* to lose... to avoid "worshiping the Beast"?"

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for wisdom and endurance.)

"Lord God, This *calls for wisdom*. Give me *Your* wisdom. Not the "wisdom" to "calculate" a *number*. But the "wisdom" to see the "Beast." The "wisdom" to *discern* the "False Prophet."

Lord, *this* is the "endurance and faith of the saints." Give me the *endurance* to *lose* my "job." Give me the *faith* to *lose* my "life." *Never* let me "take the mark." *Seal* my "forehead" with *Your* Name, O Lord. For *my* "number" is *not* 666... *My* "name" is "written in the Book of Life of the Lamb." Amen."

Week 14 (Chapter 14): Contrasting Destinies: The Lamb's Victory & The Two Harvests

Revelation Bible Study: Week 14, Day 1

The Lamb and the 144,000

Scripture Focus: Revelation 14:1-5

¹ Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- The "**Counter-Vision**": This is the *direct answer* to Chapter 13.
 - **Chapter 13:** The **Beast** stands on the *sand of the sea* (chaos, instability).

- **Chapter 14:** The **Lamb** stands on **Mount Zion** (God's holy mountain, the symbol of *ultimate stability and kingdom*).
- **Chapter 13:** The "world" receives the **Mark of the Beast** (666).
- **Chapter 14:** The "redeemed" have the **Name of the Lamb and the Father** on *their* foreheads.
- **"Mount Zion":** This is the *heavenly* Mount Zion, the *capital city* of God's kingdom, the "New Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). It is the place of *victory* and *God's presence*.
- **"Harpists... a new song":** This is the *sound* of heaven's *worship*. It's *not* the "blasphemies" of the Beast (13:5); it's the "new song" of *redemption* (5:9).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Who are the 144,000?**
 - This is the *same group* from Chapter 7. But their *role* is now different.
 - In **Chapter 7**, they were on *earth*, "sealed" for *protection* from judgment.
 - In **Chapter 14**, they are in *heaven* ("on Mount Zion"), "redeemed" as *victors*.
 - This confirms the **Symbolic View (View 2 from Week 7)**: The 144,000 (12x12x1000) are the *complete, symbolic number* of the *redeemed Church*, the *true "Israel of God."*
- **Their "Character" (v. 4-5):** This is a *symbolic* description of *spiritual* purity, not a *literal* one.
 - **"Not defiled with women, for they are virgins":** This does *not* mean only *literal, celibate males* are in heaven. "Harlotry" and "adultery" in the Old Testament (and Revelation) are the *primary symbols* for **idolatry** (worshiping *false gods*). These are the ones who have *not* "slept with" the "harlot Babylon" (Ch. 17). They are *spiritually pure*, the "Bride of Christ."
 - **"Follow the Lamb wherever he goes":** This is the definition of *discipleship*.
 - **"Firstfruits":** They are the *first* part of the *full harvest* of redemption, a "holy offering" given to God.
 - **"No lie was found... blameless":** They did *not* speak the "lie" of the Beast. They are "blameless" *not* by their *own perfection*, but because they are "washed in the blood" (7:14).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Mount Zion:** Psalm 2:6, "As for me, I have set my **King** on **Zion, my holy hill.**" (The Lamb is *that* King).
- **Spiritual "Virginity":** 2 Corinthians 11:2, "For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a **pure virgin** to Christ." (Paul uses this *same metaphor* for the *whole Church*).
- **Firstfruits:** James 1:18, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of **firstfruits** of his creatures."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Stand with the Lamb:** The world *worships* the "Beast on the sand." But the *reality* is that the "Lamb is on the mountain." Our "feet" are *not* on the "shifting sand" of *this world's* politics and culture; they are *firmly planted* on Mount Zion with our King.
- **The "Mark" of the Father:** The *world* is *desperate* for an "identity" (the "Mark of the Beast"). We already *have* one. Our "foreheads" (our *minds*, our *identity*) are "sealed" with the *Name* of our *Father* and our *Lamb*.
- **The "Call to Purity":** This is a *high call*. In a world *saturated* with "harlotry" (literal *sexual sin* and *spiritual idolatry*), we are *called* to be "virgins"—set apart, *pure*, and *loyal* to *one* Husband (Christ).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the *image* of the "Beast on the sand" (13:1) with the "Lamb on Mount Zion" (14:1). What do these two "locations" (unstable *sea* vs. stable *mountain*) tell you about these two *kingdoms*?
2. The "mark" of the Beast (13:16) vs. the "Name" of the Father (14:1). What is the *difference* between a "mark of commerce" and a "Name of family"?
3. The 144,000 are *spiritually* "virgins" (they *refused* to "commit idolatry" with the "Beast/Harlot"). What is the *biggest "harlot"* (idol) that *tempts you* to be "unfaithful" to Christ?
4. They "follow the Lamb *wherever he goes*." What is *one area* of your life where you are *afraid* to "follow Him" (if He *asked* you to go there)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "check your 'mark'." The "world" *wants* to "stamp" your "forehead" (your *identity*) with *its* values. *Today*, "wash your face." *Consciously* "mark" yourself with *His* Name. Start your day with this prayer: "Lord, I am *not* my 'job,' I am *not* my 'possessions.' I *am* 'sealed' with *Your Name*. I am *Yours*."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the hymn "My Jesus, I Love Thee".)

"I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me, And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I will love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death, And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath; And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow, 'If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.'

Anen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 14, Day 2

The First Angel: The Eternal Gospel

Scripture Focus: Revelation 14:6-7

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Angel"**: This is the *first* of a "trio" of angels who fly "directly overhead" (*in mid-heaven*), where *everyone* can see and hear them.
- **"An Eternal Gospel"**: The word "gospel" (*euangelion*) means "Good News."
- **"To those who dwell on earth..."**: This is the *target* audience: *rebellious, unbelieving humanity* (the "Beast-worshippers").
- **The "Message" (v. 7)**: This "gospel" *sounds* like "bad news."
 1. **"Fear God..."**: (Not the *Beast*).
 2. **"...and give him glory!"**: (Not the *Beast*).
 3. **"BECAUSE the hour of his judgment has come..."**: This is the "Good News." The *Good News* for the *saints* (who are being "conquered," 13:7) is the *Bad News* for the "world": *Judgment is here*.
 4. **"Worship him who made..."**: This is a *direct* jab at the "Beast-worshippers" (13:4) and the "idol-worshippers" (9:20). "Stop *worshipping* the 'creature' (the Beast, the idols)... and *worship the Creator*."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Eternal Gospel"**: This is *not* a "different" gospel from Paul's (Faith in Christ). This *is* the "Good News" from *God's perspective*. The "Good News" is that **God is reclaiming His creation**.
- **This is the *final, global call to repentance***. Right before the *final "harvest" judgments* (v. 14-20), God sends an *angel* to *proclaim* the "Good News" *one last time*.
- **The "Gospel" is "Judgment"**: We often *separate* "the Gospel" (love) from "Judgment" (wrath). This verse *melds* them. The "Good News" is that a *Holy God* is *finally* going to *judge sin* and *make things right*.
- **The "Foundation" of Worship**: The *reason* we should "worship Him" is because He is the **Creator** ("who made heaven and earth..."). This *again* links back to the *Elders' Song* (4:11) and *attacks* the *foundation* of "Beast-worship" (who *made nothing*).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Great Commission**: This is the *angelic* version of the **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:19), "Go... and make disciples of *all nations*..."
- **Paul's "Gospel" to Pagans**: This is the *exact* "gospel" that *Paul* preached to the *pagans* in Lystra: **Acts 14:15**, "We... bring you *good news*... that you should *turn from* these *vain things* [idols] to a *living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea*..."
- **The First Commandment**: This is a call *back* to the **First Commandment** (Exodus 20:3-4) and the *Sabbath* command (Exodus 20:11, "For in six days the LORD *made heaven and earth, the sea*...").

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God is Sending a "Witness"**: God *never* judges *without* first "proclaiming" a "warning." *Even* to the "Beast-worshippers," He sends an *angel* with the "Gospel."
- **The "Good News" of Judgment**: This is *Good News* for the *oppressed*. It is "Good News" for the "saints" (13:7). It is "Good News" for the *persecuted*. The *fact* that God *will* "judge" the "Beast" *is* "Gospel."

- **The "Offense" of the Gospel:** The *first word* of this "Gospel" is **"FEAR GOD!"**
 - Our "modern" gospel often *starts* with "God loves you."
 - The "angel's" gospel *starts* with "Be *terrified* of the *Creator-Judge*."
- **The *Antidote* to "Beast-Worship" is "Creator-Worship":** The *only way* to "stop" worshipping the "creature" (money, power, self, the *State*) is to *start* "worshipping the *Creator*."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This "Gospel" (Good News) *is* that "the hour of His judgment *has come*." How can "judgment" be "Good News"? (Hint: Who is it "Good News" *for*?)
2. The angel's *first* command is **"Fear God!"** Why is "holy fear" (awe, terror) the *beginning* of *true* worship?
3. The *reason* we must "worship Him" is because He is the **"Creator"** (v. 7). Why is the *doctrine of Creation* the *foundation* for *all* "worship"?
4. If *this* is the "eternal gospel," how does *your* "gospel" (the "good news" *you* tell) *compare*? Does it *include* "Fear God" and "Judgment"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "proclaim the *whole* Gospel." *Practice* "proclaiming" this "angelic gospel."

- **To God (in prayer):** "Lord, I *Fear You*. I *give You glory*. I *know* Your 'judgment is coming.' I *worship You* as my 'Creator'."
- **To Yourself (in your heart):** *Remind* yourself *why* you "worship" Him: *because He made you*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Psalm 96.)

"Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name...

Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; **tremble [Fear] before him, all the earth!**

Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns!' Yes, the world is established... for he comes, for he comes **to judge the earth**. He will **judge the world** in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 14, Day 3

The Second & Third Angels: The Fall & The Warning

Scripture Focus: Revelation 14:8-11

⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Second Angel (v. 8):**
 - **"Fallen, fallen is Babylon...":** This is a *proleptic* announcement. (Babylon's *full* fall isn't described until Ch. 18). But the *judgment* is so *certain* that the angel *already declares it as past tense*.
 - **"Babylon":** To a 1st-century reader, "Babylon" was the *code-word* for **Rome**. (Just as "Babylon" *destroyed* the *first* Temple, Rome "destroyed" the *second* Temple).
 - **"Wine of... her sexual immorality":** "Babylon" (the *world system*) is a "harlot" (Ch. 17) who *seduces* the "nations" (the *world*) into *idolatry* (her "immorality") and *makes them "drunk"* on it.
- **The Third Angel (v. 9-11):**
 - This is the *most terrifying, explicit warning* in the *entire Bible*.
 - It is the *specific, parallel punishment* for *taking the Mark of the Beast*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Talionic" Justice" (Eye-for-an-Eye):**
 - **The "Harlot" (v. 8):** Makes the nations "drink the **wine** of... her **immorality**."
 - **The "Mark-Taker" (v. 10):** *Therefore*, "he also will drink the **wine** of... God's **wrath**."
- **God's "Wine" (v. 10):**
 - **"Poured full strength":** The Greek is *akeratos*, meaning "unmixed" or "undiluted." In the ancient world, wine was *always* "cut" with *water*. "Uncut" wine was "barbaric" and *intensely* potent.
 - **The Message:** God's "wrath" will *not* be "cut" with *mercy*. It is "full strength" *fury*.
- **The "Torment" (v. 10-11):**
 - **"Fire and sulfur":** The *judgment* of Sodom (Gen 19).
 - **"In the presence of... the Lamb":** This is *horrifying*. The "torment" is *not* "separation from God" (in the "annihilation" sense). It is *separation in purpose*, but *in the presence* of the *Holy Judge* (the Lamb) who *is* the "consuming fire."
 - **"Forever and ever":** This *explicitly* defines the torment as *eternal* and *conscious*.
 - **"No rest, day or night":** This is the *eternal "flip-side"* of the "Beast-worshipers" (who *also* "worshiped" him "day and night") *and* the *heavenly worshipers* (who *also* "do not rest day or night," 4:8).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Fallen, Fallen...":** Isaiah 21:9, (a prophecy *against* the *literal* Babylon), "Fallen, **fallen is Babylon!**"
- **The "Wine of Wrath":** Psalm 75:8, "For in the hand of the LORD there is a **cup** with **foaming wine**, well mixed [or 'full']... and all the wicked of the earth **must drink** it..."
- **"Fire and Sulfur":** Genesis 19:24, "Then the LORD rained on Sodom... **sulfur and fire**..."
- **"Smoke... forever":** Isaiah 34:10, (on the *judgment* of Edom), "Night and day it shall not be quenched; its **smoke shall go up forever.**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Babylon" is the World System:** "Babylon" is *any* human system (culture, economy, government) that *seduces* us into *idolatry* (making *it* our "god") and *persecutes* the *saints*. We are *living* in "Babylon."
- **The "Choice" has *Eternal* Consequences:** This is the *clearest* "line in the sand."
 - **"Worship the Beast" (13:16-17):** Get *short-term* "life" (you can "buy and sell").
 - **"Worship the Beast" (14:9-11):** Get *eternal* "death" (the "wine of wrath").
- **The Doctrine of Hell:** This is the *clearest, most terrifying* description of *conscious, eternal torment* in the Bible. It is *not* "popular." It is "bitter" (like the scroll). But it is the "Word of God."
- **The "Wrath" is *Because* of the "Lamb":** The "torment" is "in the presence of the *Lamb*." Why? Because *sin* is so "evil" *because* it is *against* the *infinite holiness* and *infinite sacrifice* of the "Lamb." The "wrath" is *proportional* to the "love" that was *rejected*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *Second Angel declares* "Babylon is fallen." The *Third Angel warns* "Don't worship the Beast." How do these two messages (*Victory is certain...* but the *Warning is urgent*) *work together*?
2. The "punishment" *fits* the "crime": "Drink the 'wine of harlotry'" -> "Drink the 'wine of wrath'." Where *else* do you see this *poetic justice* in the *world*?
3. This is the *clearest* "picture of hell" in the Bible. It is "fire," "forever," "no rest," and "in the presence of the Lamb." How does *this* "bitter" truth (from the "scroll") *change* the *urgency* of your "witness" (your "prophesying")?
4. If *this* is the "stakes" (eternal torment), why do *so many* "worship the beast" (13:8)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Heed the Warning." *These three angels are still* "flying overhead." Their "message" is *still* being "proclaimed."

- **1. Fear God!**
- **2. Flee Babylon!**
- **3. Do *NOT* Worship the Beast!**
- Verbally "pray" this *back* to God: "Lord, help me to *Fear You*. Help me to *flee* the 'idolatry' of 'Babylon.' Help me to *never* 'take the mark,' *no matter the cost*."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision".)

"O Lord, Thy *wrath* is as *holy* as Thy *love*. Thy *justice* is as *true* as Thy *mercy*. Let me *not* be "deceived" by the "sweet wine" of "Babylon." Let me *not* be "seduced" by the "power" of the "Beast." Let me *not* "drink" the "wine of Your wrath," which is "poured full strength." Let me "drink" *only* from the "cup of salvation," which You "drank" *for me* in the *Garden* and on the *Cross*. O Lord, *save me* from the "torment" to come. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 14, Day 4

The Endurance & The Blessed Dead

Scripture Focus: Revelation 14:12-13

¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Here is a call for... endurance" (v. 12):** This verse is *identical* to **13:10**. It is the *summary* and "punchline" of the *entire* warning.
 1. **The "Stakes" (v. 9-11):** "Worship the Beast" -> "Eternal Torment."
 2. **The "Cost" (13:15-17):** "Don't Worship" -> "Be slain" / "Can't buy or sell."
 3. **The "Call" (v. 12):** *Therefore...* this *requires* **ENDURANCE**.
- **The "Saints" (v. 12):** *Again, a two-part definition.*
 1. "Keep the commandments of God" (Obedience).
 2. "Their faith in Jesus" (Belief).
- **"A Voice from Heaven" (v. 13):** This is a *direct command* to "Write!" This is *critical*.
- **"Blessed are the dead...":** This is the *second* of the seven "*Beatitudes*" (blessings) in Revelation (the first was 1:3).
- **"From now on":** This is *key*. *Why* "from now on"? Because the *Beast* has just been "allowed to make war... and conquer" (13:7). The *age of martyrdom* has *begun*.
- **The "Comfort":** This is a *direct comfort* to those *facing* the "choice" (13:17). The "Beast" says, "Take the mark, or *die*." Heaven *answers*, "**Blessed** are those who *die* (in the Lord)." It *reverses* the "threat."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"Endurance" (v. 12):** The Greek is *hupomone* ("patience," "perseverance"). It's *not* "passively waiting"; it's "actively standing firm" *under a heavy load*.
- **"Their Deeds Follow Them" (v. 13):**
 - This is *not* "we are *saved* by our deeds." (We are "saved" by "faith in Jesus," v. 12).
 - This *is* "our deeds are the *evidence* of our faith, and they *will be rewarded*."
 - Our "labors" (our *work* for Christ, our *endurance*) *stop* at death, but the "fruit" (the "deeds") *follow us* into eternity to *become* our "reward."
- **"Rest from their labors":** "Death" (for the *martyr*) is *not* a "loss"; it is a "release." It is "rest" from the "torment" of the "Beast" and the "labor" of the "war."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Endurance of the Saints": Revelation 13:10.** This *book-ends* the entire "Beast" section.
- **"Keep Commandments & Faith": Revelation 12:17.** This is the *consistent definition* of a "saint" in this *cosmic war*.
- **"Deeds Follow": 1 Corinthians 3:13-14,** "each one's *work* will become manifest... if the *work* that anyone has built *survives*, he will *receive a reward*."
- **"Rest": Hebrews 4:9-10,** "So then, there *remains a Sabbath-rest* for the people of God, for whoever has *entered God's rest* has also *rested from his works*..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "How-To" for the End Times:** This *is* the "battle plan" for the "saints."
 1. **Obey** ("Keep the commandments").
 2. **Believe** ("Keep the faith").
 3. **Endure** ("Stand firm").
- **The "Choice" is *Real*:** The "choice" is "Temporary *comfort*" (the Mark) vs. "Eternal *rest*" (dying in the Lord).
- **A "New View" of Death:** This verse *radically* re-defines "death" for the *believer*.
 1. **The World's View:** Death is a *tragedy*, a *loss*, the *end*.
 2. **The Beast's View:** Death is a *threat* / a *punishment*.
 3. **Heaven's View:** Death is a **"BLESSING."**
- **Why is Death a "Blessing"?**
 1. It is "Rest" from our *labor* (the *fight*, the *toil*, the *pain*).
 2. It is "Reward," as our *deeds* "follow us."
- **This *removes* the "sting of death" and *removes* the "threat" of the "Beast."**

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Verse 12 *defines* a "saint" (Obedience + Faith). Why are *both* of these "non-negotiable" for *true* "endurance"?
2. The *command* is "Endurance" (v. 12). The *comfort* is "Blessed are the dead" (v. 13). How do these two verses *work together* to *give you* "courage" to *face* the "Beast" (the "system")?
3. The *world* (and the *Beast*) *uses "death"* as its *ultimate threat*. How does *this* verse ("Blessed are the dead...") *disarm* that "threat"?
4. "Their deeds *follow them*." This means *nothing* you "do" for God (your "labors") is *ever wasted*. How does *that* "motivate" you *today*, in your "labors"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "re-define 'rest'." We *seek* "rest" *now* (in *comfort, money, ease*). This is "taking the Mark."

- God's "rest" *only* comes *after* our "labors."
- Today, *choose* to "labor" for Christ in *one specific way* (encourage someone, *do* the "hard thing," *endure* a "trial" with "faith").
- And thank God that your "labor" is *not in vain*, and your *true "rest"* is *coming*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the "Requiem" mass.)

"Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the deep pit.

Eternal *rest* grant unto them, O Lord, and let *perpetual light* shine upon them.

For they *died in You*, and they are *blessed*. Their *labors* are *over*. Their *deeds follow them*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 14, Day 5

The Son of Man and the Earth's Harvest

Scripture Focus: Revelation 14:14-16

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to the one seated on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." ¹⁶ So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"One like a son of man":** This is *not* a "subtle" clue. This is **Jesus Christ**.
 - This is the *title* He *used for Himself* (Matt 24:30).
 - This is the *title* from **Daniel 7:13**, the *Messianic King*.
- **The "Look" of the King:**
 - "Seated on a white cloud": Symbol of *divine authority* and *judgment* (Matt 26:64).
 - "Golden crown": He is the *King*.

- "Sharp sickle": He is the *Harvester*.
- **The "Angel from the Temple":** This angel comes *from the "temple"* (the *presence of God*). He is the *messenger* who *delivers* the *command from the Father*.
- **"The time to reap has come":** The "harvest" (*therismos*) is the "grain harvest." This is the *end of the age*.
- **"Fully ripe":** The Greek is *exeranthe*, which can mean "fully ripe" or "fully dry / withered." The "grain" (humanity) is *ready* for its "harvest."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This is the **First of Two Harvests**. This "first harvest" (v. 14-16) is the **"Harvest of the Saints."**

- **How do we know?**
 1. The *Harvester* is **Christ** ("Son of Man").
 2. The *Harvest* is "grain" (wheat). In *Jesus's parables*, the "wheat" is *always* the **believers** (Matt 13:30, "Gather the *wheat* into my barn").
 3. The *Action* is "reaping" (*therizo*), which is *gathering*.
 4. It *contrasts* with the *second* harvest (v. 17-20), which is *explicitly* the "grapes of *wrath*."
- **This is the "Rapture":** This is a *picture* of the "end-times *gathering*" of the *Church* ("the dead in Christ rise first..." 1 Thess 4:16-17). The "Son of Man" *swings His sickle* and "reaps" His "wheat" *from* the earth *before* the "winepress" (v. 19) is *stomped*.
- **The "Ripe" Harvest:** The "harvest" is "ripe" *because* the *persecution* of the "Beast" (Ch. 13) has *purified* the Church.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Daniel's Vision: Daniel 7:13**, "I saw... and behold, with the **clouds of heaven** there came **one like a son of man**..."
- **Jesus's Parable (The Wheat & Tares): Matthew 13:30, 39**, "Let both grow together until the *harvest*... The *harvest* is the *end of the age*, and the *reapers* are *angels*... the *Son of Man* will send his angels..."
- **Joel's Prophecy: Joel 3:13**, "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe..." (This one verse *also* mentions the "winepress," which is the *next* harvest).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Jesus is the *Harvester*:** He is the one who *decides* when the "harvest is ripe." He is the one who "swings the sickle."
- **Our "Job" is to Be "Wheat":** Our "job" is *not* to "run from the sickle." Our "job" is to be good "*wheat*," "ripe" for the *harvest*.
- **The "Good News" of the "Sickle":** For the *world*, a "sickle" is *terrifying*. For the "*wheat*," the "sickle" is *salvation*. It's the "moment" the "Farmer" *gathers us* "into His barn" (heaven).
- **The "Gathering" Comes Before the "Wrath":** This order is *critical*.
 1. **Harvest 1 (v. 16):** The *Earth is Reaped* (The "Wheat" is *gathered*).
 2. **Harvest 2 (v. 19):** The *Grapes* are *thrown into the "winepress"*.
- This vision shows the "saints" (the "wheat") are "harvested" *out of the way before* the "winepress" of God's *wrath* (the *next* vision).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Son of Man" (Jesus) is *crowned* (King) and *holds a sickle* (Harvester/Judge). Why are these *two roles* (King and Judge) *inseparable*?
2. The *command* to "reap" comes *from the Temple* (the *Father*). What does this "chain of command" (Father -> Angel -> Son) tell you about the *order* of the *Trinity*?
3. This "harvest" is the "*wheat harvest*" (the "gathering" of *saints*). How does this *hope* of the "final harvest" *encourage* you in your *daily "labor"*?
4. Jesus *Himself* is the one "swinging the sickle" to "gather" *you*. How is this *more comforting* than a "nameless angel" (like in the *parable*)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "get ripe." The "harvest" (the *end*) *is coming*. A "ripe" Christian is one who is *full of "fruit"* (Gal 5:22 - love, joy, peace...).

- *Today, focus on one "fruit of the Spirit."*
- *Pray, "Lord, 'ripen' this fruit in me. Make me ready for Your 'sickle' (Your 'harvest')."*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the hymn "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come".)

"Come, ye thankful people, come, Raise the song of harvest home; All is safely gathered in, Ere the winter storms begin. God, our Maker, doth provide For our wants to be supplied; Come to God's own temple, come, Raise the song of harvest home.

"Even so, Lord, quickly come, Bring Thy final harvest home; Gather Thou Thy 'wheat' in store, Free from sin and sorrow evermore... Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 14, Day 6

The Grape Harvest of God's Wrath

Scripture Focus: Revelation 14:17-20

¹⁷ Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹ So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of

God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Angel" (v. 17):** This is *NOT* the "Son of Man." This is an *angel*.
- **"Angel... from the Altar" (v. 18):** This is *key*. This is the *same "altar"* where the "souls of the martyrs" (6:9) and the "prayers of the saints" (8:3) *were*.
- **"Authority over the Fire":** This *angel* is the "answer" to those *prayers*. He *commands* the *judgment*.
- **"The Vine of the Earth":** This is *not* the "true vine" (Jesus, John 15). This is the *apostate, rebellious* "vine" of *mankind*.
- **"The Great Winepress":** This was a *terrifying* image. A "winepress" was a *vat* where "grapes" were *stomped* and *crushed* until their "blood-red" *juice* "flowed out."
- **"Trodden Outside the City":** The "city" is *Jerusalem* (the "Holy City"). "Treading" (judgment) *always* happened *outside* the "holy camp."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This is the **Second Harvest: The "Harvest of the Wicked."**

- **Harvest 1 (Wheat):** "Reaped" by *Christ* (v. 14) and "gathered" (v. 16, *into the "barn"*).
- **Harvest 2 (Grapes):** "Gathered" by an *Angel* (v. 19) and "thrown" (v. 19, *into the "winepress"*).
- **"The Winepress of the... Wrath of God":** This is *pure judgment*. The "grapes" (the *wicked*) are "crushed" by God's *holy anger* against *sin*.
- **The Result (v. 20):**
 - **"Blood flowed...":** The "grape juice" *is* "blood."
 - **"As high as a horse's bridle":** (approx. 4-5 feet deep). This is a sea of blood.
 - **"For 1,600 stadia":** A "stadion" was ~600 feet. This is ~180 miles.
- **The "Message":** This is *symbolic* (hyperbole) for *total, catastrophic, unimaginable* "carnage." This is the "Battle of Armageddon" (Ch. 16/19) described in *metaphor*.
- **The "1,600":** This is *also* symbolic: 40 x 40. (40 = the number of *testing* and *judgment* - 40 days of flood, 40 years in wilderness). This is *judgment squared*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Vine of the Earth": Deuteronomy 32:32**, (describing the *wicked*), "For their **vine** is from the **vine of Sodom**... their **grapes are grapes of poison**..."
- **The "Winepress":** This is *classic* "judgment" imagery.
 - **Isaiah 63:2-3:** "Why is your apparel *red*...? 'I have **trodden the winepress alone**... I *trod* them in my *anger*... their *lifeblood* stained my garments.'"
 - **Joel 3:13:** "...Put in the sickle... for the *harvest is ripe*. Go in, **tread, for the winepress is full**... their *evil* is great."
- **"Outside the City": Hebrews 13:12**, "So Jesus also *suffered outside the gate*..."
 - **The "Irony":** Jesus was "crushed" (judged) *outside the city* (for *our* sin). *Therefore*, those who *reject* Him will *also* be "crushed" *outside the city* (for *their own* sin).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **There are Two Harvests:** This is the *end* of the "universal" idea that "all paths lead to God." There are *two* "harvests," *two* "sickles," and *two* "destinations":
 1. The "Barn" (Salvation).
 2. The "Winepress" (Wrath).
- **This is the *Most Sobering Image in the Bible*:** This is the *end result* of "following the Beast." This is the *consequence* of "taking the Mark."
- **The "Grapes" are "Ripe":** The *world* is "ripening" *for judgment*. God *is* "patient" (2 Pet 3:9), but the "vine of the earth" *will* become "fully ripe" in its *evil*. And the *judgment will come*.
- **The "Altar" Remembers:** The *command* for this *came from the altar* (v. 18). This is *God's justice* for the "martyrs." This is *not* "senseless violence." This is *divine justice answering the prayers of the saints*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. There are *two* "harvesters": *Christ* (for the *wheat*) and an *Angel* (for the *grapes*). Why is this "distinction" *so important*?
2. The *command to judge* (v. 18) comes *from the "altar"* (the place of *martyr's prayers*). How does "God's Justice" *answer "God's People"*?
3. The *imagery* (180 miles of 5-foot-deep "blood") is *designed* to be *horrifying*. Why must we *confront* this "bitter" (10:10) *reality of God's wrath*?
4. *This* is the *end* of the "Beast-worshippers" (13:8). *This* is the *end* of those who "did not repent" (9:21). How does *this* "end-game" *motivate* you to "proclaim the *first angel's message*" (14:7) *now*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Flee the 'Vine'." You *live* in the "vine of the earth" (the "world system"). You are *constantly* "tempted" to "be* a *part* of its "clusters."

- *Today, identify one "grape" (a sin, a worldly attitude, an idolatry) that is "ripening" in your life.*
- *Confess it. Ask God to "prune" it off...*
- *...so that you will be "wheat for His barn," not "grapes for His winepress."*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the hymn "Before the Throne of God Above".)

"When Satan *tempts me* to despair, And tells me of the *guilt within*, Upward I look and see *Him there* Who *made an end of all my sin*. Because the *sinless Savior died*, My *sinful soul* is *counted free*; For God, the Just, is *satisfied* To look on *Him* and *pardon me*.

Lord, *save me* from the "winepress." *Hide me* in the "wounds" of the *Lamb*. Amen."

Week 15 (Chapter 15): Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

Revelation Bible Study: Week 15, Day 1

The Sign of the Seven Last Plagues

Scripture Focus: Revelation 15:1

¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Sign":** Connects back to the "signs" in Chapter 12 (the Woman and the Dragon). John is seeing another **symbolic vision** revealing the *spiritual reality* behind coming events.
 - **"Great and Amazing":** Emphasizes the *magnitude* and *awe-inspiring nature* of this final phase of judgment.
 - **"Seven Angels with Seven Plagues":** Parallel to the seven angels with seven trumpets (8:2). Angels are God's agents of judgment.
 - **"Which are the last":** This explicitly tells the audience that the **Bowl Judgments** are the *final* series. There are no more "warnings" after this.
 - **"Wrath of God is finished":** The Greek word for "finished" is *etelesthe*, related to Jesus' cry on the cross, *Tetelestai* ("It is finished!"). This signifies the *completion* or *consummation* of God's righteous anger against sin.
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Finality:** This verse sets the stage for the *end*. The trumpets were partial ("a third"); the bowls will be total and final. This is the **consummation** of the Day of the Lord's judgment phase.
 - **God's Control:** The plagues are delivered by *angels* acting under God's command. This isn't random chaos; it's divinely orchestrated judgment.
 - **Wrath Completed:** God's patience has reached its end. The time for mercy *within* judgment (like the warnings of the trumpets) is over. This is pure, undiluted (*akeratos*, 14:10) wrath.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Plagues:** Directly links back to the **Plagues of Egypt** (Exodus 7-12). God uses the same *types* of judgment against the world-system ("Babylon") as He did against the original oppressor ("Egypt").
 - **Completion:** Echoes Jesus' cry **"It is finished" (John 19:30)**. Just as salvation was decisively accomplished, judgment will be decisively completed.
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's Justice is Real:** In a world that often ignores or mocks divine judgment, this verse is a stark reminder that God's wrath against sin is real, serious, and *will* have a final, complete outpouring.
 - **The End is Coming:** This signals the "end game." It reminds believers that history is heading toward a final culmination according to God's plan.
 - **Urgency:** Knowing these are the *last* plagues adds urgency to the call for repentance *now*, during the age of grace.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is described as a "great and amazing" sign. Why is God's final judgment considered "amazing" or "awe-inspiring" in heaven?
 2. What is the significance of these plagues being called "the last"?
 3. The word "finished" (completed) is used for God's wrath. How does this relate to Jesus' cry "It is finished" regarding salvation?
 4. How does the knowledge that these judgments are *final* impact your perspective on God's patience and the urgency of the Gospel?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **reflect on God's complete work**. God doesn't do things halfway. Just as His **salvation** in Christ is complete ("It is finished"), His **judgment** on unrepentant sin will also be complete ("wrath is finished").

- Take a moment to thank God for the **completeness** of Christ's saving work on your behalf.
 - Pray for those who are currently under His patience, that they would repent before His wrath is "finished."
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God Almighty, Your works are great and amazing. Your judgments are true and just. Thank You that through Christ, Your saving work is finished. Grant mercy, Lord, during this time before Your wrath is finished, that many more may turn and find refuge in the Lamb. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 15, Day 2

Victory on the Sea of Glass

Scripture Focus: Revelation 15:2

² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Sea of Glass":** This recalls the vision from **Chapter 4:6**, representing God's **transcendent holiness and peace** before the throne.
 - **"Mingled with Fire":** This is new. The "fire" likely represents the **fiery trials and judgments** that the saints have passed *through*, or the **fiery judgment of God** that *vindicates* them and *consumes* their enemies.
 - **"Those who had conquered":** These are the **saints** described in Chapter 13 who *refused* the Mark and *resisted* the Beast, even unto death (martyrdom). This is the "Church Triumphant."
 - **"Standing beside [or on] the Sea":** This imagery evokes the **Exodus**. After escaping Pharaoh's army (the "Beast" of Egypt) *through* the Red Sea (a fiery judgment on their enemies), the Israelites *stood safely on the shore* and sang a song of victory (Exodus 15).
 - **"Harps of God":** Instruments of **joyful worship and celebration** (cf. 5:8, 14:2). Their "mourning" (11:3, sackcloth) is over.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Victors:** This vision shows the *end result* for those who heed the call for "endurance and faith" (13:10, 14:12). They *do* conquer, not by fighting, but by faithfulness.
 - **Victory Through Judgment:** They stand *beside* (or *on*) the sea *mingled with fire*. Their victory is intrinsically linked to passing *through* tribulation and being vindicated *by* God's fiery judgment on their persecutors.
 - **The Heavenly Exodus:** This scene depicts the *final, heavenly Exodus*. The saints have been delivered from the "Pharaoh" (the Beast/Dragon) through the "Red Sea" (judgment) and now stand ready to sing God's praises.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Sea of Glass:** Revelation 4:6.

- **The Exodus: Exodus 14:30-15:1**, "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians... Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD..."
 - **Conquering: Revelation 12:11**, "And they have **conquered him** [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Future Position:** This is the future hope for all believers who persevere. We will stand victorious, beyond the reach of trial and judgment, ready for eternal worship.
 - **Victory Comes Through Faithfulness:** True "conquering" in God's eyes isn't worldly success or avoiding suffering, but remaining faithful to Christ *through* suffering, refusing to compromise with the "Beast" (the world's pressures).
 - **Worship Follows Deliverance:** Just as Israel sang *after* crossing the Red Sea, our ultimate, unhindered worship follows our final deliverance.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the "sea of glass" in 4:6 (pure, calm) with the one here (mingled with fire). What does the addition of "fire" signify in this context of judgment and victory?
 2. How does the imagery of the saints standing *beside* this sea echo the story of the Exodus? What parallels do you see?
 3. Who are "those who had conquered the beast"? What actions defined their victory (see Rev 13)?
 4. They hold "harps of God." What does this tell you about their primary activity and emotional state in this scene?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Stand by Faith."** You are currently walking *through* the "fiery trials" and pressures of the "Beast's system."

- Picture yourself *already standing* victorious beside that sea of glass by faith.
 - Let that future hope give you strength to "conquer" today – to refuse compromise and remain faithful, knowing your ultimate deliverance and victory song are secure.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God, thank You for the vision of the victors standing beside the sea of glass mingled with fire. Thank You that through the blood of the Lamb and faithfulness to Your Word, we can conquer the Beast. Grant us endurance now, that we may join that triumphant chorus with harps in hand, celebrating Your great salvation. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 15, Day 3

The Song of Moses

Scripture Focus: Revelation 15:3a

³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God...

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Song of Moses":** This refers *directly* to **Exodus 15:1-18**, the song the Israelites sang *immediately after* God miraculously delivered them through the Red Sea and *destroyed* Pharaoh's pursuing army (the "beast" of Egypt).
 - **"Moses, the servant of God":** Emphasizes Moses' role as God's chosen leader and mediator during that foundational act of redemption and judgment.
 - **The Connection:** By singing this *specific* song, the victorious saints in heaven are explicitly identifying their *own* deliverance (from the Beast and Babylon) *with* Israel's *original* deliverance from Egypt. It frames God's final act as the *ultimate Exodus*.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Salvation History Unified:** This links the **beginning** of God's redemptive acts (Exodus) with the **end** (Revelation). God's character and His way of saving His people through judgment on their enemies are consistent throughout history.
- **Themes of Moses' Song:** Exodus 15 celebrates:
 - God's **mighty power** ("horse and rider he has thrown into the sea").
 - His **holiness** ("Who is like you, O LORD... majestic in holiness?").
 - His **redemption** ("You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed").
 - His **guidance** ("You have guided them by your strength to your holy abode").
 - His **ultimate reign** ("The LORD will reign forever and ever").
- **Application:** All these themes perfectly apply to the saints who have conquered the Beast. God's power destroyed their enemy; His holiness is vindicated; He redeemed them; He guided them through tribulation; He will reign forever.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Song Itself: Exodus 15:1-18.** (Reading this chapter is crucial to understanding this verse).
 - **Moses as Servant: Deuteronomy 34:5,** "So **Moses the servant of the LORD** died there..." (A title of honor).
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Story is Part of *The Story*:** Our personal experience of salvation and deliverance from sin and the world-system ("Egypt"/"Babylon") is part of the grand narrative that began with the Exodus. We sing the same song because we have the same God who acts in the same way.
 - **Remembering Past Deliverance:** Just as Israel looked back to the Red Sea, we look back to the Cross (our Exodus) *and* forward to this final deliverance. Recounting God's past faithfulness fuels our present endurance and future hope.
 - **Worship Includes Judgment:** The Song of Moses is a *victory* song, celebrating God's triumph *over* His enemies. It reminds us that true worship acknowledges God's justice as well as His mercy.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is it significant that the saints sing the "Song of *Moses*"? What specific event does this song commemorate?
 2. Read Exodus 15:1-18. What are the main themes of Moses' song?
 3. How do those themes (God's power, holiness, redemption, guidance, reign) apply to the situation of the saints who conquered the Beast?
 4. How does understanding your own salvation as part of the larger "Exodus" story (from slavery to sin) change your perspective?
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Call to Action

Your call is to "**Sing the Song of Moses Today.**"

- Read through **Exodus 15:1-18**.
 - Personalize it. Thank God for *your* Exodus – how He showed His power to defeat *your* "enemy" (sin, Satan), how He redeemed *you*, how He guides *you*, and how He reigns *over your life*. Make Moses' ancient song your present worship.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by Exodus 15)

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; my sin and my enemy he has cast into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds? You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; You have guided them by your strength toward your holy abode. The LORD will reign forever and ever. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 15, Day 4

The Song of the Lamb

Scripture Focus: Revelation 15:3b-4

^{3b} ...and the song of the Lamb, saying,

"Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"And the Song of the Lamb":** The saints sing *two* songs, or perhaps *one* song with *two* titles, signifying the unity of God's work in both the Old (Moses) and New (Lamb) Covenants.
- **Focus Shift:** While the Song of Moses (Exodus 15) focuses heavily on the *specific act* of deliverance at the Red Sea, this "Song of the Lamb" takes a broader view, celebrating God's **universal attributes and reign**.
- **The Content:** This song praises God for:
 - His **Deeds** ("Great and amazing").
 - His **Ways/Character** ("Just and true").
 - His **Sovereignty** ("King of the nations").
 - His **Uniqueness** ("You alone are holy").
 - His **Future Triumph** ("All nations will come and worship").
 - His **Justice Revealed** ("Your righteous acts have been revealed" - i.e., in the judgments like the fall of Babylon).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Moses + Lamb = One Redemption:** Singing both songs together shows that the redemption foreshadowed by Moses is **fulfilled and perfected** in the Lamb (Jesus Christ). It's one continuous plan of salvation.
 - **Universal Scope:** This song explicitly looks forward to the **conversion/submission of "all nations."** It connects the judgment (v. 4b - "righteous acts revealed") with the ultimate goal of universal worship (v. 4a - "all nations will come").
 - **Attributes of God:** This is a doxology, a hymn of praise focused purely on God's magnificent character – His power (Almighty), justice, truth, kingship, and holiness.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Great and Amazing Deeds": Psalm 111:2**, "Great are the **works** of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them."
 - **"Just and True Ways": Deuteronomy 32:4** (Song of Moses!), "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his **ways are justice**. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, **just and upright** is he." **Revelation 16:7**, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, **true and just** are your judgments!"
 - **"King of the Nations": Jeremiah 10:7**, "Who would not fear you, O **King of the nations**? For this is your due..."
 - **"You Alone are Holy": 1 Samuel 2:2**, "There is none **holy like the LORD**; there is none besides you..."
 - **"All Nations Worship": Psalm 86:9**, "**All the nations** you have made shall come and **worship before you**, O Lord, and shall glorify your name." **Zechariah 14:16**, Nations go up to Jerusalem to **worship the King**.
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Harmony of Scripture:** The joining of these two songs highlights how the Old and New Testaments form one unified story of God's redemptive plan centered on Christ.
 - **Focus of Worship:** True worship focuses on God's **character** ("just and true ways," "holy") and His **deeds** ("great and amazing," "righteous acts revealed").
 - **Missionary Motivation:** The confident declaration "All nations will come and worship before you" is a powerful motivator for global missions. God's ultimate purpose *will* be fulfilled.
 - **Justice Leads to Worship:** God revealing His "righteous acts" (including judgment) is presented as the very reason *why* the nations will ultimately fear, glorify, and worship Him.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why do the saints sing *both* the Song of Moses *and* the Song of the Lamb? What does this teach about God's plan?
2. What attributes of God are highlighted in the Song of the Lamb (v. 3-4)?

3. How does this song connect God's judgment ("righteous acts revealed") with the future worship of all nations?
 4. Verse 4 asks, "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?" How does this heavenly perspective challenge our often casual or irreverent approach to God?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Sing the Song of the Lamb Today."**

- Read verses 3b-4 aloud as an act of worship.
 - Focus on the attributes praised: His great deeds, His just ways, His kingship, His unique holiness.
 - Pray this back to God, perhaps personalizing it: "Lord God Almighty, *Your* deeds in *my* life are great and amazing! *Your* ways with *me* are just and true..." Make this heavenly song your earthly worship.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Great and amazing are Your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. May all nations come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts are being revealed. To You be glory forever. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 15, Day 5

The Temple Opened & The Angels Emerge

Scripture Focus: Revelation 15:5-6

⁵ After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, ⁶ and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Sanctuary of the Tent of Witness":** This is a very specific name for the **heavenly Tabernacle/Temple**, emphasizing the **Ark of the Covenant** within it (which held the "tablets of the testimony/witness," Ex 25:16). This connects back to **11:19** where the Ark was seen when the *seventh trumpet* sounded. The opening of the Temple signifies God is now acting based on His covenant faithfulness and revealed law.
 - **"Was Opened":** Access to God's immediate presence is granted, not yet for general worship, but for the execution of His final judgment.
 - **"Out of the sanctuary came the seven angels":** The judgment originates directly from God's holy presence, from the very center of worship and covenant.
 - **Their Attire (v. 6):**
 - **"Pure bright linen":** The clothing of **priests** (Exodus 28:42) and **angels** (Daniel 10:5), signifying **holiness and purity**.
 - **"Golden sashes":** The attire of **royalty** and **high-priestly figures** (cf. Jesus in Rev 1:13; Daniel 10:5).
 - **The Message:** These angels are holy, priestly, and royal ministers executing God's pure and righteous judgment, coming directly from His presence where the covenant law resides.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Judgment from the Holiest Place:** Emphasizes that God's wrath isn't arbitrary rage but flows from His perfect holiness and faithfulness to His covenant word (the "witness").
 - **Priestly Executioners:** The angels are dressed like priests, suggesting this act of judgment is also a holy, "liturgical" act of purification for the cosmos. They are cleansing creation as priests would cleanse the sanctuary.
 - **Fulfillment of 11:19:** The seventh trumpet *opened* the temple and revealed the Ark, accompanied by lightning/thunder/hail (signs of judgment). Now, the angels *emerge* from that opened temple to *execute* the judgment prefigured then.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Tent of Witness:** **Exodus 38:21**, Refers to the Tabernacle containing the Testimony (Ten Commandments). **Acts 7:44**, Stephen refers to the "tent of witness" in the wilderness.
 - **Temple Opened:** **Revelation 11:19**.
 - **Priestly/Angelic Garb:** **Exodus 28** (priests), **Daniel 10:5** (angelic man), **Revelation 1:13** (Christ).
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's Wrath is Holy:** It's not like human anger (petty, selfish). It originates from His perfectly pure nature and His commitment to His own righteous law (the Testimony).
- **Judgment as Purification:** The priestly attire suggests judgment isn't just punishment but a necessary act of cleansing the universe from sin's corruption.

- **Access Through Christ:** While the Temple opens here for judgment, Hebrews reminds us that through Christ's sacrifice, the way into the *true* heavenly sanctuary is open *now* for believers for mercy and grace (Heb 10:19-22).
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is the heavenly sanctuary called the "tent of witness"? What does the "witness" (the Law/Covenant) inside have to do with the judgment coming out?
 2. What is the significance of the angels coming *out of the sanctuary*? What does this location tell us about the source and nature of the judgments?
 3. How does the angels' clothing (linen, golden sashes) contribute to the message being conveyed?
 4. Revelation 11:19 showed the temple opening with signs of judgment. How does this passage (15:5-6) show the *next step* after that opening?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **approach the *right* opening**. The Temple opens in Revelation for judgment to come *out*. But through Christ, the way *into* the heavenly sanctuary is open for *you* to find mercy.

- Read **Hebrews 10:19-22**.
 - Take a moment today to consciously "draw near" to God with confidence, thanking Christ for opening the way through His sacrifice, ensuring you receive mercy, not the bowls of wrath.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God Almighty, Holy and True, Your heavenly sanctuary contains the witness to Your perfect righteousness. We thank You that while judgment proceeds from Your presence against sin, You have opened a way for us *into* Your presence through the blood of Jesus. Clothe us in His righteousness, that we may stand secure when Your holy wrath is revealed. Amen.

The Bowls Given & The Temple Filled with Smoke

Scripture Focus: Revelation 15:7-8

⁷ And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"One of the Four Living Creatures":** These represent all creation and guard God's throne (Chapter 4). Creation itself participates in initiating the final judgment upon those who corrupted it.
 - **"Seven Golden Bowls":** These resemble the shallow, wide bowls (*phiale*) used in temple rituals for pouring out liquid offerings (like wine or water) or carrying incense. Here, they are filled with the **concentrated "liquid" wrath** of God.
 - **"Smoke from the Glory of God":** This is the **Shekinah Glory**, the visible manifestation of God's holy presence and power. It filled the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and the Temple (1 Kings 8:10-11) at their dedication.
 - **"No one could enter the temple":** This parallels the dedication accounts. When God's glory filled the sanctuary, the priests **could not enter** to minister because the holiness was overwhelming.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Creation's Participation:** The living creature giving the bowls shows that creation itself cries out for justice and participates in executing God's judgment against those who defiled it (cf. Romans 8:19-22).
 - **Bowls vs. Trumpets:** Trumpets were *alarms*, blown *sequentially* with pauses. Bowls are *poured out quickly*, possibly overlapping, signifying a rapid, intense, and final outpouring.
 - **Smoke = Holiness & Judgment:** The smoke signifies God's **unapproachable holiness** and the **consuming power** of His glory manifesting as wrath. It's the same glory that brings salvation, now revealed in its judgment aspect.
 - **No More Intercession:** "No one could enter" signifies that the **time for priestly mediation or intercession is over**. Once the final wrath begins, the judgment must run its course completely. Access to God's presence for mercy (in this specific context) is temporarily closed until the judgment is "finished."
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Bowls for Offerings:** Used throughout Leviticus and Numbers for various offerings.
- **Smoke/Glory Filling: Exodus 40:34-35**, "Then the cloud covered the tent... and the **glory of the LORD** filled the tabernacle. And Moses **was not able to enter**..." **1 Kings 8:10-11**, "...the cloud **filled the house of the LORD**, so that the priests **could not stand to minister** because of the cloud, for the **glory of the LORD** filled the house..."

- **Smoke as Judgment: Isaiah 6:4**, At Isaiah's commissioning, the temple filled with **smoke**, signifying God's awesome holiness and coming judgment.
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God's Holiness is Unapproachable (Apart from Christ)**: The smoke reminds us that God's raw glory and holiness are terrifying and inaccessible to sinful humanity on its own.
 - **The Seriousness of Final Judgment**: The image of the temple being closed to entry underscores the finality and severity of this last stage of wrath. The time for seeking mercy runs out.
 - **Gratitude for Access Now**: This vision should fill believers with immense gratitude that *now*, through Christ, we *can* "enter" the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 10:19) and find grace. We live in the day of open access, before the smoke of final judgment descends.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is it significant that one of the *four living creatures* (representing creation) gives the bowls of wrath to the angels?
 2. What is the symbolism of using "bowls" (used for offerings) to pour out God's wrath?
 3. The smoke represents God's glory and power. Why does this glory prevent anyone from entering the temple at this specific time?
 4. How does the temporary closure of the temple in this vision contrast with the access believers have to God *now* through Christ (Hebrews 4:16, 10:19-22)?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **cherish your access**. The time is coming when access for intercession or repentance (for the world) will cease as final judgment falls.

- Today, consciously **enter God's presence** through prayer and thanksgiving, not taking for granted the access won by Christ.
 - **Intercede** now for those who are still outside His grace, praying they will seek Him before the temple is filled with the smoke of judgment.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God Almighty, Your glory fills the heavens, Your power is awesome, Your holiness unapproachable apart from grace. Thank You for making a way for us to enter Your presence now through the blood of the Lamb. We stand in awe of Your coming judgment, yet rest in the access You provide. Keep us close to You, and use us to draw others in before the final judgment is poured out. Amen.

Week 16 (Chapter 16): The Seven Bowls: God's Undiluted Wrath Poured Out

Revelation Bible Study: Week 16, Day 1

The First Bowl: Painful Sores

Scripture Focus: Revelation 16:1-2

¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Loud Voice from the Temple":** This is the *command of God the Father* from the Holy of Holies. The "delay" (10:6) is over. The "time for intercession" is over (15:8). This is the *final execution* of judgment.
- **"Bowls of... Wrath":** The word "wrath" here is *thumos* (θυμός), which means "hot anger" or "fury." This is not the "slow burn" of God's judgment (*orge*); this is the *passionate, fiery, intense* outpouring of His holiness against sin.
- **"Painful Sores":** A 1st-century audience would *immediately* recognize this. This is the **Sixth Plague of Egypt** (boils).
- **The "Target" (v. 2):** This is the *most specific* targeting yet. This plague does *not* hit "the earth." It *only* hits "the people who bore the mark of the beast."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Anti-Seal":** This is the *perfect, divine reversal* of the trumpet judgments.
 - In **Chapter 9:4** (the 5th Trumpet), the locusts were commanded *not* to harm those *with* the **Seal of God**.
 - In **Chapter 16:2**, the bowl *only* harms those *with* the **Mark of the Beast**.
- **The "Mark" is the Target:** The very "mark" that the people *took* to *save* their *economic lives* (13:17, "to buy or sell") is now the *target* that *damns* their *physical lives*. The "mark" acts as a *homing beacon* for God's judgment.

- **Trumpets vs. Bowls:** This is the *crucial* distinction.
 - **Trumpets (Ch. 8-9):** Were "warnings." They affected only "a **third**" of the earth.
 - **Bowls (Ch. 16):** Are "executions." They are *total* and *complete* ("full strength," 14:10).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The 6th Plague of Egypt: Exodus 9:10-11,** "and it became **boils** breaking out in **sores** on man and beast. And the magicians *could not stand* before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians..."
- **Deuteronomy's Curses:** This is a direct fulfillment of the covenant curses. **Deuteronomy 28:35,** "The LORD will strike you... with **grievous sores** of which you cannot be healed..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Mark" of Allegiance:** We are *not* (yet) in this judgment. But this is the *final warning* about our "allegiance." The "mark" (our *total allegiance* to the *world system*) *seems* to offer *security*. This verse shows it is the *guarantee of destruction*.
- **God's Specific Justice:** God's judgment is *not* a "blind carpet-bombing" of the world. It is *infinitely precise*. He *knows* who "bears the mark." He *knows* who "worships the image." There is *no hiding* in the "crowd."
- **The "Poisoned" Salvation:** The "salvation" the Beast offered was the "poison." The "mark" *is* the "sore."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The command comes from the "temple" (v. 1). Why is it so important that this *final wrath* originates from the *holiest place* (God's presence)?
2. The *very "mark"* (v. 2) that was supposed to *save* people *becomes* the "target" that *condemns* them. Where else in life do we see "false saviors" (money, fame, power) *become* the *source* of "painful sores"?
3. This plague is the *reverse* of the 5th Trumpet (9:4). How does this *perfect, parallel* justice (sealing vs. marking) show God's *orderliness*?
4. This is the *6th Plague of Egypt*. Why does God *keep* "re-using" the plagues from the *Exodus* story?

Call to Action

Your call is to "check your 'mark'." The "mark of the Beast" is *allegiance* to the "world system" on your "hand" (what you *do*) or "forehead" (what you *think/believe*).

- *Today, examine* your *actions* ("hand") and your *thoughts* ("forehead").
- *Where* are you "marked" by the *world's values*?
- *Repent*, and ask God to "re-seal" your *mind* and *actions* with His "Name" (14:1).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for protection and purity.)

"O Lord God, The *Beast* demands a "mark" of allegiance. The *world* offers "sores" for "salvation." I *refuse* the "mark." I *flee* from the "Beast." *Seal* my "forehead" with *Your* Name. *Mark* my "hands" with *Your* service. *Protect* me from the "painful sores" of *idolatry*. *Hide me* in the "blood of the Lamb." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 16, Day 2

The Second & Third Bowls: All Water to Blood

Scripture Focus: Revelation 16:3-4

³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.

⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Like the blood of a dead man":** This is *not* just "bloody water." This is *congealed, putrid, thick* blood. It is *gruesome* and *total*.
- **"Every living thing in the sea died":** This is the *escalation*.
 - **2nd Trumpet (8:9):** "A *third* of the living creatures... died."
 - **2nd Bowl (16:3):** "**EVERY** living thing... died."
- **"Rivers and the springs of water...":**
 - **3rd Trumpet (8:10):** "A *third* of the rivers" were poisoned.
 - **3rd Bowl (16:4):** *All* "rivers and springs" are blood.
- **The Message:** The "warning shots" (Trumpets) are *over*. This is *total* judgment. The *entire* "sea" (the source of *global commerce* and "chaos") and the *entire* "fresh water" (the source of *human survival*) are *gone*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Execution" of Wrath:** This is the "full strength" (*akeratos*) "wine of God's wrath" from 14:10. There is *no "third" of mercy* left. The judgment is *un-diluted*.
- **Ecological Collapse = Total Collapse:** In *two strokes*, God *ends* (1) the *global economy* and (2) *human sustainability*. The "Beast's kingdom" is *built* on "commerce" (the sea) and "life" (the rivers). God *removes* both.
- **Literal vs. Symbolic:**
 - **Literal (Futurist):** This will be a *literal, supernatural* event. *All* salt water and *all* fresh water on earth will be *supernaturally* turned to *blood*, resulting in *total* death.

- **Symbolic (Idealist):** This is a *symbol* of "total war" and "total societal collapse," where the "lifeblood" (economy/sustenance) of *all* nations is *destroyed*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The First Plague of Egypt:** This is *again* the **First Plague** (Exodus 7), but now *global* and *complete*.
 - **Exodus 7:20-21:** "all the water in the **Nile**... was turned into blood. And the **fish... died**..."
- **The "Cup" of Wrath: Psalm 75:8,** "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine... and *all* the wicked of the earth must *drink* it down."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Source" of Life:** We *worship* our "source." The "Beast-worshippers" *worship* the "economy" (the sea) and their *own "life"* (the springs). God *proves* He is *sovereign* by *ending* both.
- **Our "True" Water:** This is the *ultimate* "thirst." This judgment *forces* humanity to *reckon* with the *fact* that they have *rejected* the "spring of *living water*" (Jesus, Rev 7:17, John 4).
- **We *Deserve* This:** As we will see *tomorrow*, this judgment is *not* "mean." It is *perfectly just*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the *escalation* from "a third" (Trumpets) to "all" (Bowls). Why does God *use* "warnings" (Trumpets) *before* He uses "executions" (Bowls)?
2. The "sea" (commerce) and the "rivers" (survival) are *both* destroyed. What is the *message* in *this* "one-two" punch?
3. The "blood" is "like a *dead man's* blood" (v. 3). Why is this *gruesome detail* included? What "emotion" is it *meant* to evoke?
4. If *all* water on earth *were* "blood"... what is the *only* "drink" left? (Hint: See v. 6).

Call to Action

Your call is to "thank God for *water*." This *sounds* simple. But *this judgment* is the *removal* of "water."

- *Every time* you *drink* a glass of *clean water* today...
- *Every time* you *wash your hands*...
- ...*Thank God* for His "common grace." *Thank Him* that you are *not* (yet) in this "judgment," and *thank Him* that *He* is the *true* "Spring of Living Water."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of thanksgiving for "common grace".)

"Lord God, Creator, You *made* the seas. You *made* the springs of water. You *give* it to us *freely*. But we have *rejected* You, the "Spring of Living Water." We *deserve* "blood to drink." Thank You for the *mercy* of *this* "Day of Grace." Thank You for the *water* I drink. Thank You for the *Blood* of the *Lamb*, which *saves me* from the "blood" of *this cup*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 16, Day 3

The Angel's Song: "It is Just!"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 16:5-7

⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters say,

"Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. ⁶ For they have poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"

⁷ And I heard the altar respond,

"Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Angel of the Waters":** This is an *angel* who has "authority" over the "waters" (the sea, the rivers). *Even he* agrees that the *destruction* of his own "*domain*" is *just*.
- **The "Song" (v. 5-6):** This is a *legal declaration* from *heaven*. It is the "*reason*" *why* the judgment is *not* "cruel."
- **The "Crime" (v. 6a):** "They have poured out the blood of saints and prophets..." (The *martyrdom* of God's "Witnesses," 11:7, 13:7).
- **The "Punishment" (v. 6b):** "...you have given them blood to drink."
- **The "Verdict" (v. 6c):** "It is what they deserve!" (Greek: *Axios eisin*, "They are *worthy* of it!").
- **"The Altar Respond" (v. 7):** This is *critical*. The "altar" is *where the "souls" of the martyrs* are (6:9-10). The *martyrs themselves* "respond" to this judgment with a *resounding* "YES!" ("True and just!").

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is the *Lex Talionis*:** This is "eye-for-an-eye" *justice*. It is *perfectly proportional*.
 - **Crime:** You *shed* "blood" (of saints).
 - **Punishment:** You *drink* "blood" (of judgment).
- **This is the "Answer" to 6:10:**
 - **The *Martyrs' Cry* (6:10):** "How long... before you will *judge* and *avenge our blood*?"
 - **The *Altar's Cry* (16:7):** "Yes, Lord... *true and just* are your *judgments*!"
- This "interlude" is *crucial* because it *proves* that God's "wrath" is *not* "petty rage." It is the *cold, hard, perfect, and "just"* fulfillment of His *justice* in *answer* to the *prayers* of His *people*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Just are you...": Psalm 119:137**, "Righteous [Just] are you, O LORD, and *upright* are your judgments."
- **"Blood to Drink": Isaiah 49:26**, "I will make your oppressors... **drink their own blood** as with wine."
- **"True and Just": Revelation 15:3** (The Song of Moses), "**Just and true** are your ways..." Now, in 16:7, "**Just and true** are your judgments."
 - His "ways" (His *character*) are "just," therefore His "judgments" (His *actions*) are "just."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This *Will Be* the "Verdict":** *This* is the "song" that *all of heaven* (the "angels" and the "altar") *will sing* when God *pours out* His *wrath*.
- **The "Problem" of God's "Goodness":** We *struggle* with this. We *want* a "God" who is *only* "nice."
- **The *Bible* "Song":** The *Bible* celebrates God's *justice* just as *much* as His *mercy*.
- **Why?** Because "justice" *is* "mercy" for the *oppressed*. God's *wrath* on the "Beast" *is* His *love* for the "saints."
- **"It is what they deserve!":** This is the *hardest phrase* for us to *swallow*. But it is the *foundation* of "justice." It *also* reminds us of *our own* "deserved" punishment, which the *Lamb* "drank" *for us*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "angel of the waters" *praises God* for *destroying* the "waters." What does this tell you about the *absolute loyalty of heaven* to God's *justice* (over their "own interests")?
2. The "crime" (v. 6) *perfectly matches* the "punishment" (v. 6). Why is this "proportional justice" so *important* for God's "character"?
3. The *Martyrs* (the "altar," v. 7) *cheer* for this judgment. *Why?* Are they "bloodthirsty"? (Or are they "justice-thirsty"?)
4. It is *hard* for us to *agree* with the "verdict": "It is what they deserve!" *Why* do we "struggle" with this "verdict"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "agree with the altar." *Your "flesh" hates* "judgment." *Your "spirit"* (if you are a "saint") must *love* "justice."

- *Today, read Psalm 136.*
- *Notice* how *every* verse ends with "His steadfast love endures forever."
- *Notice* that this "love" (v. 17-20) *includes* "who *struck down* great kings," "and *slew* mighty kings... Sihon... and Og..."
- *Practice* "praising" God *for* His "love" *and* His "justice."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Psalm 119 & Rev 16.)

"Yes, Lord God Almighty, True and just are Your judgments. Righteous are You, O Lord, and upright are Your judgments.

You *are* "just" to *give them "blood to drink,"* for they *poured out* the "blood of Your saints."

Lord, *thank You* that *You are just.* And *thank You* that *my "cup of wrath,"* which *I "deserved" to drink,* was "drunk" *by the Lamb.*

Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 16, Day 4

The Fourth & Fifth Bowls: The Scorching & The Dark

Scripture Focus: Revelation 16:8-11

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹ They were scorched with fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **4th Bowl (v. 8):** This is the *reverse* of the **4th Trumpet** (8:12), which *darkened* 1/3 of the sun. Now, the sun is *intensified*. This is "global warming" as *divine judgment*.
- **5th Bowl (v. 10):** This is a *direct, targeted* attack. The bowl is *not* "on the earth"; it's "on the **throne of the beast**." This is the **Ninth Plague of Egypt** (Darkness).
- **The "Throne" (Satan's "HQ"):** God *hits* the *political capital* of the "Antichrist" (his "kingdom") with *supernatural darkness*.
- **The "Response" (v. 9 & 11):** This is the *key*.
 1. They "gnawed their tongues in anguish" (v. 10) (from the "sores" of v. 2, *and* the "scorching" of v. 9).
 2. They "**cursed the name of God.**"
 3. They "**did not repent.**"

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Hardening" of the Heart:** This is the *theme* of the "Woes."
 - *6th Trumpet* (9:20-21): "did not repent."

- *4th Bowl (16:9): "did not repent."*
- *5th Bowl (16:11): "did not repent."*
- *7th Bowl (16:21): "cursed God."*
- **The "Doctrine" of This Passage:** *Suffering does not "produce" repentance. Grace "produces" repentance (Romans 2:4). Suffering (without grace) only "produces" a harder heart and more "cursing."*
- **The "Irony" (v. 10-11):**
 - They *worshiped* the "Beast" (13:4) because he was "powerful."
 - Now, God *plunges* the "Beast's kingdom" into *darkness* and "anguish."
 - ...And the people *still* "curse God" (the *true* power) and *refuse* to "repent" of their "deeds" (their *allegiance* to the *powerless* "Beast").

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The 9th Plague of Egypt: Exodus 10:22**, "and there was **pitch darkness** in all the land of Egypt... but all the people of *Israel* had *light*..."
- **The "Hardened" Heart: Exodus 9:34-35**, (After the "hail" plague), "But when *Pharaoh* saw... he **sinned yet more**, and **hardened his heart**... he *would not* let the people go..."
- **The "Sun" as Judgment: Malachi 4:1**, "For behold, the day is coming, *burning like an oven*... the *sun* of righteousness shall *rise*..." (It's *healing* for the "righteous," but *burning* for the "wicked").

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is "Hell":** This is a *picture* of "hell." It is "anguish," "pain," "darkness," *and* the *continual, unrepentant* "cursing" of God. Hell is *not* "a big party." It is *eternal, self-chosen misery* and *rage against God*.
- **The "Blame Game":** Notice *who* they "curse" (v. 11): "the God of heaven." They *know* He is the one "who had power over these plagues" (v. 9).
- **They don't "curse" Satan** (who "deceived" them).
- **They don't "curse" the Beast** (who "failed" them).
- **They don't "curse" themselves** (for their *sin*).
- **They "curse" God.**
- This is the *ultimate* "blame-shifting" of a *hardened heart*. They *hate* God *more* than they *hate* their own "sores".

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "sun" (God's *blessing* of "light") is *turned into* a "curse" ("scorching"). How does "sin" *do this* (take a "blessing" and "turn it" into a "curse")?
2. The *5th Bowl specifically* "targets" the "throne of the beast." Why does God *attack* the *headquarters* of the *enemy*?
3. *Three times* (9:21, 16:9, 16:11) it says "they did not repent." Why is *this* "refusal to repent" the *central sin* of *mankind*?
4. They *knew* God "had power" (v. 9), but they *cursed* Him instead of "repenting." What is the *difference* between "knowing *about* God" and "repenting *to* God"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "do the opposite." The *world* "hardens" under "plagues" (trials). *You* must "soften."

- Today, identify one "plague" (one *trial*, one "scorching heat," one "darkness") in *your* life.
- The "Beast-worshiper" *curses* God for it.
- The "Saint" *repents* in it.
- Choose to "repent" in your "trial." (e.g., "Lord, this *trial* is *painful*, but *use it* to *show me my sin* and to *soften my heart*.")

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Psalm 51.)

"Lord God, The *world's* heart is "hard." The *plagues* "harden" them *more*. I am *no different*.

"Create in me a **clean heart**, O God, and renew a *right spirit* within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation..."

Do not let me *curse* You in my "anguish." *Let me* "repent" and "give You glory." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 16, Day 5

The Sixth Bowl: The Demonic Frogs of Armageddon

Scripture Focus: Revelation 16:12-16

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³ And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. ¹⁴ For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

¹⁵ ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!")

¹⁶ And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **6th Bowl (v. 12):** "Euphrates... dried up."
 - This is the "eastern border" (9:14).

- This is *how* the *literal* "Babylon" *fell* (539 BC). The "kings of the east" (Cyrus the Persian) *diverted* the Euphrates, *walked* on the "dry" riverbed, and *conquered* the "invincible" city.
- **The Message:** God is "drying up" the "border" to *allow* the "kings of the east" (the *enemies* of "Rome/Babylon") to *come* for the *final battle*.
- **The "Frogs" (v. 13):** This is the **Second Plague of Egypt** (Exodus 8).
 - "Frogs" were "unclean," "noisy," and "everywhere."
 - These are *demonic spirits* (v. 14).
- **The "Unholy Trinity" (v. 13):** This is the *source* of the "demons." *All three* "Beasts" (Dragon, Beast, False Prophet) *spew* them *out of their mouths*.
- **Armageddon (v. 16):**
 - Hebrew: *Har-Magedon* = "Mountain of Megiddo."
 - **Megiddo** was the *greatest battlefield* of the Old Testament. It was a *vast plain* where *all* the "kings of the earth" *fought*. (e.g., Deborah/Barak vs. Sisera, Gideon vs. Midianites, King Josiah *died* there).
 - It is the *symbol* of the "ultimate, final battle."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Great "Deception" (v. 14):**
 - *What* do the "demonic spirits" ("frogs") *do*? They "perform signs."
 - *Why*? To "deceive" the "kings of the world."
 - *To what end*? To "assemble them" *for battle*.
- **The "Irony":** God *uses* the *Devil's own* "*demons*" to *do God's work*. The *demons* "think" they are "gathering" an "army" to *fight God*. But *God* is "letting" them *gather* the *entire world* into *one, convenient place* ("Armageddon") so that *He can judge them all at once*.
- **The "Pause" (v. 15):** This is *Jesus Christ Himself* "breaking in" to the *vision*.
 - This is the *Third Beatitude* (blessing) in Revelation.
 - It's a "warning" and "blessing" *for the "saints"* who are *living* while this "gathering" is happening.
 - "I come like a thief" (His *return* is *sudden*).
 - "Blessed is the one who stays awake" (Spiritually *alert*).
 - "Keeping his garments on" (Spiritually *pure*, *not* "naked and exposed" by *sin*).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Drying the River: Isaiah 11:15**, "And the LORD will... "wave his hand... and *break it into seven streams*" (the "Euphrates"). **Isaiah 44:27**, (God says to Cyrus), "who says to the deep, 'Be dry...'"
- **Frogs: Exodus 8:6**, "So Aaron stretched out his hand... and the **frogs** came up..."
- **"Come like a thief": Matthew 24:43-44**, "But know this, that if the master... had known... he would have *stayed awake*... the *Son of Man* is *coming* at an hour you do not expect."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Demonic Frogs" are *Here*:**
 - They are "unclean spirits" that *come from the "mouth"* (the *propaganda*, the *ideology*) of the "Dragon" (Satan), the "Beast" (godless government), and the "False Prophet" (godless religion).
 - They are "performing signs" (deceptions).
 - They are "gathering" the *whole world* into *one* "globalist" *mindset* "for battle" *against God*.
- **We see this "gathering" every day** in the "global" *propaganda* that *unites* the "world" *against* "the saints" and *against* "God's truth."

- The **"Warning" is for Us (v. 15):**
 - "Stay Awake!" (Don't be "fooled" by the "frogs").
 - "Keep your *Garments On!*" (Stay *pure*. Don't *compromise* with the "Beast").
- **"Armageddon" is a "Mindset":** Before it's a "place," it's a "decision." It's the "decision" of the "world" to "assemble... for *battle*" *against God*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. God *dries up* the "Euphrates" to "prepare the way" for His *enemies*. How does this *show* God's *absolute sovereignty* (that He *uses* His *enemies' plans* to *fulfill His own*)?
2. The "demons" are "like frogs" (unclean, "noise" from the *mouth*). Where do you *hear* the "croaking" of these "demonic frogs" (propaganda, lies) in *our culture*?
3. Jesus *breaks into* this *terrifying* vision with a *personal warning* (v. 15). *Why* does He *put* this "blessing" *right here*?
4. What does it *mean* (practically) for *you* to "stay awake" and "keep your garments on" *today*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "stay awake" (v. 15). The "frogs" are "croaking" *to lull you to sleep*.

- *Today, identify one "frog"* (one *lie* from the "Dragon" or "Beast" - e.g., "God is not in control," "Sin is not a big deal," "You are not safe").
- *Kill* the "frog" with the "sword" (the Word of God). *Find one verse* that *is* the *truth* and *speak it "over"* the "lie."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on v. 15.)

"Lord Jesus, You are "coming like a thief." The "frogs" are "croaking," trying to *lull me to sleep*. *Wake me up!* Help me to "stay awake" (be *alert*). Help me to "keep my garments on" (be *holy*). Let me *not* be "fooled" by the "signs" of the "demons." Let me *only* be "fooled" by the "grace" of the *Lamb*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 16, Day 6

The Seventh Bowl: "It Is Done!"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 16:17-21

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸ And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. ¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. ²¹ And great hail, weighing about a talent, dropped from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **7th Bowl (v. 17):**
 - **"Into the air":** This is the *domain of Satan* (the "prince of the power of the *air*," Eph 2:2). This is the *final* judgment, *hitting* the "headquarters" of the *enemy*.
- **"IT IS DONE!":** (Greek: *Gegonen*).
 - This is the "bookend" to Jesus's cry on the Cross: **"It is finished!"** (*Tetelestai*, John 19:30).
 - The "work of *Salvation*" (*Tetelestai*) is *finished*.
 - Now, the "work of *Wrath*" (*Gegonen*) is *done*.
- **The "Results" (v. 18-20):**
 - The *Greatest Earthquake in History*.
 - "The Great City" (Jerusalem / "Babylon the Great") is *split*.
 - "The cities of the *nations* fell."
 - "Every island... mountains... *gone*."
- **This is the Sixth Seal (6:12-14) all over again, but not as a "warning." This is the final, total de-creation.**

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"It is Done!":** This is the *end* of the "Bowl Judgments." This is the "Battle of Armageddon." It's *not* a "long war"; it's a *single, catastrophic moment of divine judgment*.
- **"Babylon the Great" (v. 19):** This is *Rome* (for John) and the *entire, godless "world-system"* (for us). Now she *drinks* the "cup" that the *Third Angel* (14:10) warned about.
- **"Great Hail" (v. 21):**
 - This is the **Seventh Plague of Egypt** (Exodus 9:24).
 - **"A Talent":** A "talent" was a *weight*. It was *massive* (anywhere from 70 to 100 pounds).
 - This is *not* "hail." This is *supernatural, "boulder-sized" ice falling from heaven*.
- **THE FINAL RESPONSE (v. 21):**
 - "...and they **cursed God**... because the plague was so severe."
 - This is the *fourth* and *final* "they did not repent" (9:21, 16:9, 16:11).
 - **The "unpardonable" sin is finalized.** The *heart* of the "Beast-worshiper" is so *hard* that even in the face of "100-pound hail," their *only response* is to *curse God*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"It is Done!":** John 19:30, "When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished!'"
- **The 7th Plague (Hail):** Exodus 9:24, "there was hail... very severe..."

- **The "Great Earthquake": Haggaï 2:6**, "Yet once more... I am going to **shake the heavens and the earth...**" (See *Hebrews 12:26-28*).
- **The "Cursing"**: This is the *final state* of the "wicked" from **Psalms 2:1-3**, who "rage" and "set themselves" *against* the "LORD and his Anointed."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"It Will Be Done"**: We *live* in the "pause" *before* this "shout." We *live* in the *hope* that this *will* happen. *Justice* (the "cup") *will* be "drained." *Creation* (the "islands/mountains") *will* be "*shaken*" (Heb 12).
- **The Hopelessness of the "Hard Heart"**: This is the *most tragic part* of the "judgment." The *greatest "plague"* is *not* the "hail." It is the "heart that *cannot* repent."
- **"Repentance" is a Gift**: ** This *proves* that "repentance" is *not* "something we *do*." It is a *gift* of God's *grace* (Romans 2:4). *Without* that "grace," the *only* "human response" to God is to *curse Him*.
- **The "Air"**: The *final* plague is "poured on the *air*." This is the *total* "cleansing" of the *world—even* the "atmosphere" *around* it—from the "prince of the power of the air" (Satan).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "voice" cries, "**It is done!**" (v. 17). *Jesus* cried, "**It is finished!**" (John 19:30). How are these two "cries" the "two sides" of the *same "coin"* (Salvation / Judgment)?
2. The *judgment* is *total* (earthquake, cities fall, mountains *gone*). *Why* must the "old creation" be so *completely "de-created"* before the "new creation" (Ch. 21) can *come*?
3. The *very last "response"* of *unbelieving mankind* (v. 21) is to *curse God*. What does this *tell you* about the "nature" of *sin*?
4. After *all this* (the "bowls"), *do you still* "struggle" with the "justice" of God's *wrath*? Why / Why not?

Call to Action

Your call is to "thank God for *repentance*." The *greatest "horror"* in this *chapter* is the "heart that *cannot* repent."

- *If you are a believer*, "repentance" is a *gift* that God gave you.
- *Take 60 seconds*. Thank God for giving you a "soft heart." Thank Him for the "grace" that *allows* you to "turn to Him," *not* "curse Him."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of thanksgiving for grace.)

"O Lord God Almighty, True and just are Your judgments. The "wine of Your wrath" is *severe*. The "hail" of Your judgment is *terrifying*. The "hearts" of men *are hard*.

But *You*, O God, in Your *mercy*, did *not* "leave me" to "curse You." You *gave me a new heart*. You *gave me the gift of repentance*. You *saved me* from the "Beast." You *saved me* from the "Mark." You *saved me* from the "Cup."

"It is Done." "It is Finished." Thank You, Lord Jesus. Amen."

Week 17 (Chapter 17): Mystery Explained: The Harlot Babylon and the Beast

Revelation Bible Study: Week 17, Day 1

The Invitation to Judge the Harlot

Scripture Focus: Revelation 17:1-2

¹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who is seated on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"One of the seven angels..."**: This is a *continuation* of the Bowl Judgments. The angel who *poured* the wrath (Ch. 16) is now *explaining* the "Why" *behind* the wrath.
- **"The Great Harlot"**: This is the *central figure* of this judgment. In the Old Testament, "harlotry" or "adultery" was the *single most common symbol* for **idolatry**. It is the "unfaithfulness" of *worshiping* a "false god" (an idol, money, power) instead of the *one, true God*.
- **"Seated on Many Waters"**: The angel *defines* this later (17:15). But the 1st-century audience would hear an echo of the *literal* city of Babylon (which sat on the "waters" of the Euphrates) or *Rome* (which sat on the "waters" of the Mediterranean).
- **"Kings... committed sexual immorality"**: The *political powers* of the world have *allied* themselves with this "idolatrous system."
- **"Inhabitants... have become drunk"**: The *common people* have been "intoxicated" (deceived, made "drunk") by the *allure* (the "wine") of this *system*—its *wealth, power, and pleasure*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Who is the "Harlot" ("Babylon")?**
 - **To John**: "Babylon" was the *unmistakable code-word* for **Rome**. Rome was the "great city" (17:18) that was *built on* the "nations" (waters), *allied* with "kings," and *seduced* the "inhabitants" with its *wealth* and *emperor-worship* (idolatry).
 - **To Us (Symbolic)**: "Babylon" is the *world's "system"*. It is the *humanistic, materialistic, godless* "culture" that *seduces* the world into *idolatry* (worshiping *anything* but God). It is the *global system* of *commerce, government, and culture* that *stands in opposition* to the *Kingdom of Christ*.

- **The "Wine":** The "wine" of the harlot is her *ideology*. It's *materialism, secularism, "self-worship,"* and *power*. It's "intoxicating" (looks *good*, makes you *feel "giddy"*) but it *leads* to *drunkenness* (confusion, *lack of judgment*, and *death*).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Literal Babylon: Jeremiah 51:7**, "Babylon was a **golden cup** in the LORD's hand, **making all the earth drunken**; the **nations drank of her wine**, therefore the nations went mad." (John is *directly* quoting this).
- **Harlot Israel:** God *called* his own unfaithful people "harlots" for *their* idolatry. **Ezekiel 16:15**, "But you *trusted* in your beauty and *played the harlot*..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **We are *all* "drunk":** We are *living* in "Babylon." We are *all* "inhabitants of the earth" who are *constantly* being *offered* the "wine."
- **The "Wine" of Today:**
 - **Materialism:** ("You *are* what you *own*").
 - **Hedonism:** ("If it *feels* good, *do* it").
 - **Secularism:** ("You *are* your own *god*").
- This "wine" is *everywhere*—in our *media*, our *advertising*, our *universities*. It "intoxicates" us and *makes* us "drunk" so we *can't* see the *truth*.
- **The "Kings" (Governments):** Our "political systems" are *still* "committing immorality" with this *system*, *building* their "power" on *this* "godless" *ideology*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. A "harlot" *sells* "intimacy" for "money/power." How is *idolatry* ("worshiping the system") *exactly* like "selling" our *worship* (which *belongs* to God) for "money/power"?
2. The "wine" (ideology) *makes people "drunk."* In what *ways* do you see our "culture" "drunk" (confused, *unable to think clearly*) on *false ideas*?
3. What is the *most "intoxicating"* "wine" (ideology) that *you* are *tempted* to "drink"?
4. How can we *live in* "Babylon" *without* "getting drunk" on its "wine"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "get sober." The *antidote* to the "wine of the Harlot" is the "cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 10:21).

- *Today, identify one "lie" (one "sip" of "wine") that "Babylon" is telling you* (e.g., "Your 'worth' is in your *job*").
- *Counter-act it with one "truth" from the Scriptures* (e.g., "My 'worth' is in the *blood of the Lamb*").

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for sobriety.)

"Lord God, The "Harlot" *offers* me a "golden cup." Her "wine" *looks* beautiful, but it is *poison*. I am *drunk* on the *ideologies* of this world. I am *intoxicated* with *pride*, *materialism*, and *self*.

Lord, *make me sober*. Let me *not* "drink" from *her* "cup." Let me *only* "drink" from the "cup of salvation" which *You* offer, *bought* with the *blood* of the *Lamb*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 17, Day 2

The Vision: The Harlot on the Beast

Scripture Focus: Revelation 17:3-4

³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Into a wilderness":** This is *where* John sees her "true nature." The "city" *looks* "civilized," but *spiritually* it is a "wilderness"—a *barren, desolate, snake-infested* place.
- **"A Woman Sitting on a Scarlet Beast":** This is the *vision*.
 - **The "Woman" (Harlot):** The *idolatrous system* (Rome/"Babylon").
 - **The "Scarlet Beast":** The *political/military power* that *supports* her. This is the *same* "Beast from the Sea" (Ch. 13), but now he is "scarlet" (the color of "sin," Isaiah 1:18, and "luxury").
- **The "Relationship":** The "Harlot" is *riding* the "Beast."
 - This implies *control*. The "system" (Harlot) *directs* and *uses* the "government" (Beast) to *achieve her goals*.
- **Her "Appearance" (v. 4):**
 - "Purple and scarlet... gold and jewels": These were the *colors* and *materials* of *royalty* and *immense wealth*. (Rome was *fabulously* wealthy).
 - **This is her "seduction."** She *looks gorgeous*.
- **Her "Cup" (v. 4):**
 - "Golden cup": *Looks "valuable."*
 - "Full of abominations...": *Is "filth."*
- **The "Contrast":** Her *outward appearance* (rich, royal) is a *lie*. Her *inward reality* (her "cup") is *spiritual poison*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- The Harlot *is* "Religious" Rome:

- The "purple and scarlet" were *also* the *colors* of the *pagan Roman priesthood* (and *later*, the *corrupt "papal" priesthood*, in the *Historicist* view).
- This is the "State Religion"—the *pagan "church"* (the *Harlot*) *riding* (controlling) the *State "government"* (the *Beast*).
- **"Full of Blasphemous Names":** The "Beast" (the *Roman Empire*) was covered in "blasphemous names."
 - The *Emperors* called *themselves* "*Divus*" (God), "*Dominus et Deus*" (Lord and God), and "*Soter*" (Savior).
 - These *titles* (which *belong* to *Jesus*) are *blasphemy*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Golden Cup":** **Jeremiah 51:7**, "Babylon was a **golden cup** in the LORD's hand..."
- **The "Scarlet" Sin:** **Isaiah 1:18**, "Though your sins are like **scarlet**..."
- **The "Abominations":** This is the *word* used in **Daniel 9:27** for the "abomination that causes desolation."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Seduction" of the "System":** This *is* our *world*. The "world system" ("Babylon") *looks beautiful*.
 - It *offers* "purple and scarlet" (luxury, status).
 - It *offers* "gold and jewels" (wealth, security).
- **The "Harlot" *Still Rides* the "Beast":** The "idolatrous system" (materialism, secularism) *still "rides"* (controls) our *governments* (the "Beast").
- **The "Golden Cup" is *Still* "Full of Filth":** The "promise" of the "world system" *looks* "golden."
 - "Fame" *looks* golden... but is *full of* "abomination."
 - "Wealth" *looks* golden... but is *full of* "impurity."
- We are *all* "tempted" to *drink* from her *cup*, because she *looks so beautiful* on the *outside*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. John is *carried* to the "wilderness" to see the "Harlot." Why must we "step out of" the "city" (the *system*) to see the "system" *clearly*?
2. The "Harlot" *looks* "rich" (v. 4a) but her "cup" *is* "filth" (v. 4b). Where in *your* "world" do you see this "glamorous lie" (something that *looks* "good" but *is* "filth")?
3. The "Harlot" (*religion/ideology*) *rides* the "Beast" (*government/power*). Why is the "alliance" of *false religion* and *corrupt government* the *most dangerous* force on *earth*?
4. Are you "*drinking*" from her "golden cup"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "see the cup." The "Harlot" *hides* her "cup" behind her "jewels."

- *Today, identify one* "alluring" *promise* from the "world" (e.g., "This *purchase* will make you *happy*," "This *promotion* will make you *important*").
- *Ask God* for the "discernment" to see *past* the "gold" and see the "filth" *inside* the "cup."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision".)

"O Lord, The *world* decks herself in *purple and gold*, she *offers* me a *golden cup*. But *I know* it is *full of abominations*. My *eyes* are *dazzled* by her. My *heart* is *seduced* by her.

Cleanse my eyes, that I may *see her* as *You* see her: *Barren* (in the "wilderness"). *Filthy* (in her "cup"). *Doomed* (in her "judgment").

Let me *not* "drink" her "wine," but *only* the "living water" of the *Lamb*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 17, Day 3

The Harlot's Name and Her Drunkenness

Scripture Focus: Revelation 17:5-6

⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations." ⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"On her forehead was written a name":** In 1st-century Rome, *literal* "harlots" were *often* required to wear a "headband" (*frontlet*) with their "name" or "price" *written on it*.
- **The "Mockery":** This is a *grotesque* "mockery" of:
 - The *High Priest* (who *also* wore a "headband" that said, "**Holy to the LORD**," Exodus 28:36).
 - The *Saints* (who *will have* the "Father's Name on *their* foreheads," 14:1).
- **"Mystery, Babylon...":** Her "name" *is* "Mystery." It *is* "Babylon." She *is* the "Mother (Source) of *All* Harlotry (Idolatry) and *All* Abominations."
- **"Drunk with the blood of the saints":** This is *why* she *must* be judged (16:6).
 - This "harlot" (Rome) is *not* just "idolatrous"; she is *murderous*.
 - The *1st-century audience* *knew* this *literally*. Rome (under *Nero*, and *now* "Domitian") was *actively* "martyring" Christians.
- **"I marveled greatly":** John is "thunderstruck" or "shocked."
 - He is *not* "marveling" in "admiration."
 - He is *horrified* at the *sheer scale* of her *evil*, her *wealth*, and her *drunken, murderous* rage.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "System" is *Murderous*:** This *defines* "Babylon" (the World System).
 - It *first* "seduces" (v. 2, "wine").
 - If "seduction" *fails*... it *murders* (v. 6, "blood").
- **The *Spirit* of "Babylon" (Idolatry) *always* leads to the *Blood* of the "Saints."** Why? Because the *true saint* (who *only* worships *Christ*) is a *direct, living threat* to the "Harlot" (who *demand*s "worship" of her "system").
- **The "Blood" is her "Wine":** She is *not* just "drunk" on her *own* "wine" (v. 2); she is *drunk* on the *blood* of *martyrs*. This is a *vampiric* image. The "world system" *feeds* on the *death* of God's *people*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Mother of Harlots":** This *connects* her to the *literal* "Harlot" city of **Tyre**.
 - **Isaiah 23:17:** "the LORD will visit Tyre... and she will *play the harlot* with *all the kingdoms* of the world..." (Tyre was the "city of *commerce*.")
- **"Drunk with Blood": Jeremiah 46:10,** "That day is the day of the Lord GOD... the sword shall *devour*... and be *glutted* and *drunk with their blood*."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Name-Tag" of the World:** The *world system* ("Babylon") *still* has *this "name"* on its "forehead": **"Mystery... Mother of Harlots..."**
 - It is *still* the *source* of *all "abominations"* (idolatries).
- **The "System" *Still* Hates the "Saints":**
 - We are the "saints." We are the "martyrs of Jesus" (those who *bear "witness"* to Jesus).
 - The "system" ("Babylon") *hates* our *exclusivity*.
 - It *hates* that we *will not* "drink" its "wine."
 - And *when* it *gets* the "chance," it *will* "get drunk" on our "blood." (This is the "persecuted church" *right now*).
- **Are We "Marveling"?** We, like *John*, should be "shocked" (*marveling*) at the *evil* of the "system."
 - We should *not* be "comfortable" in "Babylon."
 - We should *not* be "friends" with the "Harlot."
 - We *should* be *horrified* by her "drunkenness" (her *love* of *persecuting* God's *people*).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Harlot" has her "name" on her "forehead." The "Saints" have the *Father's "Name"* on *their* "foreheads" (14:1). This is a "war" of *identity*. How do *you* "remind" yourself *which "name"* is on *your* "forehead"?
2. The "Harlot" is "drunk with the *blood of the saints*." *Why* does the "world system" *hate* the "true Christian" *so much*?
3. John "marveled greatly" (was *shocked*). What *is it* about the *world system* ("Babylon") that *shocks* (or *should shock*) *you* the *most*?
4. If the "Harlot" is the "Mother of *all Idolatry*," what *are* some of her "daughter" *idolatries* in *our* culture?

Call to Action

Your call is to "remember the martyrs." The "Harlot" is *drunk* on *their blood*.

- Go to "Voice of the Martyrs" (or a *similar* "persecuted church" *website*).
- Read one story of a modern "saint" whose "blood" *has been "shed"* by "Babylon" (an *atheist government, a false religion...*).
- Then, "marvel" (be *shocked*) at the *evil...* and *pray* for "justice" (16:6).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the Persecuted Church.)

"O Lord, The "Harlot" is *drunk* on the *blood* of *our brothers* and *our sisters*. We see *her*, and we *marvel* at her *evil*. We *cry out* with the "altar" (16:7), "**Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments!**"

Avenge the "blood of Your saints." *Remember* Your "martyrs." And *give us* the "faith" to *never* "drink" her "wine," and *never* "fear" her "rage." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 17, Day 4

The Mystery of the Beast

Scripture Focus: Revelation 17:7-8

⁷ But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel when they see the beast, because it was, and is not, and is to come."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Why do you marvel?":** The angel "snaps John out of it." "Stop *marveling* (being *shocked*) at the *evil...* and let me *tell you* the *truth* (the *mystery*) *behind* it."
- **The Angel "Explains" the Beast:** The *key* to "understanding" the "Harlot" (the *system*) is to *understand* the "Beast" (the *power*) that *carries* her.
- **The "Riddle" (v. 8):** The angel *defines* the "Beast" (Antichrist) with this "riddle":
 1. **"Was":** He *existed* (the "Nero" *myth*, or the "Satanic" *spirit* of "empire").
 2. **"Is Not":** He is *currently* "gone" (Nero is "dead"; the "Beast" is *fatally wounded* (13:3); or *Satan* is "bound" in the "pit").

3. **"Is about to rise from the Bottomless Pit":** He is *coming back*. This is the "healing" of the "fatal wound" (13:3). This is the *resurrection* of *Antichrist*.
4. **"...and go to destruction":** This is the *end* of his "story."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Demonic Mockery" of Christ:** This "riddle" is the *ultimate* "blasphemy." It is the *demonic imitation* of Christ's "title."
 - **JESUS (The "Lamb"):** "Who **was**, and **is**, and **is to come**" (1:8, 4:8) ... *from Heaven*.
 - **THE BEAST (Antichrist):** "Who **was**, and **is not**, and **is to come**" (17:8) ... *from the Bottomless Pit*.
- **The "Source" is the "Destination":**
 - The "Beast" *ris*es from the **Abyss** (v. 8).
 - ...and he *goes to* **Destruction** (*apoleia* - "perdition," "total ruin") (v. 8).
- **The "World's" Reaction (v. 8b):**
 - "The dwellers on earth... will **marvel**."
 - This is the *same* "marveling" from 13:3.
 - *Why* do they "marvel"? Because they *see* this "demonic resurrection"—this *apparent* "defeat" of *death*—and they *mistake* it for *divine power*.
- **The "Saints'" Reaction (v. 8b):**
 - *Who* "marvels"? *Everyone*...
 - **"...whose names have NOT been written in the book of life."**
 - This is the *same* "dividing line" from **13:8**. The *only thing* that *stops* you from "marveling" (worshiping) the *Antichrist* is the *predestining, sovereign grace* of *God*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Bottomless Pit" (Abyss):** This *is* the "home" of the "demonic."
 - The "demons" begged *Jesus* not to *send them* there (Luke 8:31).
 - The "locusts" (demons) *came from* there (Rev 9:11).
 - The "Beast" *himself* (their "king") *comes from* there (Rev 11:7, 17:8).
- **"Destruction" (Apollyon):** The "Beast" *goes to* "Destruction" (*apoleia*)... because he *is* the *son of* "Destruction" (*Apollyon*, 9:11).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Cycle" of Evil:** This "was, is not, is to come" is the "story" of *all* evil "systems."
 1. (e.g., "Nazism" *was... is not* [defeated]... *is to come* [neo-Nazism]).
 2. Satan *always* "revives" his "Beasts."
- **Don't "Marvel" at the "Comeback":** The *world* "marvels" at the "comeback kid." They *love* "power" that *seems* to "defeat" *death*.
- **We *must not* "marvel."** *Why?*
 1. We *know* it's a *demonic mockery* (it's *from the Pit*).
 2. We *know* its "end-game" (it *goes to destruction*).
- **The "Security" of the "Book":** Your "hope" is *not* in "your own 'wisdom'" to *not* be "fooled." Your *hope* is in *God's "election."* Your "name" *is* "in the book." *Therefore, you will not* "marvel."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The Angel's *first* "comfort" to John is to *stop "marveling"* (being "shocked"). Why is *fear* (or "shock") *not* a "helpful" *long-term* "response" to *evil*?
2. *Compare* the "bio" of Jesus ("was, is, is to come") with the "bio" of the *Beast* ("was, is not, is to come"). *How* does the *Beast's* "bio" *prove* he is a *liar* and a "failure"?
3. The *world* "marvels" because they *don't know* "the end of the story" (that he "goes to destruction"). *How* does *knowing* the "end of the story" *stop you* from "marveling" at the *Beast's* "power" *right now*?
4. The *only* "antidote" to "marveling" is "having your *name* in the *book*." *Why* is "God's *Grace* (election)" the *only* "vaccine" *against* "worshipping the Beast"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "read the ending." The *world* "marvels" at the *Beast's* "comeback".

- *You, today, read the "end" of the "Beast's" story* (v. 8: "he... goes to destruction").
- *When you see "evil" (the "Beast") "winning" today... remind yourself* (out loud!) "...but you are "going to destruction." The *Lamb* "wins."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer for an "eternal" perspective.)

"Lord God, The *Beast* "is to come." The *world* "will marvel." But *my name* is "written in the Book of Life" "from the *foundation of the world*."

I am not "surprised" by "evil." *I am not* "marveling" at its "power." For *I know* it comes from the "Pit." And *I know* it goes to "Destruction."

My "marvel" is for the *Lamb*... "who was, and is, and is to come." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 17, Day 5

The Mystery: The Heads, Horns, and the Lamb's War

Scripture Focus: Revelation 17:9-14

⁹ "This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; ¹⁰ they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. ¹¹ As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. ¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings

for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.

¹⁴ They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are the called and chosen and faithful."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"This calls for... wisdom":** The angel is "unlocking" the *riddle*.
- **The 7 Heads (Riddle, Part 1):** "seven **mountains**"
 - **The "Answer":** This is **Rome**. Rome was *famously* and *universally* known in the 1st century as "The City on **Seven Hills**." This is the "Harlot's" *location*.
- **The 7 Heads (Riddle, Part 2):** "also seven **kings**"
 - **The "Answer" (for 95 AD):** This is a *dynasty* of Roman Emperors.
 - "5 have fallen" (e.g., Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero).
 - "1 is" (The *current* Emperor, **Domitian**).
 - "1 is to come... a little while" (A *future* emperor).
- **The Beast (Riddle, Part 3):** "The beast... is an **eighth**"
 - **The "Answer" (Nero Redivivus):** The *final* "Beast" (Antichrist) will be an "**8th**" *king*... but he is *also* "of the 7" (he is the *spirit* of "Nero" *come back to life*).
- **The 10 Horns (Riddle, Part 4):**
 - "ten **kings**" who are *future* ("have not yet received...").
 - They "receive authority *for one hour*" (a *short, final* time).
 - They *unite* ("one mind") and *give* their "power" to the *Antichrist*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Political Structure" of the End:**
 - The "Beast" (Antichrist, the "8th" king) *ris*es.
 - He is *supported* by a "global coalition" of "10 kings" (the "10 horns").
 - This *united global government* has *one purpose*: "hand over their power" (v. 13) and "**make war on the Lamb**" (v. 14).
- **The "War" (v. 14):**
 - This is **Armageddon** (16:14-16).
 - This is the *climax* of the "nations raging" (11:18).
- **The "Result" (v. 14):**
 - "They... make war..."
 - "...and the **Lamb will conquer them**."
- **The *End*:** The "war" is *over* in *one sentence*. It is *not* a "*battle*"; it is a *verdict*.
- **The "Reason":** "for he is **Lord of lords and King of kings**." This is His *title*.
- **His "Army":** "and those with him are the **called** and **chosen** and **faithful**."
 - This is *us*. This is the *Church*.
 - We "conquer" *not* by "fighting," but by *being "with Him."*

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The 10 Horns: Daniel 7:24,** "As for the **ten horns**, out of this kingdom **ten kings** shall arise..."

- **"Lord of lords...":** This is the *ultimate* title of "Yahweh." **Deuteronomy 10:17**, "For the LORD your God is God of gods and **Lord of lords...**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Wisdom" Sees Rome:** The "wisdom" *today* is to *recognize* that *any* "world system" ("mountain") that *demands worship* (like Rome did) is "Babylon."
- **The "Trend" is *Consolidation*:** This *is* the "political trend" of *globalism*. The "10 kings" (the "powers of the world") *will* "unite" ("one mind") and "hand over" their "power" to *one system* (the "Beast").
- **The *Purpose* of "Globalism" is *War on the Lamb*:** The *ultimate* "goal" of the "un-godly world" is to *unite... against Christ and His "saints."*
- **The *War is Rigged* (v. 14):** This is the *greatest "spoiler"* in the *book*.
 - The *whole world* ("10 horns") *unites* with the *Antichrist* ("Beast")...
 - ...to *fight* the "Lamb."
 - ...and the **"Lamb will conquer them."**
- **Our "Identity" (v. 14):** We are "with Him." We are the "called" (our "invitation"), "chosen" (His "election"), and "faithful" (our "endurance").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "riddle" (v. 9-10) *specifically* identifies **Rome** (7 "mountains"). *Why* was it *so important* for John's *first* audience to *know* that "Rome" *was* "Babylon"?
2. The "10 kings" (v. 13) have "one mind": to "hand over their power" to the *Beast*. Where do you see "world powers" "giving up" their *sovereignty* to a *global "system"* (a "Beast") *today*?
3. The *entire "war"* (v. 14) is *one sentence*. *Why* is the "final battle" *so "anti-climactic"*?
4. We (the Church) are *defined* as the "called, chosen, and faithful." *Which* of those *three "titles"* *encourages* you the *most* today?

Call to Action

Your call is to "remember your rank." You *are* "with Him." You *are* one of the "called, chosen, and faithful."

- The "Beast" and the "10 horns" (the *entire "world system"*) *are* "at war" with *you*.
- *But...* your "King" (the "Lamb") *has already "conquered" them*.
- *Live in that "victory"* today.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the "Te Deum".)

"O Christ, our King, You are the Lord of lords. You are the King of kings. The "nations" *rage*. The "horns" *unite*. They "make war on the Lamb." But *You will conquer them*.

Keep *us* in Your "army." Keep *us* "called." Keep *us* "chosen." Keep *us* "faithful."

For *You* shall *reign forever and ever*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 17, Day 6

The Harlot's Destruction & Identity

Scripture Focus: Revelation 17:15-18

¹⁵ And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot. They will make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh and burn her up with fire, ¹⁷ for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Explanation" (v. 15, 18):** The angel solves the *last two* "riddles."
 - **"The Waters" (v. 1):** ARE "peoples and multitudes..." (The Harlot's "power" *comes from* the "masses").
 - **"The Woman" (Harlot):** IS "the great city that *has dominion*..." (This is **Rome**, the *only* "city" that *had "dominion"* in 95 AD).
- **The "Great Irony" (v. 16):** This is the *twist*.
 - In v. 3, the "Harlot" (Rome) was *riding* (controlling) the "Beast" (the *empire*).
 - *But now...* the "Beast" (the *final Antichrist*) and his "10 horns" (his *allies*) *turn on her*.
- **The "Destruction":**
 - They **"hate"** the harlot.
 - "Make her **desolate**" (destroy her *economy*).
 - "Make her **naked**" (expose her *shame*).
 - **"Eat her flesh"** (a *savage, total* "looting").
 - **"Burn her with fire"** (*total* "annihilation").

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"God has put it into their hearts..." (v. 17):**
 - This is the *most important* "theological" verse in the *chapter*.
 - *Why* does the "Beast" *destroy* "Babylon"?
 - **Because God "put it into his heart."**
- **This is God's "Sovereign Judo":** God *uses* the "evil" of the "*Beast*" (Antichrist) to *destroy* the "evil" of the "*Harlot*" (the "world-system").
- **The "Beast" *thinks* it's *his* "idea"** (to "consolidate power"). But he is *actually* just an *instrument* of God's *wrath*.
- **The "Harlot-System" (Idolatry) is "Destroyed" by the "Beast-System" (Antichrist).**

- The "system" of "drunken" *materialism* and *culture* ("Babylon")
 - ...is *destroyed* by...
 - ...the "system" of *totalitarian, globalist power* ("the Beast").
- **"Until the words of God are fulfilled":** This "evil alliance" *only* "lasts" as *long* as "God" *allows* it.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Harlot Judged by "Lovers":** This is the *exact* judgment God *prophesied* against *unfaithful "Jerusalem"*.
 - **Ezekiel 16:37, 39:** "I will gather... all your *lovers*... I will *deliver you into their hands*... they shall *strip you of your clothes* [make you "naked"]... and *leave you naked and bare*... and they shall *burn your houses with fire*."
- **God "Hardening" Hearts: Exodus 9:12,** "But the **LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh**..." God *uses* the "hardening" of *His enemies* to *fulfill* His "purpose."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Evil Will Eat Itself":** This is the "end-game" of *all* "sin." Sin is *not* "stable." It *always* "turns on itself."
- **The "Beast" (Totalitarianism) Hates the "Harlot" (Materialism/Freedom):**
 - The "Harlot" ("Babylon") is the "world" we *live in now*: "Drunk" on *freedom, individualism, and materialism*.
 - The "Beast" (Antichrist) is *totalitarianism*.
 - *Totalitarianism* ("Beast") *hates* "individualism" ("Harlot").
 - This *prophesies* that the *end* of our "free, materialistic" *world system* ("Babylon") *will be* its *destruction* by a *totalitarian* "Beast" (*Antichrist*).
- **"God is in Control... of the Evil":** This is the *hardest* (and *most comforting*) *truth*.
 - God *is not* "surprised" by the "Beast."
 - He is *actively* "*putting it into their hearts*" to *fulfill His plan*.
 - Even the *worst evil* (the *Beast*) is *still* just a "tool" *in the hand* of the "Sovereign Lord" to *judge* "other evil" ("Babylon").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Beast" *turns on* the "Harlot" (v. 16). *Why* does "evil" *always* "turn on itself"?
2. Verse 17 says **God** "put it into their [the Beast's] hearts" to *do* this. This is *hard* "theology." How does *this* "sovereignty" *both* "comfort" you and "challenge" you?
3. The "Harlot" is *Rome* (v. 18). *But...* she is *also* the *system* ("Babylon," v. 5). How can she be *both* a "literal city" *and* a "symbolic system"?
4. If the "Harlot" (our *materialistic "world-system"*) is *doomed* to be "eaten" by the "Beast" (a *totalitarian "system"*)... *where* is the *only* "safe place" to *put your "trust"*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Flee Babylon." *Chapter 18* will *command* this.

- The "Harlot" ("Babylon") *will be* "burned."
- The "Beast" (her "lover") *will* "turn on her."
- *Do not* "invest" in her. *Do not* "love" her.

- *Identify one "investment" (of time, money, or emotion) you have in "Babylon" (the "world system's" approval or wealth).*
- *Today, begin to "divest." Move that "investment" from "Babylon" to the "Kingdom of the Lamb."*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for "separation".)

"Lord God Almighty, Your *purposes* are *sovereign*. You *use* the "Beast" to *judge* the "Harlot." *Evil* "eats itself" at Your "command."

The "Harlot's" *city* is "Babylon." Her *system* is "idolatry." Her *end* is "fire."

Do not let me "love" her. *Do not* let me "trust" her. *Do not* let me *be* "one of her."

You have "called" me. You have "chosen" me. Keep me "faithful" to the *Lamb*. Amen."

Week 18 (Chapter 18): The Fall of Babylon the Great

Revelation Bible Study: Week 18, Day 1

The Angel and the Fall

Scripture Focus: Revelation 18:1-3

¹ After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. ² And he called out with a mighty voice,

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. ³ For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Angel... his glory":** This is not a "minor" angel. He has "great authority," and his *own glory* is so immense it *illuminates the entire earth*. This is a "cabinet-level" messenger, sent to make a *formal, final* declaration.

- **"Fallen, Fallen is Babylon":** This is the *second time* this is declared (see 14:8). The first was an *anticipation*. This is the *official announcement* of the *execution*.
- **"A Haunt for Demons":** In the ancient world, when a city was *totally destroyed* and "desolated," it was believed to become a "dwelling place" for "demons," "jackals," and "unclean spirits." This is a symbol of *absolute, spiritual desolation*.
- **The "Indictment" (v. 3):** The "charges" are read *again*. Why did she fall?
 1. **Religious/Cultural Sin:** She made "all nations drunk" with her "sexual immorality" (idolatry, cultural seduction).
 2. **Political Sin:** The "kings" (governments) "committed sexual immorality" with her (made *unholy alliances* for *power*).
 3. **Economic Sin:** The "merchants" (commerce) got "rich" from her "luxury" (materialism).
- **Conclusion:** The *entire world system* (cultural, political, and economic) *is* "Babylon" and *is* condemned.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Identity" of Babylon:** As we saw in Chapter 17, "Babylon" is the *code-word* for **Rome**. But it is *also* the symbol for the *entire, godless, humanistic "world system"* that *seduces* through *wealth* ("luxury") and *persecutes* the *saints*.
- **The "Glory" of the Angel:** The *glory of the angel* (v. 1) *overwhelms* and *replaces* the *false "glory"* of "Babylon." The "light" of *heaven's truth* *exposes* the "darkness" of the "demonic haunt."
- **She Is What She Worshiped:** Babylon "worshiped" *demons* (9:20), so she *becomes* a "dwelling place for *demons*." Her "punishment" is her "sin."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Fallen, Fallen":** **Isaiah 21:9**, "And behold, here come riders... and he answers, '**Fallen, fallen is Babylon...**'"
- **The "Haunt":** **Isaiah 13:21-22**, (a prophecy *against* literal Babylon), "But **wild animals** will lie down there... and **jackals** will fill their houses; ...**hyenas** will cry in its towers..." (This is the "haunt for... detestable beasts").

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Seeing Past the "Glitz":** The "world system" ("Babylon") *looks amazing*. It *looks* like *New York, London, Tokyo, Shanghai*—full of "light," "commerce," and "power."
- **God's "View":** *This verse* shows us God's "spiritual X-ray." *Behind* the "glorious facade," it is *spiritually* a "haunt for every unclean spirit." It is *demonic*.
- **The "Allure" is the "Sin":** The "sin" (v. 3) *is* the "system." *Materialism* ("luxury") and *idolatry* ("immorality") are *not* "side-effects" of "Babylon"; they *are* "Babylon."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "angel's glory" (v. 1) *illuminates the earth*. How does the *truth* of *God's glory* "expose" the *false "glory"* of the "world system"?
2. God sees "Babylon" (the "glorious city") as a "haunt for demons" (v. 2). What *is* the "disconnect" between *how the world "sees" itself* and *how God "sees" the world*?
3. The *three "indictments"* (v. 3) are *cultural, political, and economic*. *Why* is "Babylon" *all three*?
4. How do we (the Church) *avoid* "drinking" this "wine"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "see with the angel's light." *Today*, when you see the "glory" of "Babylon" (a *commercial* full of "luxury," a *news report* full of "political power," a *cityscape* full of "wealth")... *pause*.

- *Pray*: "Lord, *that* is what *Babylon* 'looks' like. Show me what it 'is' (a 'haunt for demons')."
- *Ask God* for "spiritual eyes."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306-373 AD).)

"O Lord, You are the *true Light* that *illuminates* the world. The "world" *offers* a "false light" that *is* "darkness." It *is* a "haunt" for *unclean spirits*. *Shine* Your "glory" into *my* heart, *Expose* the "darkness" *in me*. *Save me* from the "haunt" of *my own sin*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 18, Day 2

The Command: "Come Out of Her!"

Scripture Focus: Revelation 18:4-5

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,

"Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; ⁵ for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Another Voice from Heaven":** This is *God the Father* (or *Christ*) *Himself* speaking. This is not an "angel"; this is the *Sovereign* giving a *direct command*.
- **"Come out of her, my people...":** This is *the* central command of the chapter.
 1. This *proves* that God's "people" (the *saints*, the *Church*) are *living "in" Babylon* (the "world system") *right up until* the end.
- **The "Two Reasons" for the Command:**
 1. **Separation from Sin:** "...lest you *take part in her sins*." (A call to *Holiness*).
 2. **Separation from Judgment:** "...lest you *share in her plagues*." (A call to *Preservation*).

- **"Sins... heaped high as heaven":** This is "legal" language. The "evidence" *against* her is so *high* it has "reached the Judge." Her "cup" is *full*.
- **"God has remembered...":** This is the *answer* to the *martyrs' cry* (6:10). They *cried* "How long?" God now says, "The *time is up*. I *remember*."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Rapture"?** Some (a *minority*) see this as a *literal* "call" for the "Rapture" ("Come *out*" = "Come *up*").
- **The *Literal* "Fleeing"?**
 - **Preterist:** This was the *literal* command *from Christ* (Luke 21:20-21, "flee to the mountains") that the *Jewish-Christians* "came out" of *Jerusalem* ("Babylon") *before* the "plague" (the *Roman invasion* of AD 70).
 - **Futurist:** This *may be* a *literal* command for *future believers* to *flee* the "rebuilt" city of "Babylon" (or "Rome") *before* it is "nuked."
- **The *Spiritual* "Coming Out" (The *Primary Meaning*):**
 - This is a *trans-temporal* command *for the Church in all ages*.
 - We are *called* to be "*in*" the world, but *not* "*of*" it (John 17:15-16).
 - "Coming out" means *radical, spiritual, economic, and ideological separation*.
 - It means *refusing* to "take part in her sins" (materialism, idolatry, greed, immorality).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Jeremiah's Call:** This is a *direct quote* from **Jeremiah 51:6, 45:**
 - **"Flee from the midst of Babylon;** let every one save *his life*! Do *not* be cut off in her punishment..."
 - **"Go out of the midst of her, my people!** Let every one save *his life* from the *fierce anger* of the LORD!"
- **Paul's Call:** 2 Corinthians 6:17, "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord... and I will *welcome* you."
- **Lot in Sodom:** This is the *same* command to *Lot* (Genesis 19:15), "Up! ...lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The *Hardest Command* for the "Western Church":**
 - We are "Babylon." We *live in* the *most materialistic, luxurious* "system" in *history*.
 - We are *not* "persecuted" (like the "Two Witnesses"). We are "*seduced*" (like the "drunkards").
 - This "command" ("Come out!") is the *hardest command* for *us*.
- **What does "Coming Out" *Look Like*?**
 - It *doesn't* mean "move to a 'commune' in the 'woods'."
 - It *does* mean:
 - **Economically:** Stop "living for *luxury*" (v. 3). Live "simply." Give "generously." Get out of "debt" (slavery to "Babylon").
 - **Spiritually:** Stop "drinking her *wine*" (media, ideology) that "poisons" your *mind*.
 - **Ethically:** Refuse to "take part in her sins" (*immorality, greed, idolatry*).
- **The "Warning" is *Real*:** If we *refuse* to "come out" *spiritually*, we *will* "share in her plagues" *physically* (we will be *destroyed with her*).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This command is to **"my people."** *Why* do "God's people" *need* to be *told* to "come out"? (What is so *seductive* about "Babylon"?)
2. The *two reasons* are (1) "don't *sin*" and (2) "don't *get judged*." *Which* of those two "motivations" is *stronger* for *you*?
3. What does "coming out of Babylon" *look like* (practically) for a *Christian* "living in" *America* in *2025*?
4. What is *one "sin of Babylon"* (e.g., materialism, greed, "luxury-living," idolatry) that *you* are "taking part in"?

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Come Out."**

- *Identify one specific way* you are "entangled" in "Babylon's sin" (e.g., *materialism, consumer debt, a media addiction, a "love of luxury"*).
- *Today, take one, concrete step* to **"come out"** of *that one thing*.
- (e.g., *Make a "budget" / Cut up a "credit card" / Fast from "media" / Sell or give away one "luxury" item*).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from John Wesley (c. 1703-1791).)

"Lord, I *am* "in the world," but *let me not* be "of it." *Save me* from the "sins of Babylon." *Save me* from the "plagues of Babylon."

"I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, Exalted for thee or brought low for thee...

"I *freely* and *heartily* "come out," And *surrender* all to *Thy* pleasure and disposal. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 18, Day 3

The "Eye for an Eye" Judgment

Scripture Focus: Revelation 18:6-8

⁶ Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. ⁷ As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give

her a like measure of torment and mourning; since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' ⁸ For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Pay her back...":** This is the *Lex Talionis* (the "law of retribution"). This is *perfect*, "eye-for-an-eye" justice.
- **"Repay her double...":** This was *literal* Old Testament *law*. If a *thief* was *caught*, he *had* to "repay *double*" (Exodus 22:7). "Babylon" (the "system") is a *thief*—she *stole* "glory" from *God* and "wealth" from the *nations*.
- **Her "Sin" vs. Her "Judgment" (v. 7):**
 - **Her Sin:** "She *glorified herself*" and "lived in *luxury*."
 - **Her Judgment:** "give her... *torment* and *mourning*."
- **Her "Boast" (v. 7b):** "I sit as a queen... I am no widow..."
 - This was the *boast* of **Rome**. Rome was the "Queen" of the *world*. A "widow" was the *most vulnerable* person in society (no *husband/provider*). Rome is *boasting* in her *total self-sufficiency*.
 - "I shall *never see mourning*": This is the *height* of *arrogance*.
- **The "Reversal" (v. 8):** *Because* of her "boast," her *total* "reversal" will be *sudden* ("in a single day").

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Arrogance" is the "Sin":** The *core sin* of "Babylon" is *not* "just" "idolatry." It is *arrogant self-sufficiency*.
- **This is the "Laodicean" Sin (3:17):**
 - **Babylon (18:7):** "I sit as a *queen*... I shall *never see mourning*."
 - **Laodicea (3:17):** "I am *rich*, I have *prospered*, and I *need nothing*."
- **It is the *same sin*.** It is the *humanistic "boast"* that "We do not need God."
- **"In a Single Day":** The *judgment* on this "system" will *not* be a "slow decline." It will be a *catastrophic, sudden collapse*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Isaiah 47:** This *entire passage* is a *direct commentary* on **Isaiah 47** (the prophecy *against* literal "Babylon").
 - **Isaiah 47:7-9:** "You said, 'I shall be **queen forever**'... you said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall *not* sit as a **widow** or *know the loss of children*.' **These two things shall come to you in a moment, in a single day...**"
- **The "Double" Portion:** Jeremiah 16:18, "I will **repay them double** for their iniquity and their sin..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Boast" of the "West":** This is the *boast* of our *entire "Western" culture* ("Babylon").
 - "We sit as a *queen*." (We are the *superpower*).

- "I am *no widow*." (We are *self-sufficient*. We have *technology, science, medicine, and wealth*. We do not need "God").
- "Mourning I shall *never see*." (We *believe* we have *conquered* "suffering").
- The **"Warning" (v. 8)**: *Because of this "arrogance," the "plagues" will come "in a single day."*
- **"Mighty is the Lord God..."**: *Our "system" looks "mighty." Our "economy" looks "mighty." Our "military" looks "mighty."*
- *But... "Mighty is the Lord God who judges her." His "might" is greater than her "might."*

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "judgment" is "double for her deeds" (v. 6). *Why* is it so *important* for God's "character" that His "judgment" is *perfectly "just"* (and *not* just "angry")?
2. What *is* the "sin" in "boasting": "I sit as a queen... I am no widow"? (v. 7).
3. How is *that "boast"* (v. 7) the *exact same "boast"* of our "*modern culture*"?
4. The "plagues" come "in a single day" (v. 8). *Why* is the *speed* of the "judgment" so "terrifying" to a "system" that *thought* it was "permanent"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "confess your 'widowhood'."

- The *world* "boasts": "I am *no widow* (I need *no one*)."
- The *Christian* "confesses": "I *am* a 'widow' (I am *helpless* and *vulnerable... unless 'God' is my 'Husband'*)."
- *Today, confess your total dependence on God. Renounce the "boast" of "self-sufficiency."*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision".)

"O Lord, My heart is *prone* to "boast." I "sit as a queen" in my *own 'kingdom'*. I "live in luxury" in my "*self-sufficiency*." I "say in my heart" that I "need nothing."

This is the "sin of Babylon." *Forgive me.*

I am a "widow." I *am* "helpless." I *do* "need You." *You are my "King." You are my "Husband." You are "mighty." I am not.* Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 18, Day 4

The Lament of the Kings

Scripture Focus: Revelation 18:9-10

⁹ “And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. ¹⁰ They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

“Alas, alas, you great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Laments":** This is the *first* of *three* "funeral laments" (Kings, Merchants, Shippers) over "Babylon."
- **The "Kings":** These are the *political rulers*—the "allies" of "Rome," the "puppet-kings" who *allied* with the "Beast" (17:2).
- **Their "Motive":** They "weep and wail"... *why?*
 - *Not* because "she" *is gone*.
 - *But* because *their "luxury"* (v. 9) *is gone*.
 - This is *selfish* "grief."
- **Their "Posture":** "They will stand **far off**..."
 - This is *key*. They are *terrified* ("in fear of her torment").
 - They "allied" with her in her "glory," but they *abandon* her in her "judgment."
 - They are *cowards*. They "socially distance" *themselves* from the "plague" of *God's wrath*.
- **"In a single hour...":** The *speed* of the *collapse* is *terrifying* to them. The "system" that *looked "invincible"* ("mighty city") *disappeared* "in an hour."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Fair-Weather Friends" of the World:**
 - This is the *nature* of *all "worldly" alliances*.
 - The "kings" (political powers) *partnered* with the "Harlot" (the *system*) *only* as long as "she" *benefited* them ("lived in luxury with her").
 - The *moment* she *costs* them (the "burning"), they *abandon* her.
- **The "False" Mourning:**
 - They "weep and wail." It *looks* like "grief."
 - But it's *not* "repentance."
 - It's the "grief" of *loss*. It's the "grief" of a *gambler* who *lost the "bet."*
 - They *still* call her "**great**" and "**mighty**." They *still* "marvel" at *her*... not at *God*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Lament for Tyre:** This *whole section* is a *direct echo* of the "Lament for Tyre" (the *commercial "harlot"* city) in **Ezekiel 26 & 27**.
 - **Ezekiel 26:15-16:** "Will not the *coastlands shake*...? Then all the **princes of the sea** will... *tremble*... they will be *appalled* at you."
 - **Ezekiel 27:35:** "All the *inhabitants of the coastlands* are *appalled* at you, and their **kings are terribly afraid**..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"There is No Loyalty in 'Babylon'":**
 - This is the "lesson" for *us*.
 - The "alliances" of the *world* are *always* based on *mutual "luxury"* (mutual *benefit*).
 - The *moment* "it costs you," the "world" *will* "stand far off."
- **"Weep" for the Wrong Reason:**
 - The "kings" *weep* because they *lost their "luxury."*
 - They *do not* "weep" because they *sinned against God*.
- **This is "Worldly Grief": 2 Corinthians 7:10**, "For **godly grief** produces a *repentance...* but **worldly grief** produces *death*."
 - The "kings" have "worldly grief" (grief over *consequences*).
 - The "saints" (like *Peter*) have "godly grief" (grief over *sin*).
- **"Standing Far Off":**
 - This is *Peter* "warming his hands" (John 18:18).
 - This is the *world's* "response" to *judgment*: "Don't *get involved*. *Stay back*."
 - The *Christian's* "response" is *not* to "stand far off," but to "draw near" (to the *cross*).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "kings" (politicians) "weep" for their *lost "luxury,"* not their "sin." *Where* in your life are you "more sad" about the *consequences* of your *sin...* than the *sin itself*?
2. The "kings" "stand **far off**." *Why* is "fear" (of *judgment*) *not* the *same thing* as "repentance"?
3. These "alliances" *broke* the *moment* the "fire" started. *Where* have you seen "worldly" friendships "break" when "times got tough"?
4. *How* is "loyalty" in the "*Kingdom of the Lamb*" different from "loyalty" in the "*Kingdom of Babylon*"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "check your 'alliances'."

- *Examine* your "closest" *relationships* (friends, *business*, *political*).
- Are they *based* on "mutual *luxury*" (what "we *get* from *each other*")?
- Or are they *based* on "mutual *holiness*" (what "we *do* for *God*")?
- *Invest* in one "*kingdom*" *relationship* today.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer about "friendship".)

"Lord Jesus, You are the "friend who sticks closer than a brother." The "kings" of the "earth" *flee* when "judgment" *comes*. They "stand far off."

But *You*... *You* did *not* "stand far off." *You entered into* our "judgment." *You took* the "torment" *for us*.

Let *me* be *that* "kind of friend." Let *my* "alliances" be *based on Your* "love," *not* on the "world's" "luxury." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 18, Day 5

The Lament of the Merchants

Scripture Focus: Revelation 18:11-17a

¹¹ "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, ¹² cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, ¹³ cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and **slaves, that is, human souls**.

¹⁴ (The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!)

¹⁵ The merchants of these wares, who gained their wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶ "Alas, alas, you great city..." ^{17a} For in a single hour all this great wealth has been laid waste."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Merchants":** This is the *second* lament. This is the *economic* "engine" of "Babylon" (Rome).
- **Their "Motive":** (v. 11) They *also* "weep" for *one reason*: "...since **no one buys their cargo anymore**."
 - This is *100% selfish* "grief." Their "demand" has *vanished*.
- **The "Cargo List" (v. 12-13):** This is *literally* a "cargo manifest" of a *Roman luxury ship*. It starts with "hard assets" (gold, silver), *moves to* "textiles" (linen, purple), *then* "materials" (ivory, marble), *then* "consumables" (cinnamon, wine), *then* "transport" (horses, chariots)...
- **The "Climax" (v. 13b):** "...and **slaves, that is, human souls**."
 - The Greek is *somaton kai psychas anthropon* ("bodies and souls of men").
 - This is the *climax* and *horror* of "Babylon's" *economy*.
 - Her *ultimate "commodity"* is *people*.
- **Their "Posture" (v. 15):** *Exactly the same* as the "kings": "will **stand far off**." Zero loyalty.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Harlot" is "Consumerism":** This is the *ultimate* "critique" of *materialism*.
- "Babylon" is a *system* that *convinces* you that "life" *consists of this "list"* (v. 12-13).
- **The "Sin" of "Babylon":** The *sin* is *not* "having 'gold'." The *sin* is an *"economy"* that is *built on* "luxury" (v. 7), "idolatry" (v. 3), and *climaxes* in the "de-humanizing" of *people* (v. 13).

- **The "Harlot's" "Epitaph" (v. 14):** A "voice" breaks in and "taunts" the *city*: "The 'fruit' [the 'delicacies'] you *longed for...* is *gone... never to be found again.*"
 - This is the "horror" of "materialism": It *is not permanent*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Lament for Tyre:** This is *again a direct echo* of **Ezekiel 27**, the "Lament for Tyre."
 - **Ezekiel 27:36:** "The *merchants* among the peoples *hiss* at you; you have come to a *dreadful end...*"
 - **Ezekiel 27:13:** (Tyre's "cargo list"): "Javan... traded... with **human lives...**"
- **The "Cargo" is the Same.** The "sin of *commerce*" (when it *becomes* "God") is *thousands of years old*.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is "Global Consumerism":** This "cargo list" *is* "Amazon." It *is* "Wall Street."
- **The "System" Still "Traffics in Human Souls":**
 - **Literally:** The *global "sex trafficking"* industry. The "slave labor" *behind* "cheap goods."
 - **Metaphorically:** The "economic system" that "traps" people in *debt* ("slaves") and *convinces* them *their "soul" (their "identity") is worthless unless they buy this "cargo."*
- **The "Grief" of the "Merchant":**
 - This is the "grief" of a *stock market crash*.
 - It is the "weeping" of *lost "wealth."*
 - It is *not* "repentance." It is *regret*.
- **"In a single hour...":** *All* this "great wealth" (our "Dow Jones," our "401k," our "housing market")... *can be "laid waste"* "in a single hour." It is *not stable*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "merchants" (v. 11) "weep" for *one reason*: "no one buys their cargo." *How* does "capitalism" (or *any* "economy") *become* "sinful" when "profit" *becomes* the *only "motive"*?
2. The "cargo list" (v. 12-13) *ends* with "human souls." *How* does our "modern economy" *still* "buy and sell" "human souls"?
3. The *merchants* (like the *kings*) "stand far off" (v. 15). *What* does this "lack of loyalty" *tell you* about the *god of "Money"*?
4. "The 'fruit' for which your *soul* *longed...* is *gone*" (v.14). *What* "fruit" (what "purchase") is *your "soul"* *longing for right now?* *How* is it "temporary"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "re-value 'human souls'."

- The "merchants" *valued* "human souls" *last* (as "cargo").
- *You, today, value* a "human soul" *first*.
- *Do one thing:* Invest in a "human soul." (e.g., Give to a "human trafficking" *charity...* or *invest your "time"* (which is *more valuable* than "money") in a "soul" (your *child, your spouse, a friend*) *without* "distraction").

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226).)

"Lord, Make me an *instrument* of Your *peace*. Where there is *hatred*, let me sow *love*...

"O Divine Master, Grant that I may *not* so much *seek* To be *consoled*, as to *console*; To be *understood*, as to *understand*; To be *loved*, as to *love*.

"For it is in *giving* that we *receive*... [It is in *valuing* "souls" that we "*profit*", not in *valuing* "cargo". Amen.]"

Revelation Bible Study: Week 18, Day 6

The Final Lament & The Millstone

Scripture Focus: Revelation 18:17b-24

^{17b} And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all who make their living by the sea, stood far off ¹⁸ and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?"

¹⁹ And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, "Alas, alas, you great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you on her!"

²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

"So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; ²² and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, ²³ and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The *Third* Lament (v. 17b-19):** The "Shippers" (the "global transport industry").

1. Their "Posture": "Stand far off" (v. 17).
2. Their "Motive": *Also* "grew rich by her wealth" (v. 19).
- **The "Interruption" (v. 20):** A "voice from heaven" *interrupts* the "mourning" of *earth*.
 1. **"Rejoice, O heaven!":** This is the *counter-point*.
 2. *Earth* "weeps" (v. 19). *Heaven* "rejoices" (v. 20).
 3. **Why?** "God has given judgment **for you...**" This is the *final answer* to **6:10** ("How long... *avenge our blood?*").
- **The "Millstone" (v. 21):** The *final* "funeral."
 1. This is an "acted-out" *prophecy*.
 2. A "millstone" (a *massive* stone) *does not "float."*
 3. Its "sinking" is *total, violent, and permanent*.
- **The "No More" List (v. 22-23):** This is the *end* of "human culture."
 1. "No more... *music*."
 2. "No more... *commerce* ('craftsmen,' 'millstone')."
 3. "No more... *light*."
 4. "No more... *family* ('bridegroom and bride')."
 - **The *Final* "Indictment" (v. 23-24):** The *three "charges"* are *read one last time*:
 1. *Pride/Wealth*: "Your merchants were the great ones..."
 2. *Deception*: "By your *sorcery* [*pharmakeia*] all nations were *deceived*."
 3. *Murder*: "In her was found the *blood of prophets and saints*..."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Two Cries":** The *same event* (the "fall of Babylon") *produces two different "cries"*:
 - **Cry 1 (Earth): "Alas, alas!"** (Weeping for *lost wealth*).
 - **Cry 2 (Heaven): "Rejoice!"** (Praising *found justice*).
- **"Sorcery" (*Pharmakeia*):** This is "drug-culture," *but* it is *also* "deception." The "system" *keeps* the "nations" *deceived* (drugged, "drunk," 18:3) *so that* it can "control" them.
- **"Blood... of all..." (v. 24):** The "sin" of "Babylon" (the "system") is *so great* that *God holds her "accountable"* for *all "murders" in history*. She is the "system" of "Cain."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Millstone":** This is *Jeremiah's "prophecy" acted out*.
 - **Jeremiah 51:63-64:** "When you *finish reading* this book, *tie a stone to it* and **throw it into... the Euphrates**, and say, 'Thus shall **Babylon sink, to rise no more...**'"
- **The "No More" List: Jeremiah 25:10,** "Moreover, I will *banish from them* the **voice of mirth** and the **voice of gladness**, the **voice of the bridegroom** and the **voice of the bride**, the **sound of the millstones**, and the **light of the lamp**." (John *quotes this*).
- **"Sorcery": Isaiah 47:9,** (against Babylon) "...these shall come *upon you...* in *full measure*, *despite* your many **sorceries...**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Which 'Cry' is Yours?"**
 - This is the "choice" for the *Christian*.
 - When the "system" *crashes* (a *stock market crash*, a *political "collapse"*)...
 - ...is your *first* "cry" **"Alas!"** (My 401k! My *security!*)
 - ...or is your *first* "cry" **"Rejoice!"** (God's *justice is coming!*)?

- **"The End of 'Culture'":**
 - "Babylon" is *everything* we associate with "life" (music, light, marriage, commerce).
 - God's "judgment" is the "end" of *all human "culture"* that is *not "centered" on Him*.
- **The "Millstone" of Jesus:**
 - Jesus said (Matthew 18:6), "*whoever causes one of these little ones... to sin... it would be better for him to have a **great millstone** fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*"
 - "Babylon" (v. 23-24) is the *ultimate* "causer-of-sin."
 - *This "vision" (v. 21) is the "fulfillment" of Jesus's "warning."*

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *same "event"* (the "burning") *causes* "weeping" on *earth* (v. 19) and "rejoicing" in *heaven* (v. 20). *Why?*
2. The "final judgment" is *pictured* as a "millstone" (v. 21). *Why* is this "image" (violent, *total*, *permanent* "sinking") so "*final*"?
3. The "No More" list (v. 22-23) is the "end" of "music, commerce, light, and marriage." *What* is a "life" *without* these "things"?
4. The "final charges" (v. 23-24) are *Wealth-Pride*, *Deception (Sorcery)*, and *Murder*. *How* are these *three "sins"* the "pillars" of our "*world system*" (our "Babylon") *today*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Rejoice."

- We are "saints" (v. 20). We are *called* to "rejoice" at the *justice* of God.
- This *feels "wrong"* to our "flesh."
- *Practice* it. Find one "*news story*" *today* where "Babylon's" "sin" is *exposed* or "judged" (a *corrupt "merchant"* "goes to jail," a *liar* is "exposed").
- *Instead of "gloating"* (which is *sin*), *Rejoice* (which is *worship*). *Pray*, "Thank You, Lord, that *You are just.*"

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Psalm 58:10-11.)

"The righteous *will be glad* when they *see the vengeance*; they will *bathe their feet* in the *blood of the wicked*."

"Mankind will say, 'Surely there *is a reward* for the "righteous"; surely there *is a "God who judges* on earth*."

Week 19 (Chapter 19): Heaven Rejoices: The Marriage Supper & The Warrior King Returns

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 1

The Hallelujah Chorus: Heaven Rejoices over Justice

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:1-3

¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

³ Once more they cried out,

“Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"After this...":** After the *mourning* of the "kings and merchants" *on earth* (Chapter 18), John now hears the *rejoicing* in *heaven*.
- **"Hallelujah":** This is a *Hebrew* word (*Praise Yahweh*), not a Greek one. It's used *constantly* in the Psalms (e.g., Psalm 111-118, the "Hallel") but only appears in the *New Testament* in *this one chapter* (four times). It is the *great, final, Hebrew "Praise the LORD"* for His ultimate victory.
- **The "Reason" for Praise (v. 2):** Heaven is *not* praising God *despite* the judgment; they are praising Him *for* it.
 - **"His judgments are true and just":** This is the *same song* as the "altar" (16:7).
 - **"He has judged the... harlot":** The "fall of Babylon" (Ch. 18) is the *reason* for the "Hallelujah."
 - **"Avenged... the blood of his servants":** This is the *direct answer* to the *martyrs' cry* from the fifth seal: "How long... before you will *judge and avenge our blood*?" (6:10).
- **"Smoke... goes up forever" (v. 3):** This is *not* a *temporary* judgment. The *destruction* of the "Babylon" system is *final* and *eternal*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Flip Side" of Mourning:** Chapter 18 showed the *world* ("kings," "merchants") *weeping* over "Babylon" because their *source of wealth* was *gone*. Chapter 19 shows *heaven* ("the great multitude") *rejoicing* because the *source of idolatry and martyrdom* is *gone*.
- **This is the "Joy of Justice":** We are *uncomfortable* "cheering" for "judgment." Heaven is *not*. Heaven *rejoices* when *evil* is *finally judged* because God's *holiness* is *vindicated* and His *people* are *avenged*.
- **The "Eternal Smoke":** This *confirms* the *eternal* nature of the *judgment* from 14:11 ("the smoke of their torment goes up forever..."). The "de-creation" of the "harlot-system" is *permanent*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Hallelujah":** The *Psalms of Praise*. **Psalm 106:48**, "Blessed be the LORD... And let all the people say, 'Amen!' **Hallelujah!**"
- **"Avenging Blood":** **Deuteronomy 32:43**, "Rejoice with him, O heavens... for he will **avenge the blood of his servants** and will *repay vengeance* on his adversaries..."
- **"Smoke Forever":** **Isaiah 34:10**, (a judgment on *Edom*), "Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Do We "Hallelujah" for *Justice*?** We *love* to "Hallelujah" for "grace" and "mercy." This *challenges* us. Can we *also* "Hallelujah" for God's *justice* and *wrath*?
- **"True and Just":** This is our *confidence*. God's "judgment" is *not* a "divine tantrum." It is *true* (it *matches* the "crime") and *just* (it is *morally right*).
- **God *Will* Answer the Martyrs:** This is the *hope* for the *persecuted church* (Week 11/17). Their *prayers* ("How long?") are "answered" with *this "Hallelujah"*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *world* (Ch. 18) *mourns* the "fall of Babylon," but *heaven* (Ch. 19) *rejoices*. What does this *tell you* about the *difference* in "value systems" (Heaven vs. Earth)?
2. The *reason* for the "Hallelujah" is God's "*judgment*" (v. 2). *Why* are we (in the "West") so *uncomfortable* with "praising God" *for* His "wrath"?
3. How does the *fact* that God "avenged the blood of his servants" *fulfill* the *prayer* of the *martyrs* in 6:10?
4. What is "Babylon" *today*? And *why* should we *long* for its "judgment"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "re-calibrate your 'Hallelujah'."

- *Today, read Psalm 136.*
- *Notice that the same "Hallelujah" ("His love endures forever") is **given for** "Creation" (v. 4-9) and for "Judgment" (v. 17-20, "who *struck down* great kings").*
- *Practice "thanking God" for His **Justice**.*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the "Hallelujah".)

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power *belong to You, our God!* For Your *judgments* are *true and just*. You are "judging" the "Harlot" *system of our world*. You are "avenging" the *blood of Your servants*.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 2

The "Amen" from the Throne Room

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:4-5

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

⁵ And from the throne came a voice, saying,

"Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Elders and... Creatures":** This is the "Throne Room" *core group* from **Chapter 4**.
 - **"Great Multitude" (v. 1):** (The "saints" / "martyrs") *shout* the "Hallelujah" (v. 1).
 - **"Elders/Creatures" (v. 4):** (The "Church" / "Creation") *affirm* it with **"Amen!"**
- **"Amen. Hallelujah!":** This is the *great "call and response"* of heaven.
 - **Multitude:** "Hallelujah!"
 - **Elders:** "Amen! (So be it!) Hallelujah!"
- **"A Voice from the Throne" (v. 5):** This is *not* "God" (He is *being "praised"*). This is a "throne-angel" (perhaps the "Angel of the Waters" or a *Seraphim*) *leading* the *next* phase of worship.
- **The "Call to Worship":** The "voice" *commands* a new "Hallelujah," but *this time* it's "all-inclusive."
- **"Small and great":** This is a *specific* "democratic" *statement*. In the "Roman" *system* (the "Harlot"), *only* the "great" (kings, merchants) *mattered*. In God's "Kingdom," *everyone* ("small and great") *is included* in the "call to praise."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Crescendo" of Worship:** This is a *building* "symphony."
 1. **Movement 1 (v. 1):** The *Saints* shout.
 2. **Movement 2 (v. 4):** The *Heavenly "Court"* (Elders/Creatures) *affirms*.
 3. **Movement 3 (v. 5):** The *Throne Itself* commands "everyone" to *join*.
 4. **Movement 4 (v. 6):** (See tomorrow) *Everyone* "joins."
- **"You who fear him":** This is the *definition* of a *worshiper*. It *fulfills* the *First Angel's Message* (14:7, "Fear God and give him glory...").

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Amen":** The "affirmation" of God's people. **Nehemiah 8:6**, "And all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' lifting up their hands."
- **"Praise... small and great":** This is *pure* "Psalms" *language*.

- **Psalm 135:1, 20:** "**Praise** the LORD! ...you *servants* of the LORD... You *who fear the LORD*, praise the LORD!"
- **Psalm 115:13:** "he will bless *those who fear the LORD*, both **small and great** alike."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Amen" to Justice:** The "Elders" (the *Church Triumphant*) *hear* God's "judgment" (v. 2) and their *first response* is **"Amen!"**
- **Are we "able" to say "Amen" to God's judgment?**
- **The "Equal-Opportunity" Choir:** "Small and great." This is the *opposite* of the "Beast's" *system* (which *also* "marked" the "small and great," 13:16, but for *slavery*).
- **God's "Kingdom" *unites* the "small and great" in *praise*.**
- **The "Beast's" *kingdom* "unites" the "small and great" in *bondage*.**

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Elders" (Church) and "Creatures" (Creation) *wait* for the "Saints" (Martyrs) to *sing first*. What does this "order" *tell you* about the "honor" God *gives* to the *persecuted*?
2. The "Elders" cry "Amen" *to* the "Hallelujah" *for judgment*. What *stops you* from saying "Amen" (I agree) to "God's *justice*"?
3. The "Voice" (v. 5) *commands* praise. Why is "worship" *both* an "emotion" (joy) *and* a "command" (duty)?
4. What is the *comfort* in *knowing* that the "small" *and* the "great" *sing the same song* in heaven?

Call to Action

Your call is to "say 'Amen'."

- *Today, find one "judgment" (a warning) of God in the Scriptures* (e.g., "the wages of sin is death").
- *Instead of "ignoring" it or "feeling 'bad'" about it...*
- *...say "Amen" to it.*
- *Pray: "Lord, 'Amen.' Your judgment against sin is 'true and just.' Thank you for judging 'it' (on the Cross for me, and on the 'Harlot' at the end)."*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Psalm 115.)

"Lord God, You *are* in the *heavens*; You *do* "whatever You please."

The "idols" of "Babylon" are *silver and gold*... They *cannot see or hear or speak*.

We will *trust* in You, O LORD! You are our *help* and our *shield*.

You will bless "those who fear You," Both "small and great" alike.

Amen. Hallelujah!"

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 3

The Marriage of the Lamb

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:6-8

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Final Hallelujah" (v. 6):** This is the *answer* to the "call" from v. 5. The *full* "multitude" *now cries out*.
- **The "Reason":** "For the Lord our God... **reigns**."
- **"The Marriage of the Lamb" (v. 7):**
 - In 1st-century Jewish culture, a "marriage" had two *stages*:
 1. The **Betrothal** (*Erusin*): The "covenant" was *made*. (This *is* the "Church Age").
 2. The **Marriage Feast** (*Nisu'in*): The "groom" *comes* for his "bride" and *brings her* to the "feast."
 - **The Message:** The "feast" (the "Supper") *is ready*.
- **"His Bride has made herself ready" (v. 7):**
 - The "Harlot" ("Babylon," Ch. 18) is *destroyed*.
 - Now, the "Wife" ("Bride," the *Church*) is *revealed*.
- **The "Dress" (v. 8):**
 - **Harlot's "Dress" (17:4):** "Purple, scarlet, gold, jewels" (self-adorned *luxury*).
 - **Bride's "Dress" (19:8):** "Fine linen, bright and pure" (*divine* purity).
- **"The Fine Linen IS...":** John *defines* the *symbol*.
 - "...the righteous deeds of the saints."
 - This is *not* "the 'deeds' that *saved* them."
 - This *is* the "deeds" (the "fruit," the "works") that *flowed from* their "salvation."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Fall" Leads to the "Marriage":**

- The *judgment* of "Babylon" (the "Harlot") in Ch. 18 is *what "clears the stage"* for the wedding of the "Bride" in Ch. 19.
- The *false "bride"* (the idolatrous system) *must be "destroyed" before* the *true "Bride"* (the Church) *can be "presented."*
- **"It was *granted* her..." (v. 8):**
 - This is *key*. The "Bride" *did not "make"* her own dress.
 - It was **"granted"** to her (*by grace*).
- **The "Paradox" of the "Dress":**
 - v. 7: "His Bride has *made herself* ready..." (Our *action / obedience*).
 - v. 8: "It was *granted* her..." (God's *grace / salvation*).
 - **Conclusion:** Our "righteous deeds" (the "dress") are *only possible* because of God's "*grace*" (the "granting"). We *work out* (deeds) what He "*works in*" (grace).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **God "Reigns": Psalm 97:1**, "The **LORD** reigns, let the earth *rejoice*..."
- **The "Bride" of Christ: Ephesians 5:25-27**, "Christ *loved the church* and *gave himself up* for her... that he might *present the church to himself* in *splendor*, without spot or wrinkle... that she might be *holy and without blemish* [bright and pure]."
- **The "Righteous Robe": Isaiah 61:10**, "...he has *clothed me* with the *garments of salvation*; he has *covered me* with the *robe of righteousness*, as a *bridegroom* decks himself... and as a *bride* adorns herself..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our "Identity":** We are *not* a "Harlot" (living for the "world"). We are the "Bride" (living for the "Lamb").
- **"Making Herself Ready":** This is *our job* in the "1,260 days." We are *not* "waiting for the wedding." We are "getting *ready* for" the wedding.
- **How?** By *allowing* God to "grant" us "righteous deeds." We "clothe ourselves" in "purity" *by* "walking" in the *Spirit* (Gal 5).
- **The "Contrast":**
 - The "Harlot" *loves* the "Beast" (power) and "Wine" (idolatry).
 - The "Bride" *loves* the "Lamb" (sacrifice) and "Fine Linen" (righteousness).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Hallelujah" (v. 6) *is* for the "reign of God." The *evidence* of His "reign" *is* the "Marriage." *Why* is the "wedding" of the Church the *ultimate proof* that "God reigns"?
2. The Harlot (17:4) *dressed herself* in "gold/jewels." The Bride (19:8) *is "granted"* a "linen" dress. What is the *difference* between "self-adornment" and "God-granted" clothing?
3. The "dress" *is* "the righteous deeds of the saints." *What "deeds"* (actions, words, thoughts) are you "*weaving*" into your "wedding dress" *this week*?
4. If *this* (the "Marriage") is the *goal*, how does that *change* your "motivation" for "doing good deeds" *today*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "put on the dress." The "Bride" is "making herself ready."

- Today, "put on" *one* "righteous deed" *that you do not want to do*.
- (e.g., *Forgive* someone, *serve* someone, *be patient* when you *want* to be *angry*).
- As you do it, "picture" it as you "weaving" *one more "thread"* into your "fine linen, bright and pure."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the "Bride".)

"O Christ, our *Lamb*, our *Groom*, The *Harlot* is "fallen." The *Marriage* "has come."

Lord, *we are* Your "Bride." *Forgive us* for "running" after the "Harlot's gold." *Cleanse us* of our "filthy rags."

Grant us the "fine linen." *Clothe us* in Your "righteousness." *Make us ready* for the "Feast." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 4

The Blessing and the Spirit of Prophecy

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:9-10

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Invitation" (v. 9):** The *angel* (the "messenger") *commands* John to "Write" the *fourth* "Beatitude" (Blessing) of Revelation.
- **"Blessed are those who are invited...":** This is the *Gospel call*. The "invitation" has *gone out* to the *world*. *Blessed* are those who *RSVP* "Yes."
- **"These are the true words of God":** The *angel* "swears" (like in 10:5-7) that *this* (the "judgment" and the "wedding") is *true*.
- **John's "Mistake" (v. 10):**
 - John is *so overwhelmed* (by the "Hallelujahs," the "Bride," the "angel") that he *makes a mistake*.

- He "fell down... to worship him" (the *angel*).
- **The "Rebuke" (v. 10):**
 - The *angel* is *horrified*. "**You must not do that!**" (*Me phe!* - "Stop it!").
 - **Why?** "I am a *fellow servant*." (We are on the same "*level*").
 - **The "True Identity":** The *angel* defines *both* "himself" and "John" (the "saints") as *those* who "**hold to the testimony of Jesus.**"
- **The "Command": "Worship God!"** (This is the *theme* of the *whole book*).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy":**
 - This is one of the *most important "key"* verses in the *entire Bible*.
- **What does it mean?**
 - **Meaning 1 (The "Content"):** The "testimony *from* Jesus" (what *Jesus* "testifies") is the "prophecy" (the "scroll") that the *Spirit* "gives."
 - **Meaning 2 (The "Purpose"):** The "testimony *about* Jesus" (what we "testify" *about* Him) is the *essence* ("spirit") of all "*prophecy*".
- **The "Best" View (Meaning 2):**
 - The *entire "spirit" / "essence" / "point"* of all "*prophecy*" (all of the *Old Testament*, all of the *Prophets* - Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Ezekiel) ... *is* ... **The Testimony of Jesus.**
 - **All "prophecy" points to JESUS.**
- **The "Angel's" Logic:** "Don't *worship me* [the "prophet"/angel]. I *am just* a 'servant.' My *only job* is to "hold the testimony." *Worship GOD*... because the *only "point"* of my "*prophecy*" (this *whole book*) is to "testify" *about HIM* (Jesus)."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Invitation": Luke 14:16-24** (The "Parable of the *Great Supper*"). God "invited many"... but *they* "*made excuses.*"
- **"Worshipping Angels":** This was a *specific* "heresy" (especially in *Asia Minor*, where the 7 churches were).
 - **Colossians 2:18:** "Let no one... *insist* on... the **worship of angels**..."
- **"Worship God *Only*": Matthew 4:10**, (Jesus *to Satan*), "You shall **worship the Lord your God**, and *him only* shall you serve."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **You are "Invited":** *This* is the "Gospel call." *You* are "invited" to the "Marriage Supper." *Have you RSVP'd "Yes"?*
- **The "Temptation" to "Worship the Angel":**
 - We *still* "do this."
 - We "worship" the *messenger* (the "pastor," the "author," the "prophet").
 - We "worship" the *experience* (the "miracle," the "sign").
 - We "worship" the *book* (the "Bible") *more* than the *God* the *book points to*.
- **The "Testimony *is* the Spirit":**
 - This *is* our "litmus test" for all "*prophecy*".
 - Does a "prophet" (a "pastor," a "teacher") *point you to Jesus?*
 - Or do they *point you to "themselves," "a new secret," "an angel,"* or "*a political party*"?
 - **If the end-result is *not* "Jesus"... it is *not* "the spirit of prophecy."**

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the 4th "Beatitude": "Blessed are those *invited*..." How is "being *invited*" *different* from "earning" *your way in*?
2. John *himself* (the *Apostle!*) *made the mistake* of "worshipping an angel." How does *his "mistake"* "comfort" *you* when *you* "make mistakes"?
3. The *angel* (a *glorious* being) *insists* he is *only* a "fellow servant." How does this "humility" of *heaven* "challenge" the *pride* of *earth*?
4. "The testimony of Jesus *is* the spirit of prophecy." How does *this "key"* "unlock" the *Old Testament* (Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah) *for you*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Worship God *Only*."

- *Identify one "angel"* (a "messenger," a *pastor*, a *leader*, an *ideology*) that you *admire* so "much" that you are *tempted* to "worship" *it* (or *its "opinions"*) *more* than God.
- *Today, practice* the "rebuke": "**You must not do that!**"
- *Re-direct* your "worship" *only* to "God."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on v. 10.)

"Lord God, You *alone* are *worthy* of "worship." I am *just* a "fellow servant." My *pastor* is a "fellow servant." The *angels* are "fellow servants."

Forgive me for "worshipping" *anything* or *anyone else*.

Let the *spirit* of all "prophecy" (all my "Bible study") be *only* the "testimony of Jesus." He is the *only* "King." He is the *only* "Lamb." *Worship God! Amen.*

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 5

The Rider on the White Horse: His Identity

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:11-13

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and

on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Heaven Opened"**: This is *it*. This is *not* a "vision" *in* heaven (like Ch. 4). This is "heaven *opening*" for the *King to ride out to earth*. This is the **Second Coming**.
- **"A White Horse"**: This is the "General's" horse, the *symbol of victory and triumph*.
- **The "Rider"**: This is **Jesus Christ**.
- **The Contrast (The "Two Riders")**:
 1. **1st Horseman (Rev 6:2)**: "White horse," "a bow," "a crown" (*stephanos* - "victor's" *wreath*). This was the *Antichrist* (the "Conqueror").
 2. **This Rider (Rev 19:11)**: "White horse," "a sword" (v. 15), "many *diadems*" (*royal* "kingly" *crowns*). This is the *Christ*.
- **His "Names" (His *Character*)**: John *piles up* "Names."
 1. **"Faithful and True" (v. 11)**: He *is* the *fulfillment* of *all* God's "faithful" *promises* and the *embodiment* of *all truth*.
 2. **"A Name... No One Knows" (v. 12)**: His *divine essence* is *infinite* and *unknowable* by the "created" *mind*.
 3. **"The Word of God" (v. 13)**: (See "Cross-References").

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"In righteousness he judges..."**: This is *why* He "makes war."
 - The "Beast" (Ch. 13) "makes war" *out of* "*blasphemy*".
 - *Christ* "makes war" *out of* "*righteousness*."
- **His "Look" (v. 12-13)**:
 - **"Eyes... flame of fire"**: *Same as Rev 1:14*. He sees "*all*" and judges "*all*."
 - **"Many Diadems"**: He is the *King of ALL* "kings." (The "Dragon" only had 7 "diadems," 12:3. Christ has *many*).
 - **"Robe dipped in blood"**:
 - **View 1 (His *Own* Blood)**: His "garment" is "dipped" in *His own* sacrificial *blood* from the *Cross*. His *authority* to "judge" *comes from* His "sacrifice."
 - **View 2 (His *Enemies'* Blood)**: This is the "blood" of the "winepress" (14:20). He is *already* "splattered" with the "blood of His enemies" (Isaiah 63).
 - **Conclusion**: It's *both*. His *right* to "shed" (judge) *their* blood *comes from* the *fact* that He *shed His* blood.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Judge"**: Isaiah 11:4, "but with **righteousness he shall judge** the poor..."
- **The "Bloody Robe"**: Isaiah 63:3, "I have *trodden the winepress* alone... their *lifeblood* stained all my *garments*."
- **"The Word of God" (v. 13)**:
 - This is the *most direct link* to **John 1:1, 14**.
 - "In the beginning was the **Word**... and the **Word was God**."
 - "And the **Word became flesh**..."

- **The "Message":** The *same "Jesus"* who *came* as the "Word-in-flesh" (the *Lamb*) is *now "returning"* as the "Word-in-judgment" (the *King*).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is Not "Gentle Jesus":** We (in the *modern church*) are *very* "comfortable" with the "Lamb" (the *Sermon on the Mount*). We are *very "uncomfortable"* with the "Warrior-King" (the *Rider on the White Horse*).
- **This is the Same Jesus.**
- His "righteousness" *demands* that He "judge" and "make war" on *sin*.
- **The "Real" Jesus:** The *real* "Jesus" is *both* "Lamb" (1:18, "I died") *and* "King" (19:11, "He judges").
- **"A Name... No One Knows":** He is *bigger* than our "theology." He is *more* than our "boxes." He is *infinite*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. *Compare* the "Rider" in 6:2 (Antichrist) with the "Rider" in 19:11 (Christ). What is the *biggest "difference"* that *stands out* to you?
2. Jesus's "name" is "Faithful and True." *How* has He been "faithful and true" *to you* this week?
3. His "robe" is "dipped in blood" (v. 13). How does *this "one image"* "link" His *First Coming* (the *Cross*) with His *Second Coming* (the *Judgment*)?
4. His "name" is "The Word of God." *Why* is *that* "name" *so fitting* for the *Judge*? (Hint: He "spoke" creation *into* "being"... He *will "speak"* judgment *into* "being").

Call to Action

Your call is to "Know *This* Jesus."

- We *"like"* the "Jesus" who "loves us."
- We *must "also"* "worship" the "Jesus" who "is Faithful and True" and "in *righteousness... makes war*."
- *Today, read Isaiah 63:1-6.*
- *Worship* Him as the "Avenger" and the "Judge."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on "The Word".)

"O Lord Jesus, You are "The Word of God." You *spoke* "light" into *darkness*.

You are "Faithful and True." Your eyes are "flames of fire." Your *robe* is "dipped in blood."

You are *not* "safe." You are "Good." You are the "King."

In *righteousness*, You "judge." In *righteousness*, You "make war."

I worship You as the "Lamb." I worship You as the "Lion-King." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 6

The Rider on the White Horse: His Armies & His Rule

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:14-16

¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Armies of Heaven":** This is *us*. This is the *Bride* (the "saints") from v. 8.
- **Our "Uniform" (v. 14):** "Fine linen, white and pure."
- **Our "Weapon":** ...*We don't have one*.
- **His "Weapon" (v. 15):** "A sharp sword... *from his mouth*."
- **The "Battle":** This is *not* a "battle." This is an *execution*.
 - *We* (the "armies") *do not fight*. *We follow*.
 - *He* (the "King") *speaks*.
 - *His "Word"* (the "sword") *is* the "weapon" that "strikes down the nations."
- **His "Rule" (v. 15):**
 - "Rule... with a rod of iron": The *fulfillment* of **Psalm 2:9**.
 - "Tread the winepress...": The *fulfillment* of the "grape harvest" (**14:19-20**) and **Isaiah 63**.
- **His "Name" (v. 16):**
 - "On his robe and on his thigh": The "thigh" (on a "Rider") is the *most visible place* to read a "name." (A Roman general *wore* his "sword" [his *authority*] on his *thigh*).
 - **"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS":** This is His *ultimate* "Name." It is the *answer* to the *Beast's "blasphemies."*

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Sword from His Mouth":**
 1. This *is* the "Word of God."
 2. **Hebrews 4:12:** "For the word of God is... *sharper than any two-edged sword*..."
 3. **Isaiah 11:4:** "...he shall *strike the earth* with the **rod of his mouth**, and with the *breath of his lips* he shall *slay the wicked*."
- **Christ speaks, and the battle is over.**
- **The "Armies" (Us):**
 1. We are *not* "warriors" in this "battle." We are *spectators*. We are the "vindicated" *following* our "Avenger."

2. Our *only* "job" is to "be with Him" (17:14) and look *"pure."*
- **The "Names" of Christ (in Ch. 19):**
 1. "Faithful and True" (v. 11) - His *Character*.
 2. "The Name No One Knows" (v. 12) - His *Divinity*.
 3. "The Word of God" (v. 13) - His *Identity*.
 4. "KING OF KINGS..." (v. 16) - His *Authority*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Sword" (Word):** Ephesians 6:17, "...the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the **word of God**."
- **"Rod of Iron":** Psalm 2:9, "You shall *break them* with a **rod of iron**..."
- **"Tread the Winepress":** Revelation 14:19-20. This is that *moment*.
- **"King of Kings":** Deuteronomy 10:17, "For the LORD your God is God of gods and **Lord of lords**..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is *Not* "Our" Battle:** We (the "Church") are *constantly* "tempted" to "take up the *physical sword*" to "bring in the kingdom."
- **This "vision" *forbids* it.**
- *Our* "King" *fights* His own "battles."
- *His* "weapon" is *His* "Mouth" (His Word).
- *Our* "weapon" (as "saints") is *also* the "sword of the Spirit... the word of God" (Eph 6).
- **We *win* by "speaking His truth," *not* "slaying His enemies."**
- **His "Name" is His "Authority":**
 - The "Beast" (Antichrist) *gets* his "authority" *from* the "Dragon" (13:2).
 - *Christ IS* His own "authority." His "name" is **"King of Kings."**
- **He *Will* "Tread the Winepress":** This is the *end* of all "*injustice*." This is the "wrath" that *must* "come."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Armies" (v. 14) *follow* the King. They *don't* "*fight*." How does this *change* your view of "spiritual warfare"?
2. The King's *only* "weapon" (v. 15) is the "sword from His *mouth*." If His "Word" is *that* "powerful", how *seriously* should we *take* His "Word" (*the Bible*) today?
3. He *will* "tread the winepress of... wrath." This is *violent*. How do we "reconcile" *this* "image" with the "Lamb who was slain"? (Hint: 19:13, *His* "robe" is *also* "dipped in blood").
4. His "final name" (v. 16) is "KING OF KINGS...". *Is He* "King" of your *thoughts*? *Is He* "Lord" of your *actions*?

Call to Action

Your call is to "follow the King."

- The "Army" *follows*. They *don't* "run ahead."
- *Today*, *identify one area* where you are "running *ahead*" of the "King" (trying to "fight" a "battle" *your way*, in *your own* "*strength*").
- *Stop*. "Fall back in line."
- *Trust His* "Word" (the "sword") to "fight" *for you*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on "King of Kings".)

"O Lord Jesus Christ, You *are* "Faithful and True." You *are* "The Word of God." You *are* the **"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

I am in "Your army." My *only* "uniform" is the "fine linen" You "*granted*" me.

Help me to *stop* "fighting". Help me to *start* "following".

Let Your "Word" (Your "sword") *be* my *only* "weapon". Let Your "Name" be my *only* "authority".

You "reign forever." **Hallelujah!** Amen."

Week 20 (Chapter 20): The Millennium & The Great White Throne: Final Judgment

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 1

The Great Supper of God

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:17-18

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Other" Supper:** This vision is the *gruesome, horrific counterpart* to the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" (19:9). There are *two* "suppers" at the end of the age:
 1. The "Marriage Supper" (for the *Saints*, inside).
 2. The "Great Supper of God" (for the *vultures*, outside).
- **"An Angel... in the Sun":** This angel is *silhouetted against the sun*. He is a *cosmic* figure, visible to the *entire world*.

- **"Called to all the birds":** Vultures, buzzards, and carrion birds were the "clean-up crew" of every ancient battlefield. This is a call to *scavengers*.
- **The "Menu" (v. 18):** The "menu" for this "supper" is the *arrogant, rebellious army* of the world.
- **"Kings... captains... free... slave...":** This is the *same* "list of humanity" that *hid in the caves* from the "wrath of the Lamb" (6:15). This is the *great equalizer* of judgment. All of their "ranks" and "wealth" *mean nothing*. They *all* end up as "food" for *birds*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is *Not* a "Battle":** This is a *feast*. The "battle" is so *one-sided* that the *angel calls the vultures before it even begins*. The *outcome is not in doubt*.
- **The "Great Supper":** This is the *result* of the "sword from His mouth" (19:15) and the "winepress" (19:15). This is the *physical aftermath* of the "Battle of Armageddon."
- **This is the "End" of Human "Glory":** The "flesh of kings" and "mighty men" (human *power, glory, and pride*) is *reduced* to "carrion." This is God's *final, visceral* "statement" on the *value* of "human glory" that *opposes Him*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- ****This is a *direct quote* from Ezekiel 39:17-20.**
 - **Ezekiel 39:17:** "As for you, son of man... Speak to the **birds of every sort**... '**Come, gather... for the sacrificial feast** that I am preparing for you...'"
 - **Ezekiel 39:18:** "You shall **eat the flesh of the mighty**, and *drink the blood* of the princes... the **flesh of horses and their riders**..."
- This *links* "Armageddon" (Revelation) *directly* to the "Battle of Gog and Magog" (Ezekiel 38-39).
- **Jesus's Warning: Matthew 24:28**, "Wherever the **corpse** is, there the **vultures** [eagles] will **gather**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Two Suppers:** This is the *choice* that *every human* is *given*.
 1. Will you "eat" at the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (as a *guest of Grace*)?
 2. Or will you "be eaten" at the *Great Supper of God* (as a *corpse of Judgment*)?
- **The "End" of "Pride":** We live in a world that *worships* "kings, captains, and mighty men." We *elevate* the "rich" and "powerful." This is God's "verdict" on *all* of that *pride*. In the *end*, it is *just "flesh."*
- **The "Call" is *Public*:** The "angel" *cries out* "with a loud voice." This is *not* a "secret." God *warns* the *entire world* of this "coming feast."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. *Compare* the "Marriage Supper" (19:9) with the "Great Supper of God" (19:17). *Why* does God use the *same "word"* ("supper") for two *such different "events"*?
2. The "angel" *calls the birds before* the "battle" (v. 19). What does this *tell you* about God's *sovereignty* and the *certainty* of His "victory"?
3. The "menu" *includes* "small and great, free and slave." *Why* is this "equalizing" *detail* so *important* to God's "*justice*"?
4. *How* do you "RSVP" for the "Marriage Supper"... and *avoid* "being" the "menu" *at* the "Great Supper"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "RSVP." You have been *invited* (19:9) to the "Marriage Supper."

- *Today, thank God for that "invitation."*
- *Thank the "Lamb" that His "flesh" was "broken" for you...*
- *...so that your "flesh" would not be "eaten" by the vultures.*
- *Your "call" is gratitude for the "Supper" you get to attend.*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of "thanksgiving" for the "Supper".)

"Lord Jesus, The *King of kings*. The world "gathers" for *battle*. The "vultures" *gather* for *supper*.

But *You*... You *gather* Your *Bride*. You "invite" *me* to Your "Supper."

Thank You that I *am not* "on the menu." Thank You that I *am* "on the guest list." My "flesh" is *safe*, because *Your "flesh" was torn*.

Blessed are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 2

The Capture of the Beast and the False Prophet

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:19-21

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Gathering" (v. 19):** This is the *fulfillment* of the "demonic frogs" *mission* (16:14). The "armies" are "gathered." They are "making war."
- **The "Battle" (v. 20):**

- ...*There isn't one.*
- There is *no "fight"*. There is *no "struggle"*.
- The "King" (v. 11) *speaks*...
- ...and the *two "leaders"* (Beast and False Prophet) are *instantly "captured."*
- **"Thrown ALIVE...":** This is *critical*. They *do not "die."* They *do not* "go to Hades." They *do not* "pass Go." They are the *first* (and *only*, at this point) "humans" to *enter* the "Lake of Fire," and they *enter it "alive."*
- **"The Lake of Fire":** This is *not* "Hades" (the "holding place" of the dead). This *is* "Gehenna," the *final, eternal* "place of punishment."
- **"The Rest were Slain" (v. 21):**
 - The "armies" (the "followers") *are* "killed."
 - *How?* By the **"sword from his mouth"** (v. 15).
 - *His "Word"* (His *command*) *is* the "weapon" that *slays* them.
- **"The Birds were Gorged":** The "Supper" (v. 17-18) *happens*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is "Armageddon":** This "battle" *is* the "Battle of Armageddon." It is *not* a "war"; it is an *execution*.
- **The "Leaders" vs. "The Rest":**
 1. The *Leaders* (the "Deceivers") -> *Thrown "alive"* into the "Lake of Fire."
 2. The *Followers* (the "Deceived") -> *Slain* (and *await* the "Great White Throne Judgment," 20:11-15).
- **The "Unholy Trinity" *Dismantled*:**
 1. The **Beast** (Anti-Son) -> **Captured**.
 2. The **False Prophet** (Anti-Spirit) -> **Captured**.
 3. (This *sets the stage* for *Chapter 20*, where the **Dragon** (Anti-Father) *is dealt with*).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Breath" of His Mouth: 2 Thessalonians 2:8,** "And then the *lawless one* [the "Beast"] *will be revealed*, whom the Lord Jesus will *kill* with the **breath [Spirit] of his mouth...**" (The "sword from His mouth").
- **The "Beast" in Daniel: Daniel 7:11,** "I looked... and the *beast was killed*, and *its body destroyed* and *given to be burned with fire.*"
- **"Lake of Fire": Matthew 25:41,** (Jesus *speaks*), "...Depart from me... into the *eternal fire* prepared for the **devil and his angels.**" (The *Beast* and *Prophet* are the "first" to go *there*).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "End" of All "False Systems":**
 - The "Beast" (the *godless political system*) *will be* "captured."
 - The "False Prophet" (the *godless religious/ideological system*) *will be* "captured."
- **"Ideologies" Have an "End-Date":** We *live* in a "world" of "Beasts" (Totalitarianism) and "False Prophets" (Secularism, Materialism, etc.). This *is* their *end*. They *will be* "thrown into the fire."
- **The "Power" of the "Word":** The "armies" are *slain* by Christ's "Word." The *same* "Word" (the *Bible*) that "gives *life*" (to *us*) is the *same* "Word" that "brings *death*" (to *His enemies*).
- **This is *Why* the "World" *Hates* the "Bible."**

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is there *no "battle"*? (v. 19 vs. v. 20). What does this *anti-climax* "teach" us about the "power" of the "Beast" *versus* the "power" of the "Lamb"?
2. Why are the "Beast" and "False Prophet" *thrown "alive"* into the *Lake of Fire*? (What does this "special" *punishment* "tell" us about *their "special" sin*?)
3. The *armies* are "slain" by the "sword *from His mouth*." How is "God's Word" a "sword" (Heb 4:12)?
4. The "birds" *were "gorged."* The "judgment" is *complete*. How does the "gruesome" *finality* of *this "judgment"* *motivate* your "evangelism"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Trust the Sword."

- The *only "weapon"* you *need* (and *Christ "needs"*) is the "Sword of the Spirit... the *Word of God*" (Eph 6:17).
- *Today*, when you "battle" *sin* or *deception*...
- *Do not "fight"* with "earthly" *weapons* (anger, manipulation, power).
- *Fight* with the "sword": *Speak* (and *believe*) *God's Word*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God".)

"Lord God, The *Beast* and *kings* "gather." But *Your Word* remains.

"The *Prince of Darkness* grim, We *tremble not* for him; His *rage* we can *endure*, For lo, his *doom* is *sure*: One little word shall *fell* him.

"That *Word*... is *Jesus Christ*, our *Lord*. And *He* must *win* the *battle*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 3

The Binding of Satan (The Millennium)

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:1-3

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Unholy Trinity" (Conclusion):**
 1. Beast -> Captured (19:20).
 2. False Prophet -> Captured (19:20).
 3. **Dragon (Satan)** -> *Now* (20:2).
- **The "Angel":** A *single, unnamed* "angel" seizes the "Dragon." This is "humiliating" for Satan. *He doesn't warrant "Christ's" personal "arrest."*
- **"The Bottomless Pit" (Abyss):** This is the *same "pit"* from **9:1** (where the "locusts" *came from*). This is the "holding cell" for *demons*.
- **"Bound him for 1,000 years":** The "Millennium."
- **The "Purpose" (v. 3):** "**so that he might not deceive the nations any longer.**"
- **The "Mystery" (v. 3):** "After that he *must* be *released*..."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This is the *most debated* "prophetic" *passage in the Bible*. (Be "humble" here).

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Futurist):**
 - This is *literal* and *future*.
 - *After Christ returns* (Ch. 19)...
 - ...He *will bind* Satan...
 - ...and He (Christ) *will "reign" on this earth* (from *Jerusalem*)
 - ...for a *literal 1,000-year* "golden age" (the "Millennium").
 - This "*binding*" is *total*.
- **View 2: Amillennialism (Idealist/Historicist):**
 - This is *symbolic* and *present*.
 - The "1,000 years" (10x10x10) is a *symbolic "long time"* representing the *entire "Church Age"* (from Christ's *First Coming* to His *Second Coming*).
 - Satan was "*bound*" by **Christ's Cross and Resurrection** (John 12:31).
 - *How is he "bound"?* His "purpose" (v. 3) is *stopped*. He *cannot* "deceive the *nations*" anymore. (i.e., *before Christ, all "nations" were "deceived" in paganism. Now, the Gospel is going out to all "nations" and Satan "cannot stop it"*).
 - We are *living in* the "Millennium" *now*.
- **View 3: Postmillennialism:**
 - The "1,000 years" is a *future (or present) "golden age"* where the *Gospel will be so successful* that it "*binds*" Satan's "*influence*" *through the Church, before Christ "returns."*

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Four Names" (v. 2):** (Dragon, Serpent, Devil, Satan) - *Same as 12:9*.
- **The "Binding" (Amil View):**
 - **John 12:31:** (Jesus, *before* the Cross), "Now... the *ruler of this world* will be **cast out**."
 - **Matthew 12:29:** "How can one *enter a strong man's house*... unless he *first binds* the *strong man*? Then he can *plunder* his house." (Jesus "bound" Satan *so that* He could "plunder" his "house" - i.e., *save us*).
- **The "Binding" (Premil View):**

- This is a *future* "fulfillment" *not* seen in the "past."
- The "Pit": Luke 8:31, (The *demons* "begged" Jesus *not* to "send them" to the "**abyss**").

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- Satan is on a "Leash": *Regardless* of your "view," this is *true*.
 - (Premil): He *will be* "bound."
 - (Amil): He *is* "bound."
- He **cannot** "stop" the "Gospel" (Amil): If you are *living "in"* the "1,000 years," *this is why* "evangelism" *works*. Satan is "*bound*" from *preventing* the "nations" from *hearing*.
- He **is not** "All-Powerful" (All Views): A *single "angel"* with a *single "chain"* "seizes" him. He is a *creature*. He is *not* "God."
- The "Mystery" (v. 3): God's *plan requires* a *final "test"* (the "release").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is the Devil "*called*" all four "*names*" (v. 2)? (What does each "*name*" tell you about *his* "*character*"?)
2. Which "*view*" (Premil or Amil) "*makes the most sense*" to you (and *why*)?
3. (If Amil): How is Satan "*bound*" *now*? (What *can't* he do?).
4. (If Premil): What is the "*purpose*" of a *literal "1000-year"* "*reign*" on earth?
5. Why do you *think* God "*must*" *release* him for a "*little while*" (v. 3)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "live in the 'binding'."

- Whether he *is* "*bound*" (Amil) or *will be* "*bound*" (Premil)...
- ...*his "power" over "you" (the "saint") is "broken"*.
- Today, identify one "*lie*" (a "*deception*," v. 3) that Satan "*tells*" you (e.g., "You are *not forgiven*," "You *must 'sin'*").
- Use your "*authority*" (in *Christ*) and "*agree*" with the "*angel*": "Satan, you *are 'bound'*. You *cannot 'deceive' me*. You *are 'cast out'*."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Martin Luther.)

"Lord God, The Devil is Your "*devil*". The "*chain*" is in Your "*angel's hand*". The "*key*" is Yours.

"Though *this world*, with *devils filled*, Should *threaten* to *undo us*, We *will not fear*, for God has *willed* His *truth* to *triumph* through us.

"The *Prince of Darkness* grim, We *tremble not* for him; His *rage* we can *endure*, For lo, his *doom is sure*: Your "*Word*" (Your "*Chain*") shall "*fell him*." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 4

The Thrones and the First Resurrection

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:4

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"I saw thrones...":** This is a *kingdom*. This is a *court*.
- **"Authority to judge":** This is the *fulfillment* of the *promise* to the *saints*.
- **"Two Groups" (or One?):**
 - "Those to whom... authority... was committed" (The *Elders* / *Apostles* / *all Saints*).
 - "The souls of those... beheaded..." (The *Martyrs*).
- **The "Martyrs" (Group 2):**
 - They were "beheaded" (the "Beast's" *punishment*, 13:15).
 - They "had *not* worshiped the beast" (they *refused* the "lie").
 - They "had *not* received its mark" (they *refused* the "economy," 13:17).
- **"They came to life":** This is the "First Resurrection" (v. 5).
- **"And reigned... for 1,000 years":** This is the "Millennium."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This verse is *why* the "Millennium" *debate* (from yesterday) *exists*.

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Futurist):**
 - This is a *literal, physical* "First Resurrection" of *all dead saints* (and *living "Tribulation" saints*).
 - They (we) then "reign" with Christ *on this earth* for the *literal 1,000 years* (while Satan is "bound").
 - They "judge" (administer) the "world" *with* Christ.
- **View 2: Amillennialism (Idealist):**
 - This is *not* a "physical" *resurrection* (that *only* happens at the *end*, v. 11-15).
 - This is a *spiritual* "vision" of *what is happening in heaven right now*.*
 - "The souls..." (v. 4) -> These are *souls in heaven*.
 - "They came to life..." -> This is *not* "resurrection"; this is "they *lived*" (i.e., *when they "died"* on *earth*, they "came to life" *in heaven*).

- "...and reigned..." -> They are *"reigning" with Christ* (in heaven) *right now*, "for" the symbolic "1,000 years" (the "Church Age").
- **Both views "agree" that the saints "reign" with "Christ."** The "debate" is *where* (earth or heaven?) and *when* (future 1000, or *present* "Church Age"?).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Thrones" (Judging):**
 - **Daniel 7:22**, "...and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom."
 - **Matthew 19:28**, (Jesus to the "Apostles"), "Truly, I say to you, in the *new world...* you... will also *sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"
 - **1 Corinthians 6:2**, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?"
- **"Reigning" with Him:**
 - **2 Timothy 2:12**, "...if we *endure* [the "Beast"], we will also **reign with him...**"
 - **Revelation 5:10**, "and you have made them a *kingdom* and *priests...* and they **shall reign on the earth.**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **You Have "Authority":**
 - (Amil): You are *already* "seated with Him in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:6). You are "reigning" *spiritually now*.
 - (Premil): You *will* "reign" *literally then*.
- **The "Cost" of the "Throne" (v. 4):**
 - The "qualification" *for* the "throne" is...
 - ...*"not* worshiping the beast,"
 - ...*"not* receiving the mark,"
 - ...and *being "faithful" unto "death"* ("beheaded").
- **The "Trade-Off":** The "Beast" (Ch. 13) *offers* "42 months" of "power" *if* you "take the mark." *Christ* (Ch. 20) *offers* "1000 years" of "reigning" *if* you "refuse the mark."
- **This is the choice:** A short "reign" *with the Beast*, or an *eternal* "reign" *with Christ*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision is *about* "thrones" and "judging." *We* (the "saints") *will "judge"*. What does that mean? (Hint: *Agreeing with and administering "God's perfect" judgment*).
2. The "list" of *those on the thrones* (v. 4) *specifically* "highlights" the *martyrs*. Why do the "martyrs" (those who "lost" *everything on earth*) get such "*high honor*" in heaven?
3. The *choice* is "Worship the Beast" (and "buy/sell" for 42 months) or "Worship Christ" (and "reign" for 1000 years). Why do so many "people" choose the "42 months"?
4. (Premil): What do you *think* "reigning on earth" for 1000 years "looks like"?
5. (Amil): What does "reigning in heaven with Christ now" "look like"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Reign Today."

- You are (or *will be*) "given authority to judge."

- Start by "judging" *yourself* (1 Cor 11:31).
- Then, "reign" over "sin" in *your own life* (Romans 6:12).
- Exercise your "authority" *today* by *refusing* to "bow" to the "Beast's" *system* in *one specific area* of your *life* (your *money*, your *time*, your *allegiance*).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on 2 Timothy 2:12.)

"Lord Jesus, The "Beast" *demands* my "worship." The "world" *demands* my "allegiance." But *You* "call" me to *endure*.

"The saying is trustworthy: For if we *died* with Him, we will also *live* with Him; if we *endure*, we will also **reign with Him**."

Give me the "grace" to *endure* "this day." *Give me* the "faith" to *refuse* the "mark." *That I may* "reign" with *You*... *Now*, and *forever*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 5

The Second Death and the Blessed Priest

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:5-6

⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Rest of the Dead" (v. 5):** This *defines* "Group 2." These are the *wicked* dead (the "Beast-worshippers," the "unmarked"). They *stay "dead"* (in "Hades") *during* the "1000 years."
- **"This is the first resurrection" (v. 5):** The *angel defines* the "event" of v. 4 ("they came to life") as the "First Resurrection."
- **The "Blessing" (v. 6):** This is the **Fifth Beatitude** (Blessing) in Revelation.
- **"Holy... shares in the first resurrection":** The *qualification* for the "First Resurrection" is *holiness* (being a "saint," "washed in the blood").

- **"The Second Death has no power":**
 - **First Death:** *Physical* death (what the "Beast" *can do*, 13:15).
 - **Second Death:** *Eternal, spiritual* death (the "Lake of Fire," v. 14, what the *Beast suffers*, 19:20).
- **The "Job" (v. 6):** "Priests... and... reign."
 - This is the *final fulfillment* of the *original promise* to the *Church*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Two Resurrections" (This is the "Crux" of the "debate"):**
 - **Premillennialism (Literal):** This *proves* a "two-stage" *physical* "resurrection."
 1. "First Resurrection" (v. 4) -> *Saints* rise (at Christ's *Return*).
 2. *1000-year "reign"*.
 3. "Second Resurrection" (implied in v. 5) -> *Wicked* rise (*after* the 1000 years, *for judgment*).
 - **Amillennialism (Symbolic):** This is *not* "two *physical*" "resurrections." This is "two *types*" of "resurrection."
 1. "First Resurrection" -> *Spiritual* "resurrection" (i.e., being **"born again,"** John 5:24) or "dying and *going to heaven*" (as in 20:4, "souls... came to life").
 2. "Second Resurrection" (v. 5, v. 12) -> The *one, final, general, physical* "resurrection" of *everyone* (both *saints* and *wicked*) *at the end of time* for *judgment*.
- **"The Second Death":**
 - This is the "Lake of Fire" (v. 14).
 - The "blessing" is *immunity*.
 - If you "share" in the "First Resurrection" (you are "born again," or you are a "saint" *in heaven*), the "Second Death" (hell) *cannot "touch" you*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Two Resurrections" (Amil): John 5:24-25**, (Jesus *speaks*), "Truly... whoever *hears* my word and *believes*... **has passed from death to life**" (the "*First Resurrection*" *now, spiritually*). "...an hour is *coming*, and **is now here**, when the *dead* [spiritual] will *hear*... and *live*."
- **The "Two Resurrections" (General): John 5:28-29**, "...an hour is *coming* when *all* who are *in the tombs* [physical] will *hear* his voice... and come out, those who have done *good* to the **resurrection of life**, and those who have done *evil* to the **resurrection of judgment**."
- **The "Promise" (Fulfilled): Revelation 2:11**, (to *Smyrna*), "The one who *conquers* will *not be hurt* by the **second death**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is *Your* "Blessed" Hope:** This is the "blessing" *for you* (if you are "in Christ").
- **"Blessed and holy":** Your *identity*.
- **"Second death has no power":** Your *security*.
 - The "Beast" *can* "inflict" the "first death" (martyrdom).
 - But he *cannot* "inflict" the "Second Death" (hell).
 - *Therefore*, "Do *not* fear *him* (the Beast)... *Fear Him* (God)..." (Matt 10:28).
- **Your "Job":** "Priests... and... reign."
 - **Priest:** You *have access* to God.
 - **King:** You *have authority* over *sin*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the *Fifth "Blessing"* in Revelation. *Who* is "blessed"? (*The one who "shares" in the "First Resurrection."*)
2. *What* is the "First Resurrection"? (Is it "physical" *future*? Or "spiritual" *now*?)
3. *What* is the "Second Death"?
4. *How* does "sharing" in the *First Resurrection* give you "immunity" from the "Second Death"?
5. What does it *mean* to you that you *will be* a **"priest of God"** and will **"reign with him"**?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Live in the Blessing."

- *You are* (if you are *in Christ*) "Blessed and holy."
- The "Second Death" *has NO POWER* over you.
- *Today*, when you *feel "fear"* (of "death," of "man," of "failure")...
- ...*Verbally "remind" Satan* (the "Accuser") and *"remind" yourself*.
- **"You have no power over me. I have a part in the First Resurrection."**

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer of "thanksgiving" for the "Resurrection".)

"Lord Jesus, I was "dead" in my "sins." But *You* "called" me, and I "heard Your voice," and I "passed from death to life."

I have "shared" in the "First Resurrection." I am "blessed and holy."

Therefore, the "Second Death" (hell, the *Lake of Fire*) *has no power over me*. *Death* "has no sting."
The "Beast" "has no power."

Thank You for this "blessing." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 6

The Final Rebellion: Gog and Magog

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:7-10

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"When the 1000 years are ended...":** The "clock" *runs out*.
- **"Satan will be released...":** The "mystery" from 20:3 ("he *must* be released") *happens*.
- **"Gog and Magog":** This is the "code-name" from **Ezekiel 38-39**. It represents the *ultimate, final, godless "horde"* from "off the map" that *attacks* God's people.
- **"The Battle" (v. 9):**
 - This is the *second "Armageddon."*
 - Satan's *final "army"* ("like the sand...")
 - ...*surrounds* the "camp of the saints" (the "Church") / "the beloved city" (Jerusalem / "Zion").
- **The "Result" (v. 9):**
 - ...It's *not* a "battle." It's *another "execution"*.
 - **"Fire came down from heaven and consumed them."**
 - (It is *identical* to the *end* of the "Two Witnesses" *enemies*, 11:5, and the *judgment* of Sodom).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Why Release Satan?**
 - This is the *final "unmasking"* of both "Satan" (his *unchangeable "deceit"*) and "humanity" (its *unchangeable "rebellion"*).
 - **Premil View:** This "proves" that *even after* "1000 years" of Christ's "perfect" "reign"... the "human heart" (in *those "born"* during that "time") is *still* "sinful" and *will "rebel"* the *second* it gets a "chance".
 - **Amil View:** This is *not* a "second" battle. This is a "re-telling" of the "Armageddon" battle (19:19-21) from the "spiritual" "angle" (Satan's "deception").
- **The "Final" End (v. 10):**
 - The "Devil" (Dragon, Satan)...
 - ...is *finally "thrown"* into the "Lake of Fire."
- **The "Reunion" in Hell:**
 - ...**"where the beast and the false prophet WERE."**
 - This *proves* (in the "Premil" view) that *1000 years* have *passed*, and the "Beast" and "Prophet" are *still "there."*
- **"Forever and ever":** The "torment" of the "Unholy Trinity" (and *all* the "wicked") is *conscious* and *eternal*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39.** This is the *source*.
 - **Ezekiel 38:22:** "I will rain upon him... **fire and sulfur.**"

- The "Battle" (Fire): 2 Kings 1:10, (Elijah *prays*), "...let fire come down from heaven and consume you..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- The "Incurable" Heart of Man: This is the *final "proof"* of "Total Depravity."
 - *Even if we had a "perfect environment"* (the "Millennium," *Premil view*)...
 - *...the "sinful heart" would still "rebel."*
- This is *why we need* a "new heart" (Ezek 36:26), *not just* a "new "environment"."
- Satan's "End-Game": Deception.
 - His *first* "act" (in the *Garden*) was "deception" (Gen 3).
 - His *last* "act" (in the *World*) is "deception" (Rev 20:8).
 - His *nature never changes*.
- The "End" of the "Dragon":
 - This is the "end" of the "war" from 12:7.
 - The "Dragon" *loses*.
 - The *Accuser* is "cast out" *forever*.
 - His "end" is *eternal torment*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does God "release" Satan (v. 7)? *What* does this "final test" *prove* about *humanity*?
2. The "final army" (v. 8) is "like the sand of the sea." The "battle" (v. 9) *still "ends"* in *one "second."* *What* does this *tell you* about the "power" of "man" *versus* the "power" of "God"?
3. The *Devil* (v. 10) is "thrown" *where* the "Beast" and "Prophet" *already "were."* *What* does this "*reunion*" "tell" you about the "future" of *all "evil"*?
4. The "torment" is "forever and ever." *Why* is the "doctrine" of "eternal torment" *necessary* (even if it's "unpopular")?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Choose Your 'Camp'."

- There are *only two* "camps" (v. 9):
 1. "The Camp of the Saints" (the "Beloved City").
 2. The "Army of Gog" (the "Deceived Nations").
- You "*choose*" your "camp" *today* by *choosing* "who" you "*trust*".
- *Today*, verbally "*renounce*" the "Deceiver" (Satan) and verbally "*pledge allegiance*" to the "Beloved City" (Christ).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision".)

"O Lord God, My *heart* is Your "*camp*." But *Satan* "surrounds" it. He *gathers* his "armies" of *doubt*, *sin*, and *fear*. He *desires* to "consume" me.

I have no defense. Send "fire" from heaven... ..the purifying "fire" of Your Spirit. Consume my "enemies" (my sins). Protect Your "beloved city" (my soul).

Throw the "Deceiver" out, That You (and You alone) may reign "forever and ever." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 1

The Great Supper of God

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:17-18

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Other" Supper:** This vision is the *gruesome, horrific counterpart* to the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" (19:9). There are *two* "suppers" at the end of the age:
 1. The "Marriage Supper" (for the *Saints*, inside).
 2. The "Great Supper of God" (for the *vultures*, outside).
- **"An Angel... in the Sun":** This angel is *silhouetted against the sun*. He is a *cosmic* figure, visible to the *entire world*.
- **"Called to all the birds":** Vultures, buzzards, and carrion birds were the "clean-up crew" of every ancient battlefield. This is a call to *scavengers*.
- **The "Menu" (v. 18):** The "menu" for this "supper" is the *arrogant, rebellious army* of the world.
- **"Kings... captains... free... slave...":** This is the *same* "list of humanity" that *hid in the caves* from the "wrath of the Lamb" (6:15). This is the *great equalizer* of judgment. All of their "ranks" and "wealth" *mean nothing*. They *all* end up as "food" for *birds*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is *Not* a "Battle":** This is a *feast*. The "battle" is so *one-sided* that the *angel calls the vultures before it even begins*. The *outcome is not in doubt*.
- **The "Great Supper":** This is the *result* of the "sword from His mouth" (19:15) and the "winepress" (19:15). This is the *physical aftermath* of the "Battle of Armageddon."
- **This is the "End" of Human "Glory":** The "flesh of kings" and "mighty men" (human *power, glory, and pride*) is *reduced* to "carrion." This is God's *final, visceral* "statement" on the *value* of "human glory" that *opposes Him*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- ****This is a *direct quote* from Ezekiel 39:17-20.**
 - **Ezekiel 39:17:** "As for you, son of man... Speak to the **birds of every sort**... '**Come, gather... for the sacrificial feast** that I am preparing for you..."
 - **Ezekiel 39:18:** "You shall **eat the flesh of the mighty**, and *drink the blood* of the princes... the **flesh of horses and their riders**..."
- This *links* "Armageddon" (Revelation) *directly* to the "Battle of Gog and Magog" (Ezekiel 38-39).
- **Jesus's Warning: Matthew 24:28**, "Wherever the **corpse** is, there the **vultures** [eagles] will **gather**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Two Suppers:** This is the *choice* that *every human* is given.
 1. Will you "eat" at the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (as a *guest of Grace*)?
 2. Or will you "be eaten" at the *Great Supper of God* (as a *corpse of Judgment*)?
- **The "End" of "Pride":** We live in a world that *worships* "kings, captains, and mighty men." We *elevate* the "rich" and "powerful." This is God's "verdict" on *all* of that *pride*. In the *end*, it is *just "flesh."*
- **The "Call" is *Public*:** The "angel" *cries out* "with a loud voice." This is *not* a "secret." God *warns* the *entire world* of this "coming feast."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the "Marriage Supper" (19:9) with the "Great Supper of God" (19:17). *Why* does God *use* the *same "word"* ("supper") for two *such different "events"*?
2. The "angel" *calls the birds before* the "battle" (v. 19). What does this *tell you* about God's *sovereignty* and the *certainty* of His "victory"?
3. The "menu" *includes* "small and great, free and slave." *Why* is this "equalizing" *detail* so *important* to God's "*justice*"?
4. *How* do you "RSVP" for the "Marriage Supper"... and *avoid* "being" the "menu" *at* the "Great Supper"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "RSVP." You have been *invited* (19:9) to the "Marriage Supper."

- *Today, thank God for that "invitation."*
- *Thank* the "Lamb" that His "*flesh*" was "broken" *for you*...
- ...so that your "*flesh*" would *not* be "eaten" *by the vultures*.
- Your "*call*" is *gratitude* for the "Supper" you *get to attend*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer of "thanksgiving" for the "Supper".)

"Lord Jesus, The *King of kings*. The world "gathers" for *battle*. The "vultures" *gather* for *supper*.

But *You*... You *gather* Your *Bride*. You "invite" *me* to Your "Supper."

Thank You that I *am not* "on the menu." Thank You that I *am* "on the guest list." My "flesh" is *safe*, because Your "*flesh*" was *torn*.

Blessed are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 2

The Capture of the Beast and the False Prophet

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:19-21

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Gathering" (v. 19):** This is the *fulfillment* of the "demonic frogs" *mission* (16:14). The "armies" are "gathered." They are "making war."
- **The "Battle" (v. 20):**
 - ...*There isn't one*.
 - There is *no "fight"*. There is *no "struggle"*.
 - The "King" (v. 11) *speaks*...
 - ...and the *two "leaders"* (Beast and False Prophet) are *instantly "captured."*
- **"Thrown ALIVE...":** This is *critical*. They *do not "die."* They *do not* "go to Hades." They *do not* "pass Go." They are the *first* (and *only*, at this point) "humans" to *enter* the "Lake of Fire," and they *enter it "alive."*
- **"The Lake of Fire":** This is *not* "Hades" (the "holding place" of the dead). This *is* "Gehenna," the *final, eternal* "place of punishment."
- **"The Rest were Slain" (v. 21):**
 - The "armies" (the "followers") are "killed."
 - *How?* By the "**sword from his mouth**" (v. 15).
 - His "*Word*" (His *command*) is the "weapon" that *slays* them.
- **"The Birds were Gorged":** The "Supper" (v. 17-18) *happens*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is "Armageddon":** This "battle" *is* the "Battle of Armageddon." It is *not* a "war"; it is an *execution*.
- **The "Leaders" vs. "The Rest":**
 1. The *Leaders* (the "Deceivers") -> *Thrown "alive"* into the "Lake of Fire."

2. The *Followers* (the "Deceived") -> *Slain* (and await the "Great White Throne Judgment," 20:11-15).

- **The "Unholy Trinity" *Dismantled*:**

1. The **Beast** (Anti-Son) -> **Captured**.
2. The **False Prophet** (Anti-Spirit) -> **Captured**.
3. (This *sets the stage* for Chapter 20, where the **Dragon** (Anti-Father) *is dealt with*).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Breath" of His Mouth: 2 Thessalonians 2:8**, "And then the *lawless one* [the "Beast"] *will be revealed*, whom the Lord Jesus will *kill* with the **breath [Spirit] of his mouth...**" (The "sword from His mouth").
- **The "Beast" in Daniel: Daniel 7:11**, "I looked... and the *beast was killed*, and *its body destroyed* and *given to be burned with fire*."
- **"Lake of Fire": Matthew 25:41**, (Jesus *speaks*), "...Depart from me... into the *eternal fire* prepared for the devil and his angels." (The *Beast* and *Prophet* are the "first" to go *there*).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "End" of All "False Systems":**
 - The "Beast" (the *godless political system*) *will be "captured"*.
 - The "False Prophet" (the *godless religious/ideological system*) *will be "captured"*.
- **"Ideologies" Have an "End-Date":** We live in a "world" of "Beasts" (Totalitarianism) and "False Prophets" (Secularism, Materialism, etc.). This *is* their *end*. They *will be* "thrown into the fire."
- **The "Power" of the "Word":** The "armies" are *slain* by Christ's "Word." The *same "Word"* (the *Bible*) that "gives *life*" (to *us*) is the *same "Word"* that "brings *death*" (to *His enemies*).
- This is *Why* the "World" *Hates* the "Bible."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is there *no "battle"*? (v. 19 vs. v. 20). What does this *anti-climax* "teach" us about the "power" of the "Beast" *versus* the "power" of the "Lamb"?
2. Why are the "Beast" and "False Prophet" *thrown "alive"* into the *Lake of Fire*? (What does this "special" *punishment* "tell" us about *their "special" sin*?)
3. The *armies* are "slain" by the "sword *from His mouth*." How is "God's Word" a "sword" (Heb 4:12)?
4. The "birds" were "*gorged*." The "judgment" is *complete*. How does the "gruesome" *finality* of this "judgment" *motivate* your "evangelism"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Trust the Sword."

- The *only "weapon"* you *need* (and Christ "needs") is the "Sword of the Spirit... the *Word of God*" (Eph 6:17).
- *Today*, when you "battle" *sin* or *deception*...
- *Do not* "fight" with "earthly" *weapons* (anger, manipulation, power).
- *Fight* with the "sword": *Speak* (and *believe*) *God's Word*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God".)

"Lord God, The *Beast* and *kings* "gather." But *Your Word* remains.

"The *Prince of Darkness* grim, We *tremble not* for him; His *rage* we can *endure*, For lo, his *doom* is *sure*: One *little word* shall *fell* him.

"That *Word*... is *Jesus Christ*, our *Lord*. And *He* must *win* the *battle*. Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 3

The Binding of Satan (The Millennium)

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:1-3

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Unholy Trinity" (Conclusion):**
 1. Beast -> Captured (19:20).
 2. False Prophet -> Captured (19:20).
 3. **Dragon (Satan)** -> Now (20:2).
- **The "Angel":** A *single, unnamed* "angel" *seizes* the "Dragon." This is "humiliating" for Satan. *He* doesn't *warrant* "Christ's" *personal* "arrest."
- **"The Bottomless Pit" (Abyss):** This is the *same "pit"* from **9:1** (where the "locusts" *came from*). This is the "holding cell" for *demons*.
- **"Bound him for 1,000 years":** The "Millennium."
- **The "Purpose" (v. 3):** "**so that he might not deceive the nations any longer.**"
- **The "Mystery" (v. 3):** "After that he *must* be *released*..."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This is the *most debated* "prophetic" *passage in the Bible*. (Be "humble" here).

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Futurist):**
 - This is *literal* and *future*.
 - *After Christ returns* (Ch. 19)...
 - ...He *will bind* Satan...
 - ...and He (Christ) *will "reign" on this earth* (from *Jerusalem*)
 - ...for a *literal 1,000-year* "golden age" (the "Millennium").
 - *This "binding" is total.*
- **View 2: Amillennialism (Idealist/Historicist):**
 - This is *symbolic* and *present*.
 - The "1,000 years" (10x10x10) is a *symbolic "long time"* representing the *entire "Church Age"* (from Christ's *First Coming* to His *Second Coming*).
 - Satan was "*bound*" by **Christ's Cross and Resurrection** (John 12:31).
 - *How is he "bound"?* His "purpose" (v. 3) is *stopped*. He *cannot "deceive the nations" anymore*. (i.e., *before Christ, all "nations" were "deceived" in paganism. Now, the Gospel is going out to all "nations" and Satan "cannot stop it"*).
 - We are *living in* the "Millennium" *now*.
- **View 3: Postmillennialism:**
 - The "1,000 years" is a *future (or present) "golden age"* where the *Gospel will be so successful* that it "*binds*" Satan's "*influence*" *through the Church, before Christ "returns."*

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- The "**Four Names**" (v. 2): (Dragon, Serpent, Devil, Satan) - *Same as 12:9.*
- The "**Binding**" (Amil View):
 - **John 12:31:** (Jesus, *before* the Cross), "Now... the *ruler of this world* will be **cast out**."
 - **Matthew 12:29:** "How can one *enter a strong man's house*... unless he *first binds* the strong man? *Then* he can *plunder* his house." (Jesus "bound" Satan so *that* He could "plunder" his "house" - i.e., *save us*).
- The "**Binding**" (Premil View):
 - This is a *future* "fulfillment" *not* seen in the "past."
- The "**Pit**": **Luke 8:31**, (The *demons* "begged" Jesus *not* to "send them" to the "**abyss**").

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- Satan *is* on a "**Leash**": *Regardless* of your "view," this is *true*.
 - (Premil): He *will be* "bound."
 - (Amil): He *is* "bound."
- He *cannot* "**stop**" the "**Gospel**" (Amil): If you are *living "in"* the "1,000 years," *this is why* "evangelism" *works*. Satan *is "bound"* from *preventing* the "nations" from *hearing*.
- He *is not* "**All-Powerful**" (All Views): A *single "angel"* with a *single "chain"* "*seizes*" him. He is a *creature*. He is *not* "God."
- The "**Mystery**" (v. 3): God's *plan requires* a *final "test"* (the "release").

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is the Devil "*called*" all four "*names*" (v. 2)? (What does *each "name"* tell you about *his "character"*?)
2. Which "*view*" (Premil or Amil) "*makes the most sense*" to you (and *why*)?
3. (If Amil): How is Satan "*bound*" *now*? (What *can't* he do?).

4. (If Premil): *What* is the "purpose" of a *literal* "1000-year" "reign" on earth?
5. *Why* do you *think* God "must" *release* him for a "little while" (v. 3)?

Call to Action

Your call is to "live in the 'binding'."

- *Whether* he is "*bound*" (Amil) or *will be* "*bound*" (Premil)...
- ...*his* "*power*" over "*you*" (the "*saint*") is "*broken*".
- *Today*, identify one "*lie*" (a "deception," v. 3) that *Satan* "tells" you (e.g., "You are *not* forgiven," "You must 'sin'").
- Use your "authority" (in *Christ*) and "agree" with the "angel": "Satan, you are '*bound*'. You *cannot* 'deceive' me. You are '*cast out*'."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Martin Luther.)

"Lord God, The *Devil* is Your "*devil*". The "*chain*" is in Your "*angel's hand*". The "*key*" is Yours.

"Though *this world*, with *devils filled*, Should *threaten* to *undo us*, We *will not fear*, for *God has willed* His *truth* to *triumph through us*.

"The *Prince of Darkness* grim, We *tremble not* for him; His *rage* we can *endure*, For lo, his *doom is sure*: Your "*Word*" (Your "*Chain*") shall "*fell him*." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 4

The Thrones and the First Resurrection

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:4

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"I saw thrones...":** This is a *kingdom*. This is a *court*.
- **"Authority to judge":** This is the *fulfillment* of the *promise* to the *saints*.
- **"Two Groups" (or One?):**
 - "Those to whom... authority... was committed" (The *Elders / Apostles / all Saints*).
 - "The souls of those... beheaded..." (The *Martyrs*).
- **The "Martyrs" (Group 2):**
 - They were "beheaded" (the "Beast's" *punishment*, 13:15).
 - They "had *not* worshiped the beast" (they *refused* the "lie").
 - They "had *not* received its mark" (they *refused* the "economy," 13:17).
- **"They came to life":** This is the "First Resurrection" (v. 5).
- **"And reigned... for 1,000 years":** This is the "Millennium."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

This verse is *why* the "Millennium" *debate* (from yesterday) *exists*.

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Futurist):**
 - This is a *literal, physical* "First Resurrection" of *all dead saints* (and *living* "Tribulation" *saints*).
 - *They* (we) *then* "reign" *with* Christ *on this earth* for the *literal 1,000 years* (while *Satan* is "bound").
 - They "judge" (administer) the "world" *with* Christ.
- **View 2: Amillennialism (Idealist):**
 - This is *not* a "physical" *resurrection* (that *only* happens at the *end*, v. 11-15).
 - This is a *spiritual* "vision" of *what is happening in heaven right now*.*
 - "The souls..." (v. 4) -> These are *souls in heaven*.
 - "They came to life..." -> This is *not* "resurrection"; this is "they *lived*" (i.e., *when they "died" on earth*, they "came to life" *in heaven*).
 - "...and reigned..." -> They are "*reigning*" *with* Christ (in *heaven*) *right now*, "for" the *symbolic* "1,000 years" (the "Church Age").
- **Both views "agree" that the saints "reign" with "Christ."** The "debate" is *where* (earth or heaven?) and *when* (future 1000, or *present* "Church Age"?).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Thrones" (Judging):**
 - **Daniel 7:22**, "...and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the **saints possessed the kingdom**."
 - **Matthew 19:28**, (Jesus *to the "Apostles"*), "Truly, I say to you, in the *new world*... *you... will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*."
 - **1 Corinthians 6:2**, "Do you not know that the **saints will judge the world**?"
- **"Reigning" with Him:**
 - **2 Timothy 2:12**, "...if we *endure* [the "Beast"], we will also **reign with him**..."
 - **Revelation 5:10**, "and you have made them a *kingdom* and *priests*... and they **shall reign on the earth**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **You *Have* "Authority":**
 - (Amil): You are *already* "seated with Him in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:6). You *are* "reigning" *spiritually now*.
 - (Premil): You *will* "reign" *literally then*.
- **The "Cost" of the "Throne" (v. 4):**
 - The "qualification" *for* the "throne" is...
 - ...*"not* worshipping the beast,"
 - ...*"not* receiving the mark,"
 - ...and *being "faithful" unto "death"* ("beheaded").
- **The "Trade-Off":** The "Beast" (Ch. 13) *offers* "42 months" of "power" *if* you "take the mark." Christ (Ch. 20) *offers* "1000 years" of "reigning" *if* you "refuse the mark."
- **This is the *choice*:** A short "reign" *with the Beast*, or an *eternal* "reign" *with Christ*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision is *about* "thrones" and "judging." *We* (the "saints") *will "judge"*. *What* does that *mean*? (Hint: *Agreeing with* and *administering* "God's perfect" judgment).
2. The "list" of *those on the thrones* (v. 4) *specifically* "highlights" the *martyrs*. *Why* do the "martyrs" (those who "lost" *everything on earth*) get *such "high honor"* in *heaven*?
3. The *choice* is "Worship the Beast" (and "buy/sell" for *42 months*) or "Worship Christ" (and "reign" for *1000 years*). *Why* do so *many* "people" *choose* the "42 months"?
4. (Premil): *What* do you *think* "reigning on earth" for *1000 years* "looks like"?
5. (Amil): *What* does "reigning *in heaven* with Christ *now*" "look like"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Reign Today."

- You *are* (or *will be*) "given authority to judge."
- *Start* by "judging" *yourself* (1 Cor 11:31).
- *Then*, "reign" over "sin" in *your own life* (Romans 6:12).
- *Exercise* your "authority" *today* by *refusing* to "bow" to the "Beast's" *system* in *one specific area* of your *life* (your *money*, your *time*, your *allegiance*).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

- ...
- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on 2 Timothy 2:12.)

"Lord Jesus, The "Beast" *demand*s my "worship." The "world" *demand*s my "allegiance." But *You* "call" me to *endure*.

"The saying is trustworthy: For if we *died* with Him, we will also *live* with Him; if we *endure*, we will also **reign with Him**."

Give me the "grace" to endure "this day." Give me the "faith" to refuse the "mark." That I may "reign" with You... Now, and forever. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 5

The Second Death and the Blessed Priest

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:5-6

⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Rest of the Dead" (v. 5):** This *defines* "Group 2." These are the *wicked* dead (the "Beast-worshippers," the "unmarked"). They *stay "dead"* (in "Hades") *during* the "1000 years."
- **"This is the first resurrection" (v. 5):** The *angel defines* the "event" of v. 4 ("they came to life") as the "First Resurrection."
- **The "Blessing" (v. 6):** This is the **Fifth Beatitude** (Blessing) in Revelation.
- **"Holy... shares in the first resurrection":** The *qualification* for the "First Resurrection" is *holiness* (being a "saint," "washed in the blood").
- **"The Second Death has no power":**
 - **First Death:** *Physical* death (what the "Beast" *can do*, 13:15).
 - **Second Death:** *Eternal, spiritual* death (the "Lake of Fire," v. 14, what the *Beast suffers*, 19:20).
- **The "Job" (v. 6):** "Priests... and... reign."
 - This is the *final fulfillment* of the *original promise* to the *Church*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Two Resurrections" (This is the "Crux" of the "debate"):**
 - **Premillennialism (Literal):** This *proves* a "two-stage" *physical* "resurrection."
 1. "First Resurrection" (v. 4) -> *Saints* rise (at Christ's *Return*).
 2. *1000-year "reign"*.
 3. "Second Resurrection" (implied in v. 5) -> *Wicked* rise (*after* the 1000 years, *for judgment*).
 - **Amillennialism (Symbolic):** This is *not* "two *physical*" "resurrections." This is "two *types*" of "resurrection."
 1. "First Resurrection" -> *Spiritual* "resurrection" (i.e., being **"born again,"** John 5:24) or "dying and *going to heaven*" (as in 20:4, "souls... came to life").

2. "Second Resurrection" (v. 5, v. 12) -> The *one, final, general, physical* "resurrection" of *everyone* (both *saints* and *wicked*) *at the end of time* for judgment.

- **"The Second Death":**

- This is the "Lake of Fire" (v. 14).
- The "blessing" is *immunity*.
- If you "share" in the "First Resurrection" (you are "born again," or you are a "saint" *in heaven*), the "Second Death" (hell) *cannot "touch" you*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Two Resurrections" (Amil): John 5:24-25**, (Jesus *speaks*), "Truly... whoever *hears* my word and *believes*... **has passed from death to life**" (the "*First Resurrection*" *now, spiritually*). "...an hour is *coming*, and **is now here**, when the *dead* [spiritual] will *hear*... and *live*."
- **The "Two Resurrections" (General): John 5:28-29**, "...an hour is *coming* when *all* who are *in the tombs* [physical] will *hear* his voice... and come out, those who have done *good* to the **resurrection of life**, and those who have done *evil* to the **resurrection of judgment**."
- **The "Promise" (Fulfilled): Revelation 2:11**, (to *Smyrna*), "The one who *conquers* will *not be hurt* by the **second death**."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is Your "Blessed" Hope:** *This* is the "blessing" *for you* (if you are "in Christ").
- **"Blessed and holy":** Your *identity*.
- **"Second death has no power":** Your *security*.
 - The "Beast" *can* "inflict" the "first death" (martyrdom).
 - But he *cannot* "inflict" the "Second Death" (hell).
 - *Therefore*, "Do *not* fear *him* (the Beast)... *Fear Him* (God)..." (Matt 10:28).
- **Your "Job":** "Priests... and... reign."
 - **Priest:** You *have access* to God.
 - **King:** You *have authority* over *sin*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the *Fifth "Blessing"* in Revelation. *Who* is "blessed"? (*The one who "shares" in the "First Resurrection."*)
2. *What* is the "First Resurrection"? (Is it "physical" *future*? Or "spiritual" *now*?)
3. *What* is the "Second Death"?
4. *How* does "sharing" in the *First Resurrection* give you "immunity" from the "Second Death"?
5. What does it *mean* to *you* that you *will be* a "**priest of God**" and will "**reign with him**"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Live in the Blessing."

- *You are* (if you are *in Christ*) "Blessed and holy."
- The "Second Death" *has NO POWER* over you.
- *Today*, when you *feel "fear"* (of "death," of "man," of "failure")...
- ...*Verbally "remind"* Satan (the "Accuser") and "*remind*" yourself.
- **"You have no power over me. I have a part in the First Resurrection."**

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer of "thanksgiving" for the "Resurrection".)

"Lord Jesus, I was "dead" in my "sins." But *You* "called" me, and I "heard Your voice," and I "passed from death to life."

I have "shared" in the "First Resurrection." I am "blessed and holy."

Therefore, the "Second Death" (hell, the *Lake of Fire*) *has no power over me*. *Death* "has no sting."
The "Beast" "has no power."

Thank You for this "blessing." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 6

The Final Rebellion: Gog and Magog

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:7-10

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"When the 1000 years are ended...":** The "clock" *runs out*.
- **"Satan will be released...":** The "mystery" *from 20:3* ("he *must* be released") *happens*.
- **"Gog and Magog":** This is the "code-name" from **Ezekiel 38-39**. It represents the *ultimate, final, godless "horde"* from "off the map" that *attacks* God's *people*.
- **"The Battle" (v. 9):**
 - This is the *second "Armageddon."*
 - Satan's *final "army"* ("like the sand...")

- ...surrounds the "camp of the saints" (the "Church") / "the beloved city" (Jerusalem / "Zion").
- **The "Result" (v. 9):**
 - ...It's *not* a "battle." It's *another* "execution".
 - **"Fire came down from heaven and consumed them."**
 - (It is *identical* to the *end* of the "Two Witnesses" *enemies*, 11:5, and the *judgment* of Sodom).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Why Release Satan?**
 - This is the *final* "unmasking" of both "Satan" (his *unchangeable* "deceit") and "humanity" (its *unchangeable* "rebellion").
 - **Premil View:** This "proves" that *even after* "1000 years" of Christ's "perfect" "reign"... the "human heart" (in *those* "born" during that "time") is *still* "sinful" and *will* "rebel" the *second* it gets a "chance".
 - **Amil View:** This is *not* a "second" battle. This is a "re-telling" of the "Armageddon" battle (19:19-21) from the "spiritual" "angle" (Satan's "deception").
- **The "Final" End (v. 10):**
 - The "Devil" (Dragon, Satan)...
 - ...is *finally* "thrown" into the "Lake of Fire."
- **The "Reunion" in Hell:**
 - ...**"where the beast and the false prophet WERE."**
 - This *proves* (in the "Premil" view) that *1000 years* have *passed*, and the "Beast" and "Prophet" are *still* "there."
- **"Forever and ever":** The "torment" of the "Unholy Trinity" (and *all* the "wicked") is *conscious* and *eternal*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39.** This is the *source*.
 - **Ezekiel 38:22:** "I will rain upon him... **fire and sulfur.**"
- **The "Battle" (Fire): 2 Kings 1:10,** (Elijah *prays*), "...let **fire come down from heaven and consume you...**"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Incurable" Heart of Man:** This is the *final* "proof" of "Total Depravity."
 - *Even if* we had a "perfect environment" (the "Millennium," *Premil* view)...
 - ...the "sinful heart" would *still* "rebel."
- **This is why we need a "new heart" (Ezek 36:26), not just a "new "environment"."**
- **Satan's "End-Game": Deception.**
 - His *first* "act" (in the *Garden*) was "deception" (Gen 3).
 - His *last* "act" (in the *World*) is "deception" (Rev 20:8).
 - His *nature* never changes.
- **The "End" of the "Dragon":**
 - This is the "end" of the "war" from 12:7.
 - The "Dragon" *loses*.
 - The *Accuser* is "cast out" *forever*.
 - His "end" is *eternal torment*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does God "release" Satan (v. 7)? *What* does this "final test" *prove* about *humanity*?
2. The "final army" (v. 8) is "like the sand of the sea." The "battle" (v. 9) *still* "ends" in *one* "second." *What* does this *tell you* about the "power" of "man" *versus* the "power" of "God"?
3. The *Devil* (v. 10) is "thrown" *where* the "Beast" and "Prophet" *already* "were." *What* does this "reunion" "tell" you about the "future" of *all* "evil"?
4. The "torment" is "forever and ever." *Why* is the "doctrine" of "eternal torment" *necessary* (even if it's "unpopular")?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Choose Your 'Camp'."

- There are *only two* "camps" (v. 9):
 1. "The Camp of the Saints" (the "Beloved City").
 2. The "Army of Gog" (the "Deceived Nations").
- You "*choose*" your "camp" *today* by *choosing* "who" you "*trust*".
- *Today*, verbally "*renounce*" the "Deceiver" (Satan) and verbally "*pledge allegiance*" to the "Beloved City" (Christ).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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- ...
- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision".)

"O Lord God, My *heart* is Your "*camp*." But Satan "surrounds" it. He *gathers* his "armies" of *doubt*, *sin*, and *fear*. He *desires* to "consume" me.

I have no defense. Send "fire" from heaven... ...the purifying "fire" of Your Spirit. Consume my "enemies" (my sins). Protect Your "beloved city" (my soul).

Throw the "Deceiver" out, That You (and You alone) may reign "forever and ever." Amen.

Week 21 (Chapter 21): All Things New: The New Heaven, Earth, and Jerusalem

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 1

The Great White Throne

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:11

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Then I saw..."**: The "Gog/Magog" rebellion is over (20:10). The 1,000-year "reign" (in whatever form) is complete. This is the *final, ultimate* "courtroom" scene.
- **"A Great White Throne"**:
 - **"Great"**: It is *authoritative*. Its *jurisdiction* is *total*.
 - **"White"**: It is *pure*. Its *justice* is *perfect* and *unblemished* by corruption.
- **"Him who was seated on it"**: This is *God Himself*, the *Judge of all*. (The Father has "given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22), so this is *Christ* acting in the *full authority* of the *Father*).
- **"Earth and Heaven Fled Away"**: This is the *final "de-creation"* (or "un-creation") of the *old, sinful* order.
- **The "Old World's" Reaction**: In the *presence* of *His absolute holiness*, the *old, stained* "creation" *cannot* "stand." It *disintegrates*. It "flees" *from Him*.
- **"No place was found for them"**: The old, sinful universe is *gone*. This *clears the stage* for the "New Heaven and New Earth" (21:1).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is *Not* the "Bema Seat"**: This is *not* the "judgment seat of Christ" (1 Cor 3, 2 Cor 5) *for "believers"*. The "Bema" is for "saints" to be "judged" for *rewards*.
- **This *is* the "Great White Throne,"** which is the *final judgment* for **"the rest of the dead"** (20:5)—the *unbelievers* of *all ages*.
- **The "De-Creation"**: This is the *fulfillment* of the "Sixth Seal" (6:14, "the sky vanished") and the "Seventh Bowl" (16:20, "every island fled... mountains... gone"). What was "partial" *then* is "total" *now*.
- **The "Terror" of Holiness**: The *scariest part* of this "judgment" is *not* the "fire" (yet). It is the *Throne itself*. It is the *unbearable, crushing holiness* of the *Judge*, from which *all "un-holiness"* (the "old earth") *must flee*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Daniel's Vision**: Daniel 7:9, "As I looked, **thrones were placed**, and the *Ancient of Days* took his seat; his *clothing was white as snow*..."
- **Peter's Prophecy**: 2 Peter 3:10, 12, "...the **heavens will pass away with a roar**, and the *heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved*, and the **earth** and the works... will be *exposed*."
- **God's Presence**: Psalm 114:7, "**Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord**, at the *presence of the God of Jacob*..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Final" Judgment *is* "Coming"**: Our "culture" *hates* the "idea" of "judgment." *This "verse" proclaims* it. There *is* a "final 'day' in 'court'."
- **God's "Holiness" *is* the "Problem"**: The "problem" *for sin* is *not* "God's rules." It is "God's Face." His *mere "presence"* (His *purity*) "un-makes" *all "impurity."*

- ****There is *No "Hiding"*: **** "No place was found for them." You *cannot* "hide" from *this* "Judge." You *cannot* "flee" from His "presence."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This "Throne" is "Great" (authority) and "White" (purity). *Why* must "judgment" *have both* of "these" "qualities"?
2. The *old* "earth and heaven" *fled away*. *Why* must the "old, sinful" "world" be *totally "gone" before* the "new" *one* (21:1) *can come*?
3. The *Judge* is "Him who was seated." This is *Jesus* (John 5:22). *Why* is it *so important* that the "Judge" is the *same one* who was the "Lamb" (Savior)?
4. *This* "throne" *causes* the "earth to flee." *How* is *this* "throne" *different* from the "throne of *grace*" (Heb 4:16) that we are *invited* to "draw near to"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "flee to the Throne."

- The "unbeliever" *flees "from"* the "Great White Throne."
- The "believer" *flees "to"* the "Throne of Grace."
- *Today, practice "fleeing to" Him. When you "sin," do not "hide"* (like *Adam*). *Run* (like the *Prodigal Son*) *to the "throne" for "mercy"*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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- ...

Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "The Valley of Vision".)

"O Lord, My *sin* is "ever before me." Your *Throne* is "great" and "white." My "world" *deserves* to "flee" from Your "presence."

I have no "place" to "stand." I have no "plea" to "make."

My only "hope" is that my "Judge" is my "Savior," the "Lamb." My only "place" is in "Him." Hide me in His "wounds," That I may not "flee" from "Your Face." Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 2

The Books Are Opened

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:12-13

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to their deeds.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Dead, Great and Small":** This is the *same "equalizing" "list"* from 6:15 and 19:18. *All "human "rank"" is gone. "Kings" and "slaves" stand together as equals before this "Throne."*
- **"Death and Hades":**
 - **"Death":** The "state" of *physical "death."*
 - **"Hades":** The "holding place" of the *wicked "souls."*
 - *Both "realms" must "surrender" their "captives." Everyone is resurrected (this is the "Second Resurrection," v. 5).*
- **"Books were opened" (plural):** This is the *first "set"* of "evidence." This is the *perfect, divine "record"* of every *"deed"* (every *action, word, and thought*) of every *person*.
- **"Another book... the book of life" (singular):** This is the *second "set"* of "evidence." This is the *"Lamb's" registry of His "citizens"* (13:8).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is a "Judgment" *Based on Works*:**
 - *"judged... according to their deeds"* (v. 12).
 - *"judged... according to their deeds"* (v. 13).
- **This is *not* "Salvation by Works."** This is **"Condemnation by Works."**
- **The "Two-Part" "Trial":**
 - **Question 1 (The "Grace" question):** *"Is your name in the Book of Life?"*
 - If **"Yes"**: *...You are not at this judgment. (You were in the "First Resurrection," 20:6).*
 - If **"No"**: *...Proceed to "Question 2."*
 - **Question 2 (The "Works" question):** *"Let's open 'the books' (your 'deeds')."*
- **"The Books" (of Works) *Justify* the "Verdict" (of Hell):**
 - The *"deeds" (the "sins") recorded in "the books" prove that the "person" is "guilty" and justly "deserves" the "Second Death" (v. 15).*
 - *No one "at this judgment" can "say": "I was a 'good person'." The "books" will be "opened," and their "deeds" will "condemn them."*

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"The Books Opened": Daniel 7:10,** *"...The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened."*
- **"The Book of Life": Daniel 12:1,** *"...your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book."* (See also Phil 4:3, Rev 3:5).
- **"Judgment by Deeds":**
 - **Romans 2:6, 16:** *"He [God] will render to each one according to his works... on the day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."*
 - **Matthew 12:36-37:** *"I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak..."*

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Everyone *Will* Give an Account":** *This is the "reality" behind our "modern" relativism. There is an "objective "standard."* There is a "final "exam."**
- **"God's 'File' on You":** *"The books" are God's "perfect file" on you. He has the "video." Every "deed." Every "word."*
- **The "Good News" for the "Saint":** *If your "name" is in the "Book of Life," God "throws away" "the books" of your "deeds".*
 - *Why? Because Jesus "paid for" all of them.*
 - *"There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).*
- **The "Bad News" for the "Un-Saved":** *If your "name" is not in the "Book of Life," your "deeds" are all you have... and they "will condemn you".*

Daily Reflection Questions

1. *"The dead, great and small" (v. 12). Why is this "equalizing" of all "humanity" (kings, slaves, rich, poor) so essential to "God's justice"?*
2. *Two "sets" of "books" are "opened." What is the purpose of "the books" (plural)? What is the purpose of "The Book" (singular)?*
3. *Why are "people" "judged by their deeds," if "salvation is by grace"?*
4. *"Death and Hades" (v. 13) "gave up their dead." What does this "image" "teach" you about the "power" of God's "summons" (that even "Death" "must obey")?*

Call to Action

Your call is to "check the 'Book of Life'."

- *You "check" if your "name" is in "The Book"...*
- *...by "checking" if your "faith" is in "the Lamb".*
- *Today, re-affirm your "allegiance" away from "your deeds" (which "condemn" in "the books")*
- *...and re-affirm your "allegiance" to "His grace" (which "saves" in "The Book").*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from the "Dies Irae" ("Day of Wrath") hymn.)

"What shall I, "wretch"-like, "say"? How shall I "who" to pray, When even the "just" may "fear"?"

O King of "majesty" dread, Who "savest" the "saved" by "grace", Save me, O "Fount" of "pity"!

*My "deeds" are "in Your books." My name is not "in my works." Lord, is my "name" in "Your" Book?
By Your "grace," O Lamb, Let it be "so." Amen."*

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 3

The Second Death

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:14-15

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Death and Hades... thrown...":** This is the *end* of the *old order*. "Death" (the *enemy*, 6:8) and "Hades" (the *prison*) are "personified" as "*enemies*" and *executed*.
- **"Death" *itself* is "executed" in the "Lake of Fire."**
- **"This is the second death":** The *angel/vision* "defines" the "symbol."
 - **First Death:** *Physical* "death." (Separation of *soul/body*).
 - **Second Death:** *Spiritual, eternal* "death." (Separation *from God*).
- **"The Lake of Fire":** This is *Gehenna*. This is *Hell*. This is *not* "Hades" (the "holding cell"); this is the "final, permanent" *prison*.
- **The "Final 'If'" (v. 15):** "And *if* anyone's name..."
- **The "Verdict":** This is the *conclusion* of the "trial" (v. 12-13).
 - The "Book of Life" is the *only* "evidence" that "matters" for "acquittal."
 - If the "name" is *not* "*in*" the *book*...
 - ...the "person" is "*thrown*" into the *fire*.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "End" of *All* "Enemies":**
 - The "Harlot" (Babylon) -> Judged (Ch. 18).
 - The "Beast" (Antichrist) -> Captured (19:20).
 - The "False Prophet" -> Captured (19:20).
 - The "Dragon" (Satan) -> Captured (20:10).
 - "Death and Hades" -> *Now* (20:14).
- **The *Last* "enemy" (Death) is *finally* "destroyed."**
- **This *clears the stage* for Revelation 21:4, where "death *shall be no more*." "Death" cannot "*be no more*" until it is "thrown into the lake of fire."**
- **The "Qualification" for "Hell":**
 - The "qualification" for "hell" is *not* "being 'bad'."
 - The "qualification" for "hell" is "*not being 'in' the Book of Life*."
 - It is a "judgment" *based on "identity,"* not "just 'deeds.'"

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Death" as "Enemy": 1 Corinthians 15:26**, "The **last enemy** to be *destroyed* is **death**." (This *is* that "moment").
- **"The Lake of Fire": Revelation 19:20**. The *Beast* and *Prophet* are *already there*.
- **"The Second Death" (The "Promise")**: **Revelation 2:11**, (The *promise* to *Smyrna*), "The one who *conquers* will not be hurt by the **second death**." (This is the *fulfillment* of that *promise*).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is the "End" of "Death"**: We *live* "under the *tyranny*" of the "First Death." We *fear* it. We *fight* it. This is the "hope": *Death itself "loses."*
- **"Hell" is "Real"**: Our "culture" *mocks* "hell." This "verse" (and *Jesus* Himself, Matt 25:41) *affirms* it. It is the "Lake of Fire." It is *not* "annihilation" (19:20, 20:10); it *is* "torment." It *is* "the Second Death."
- **The *Only* "Fire Escape"**:
 - The *only "question"* that "matters" *at this "judgment"* is (v. 15): "Is your *name* in the *book*?"
 - This is the *ultimate "urgency"* of the *Gospel*.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision *personifies* "Death and Hades" (v. 14) as "enemies" who are *executed*. *Why* is it so *important* that "Death" *itself* is "judged" and "destroyed"?
2. The "angel" *defines* "The Lake of Fire" as "The Second Death." *What* is the "difference" *between* the "First Death" (physical) and the "Second Death" (spiritual)?
3. The *only* "criteria" for "avoiding" the "fire" (v. 15) is "being *found* in the *Book of Life*." *Why* do our "*deeds*" (v. 12) *not "count"* "at this "stage"?"
4. *How* does this "*final, "sobering"* verse "set the stage" for the "*joy*" of "Chapter 21"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Praise the "Conqueror" of Death."

- *Death* is the "Last Enemy."
- *Jesus* (by *His* "death" and "resurrection") *defeated* "Death."
- *Today*, listen to (or read the "*lyrics*" of) a "song" *about* "Christ's *victory* over the *grave*." (e.g., "In Christ Alone," "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," "Living Hope").
- *Thank Him* that "Death" *has no "sting"* (1 Cor 15:55) *for you*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "1 Corinthians 15".)

"O Lord, "Death is *swallowed up* in *victory*." "O death, where *is* your "sting"?" "O grave, where *is* your "victory"?"

"The "sting" of "death" is "sin," "and the "power" of "sin" is "the law."*

"But *thanks be to God!* He gives us the "victory" *through* our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank You that my "name" "is in Your Book." Thank You that the "Second Death" has no "power" "over me." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 4

The New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:1-2

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Then I saw...":** The "Throne" (20:11) *is gone*. The "Judgment" (20:15) *is over*. This is a *brand-new vision*.
- **"A New Heaven and a New Earth":** This is the *fulfillment* of the Jewish hope of "restoration."
- **"The First... had passed away":** This *is* the "fleeing" *from* 20:11. The "old, cursed" (Gen 3) *creation is gone*.
- **"The Sea was no more":** This is *shocking* to a 1st-century *reader*. The "sea" (Mediterranean) was "life" (commerce, travel).
- *But*, "spiritually," the "sea" *was*:
 - The *source* of the **Beast** (13:1).
 - The *symbol* of **Chaos** (v. "Abyss").
 - The *symbol* of **Separation** (it *separated* "nations," and it *separated* "John" (on *Patmos*) from his "churches").
- *****The 'New Earth' has no 'chaos' and no 'separation'.**
- **"New Jerusalem, coming down...":**
 - Our "hope" is *not* "we 'go up' to *heaven*."
 - Our "hope" is "heaven *comes 'down'* to *earth*."
 - This is the *union* of "heaven and earth."
- **"Prepared as a Bride":** This is the *fulfillment* of the "Marriage" (19:7). The "City" *is* the "Bride" (the *People*).

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"New" (Greek: *Kainos*):** The "word" *kainos* (new) *does not* mean "new in *time*" (*neos*). It means "new in *quality*."
- This is *not* "Creation 'Ex Nihilo'" (from "nothing").

- *This is "Creation "Renovated""*:* This is the "old, original" "heaven and earth" *purified by fire* (2 Peter 3:10) and *made "new"* (restored to "Eden").
- **The "New Jerusalem" IS the "Church"**:
 - The "City" (the *place*) is *described* as the "Bride" (the *people*).
 - *We* (the "Church") *are* the "New Jerusalem."
 - *We* "come down" *with Christ* (19:14) *to* the "New Earth."
- **The "Adornment"**:
 - The "Harlot" (17:4) "adorned *herself*" (with *gold/pearls*).
 - The "Bride" (21:2) is "*adorned* for her husband" (with *His "righteousness,"* 19:8).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "New Creation"**: Isaiah 65:17, "For behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**, and the *former things* shall *not be remembered...*"
- **"No More Sea"**: Isaiah 57:20, "But the *wicked* are like the **troubled sea**... it *cannot* be *quiet...*" (The *wickedness* is *gone*).
- **The "Bride"**: Isaiah 61:10, "...as a *bride adorns herself* with her *jewels*." (The "*jewels*" *are* the "saints," 21:11, 19).

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **This is Our *Real* "Hope"**: Our "hope" is *not* "dying and *leaving* 'earth'." Our "hope" is "dying and *waiting* for the "New Earth."*
- **Our *Final* "Home" is *Physical***: We *will have* "resurrected *bodies*" (1 Cor 15) *living* on a "resurrected *earth*" (Rev 21) *with* our *Resurrected "King."*
- **"No More Sea" = "No More Chaos"**: *All* the "chaos" of our *current "world"* (the "Beast," the "wars," the "anxiety," the "separation") *will be gone*.
- **"Heaven Comes to Us"**: We *don't* "escape" *to* "God." *God "invades" and "comes down" to us.*

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the *start* of the "Eternal State." *Why* does John *start* by *telling us* what is "*gone*" ("first earth... sea was no more")?
2. *Why* is the "fact" that the "sea was no more" *such "Good News"*? (What *does* the "sea" *represent*?)
3. Our "hope" is "*heaven coming down to earth.*" *How* is this "hope" *different* (and *better*?) than the "pop-culture" "hope" of "*floating up* on a 'cloud'?"
4. The "City" *is* the "Bride." *How* does *this "metaphor"* (we *are* the "city") *change* "how you *view*" "the Church"?

Call to Action

Your call is to "Long for 'No More Sea'."

- The "sea" is the "chaos" and "separation" *in your life*.
- *Today, identify one "sea"* (a "chaotic" "relationship," a "separating" "distance," a "Beast-like" "system" that "*scares*" you).
- *Thank God* that *in the "New Earth,"* that "sea" *will be "no more"*.
- *Long for that "Day"*.

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from "World's End" by C.S. Lewis.)

"Lord, We *long* for the "New Creation." We *long* for the "land" *without* the "sea."

"The "leafy" "country" *at the "end"* of the "world." The "mountain" we "have been "looking for"" *all our "lives."*

You are the "King." We are the "Bride." *Come down*, O "New Jerusalem." *Make Your "tabernacle"* with "us." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 5

The "Tabernacle" and the "No More" List

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:3-4

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"A Loud Voice from the Throne":** This is the "official *proclamation*" of the "New Covenant" *reality*.
- **"The Dwelling Place...":** The Greek is *skene* (σκήνη), the **"Tabernacle."**
- **The "History" of the "Tabernacle":**
 - **Eden:** God "walked" *with* Adam (Gen 3:8). (Lost).
 - **Wilderness:** God "dwelt" *in a "Tent" (Tabernacle)* "among" His "people" (Ex 25:8).
 - **Jerusalem:** God "dwelt" *in a "Temple"* (1 Kings 8).
 - **Incarnation:** The "Word *became flesh*" and **"tabernacled"** (*skene*) *among us* (John 1:14).
 - **New Jerusalem (v. 3):** God *Himself* "will **tabernacle**" *with us "forever."*
- **The "Covenant" (v. 3):** "He... will be their God... they... his people." This is the *fulfillment* of the *entire "Covenantal promise"* of the *whole Bible*.
- **The "No More" List (v. 4):** This is the *result* of God's "*presence*."
 - *Because "God is with us"...*
 - *...Therefore, "death" (20:14), "mourning, crying, pain" (the "curses") are "gone."*

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- This is **"Immanuel"**: The "name" *Immanuel* (Isaiah 7:14) means **"God With Us."** This "verse" (v. 3) is the *final, eternal fulfillment* of "Immanuel."
- The **"Source" of "Heaven" is Not "Harps"**:
 - The "joy" of "heaven" is *not* "golden streets."
 - The "joy" of "heaven" (v. 3) is *un-interrupted, direct, personal "presence" with God.*
- The **"Great Wipe-Away" (v. 4)**:
 - This is *not* "God stops the 'tears'."
 - This is "God *personally* *"bends down"*" and **"wipes away"** the "tears" *that are "already there."*
 - This *implies* that we "carry" the "memory" of our "earthly" "sorrows" *into* "heaven"...
 - ...*only* to "have God Himself *personally* "heal" them."
- **"The Former Things... Passed Away"**: This is the *old order* ("fled," 20:11). All "sin" and "all results" of "sin" (death, pain) are *gone*.

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- The **"Covenant"**: Leviticus 26:11-12, "I will set my **tabernacle** among you... And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people."
- The **"Wipe Away Tears"**: Isaiah 25:8, "he will swallow up **death forever**, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces..."
- **"No More Pain"**: Isaiah 65:19, "...and the sound of **weeping** shall no more be heard in it, nor the cry of distress."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- This is **Why "Jesus" Came**: The *whole point* of the "Gospel" is *this "verse."* It is *not* "to get us *"into"* heaven." It is "to get God *"back to"* us."
- The **"Cure" for All "Pain"**:
 - Every "pain" we feel (physical, emotional)...
 - Every "tear" we cry (grief, sadness)...
 - Every "fear" we have (of "death")...
- ...*This "promise" (v. 4) is the only "antidote."*
- **God's Intimacy**: Our "God" is *not* "distant." He is a "God" who *personally* "wipes away" "tears." This is the "intimacy" we were *"made for."*

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "goal" of "salvation" is "God with us" (v. 3). How does *this "goal"* "change" your "view" of "what "heaven" is?"
2. Why does "God Himself" have to be "present"... in order "for" "death, mourning, and pain" to "go away"?
3. The *image* (v. 4) is *not* "there are no tears." It is "He will wipe away every tear." Why is this *active, personal "wiping"* "so much more *"comforting"*?"
4. What "former thing" (a "pain," a "sorrow," a "sin") are you "most looking forward" "to "having pass away"?"

Call to Action

Your call is to "long for the Tabernacle."

- We get "addicted" to the "former things" (this "world").
- Today, meditate on this "promise".
- Let this "hope" (*no more death, no more pain, God *with me*)
- ...loosen your "grip" on this "world".
- Pray: "Lord, make me "long"" for the "New Jerusalem."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of "longing".)

"O Lord God, You *are* our "God," and we *are* "Your "people."* You *are* our "Dwelling Place."

We *live* in a "world" of *tears, death, mourning, and pain*. We "groan." We "wait."

We *long* for the "Day" when "You Yourself" *will be "with us."* We *long* for "Your "Hand"" to "wipe away" our "*tears*."

Let the "former things" "pass away." *Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 6

"It Is Done!" & The Thirsty Invited

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:5-6

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"He who was seated on the throne":** This is **God the Father Himself** "speaking." This is one of the *clearest "direct quotes"* from the *Father* in the *Bible*.
- **"Behold, I am making all things new":** (Greek: *Kainos*, "new in *quality*," *not* "new in *time*"). This is *re-creation* and *restoration*.

- **"Write this down...":** This is the *opposite* of the "Seven Thunders" (10:4, "Do *not* write..."). This "promise" is the *central guarantee* of all "Scripture". It *must* be "written."
- **"It is done!":** (Greek: *Gegonan*). This is the *second* "*Gegonan*" (16:17).
 1. **16:17:** The 7th Bowl is poured, and Wrath is "Done!"
 2. **21:6:** The New Creation is revealed, and Restoration is "Done!"
- **"Alpha and the Omega...":** He (God) *started* "it" (Genesis 1, "Beginning") and *He finishes* "it" (Rev 21, "End").
- **"To the thirsty...":** This is the *Gospel call in the "midst"* of "heaven." *Even "in" "eternity,"* the *character* of God is "Generosity."

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"I am *making*..." (v. 5):** This is "present tense."
 - (Amil View): God *is* "*making*" "all things new" *right now* (in the *Church*, in your "*heart*").
 - (Futurist View): This is the "prophetic present," *describing* the "New Creation" event.
- **The "Gospel" in v. 6:**
 - **The "Call":** "To the *thirsty*..."
 - **The "Offer":** "...the *spring of the water of life*..."
 - **The "Price":** "...*without payment*" (*dorean* - "freely," as a *gift*).
- **This is *Sola Gratia* ("Grace Alone").** The *last "invitation"* in the "Bible" (before 22:17) is "salvation is *free*."

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"All things new":** Isaiah 43:19, "Behold, I am *doing a new thing*..."
- **"Alpha and Omega":** Revelation 1:8, "I am the **Alpha and the Omega**..."
- **"The Thirsty":** This is *Jesus's "call"* and *Isaiah's "call."*
 - **Isaiah 55:1:** "Come, everyone who *thirsts*, come to the waters; and he who *has no money*... **Come, buy... without money and without price.**"
 - **John 7:37:** "...Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone *thirsts*, let him *come to me* and *drink*.'"

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God is the "Re-Creator":** God *doesn't "scrap"* "broken "things"*; He "makes them *new*."
 - He *doesn't "scrap"* "your old *life*".
 - He "makes you" a "**new creation**" (2 Cor 5:17).
 - This "verse" (v. 5) is the *promise* for your "*sanctification*" *now*... and your "*glorification*" *then*.
- **"It is Done!":** Our "salvation" is "finished" (*Tetelestai*). Our "new "world"" is "finished" (*Gegonan*). We *live* "in the *middle*," but *both "ends"* are secured by His "*Word*."
- **The "Only" "Qualification":** The *only "qualification"* "you need" to receive "eternal life" is...
 - ...to be "*thirsty*."
- It's *not* "to the good." It's *not* "to the worthy." It's "to the *thirsty*."
- If you *know* you are "thirsty" (you "need" Him), *He "will give"* "freely."

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is *God the Father* "speaking" (v. 5). *What* is the "power" in "*hearing*" "this "promise"" ("I make all things new") *directly* "from the *Throne*"?

2. God *commands* John to **"Write this down."** Why was this "promise" so important to "preserve" in "writing"?
3. God *book-ends* "history" ("Alpha/Omega"). How does "His "sovereignty"* "over Time" "give you "peace"" in "your "time""?
4. The "invitation" (v. 6) is *only* "to the *thirsty*." Are you "*thirsty*"? (Or are you "trying" to "quench your own "thirst"" with "Babylon's "wine""?)

Call to Action

Your call is to "Be Thirsty" and "Drink Freely."

- *Admit* your "thirst."
- *Stop "trying"* to "pay" God "for "it"" (with "good deeds").
- *Today, in prayer*, "picture" yourself "kneeling" at His "spring" (v. 6)...
- ...and "drink" the "water of life" *freely, without payment*.
- *Just "receive"* "His "grace.""

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on Isaiah 55.)

"Lord God, *I am "thirsty."* I have "*no money.*"

You *are* the "Alpha and Omega." You *are* the "Beginning and the End."

You say, "Come." You say, "Drink." You *offer* me the "spring of the water of life" "*Without payment.*"

Lord, I *drink*. I *receive*. *Thank You* for this "gift." Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 1

The Hallelujah Chorus: Heaven Rejoices over Justice

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:1-3

¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

³ Once more they cried out,

"Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"After this...":** Immediately after the "funeral" for Babylon *on earth* (Chapter 18), the scene shifts to the *celebration in heaven*.
 - **"Hallelujah":** This Hebrew word (*Praise Yahweh*) is used *only* four times in the New Testament, *all* in this single chapter. It is the great, climactic "Hallel" (praise) of heaven.
 - **The "Reason" (v. 2):** Heaven is *not* praising God *despite* the judgment; they are praising Him *because* of it. His judgments are "true and just."
 - **"Avenged... the blood":** This is the *direct answer* to the martyrs' cry from the fifth seal: "**How long, O Lord... before you... *avenge our blood*?**" (6:10). That "prayer" is now *answered*.
 - **"Smoke... forever" (v. 3):** This confirms the *eternality* and *finality* of the "Harlot" system's destruction.
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Joy of Justice":** This passage is our "corrective." We are often uncomfortable "cheering" for "judgment." Heaven is *not*. Heaven *rejoices* when evil is *finally* and *justly* punished, because God's *holiness* is *vindicated* and His *people* are *avenged*.
 - **The Two "Songs":**
 - **Chapter 18 (Earth):** The *world* (kings, merchants) *mourns* because their *economy* is gone.
 - **Chapter 19 (Heaven):** The *saints* (multitude) *rejoice* because their *enemy* is gone.
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Hallelujah":** The *Psalms of Praise*. **Psalms 106:48**, "Blessed be the LORD... And let all the people say, 'Amen! Hallelujah!'"
 - **"Avenging Blood":** **Deuteronomy 32:43**, "Rejoice with him, O heavens... for he will **avenge the blood of his servants** and will repay vengeance on his adversaries..."
 - **"Smoke Forever":** **Isaiah 34:10**, (a judgment on *Edom*), "Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever."
-

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our "Value System":** This is the great "divide." *Do you "weep" when "Babylon" (the world's "system") "falls"? Or do you rejoice? Where is your "treasure"?*
 - **God is Just:** This is our *hope*. God *does not* "let evil win." He *is not* "indifferent" to the *suffering* of His "saints." His "justice" *will* "come."
-

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *world* (Ch. 18) *mourns* the "fall of Babylon," but *heaven* (Ch. 19) *rejoices*. What does this *tell you* about the *difference* in "value systems" (Heaven vs. Earth)?
 2. The *reason* for the "Hallelujah" is God's "*judgment*" (v. 2). *Why* are we (in the "West") so *uncomfortable* with "praising God" *for* His "wrath"?
 3. How does the *fact* that God "avenged the blood of his servants" *fulfill* the *prayer* of the *martyrs* in 6:10?
 4. What is "Babylon" *today*? And *why* should we *long* for its "judgment"?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Re-calibrate your 'Hallelujah'."**

- *Today, read Psalm 136.*
 - *Notice* that the *same* "*Hallelujah*" ("His love endures forever") is *given for* "Creation" (v. 4-9) *and for* "Judgment" (v. 17-20, "who *struck down* great kings").
 - *Practice* "thanking God" *for His Justice*.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on the "Hallelujah".)

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power *belong to You, our God!* For Your *judgments* are *true and just*. You are "judging" the "Harlot" *system* of our *world*. You are "avenging" the *blood* of Your *servants*.

We *trust* Your *justice*. We *praise* Your *holiness*. **Hallelujah!** Amen."

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 2

The Full Heavenly Chorus

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:4-6

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

⁵ And from the throne came a voice, saying,

"Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Crescendo" of Worship:** This is a *building* "symphony."
 1. **Movement 1 (v. 1):** The *Saints* shout.
 2. **Movement 2 (v. 4):** The *Heavenly "Court"* (Elders/Creatures from Ch. 4) *affirms* it with **"Amen! Hallelujah!"**
 3. **Movement 3 (v. 5):** A *Throne-Angel* commands "everyone" to *join*.
 4. **Movement 4 (v. 6):** *Everyone* ("the great multitude") *joins* in a *final, thunderous* "Hallelujah!"
 - **"Small and great" (v. 5):** This is a *democratic* "call." In "Babylon," *only* the "great" (kings, merchants) *mattered*. In God's "Kingdom," *everyone* ("small and great") *is included* in the "call to praise."
 - **The "Reason" (v. 6):** "For the Lord our God... **reigns**." The *judgment* of "Babylon" (Ch. 18) *is the proof* that He *"reigns."*
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Amen" to Justice:** The "Elders" (representing the *full Church*) and the "Creatures" (representing *all Creation*) *see* the "judgment" (v. 2) and *add their* "Amen" ("So be it," "It is true"). *All of God's creation* is "in *agreement*" that "His *judgment*" is *right*.
 - **The "Call to Worship" (v. 5):** This is the *job* of the "Throne-Room." It *calls all* of God's *servants* (on *earth* and in *heaven*) to *join* the "song."
 - **"The Almighty Reigns":** This is the *central fact* of the *universe*. The "Beast" *seemed* to "reign" (Ch. 13). The "Harlot" *seemed* to "reign" (Ch. 17). *But...* that was an *illusion*. God "reigns."
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"Praise... small and great":** This is *pure "Psalms" language*.
 - **Psalms 135:1, 20:** "Praise the LORD! ...you *servants* of the LORD... You *who fear the LORD*, praise the LORD!"
 - **Psalms 115:13:** "he will bless *those who fear the LORD*, both **small and great** alike."
 - **"The LORD Reigns":** This is the "enthronement" *song* of the *Psalms*. **Psalms 97:1**, "The **LORD** reigns, let the earth *rejoice*...!"
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **"Amen" to All of God's Character:** We *must* be "people" who say "*Amen*" not just to "His mercy," but also "to His *justice*."
 - **The "Equal-Opportunity" Choir:** "Small and great." This is the *opposite* of the "Beast's" system (which also "marked" the "small and great," 13:16, but for *slavery*). God's "Kingdom" *unites* the "small and great" in *praise*.
 - **The "Sound" of Truth:** The *truth* (v. 6) is "like the *roar* of many waters." It is *not* "timid." It is "thunderous."
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. The "Elders" (Church) and "Creatures" (Creation) *wait* for the "Saints" (Martyrs) to *sing first*. What does this "order" *tell you* about the "honor" God *gives* to the *persecuted*?
 2. The "Voice" (v. 5) *commands* praise. Why is "worship" *both* an "emotion" (joy) *and* a "command" (duty)?
 3. What is the *comfort* in *knowing* that the "small" *and* the "great" *sing the same song* in *heaven*?
 4. The "final" "Hallelujah" (v. 6) is "He *reigns*." How does "that "fact"" "help "you"" "when "it "looks "like"" "the "Beast" "is "reigning"" "on "earth""?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Say 'Amen' to His Reign."**

- *Today, find one "area" "in "your "life"" (or "in "the "world"" "where "it "looks "like"" chaos "is "reigning.""*
 - *Stop. Look at that "chaos".*
 - *And "speak" "heaven's "truth"" "at "it"": "Amen. Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."*
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer from Psalm 115.)

Lord God, You *are* in the *heavens*; You *do* "whatever You please."

The "idols" of "Babylon" are *silver and gold*... They *cannot see or hear or speak*.

We will *trust* in You, O LORD! You are our *help* and our *shield*.

You will bless "those who fear You," Both "small and great" alike.

Amen. Hallelujah!

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 3

The Marriage of the Lamb

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:7-8

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Reason" for the "Hallelujah":** The *first* "Hallelujah" (v. 1) was "*Babylon is judged.*" The *second* "Hallelujah" (v. 7) is "*The Bride is ready.*"
 - **The "Marriage":** In 1st-century Jewish culture, a "marriage" had two *stages*:
 - The **Betrothal** (*Erusin*): The "covenant" was *made*. (This *is* the "Church Age").
 - The **Marriage Feast** (*Nisu'in*): The "groom" *comes* for his "bride" and *brings her* to the "feast."
 - **The "Feast" *is ready*.**
 - **The "Bride" vs. "Harlot":** This is the *climax* of the "contrast."
 - **The "Harlot" (Ch. 18):** *Destroyed.*
 - **The "Bride" (Ch. 19):** *Revealed.*
 - **The "Dress" (v. 8):**
 - **Harlot's "Dress" (17:4):** "Purple, scarlet, gold, jewels" (self-adorned *luxury*).
 - **Bride's "Dress" (19:8):** "Fine linen, bright and pure" (*divine* purity).
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The "Fall" *Leads to* the "Marriage":** The *judgment* of "Babylon" (the "Harlot") in Ch. 18 is *what "clears the stage"* for the wedding of the "Bride" in Ch. 19. The *false "bride"* (the idolatrous system) *must be "destroyed" before* the *true "Bride"* (the Church) *can be "presented."*
- **"Fine Linen *IS...* righteous deeds":** John *defines* the *symbol*. This is *not* "the 'deeds' that saved them." This *is* the "deeds" (the "fruit," the "works") that *flowed from* their "salvation."
- **The "Paradox" of the "Dress":**
 - **v. 7:** "His Bride has *made herself ready...*" (Our *action / obedience*).
 - **v. 8:** "It was *granted her...*" (God's *grace / salvation*).
- **Conclusion:** Our "righteous deeds" (the "dress") are *only possible* because of God's "*grace*" (the "granting"). We *work out* (deeds) what *He "works in"* (grace).

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Bride" of Christ: Ephesians 5:25-27**, "Christ *loved the church* and *gave himself up* for her... that he might *present the church to himself* in *splendor*, without spot or wrinkle... that she might be *holy and without blemish* [bright and pure]."
- **The "Righteous Robe": Isaiah 61:10**, "...he has *clothed me* with the *garments of salvation*; he has *covered me* with the *robe of righteousness*, as a *bridegroom* decks himself... and as a *bride* adorns herself..."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our "Identity":** We are *not* a "Harlot" (living for the "world"). We *are* the "Bride" (living for the "Lamb").
- **"Making Herself Ready":** This is *our job* in *this* age. We are *not* "waiting for the wedding." We are "getting ready for" the wedding.
- **How?** By *allowing* God to "grant" us "righteous deeds." We "clothe ourselves" in "purity" *by* "walking" in the *Spirit* (Gal 5).

Daily Reflection Questions

1. The *Harlot* (17:4) *dressed herself* in "gold/jewels." The *Bride* (19:8) *is "granted"* a "linen" *dress*. What is the *difference* between "self-adornment" and "God-granted" *clothing*?
2. The "dress" *is* "the righteous deeds of the saints." *What "deeds"* (actions, words, thoughts) are you "*weaving*" into your "wedding dress" *this week*?
3. If *this* (the "Marriage") is the *goal*, how does that *change* your "motivation" for "doing good deeds" *today*?
4. *How* do both "she *made herself* ready" (v. 7) and "it was *granted* her" (v. 8) *work together*?

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Put on the Dress."** The "Bride" is "making herself ready."

- *Today*, "put on" *one* "righteous deed" *that you do not want to do*.
- (e.g., *Forgive* someone, *serve* someone, *be patient* when you *want* to be *angry*).
- *As you do it*, "picture" it as you "*weaving*" *one more "thread"* into your "fine linen, bright and pure."

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer for the "Bride".)

O Christ, our *Lamb*, our *Groom*, The *Harlot* is "fallen." The *Marriage* "has come."

Lord, *we are* Your "Bride." *Forgive us* for "running" after the "Harlot's gold." *Cleanse us* of our "filthy rags."

Grant us the "fine linen." *Clothe us* in Your "righteousness." *Make us ready* for the "Feast." Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 4

The Supper & The Spirit of Prophecy

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:9-10

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Invitation" (v. 9):** The *angel commands* John to "Write" the *fourth* "Beatitude" (Blessing) of Revelation.
 - **"Blessed are those who are invited...":** This is the *Gospel call*. *Blessed* are those who *RSVP "Yes."*
 - **John's "Mistake" (v. 10):** John is *so overwhelmed* that he *makes a mistake* and "fell down... to worship" the *angel*.
 - **The "Rebuke" (v. 10):** The *angel is horrified*. **"You must not do that!"**
 - **Why?** "I am a *fellow servant*." (We are on the *same "level"*).
 - **The "True Identity":** The *angel* defines *both* "himself" *and* "John" (the "saints") as *those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus."*
 - **The "Command":** "Worship God!"
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **"The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy":** This is one of the *most important "key"* verses in the *entire Bible*.
 - **What does it mean?**
 - The "testimony *about* Jesus" (what we "testify" *about* Him) is the *essence* ("spirit") of *all "prophecy"*.
 - **The "Best" View:**
 - The *entire "spirit" / "essence" / "point"* of *all "prophecy"* (all of the *Old Testament*, *all* of the *Prophets* - Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Ezekiel) ... *is ... The Testimony of Jesus*.
 - **All "prophecy" points to JESUS.**
 - **The "Angel's" Logic:** "Don't *worship me* [the "prophet"/angel]. I *am just* a 'servant.' My *only job* is to "hold the testimony." *Worship GOD...* because the *only "point"* of my "*prophecy*" (this *whole book*) is to "testify" *about HIM* (Jesus)."
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The "Invitation": Luke 14:16-24** (The "Parable of the *Great Supper*"). God "invited many"... but *they "made excuses."*
 - **"Worshipping Angels":** This was a *specific "heresy"* in *Asia Minor*. **Colossians 2:18:** "Let no one... *insist on... the worship of angels...*"
 - **"Worship God *Only*": Matthew 4:10**, (Jesus *to Satan*), "You shall **worship the Lord your God**, and *him only* shall you serve."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **You are "Invited":** *This* is the "Gospel call." *You* are "invited" to the "Marriage Supper." *Have you RSVP'd "Yes"?*
 - **The "Temptation" to "Worship the Angel":** We "worship" the *messenger* (the "pastor," the "author," the "prophet"). We "worship" the *experience* (the "miracle," the "sign"). The *angel* "rebukes" *this*.
 - **The "Litmus Test":** This *is* our "litmus test" for *all "prophecy."*
 - Does a "prophet" (a "pastor," a "teacher") *point you to Jesus?*
 - Or do they *point you to "themselves," "a new secret," "an angel,"* or "a *political party*"?
 - **If the end-result is *not* "Jesus"... it is *not* "the spirit of prophecy."**
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the *4th "Beatitude"*: "Blessed are those *invited...*" How is "being *invited*" *different* from "earning" *your way in*?
2. John *himself* (the *Apostle!*) *made the mistake* of "worshipping an angel." How does *his "mistake"* "comfort" *you* when you "make mistakes"?
3. The *angel* (a *glorious being*) *insists* he is *only* a "fellow servant." How does this "humility" of *heaven* "challenge" the *pride* of *earth*?
4. "The testimony of Jesus *is* the spirit of prophecy." How does *this "key"* "unlock" the *Old Testament* (Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah) *for you*?

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Worship God Only."**

- *Identify one "angel" (a "messenger," a pastor, a leader, an ideology) that you admire so "much" that you are tempted to "worship" it (or its "opinions") more than God.*
- *Today, practice the "rebuke": **"You must not do that!"***
- *Re-direct your "worship" only to "God."*

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on v. 10.)

Lord God, You *alone* are *worthy* of "worship." I am *just* a "fellow servant." My *pastor* is a "fellow servant." The *angels* are "fellow servants."

Forgive me for "worshipping" *anything* or *anyone else*.

Let the *spirit* of all "*prophecy*" (all my "*Bible study*") be *only* the "*testimony of Jesus*." *He* is the *only* "King." *He* is the *only* "Lamb." *Worship God!* Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 5

The Rider on the White Horse: The Warrior-King

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:11-16

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a

rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Heaven Opened":** This is *it*. This is the **Second Coming**.
 - **"A White Horse":** This is the "General's" horse, a *symbol of victory and triumph*.
 - **The "Rider" vs. "Rider" (The Contrast):**
 - **1st Horseman (Rev 6:2):** "White horse," "a bow," "a crown" (*stephanos* - "victor's" wreath). This was the *Antichrist* (the "Conqueror").
 - **This Rider (Rev 19:11):** "White horse," "a sword" (v. 15), "many *diadems*" (royal "kingly" crowns). This is the *Christ*.
 - **"Robe dipped in blood" (v. 13):**
 - **View 1:** His *own* sacrificial *blood* from the *Cross*.
 - **View 2:** The *blood* of His *enemies* from the "winepress" (14:20).
 - **Both:** His *authority* (v. 15) to "judge" *stems from* His *sacrifice* (v. 13).
 - His **"Weapon"** (v. 15): "A sharp sword... *from his mouth*." His *Word* is the *weapon*.
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **This is Not "Gentle Jesus":** This is *Warrior-King* Jesus. This is the "Lion" *from Chapter 5*. His "war" is *based on* "righteousness" (v. 11).
 - **His "Names" (His Identity):**
 1. **"Faithful and True" (v. 11):** His *Character*.
 2. **"A Name... No One Knows" (v. 12):** His *Divinity* (He is *infinite*).
 3. **"The Word of God" (v. 13):** His *Identity* (John 1:1).
 4. **"KING OF KINGS..." (v. 16):** His *Authority*.
 - **The "Armies of Heaven" (v. 14):** This is *us* (the "Bride," "clothed in fine linen," v. 8). We are *not* "fighters"; we are "followers." We "follow" *Him* as *He* "makes war."
 - **His "Actions" (v. 15):**
 1. "Strike... nations" (with His *Word*).
 2. "Rule... rod of iron" (Fulfills *Psalms* 2:9).
 3. "Tread the winepress" (Fulfills *14:19-20*).
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **"The Word of God":** John 1:1, 14, "In the beginning was the **Word**... And the **Word** became flesh..."
 - **The "Bloody Robe":** Isaiah 63:3, "I have *trodden the winepress* alone... their *lifeblood* stained all my garments."
 - **The "Sword-Mouth":** Isaiah 11:4, "...he shall *strike the earth* with the **rod of his mouth**, and with the *breath of his lips* he shall *slay the wicked*."
 - **"King of Kings":** Deuteronomy 10:17, "For the LORD your God is God of gods and **Lord of lords**..."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The "Real" Jesus:** We *must* "worship" the *whole* "Jesus." *Not just* the "Lamb," but *also* the "King who makes war in righteousness."
 - **Our "Battle":** Our "army" (the Church) *follows* the "King." Our "weapon" is *not* a "physical sword"; our "weapon" is *His "Word"* (the "sword from His mouth").
 - **His "Name":** His "authority" ("King of Kings") is *supreme* "over" every "Beast" *and* "every government" "on earth."
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the "Rider" in 6:2 (Antichrist) with the "Rider" in 19:11 (Christ). What is the *biggest "difference"* that *stands out* to you?
 2. His "robe" is "dipped in blood" (v. 13). How does *this "one image"* "link" His *First Coming* (the Cross) with His *Second Coming* (the Judgment)?
 3. The *only "weapon"* "the "King "uses"" is "the "sword "from "His "mouth""* (v. 15). If "*His "Word"*" "is "that "powerful,""" "how "seriously"" "should "we "take"" "His "Word"" (*the "Bible"*) "today"?
 4. His "final name" (v. 16) is "KING OF KINGS...". *Is He* "King" of your *thoughts*? *Is He* "Lord" of your *actions*?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Know *This* Jesus."**

- We *"like"* the "Jesus" who "loves us."
 - We *must "also"* "worship" the "Jesus" who "is Faithful and True" and "in *righteousness... makes war.*"
 - *Today, read Psalm 2.*
 - *Worship Him as the "Anointed King" who will "rule" with a "rod of iron."*
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer based on "King of Kings".)

O Lord Jesus Christ, You *are* "Faithful and True." You *are* "The Word of God." You *are* the **"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

I am in "Your army." My *only* "uniform" is the "fine linen" You "*granted*" me.

Help me to *stop* "*fighting*" in "my "own "strength."" Help me to *start* "*following*"" "You."

Let Your "*Word*" (Your "sword") *be* my *only* "*weapon*". Let Your "*Name*" be my *only* "*authority*".

You "reign forever." **Hallelujah!** Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 19, Day 6

The Great Supper of God & The Beast Captured

Scripture Focus: Revelation 19:17-21

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who in his presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Other" Supper:** This vision presents a gruesome, horrific contrast to the **"Marriage Supper of the Lamb"** (19:9). There are **two** ultimate feasts: one for the saints inside, and one for the vultures outside.
- **Angel in the Sun:** A cosmic figure, visible to all, acting as a herald.
- **Call to Birds:** Vultures and carrion birds were the natural aftermath of any ancient battlefield. This call signifies impending, widespread death.
- **The "Menu" (v. 18):** It lists the arrogant, rebellious army of the world, emphasizing the **great equalizer** of judgment ("kings... slave... small and great"), echoing the list of those hiding in fear (6:15). Earthly status means nothing in this final judgment.
- **The "Gathering" (v. 19):** This is the **Battle of Armageddon**, the fulfillment of the demonic "frog" mission (16:14-16).
- **The "Battle" (v. 20):** It's **not a fight**. The King speaks, and the leaders (Beast and False Prophet) are instantly captured.
- **"Thrown Alive":** This detail is critical. They don't die first; they bypass Hades and are the first humans cast directly and consciously into the **Lake of Fire** (Gehenna, the final hell).
- **"The Rest Slain" (v. 21):** The followers are killed by the **"sword from his mouth"** (the spoken Word of Christ, v. 15).

- **"Birds Gorged":** The "Great Supper" announced in v. 17 takes place.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Not a Battle, but a Feast/Execution:** The angel calls the birds *before* the armies are slain, showing the outcome is certain. It's so one-sided it's presented as preparing a feast for scavengers.
 - **End of Human "Glory":** The "flesh of kings" becoming bird food is God's final, visceral statement on the worthlessness of human power and pride that opposes Him.
 - **Leaders vs. Followers:** The *leaders* (Beast/False Prophet, the deceivers) face immediate, conscious torment in the Lake of Fire. The *followers* (the deceived) are slain and await the Great White Throne judgment (20:11-15).
 - **"Unholy Trinity" Dismantled:** The Beast (Anti-Son) and False Prophet (Anti-Spirit) are dealt with, setting the stage for Chapter 20 where the Dragon (Anti-Father) is bound.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Vulture Feast:** This passage directly quotes **Ezekiel 39:17-20**, where God calls birds to feast on the defeated armies of **Gog and Magog**. This links Armageddon with that specific end-times battle prophecy.
 - **Jesus' Warning: Matthew 24:28**, "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures [eagles] will gather."
 - **Slaying by the Word: 2 Thessalonians 2:8**, "...the lawless one [Antichrist] will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the **breath of his mouth**..."
 - **Beast Burned: Daniel 7:11**, "...the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given to be **burned with fire**."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Two Suppers Choice:** Every person faces this choice: Attend the Marriage Supper as a guest of Grace, or be the main course at the Great Supper of Judgment.
 - **Outcome Certain:** Though the armies gather (v. 19), the battle is already decided. This gives believers confidence amidst worldly opposition.
 - **Power of Christ's Word:** The ultimate weapon that defeats armies is the "sword from His mouth." This emphasizes the power and final authority of God's Word over all earthly powers.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the "Marriage Supper" (19:9) with the "Great Supper of God" (19:17). Why use the same word ("supper") for such drastically different events? What point is being made?
2. The angel calls the birds *before* the armies are slain (v. 17 vs. v. 21). What does this timing tell you about God's sovereignty and the certainty of His victory?
3. Why is there a distinction in judgment between the leaders (Beast/False Prophet) and their followers ("the rest")?

4. How does the gruesome finality of this judgment (v. 21) impact your view of God's justice and holiness? How might it motivate evangelism?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"RSVP for the Right Supper."** You have been invited (19:9) to the Marriage Supper.

- Today, consciously **thank God** for that invitation.
 - Thank the Lamb that *His body* was broken and *His blood* was shed for you, so that your flesh will *not* be consumed in judgment.
 - Express gratitude for being a guest at His table, not fodder for the birds.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of thanksgiving for salvation from judgment)

Lord Jesus, King of kings, the world gathers its armies against You, but Your victory is certain. Thank You for inviting me to Your Marriage Supper. Thank You that Your body was broken so mine wouldn't have to be, that Your blood covers me from the coming wrath. Keep me faithful, clothed in Your righteousness, ready to follow You, my victorious King. Amen.

Week 20 (Chapter 20): The Millennium & The Great White Throne: Final Judgment

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 1

The Binding of Satan

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:1-3

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over

him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Unholy Trinity" Dealt With:** Following the capture of the Beast and False Prophet (19:20), the focus shifts to the source: the **Dragon (Satan)**.
 - **Single Angel:** It takes only one angel with a chain to seize the Dragon, highlighting Satan's status as a *creature* under God's ultimate authority, not an equal opposite.
 - **"Bottomless Pit" (Abyss):** The *abyssos* (9:1), understood as a holding place for powerful demonic entities, distinct from the final Lake of Fire.
 - **"Bound... 1,000 years":** The "Millennium."
 - **Purpose (v. 3):** Specifically to prevent him from **"deceiving the nations"** during this period.
 - **Mystery (v. 3):** His eventual, necessary release "for a little while."
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

(This is the most debated prophetic passage. Approach with humility.)

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Futurist):**
 - Literal, future event *after* Christ's return (Ch. 19).
 - Satan is *literally* bound in the Abyss.
 - Christ reigns *physically on earth* for a *literal 1,000 years*.
 - Satan's binding is *total* during this time.
 - **View 2: Amillennialism (Idealist/Symbolic):**
 - Symbolic, *present* reality.
 - "1,000 years" (10x10x10) = symbolic long time for the *entire Church Age* (Christ's first coming to second coming).
 - Satan *was* "bound" by Christ's **Cross and Resurrection** (John 12:31, Matt 12:29).
 - *How bound?* Prevented from "deceiving the **nations**" (v. 3) – i.e., before Christ, all Gentile nations were deceived; now, the Gospel goes forth to all nations, and Satan *cannot stop its advance* or prevent the Church's establishment globally.
 - We are living *in* the Millennium *now*.
 - **View 3: Postmillennialism:**
 - The "1,000 years" is a future (or present) "golden age" where the *Gospel's influence* grows so vast it effectively "binds" Satan's power *through the Church, before* Christ's literal return.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Satan's Four Names (v. 2):** Dragon, Serpent, Devil, Satan – same as **12:9**.
- **Binding the Strong Man (Amil View):** **Matthew 12:29**, Jesus binds the strong man (Satan) to plunder his house (rescue souls).
- **Ruler Cast Out (Amil View):** **John 12:31**, At the cross, the ruler of this world is cast out.
- **The Abyss:** **Luke 8:31**, Demons begged Jesus not to command them into the **abyss**.

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Satan is on a Leash:** Regardless of your timing view, Satan operates only under God's permission and within His set boundaries.
 - **Gospel Cannot Be Stopped (Amil View):** If we are in the Millennium now, this explains why the Gospel continues to advance globally despite opposition. Satan cannot ultimately prevent the nations from hearing.
 - **Satan Not All-Powerful:** A single angel binds him. He is a defeated foe.
 - **God's Mysterious Plan:** The eventual release remains a part of God's sovereign, though mysterious, plan for the final test.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is the Devil called by all four names (v. 2)? What does each name emphasize about his character?
 2. Which view of the Millennium (Premil, Amil, Postmil) seems most consistent with your understanding of Scripture, and why? (It's okay not to be certain!)
 3. (Amil perspective): If Satan is bound *now*, how is he bound? What *can't* he do? How does this empower your witness?
 4. (Premil perspective): What would be the purpose of a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ *on this earth* after His return?
 5. Why do you think God's plan requires Satan to be released for a "little while" (v. 3)?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Live in the Binding."** Whether Satan *is* bound (Amil) or *will be* bound (Premil), his ultimate power over believers *is* broken.

- Identify one specific lie or deception (v. 3) Satan uses against you (e.g., "You're not forgiven," "God doesn't love you," "You must sin").
 - Exercise your authority in Christ. Agree with the angel: "Satan, you are bound. You cannot ultimately deceive me. You are cast out by the power of Christ."
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by Martin Luther)

Lord God, the Devil is *Your* devil. The chain is in Your angel's hand. The key is Yours. Though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us. The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure: Your Word (Your Chain) shall fell him. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 2

The Millennial Reign & The Judging Saints

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:4

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"I saw thrones...":** A vision of kingdom and court.
 - **"Authority to judge":** This fulfills promises made to the saints.
 - **"Two Groups" (or One?):** John sees:
 1. An unspecified group given authority to judge (likely encompassing all saints, represented by the Elders/Apostles).
 2. Specifically, the **souls of the martyrs**.
 - **The Martyrs Highlighted:** Those executed ("beheaded") for their witness, who resisted the Beast's system (no worship, no mark). Their faithfulness is explicitly noted.
 - **"They came to life":** This is defined in v. 5 as the **"First Resurrection."**
 - **"Reigned... for 1,000 years":** This is the "Millennial Reign."
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

(This verse is central to the Millennium debate.)

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Futurist):**
 - A *literal, physical* "First Resurrection" of all dead saints occurs at Christ's return.
 - These resurrected saints (along with tribulation survivors) then reign *with Christ physically on earth* for a *literal 1,000 years* while Satan is bound.
 - They "judge" by administering Christ's kingdom on earth.

- **View 2: Amillennialism (Idealist):**
 - This is *not* a future physical resurrection, but a vision of the *intermediate state* (saints in heaven *now*).
 - "The souls..." (v. 4) -> These are souls currently *in heaven*.
 - "They came to life..." -> Refers to their spiritual life *after* physical death; they passed immediately into life with Christ in heaven.
 - "...and reigned..." -> They are reigning *spiritually with Christ in heaven right now* during the symbolic "1,000 years" (the Church Age). The "judging" refers to their vindication and agreement with God's judgments.
 - **Agreement:** Both views agree that the saints *do* reign with Christ. The debate is *where* (earth or heaven?) and *when* (future 1000 years, or present Church Age?).
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Saints Judging:**
 - **Daniel 7:22**, "...judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the **saints possessed the kingdom.**"
 - **Matthew 19:28**, Jesus promised the Apostles they would "**sit on twelve thrones, judging** the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - **1 Corinthians 6:2**, "Do you not know that the **saints will judge the world?**"
 - **Reigning with Christ:**
 - **2 Timothy 2:12**, "...if we endure, we will also **reign with him...**"
 - **Revelation 5:10**, "and you have made them a kingdom and priests... and they **shall reign on the earth.**"
-

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **You Have Authority:** Whether reigning spiritually now (Amil) or literally in the future (Premil), believers share in Christ's authority.
 - **The Cost of the Throne:** The qualification highlighted for reigning is faithfulness through suffering – resisting the Beast's mark and worship, even to death.
 - **The Great Trade-Off:** The Beast offers temporary power (42 months) for compromise (the Mark). Christ offers eternal reigning (1000 years+) for faithfulness (resisting the Mark).
-

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This vision involves "thrones" and "judging." What does it mean for the saints to "judge"? (Hint: Agreeing with and administering God's perfect justice).
2. Why are the martyrs specifically highlighted among those on the thrones? What does this say about God's value system?
3. Compare the choice: Worship the Beast and "buy/sell" for 42 months, or worship Christ and "reign" for 1000+ years. Why do so many choose the former?
4. (Premil view): What might "reigning on earth" for 1000 years look like?
5. (Amil view): What does "reigning in heaven with Christ now" look like practically?

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Reign Today."** You *are* (or *will be*) given authority.

- Start by "judging" yourself (1 Cor 11:31).
- Then, "reign" over sin in your own life (Romans 6:12).
- Exercise your authority today by refusing to bow to the Beast's system in one specific area (your time, money, thoughts, allegiance).

Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Based on 2 Timothy 2:12)

Lord Jesus, the Beast demands my worship; the world demands my allegiance. But You call me to endure. The saying is trustworthy: If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him. Give me the grace to endure today, the faith to refuse the mark, that I may reign with You, now and forever. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 3

The First Resurrection & The Second Death

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:5-6

⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The Rest of the Dead" (v. 5):** The wicked dead (Beast-worshippers, unmarked). They remain in Hades during the 1,000 years.
 - **"This is the first resurrection" (v. 5):** The angel explicitly defines the event of v. 4 ("they came to life") with this term.
 - **The Blessing (v. 6):** The **Fifth Beatitude** of Revelation.
 - **"Blessed and holy":** The character and status of those in the first resurrection.
 - **"Second Death has no power":**
 - **First Death:** Physical death (separation of soul/body).
 - **Second Death:** Eternal, spiritual death (the Lake of Fire, v. 14). This is the key immunity granted.
 - **The Role (v. 6): "Priests... and... reign."** This fulfills the earlier promises to the Church (e.g., 1:6, 5:10).
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

(This is the crux of the Millennium debate regarding resurrections.)

- **View 1: Premillennialism (Literal):**
 - *Proves* a two-stage *physical* resurrection separated by 1,000 years.
 - **First Resurrection (v. 4-6):** *Saints* rise physically at Christ's return *before* the Millennium.
 - **Second Resurrection (implied v. 5, explicit v. 12-13):** *Wicked* rise physically *after* the Millennium for judgment.
 - **View 2: Amillennialism (Symbolic):**
 - Refers to *two kinds* of resurrection, not necessarily two *times*.
 - **First Resurrection:** *Spiritual* resurrection (being "**born again**," John 5:24) *or* the soul's entrance into heaven at physical death (as seen in v. 4). Believers experience this *now* or upon death.
 - **Second Resurrection (v. 5, 12-13):** The *one, final, general, physical* resurrection of *everyone* (saints and wicked) at the end of time for judgment.
 - **"The Second Death":** Defined as the Lake of Fire (v. 14). The blessing is total immunity from hell for those who belong to Christ.
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Spiritual Resurrection Now (Amil View):** John 5:24-25, Jesus speaks of passing from death to life *now* through belief, and an hour "now here" when the spiritually dead hear and live.
 - **General Physical Resurrection (Both Views):** John 5:28-29, Jesus speaks of a coming hour when *all* in the tombs will hear His voice and come out – some to a "resurrection of life," others to a "resurrection of judgment."
 - **Immunity Promise: Revelation 2:11**, Promise to Smyrna: "The one who conquers will not be hurt by the **second death**."
-

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Blessed Hope:** This is the believer's guarantee.
 - **Identity:** "Blessed and holy."
 - **Security:** "Second death has no power." The Beast can inflict the first death (martyrdom), but not the second (hell). This empowers believers to "Fear God, not man" (Matt 10:28).
 - **Our Eternal Role:** "Priests" (access to God) and "Kings" (authority with Christ).
-

Daily Reflection Questions

1. This is the Fifth "Blessing" in Revelation. *Who* is declared "blessed"? What condition must be met?
 2. What is the "First Resurrection"? How do the Premillennial and Amillennial views interpret this differently?
 3. What is the "Second Death"?
 4. How does participating in the "First Resurrection" grant immunity from the "Second Death"?
 5. What does it mean to you personally that you will be a "priest of God" and will "reign with him"?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Live in the Blessing."** If you are in Christ, you *are* "Blessed and holy," and the "Second Death has NO POWER" over you.

- Today, when you feel fear (of death, judgment, failure, man), *verbally remind* Satan (the Accuser) and yourself: **"You have no power over me. I share in the First Resurrection. The Second Death cannot touch me."**
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of thanksgiving for resurrection life)

Lord Jesus, I was dead in my sins, but You called me, I heard Your voice, and I passed from death to life. Thank You that I have shared in the First Resurrection. I am blessed and holy through You. Therefore, the Second Death—hell, the Lake of Fire—has no power over me. Death has lost its sting. The Beast has no ultimate power. Thank You for this blessing, secured by Your sacrifice. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 4

Satan's Final Rebellion: Gog and Magog

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:7-8

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"When the 1000 years are ended...":** The period of Satan's binding concludes.
 - **"Satan will be released...":** Fulfills the mysterious necessity mentioned in 20:3 ("he *must* be released").
 - **"Gog and Magog":** This is a direct reference to the prophecy in **Ezekiel 38-39**. In Ezekiel, Gog is the leader from the land of Magog, representing a coalition of distant, pagan nations ("four corners of the earth") who launch a final assault against restored Israel. John uses this name as a **symbol** for the *final, global, end-times rebellion* against Christ and His people.
 - **Satan's Action:** "Deceive the nations... to gather them for battle." This is Satan's consistent tactic throughout history.
 - **"Number... like the sand of the sea":** Represents a vast, seemingly overwhelming multitude.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Why Release Satan?** This event serves several theological purposes:
 - It demonstrates the **unchangeable evil** of Satan's heart (his first act is deception and rebellion).
 - It demonstrates the **incurable sinfulness** of the human heart (even after a long period of peace/righteousness, many still choose rebellion).
 - It reveals the **necessity of final judgment**.
 - It sets the stage for God's **final, ultimate victory** over evil.
 - **Interpretations based on Millennial Views:**
 - **Premillennialism:** After the literal 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ, Satan is released and successfully deceives many *born during the Millennium* who only outwardly conformed. This proves that even a perfect environment cannot change the sinful heart without regeneration.
 - **Amillennialism:** This is not a separate, future battle *after* the Church Age. This is a **recapitulation** (telling the same story from a different angle) of the **Armageddon campaign** described in chapters 16 and 19. It focuses on the *spiritual dimension* (Satan's deception) behind the final gathering of nations against Christ at the end of *this* age.
 - **"Gog and Magog":** Used symbolically here for *all rebellious nations* at the end of time, not necessarily literal Russia or specific modern nations often associated with Ezekiel's prophecy by some interpreters.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38:2**, "Son of man, set your face toward **Gog**, of the land of **Magog**..."
Ezekiel 38:15, "You will come from your place out of the **uttermost parts of the north**, you and many peoples with you..."
 - **Deception: Genesis 3:13**, The serpent **deceived** Eve. Satan's primary method from beginning to end.
 - **Gathering for Battle: Revelation 16:14**, Demonic spirits "go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to **assemble them for battle**..." (Armageddon).
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Unchanged Heart:** This is the final proof of human depravity. Even under ideal conditions (Premil view) or despite centuries of Gospel witness (Amil view), the unregenerate heart will ultimately choose rebellion when given the chance. This underscores the necessity of the new birth.
 - **Satan's End Game is Deception:** His first act upon release is to deceive. Believers must remain vigilant against his lies (cf. Eph 6:11).
 - **Global Opposition to Christ:** The image of nations from the "four corners" gathering against God's people is a recurring theme. We see its precursors in global movements hostile to Christian faith and values.
-

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think God's plan includes releasing Satan for this final deception and battle? What does it demonstrate?
 2. Compare the description of the rebellious army ("like the sand of the sea") with the description of the demonic cavalry in Chapter 9 (200 million). What does the sheer scale suggest?
 3. How does Satan "deceive the nations" today? What forms does this deception take?
 4. If even a perfect environment (literal Millennium) cannot guarantee faithfulness, what does this teach about the necessity of God's grace and regeneration?
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Call to Action

Your call is to "**Recognize the Deceiver.**" Satan's primary tool is deception.

- Identify one area today where you might be susceptible to deception (e.g., cultural lies about truth, happiness, identity; personal lies about your worth or God's character).
 - Counter that potential deception by grounding yourself in the truth of God's Word concerning that specific issue. Pray for discernment.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God, the ancient serpent still seeks to deceive. Guard my heart and mind from his lies. Help me stand firm in Your truth, rooted in Your Word. Expose the deceptions around me and within me. Thank You that his time is short and his ultimate defeat is sure. Keep me faithful in Your camp. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 5

The Final Battle & Satan's Doom

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:9-10

⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The "Battle" (v. 9):** Satan's final army ("Gog and Magog," v. 8) surrounds God's people.
 - **"Camp of the saints":** The gathered people of God.
 - **"The beloved city":** Jerusalem (earthly or heavenly, depending on millennial view), the center of God's kingdom.
 - **The Result (v. 9):** Again, **not a battle, but an immediate execution.** God intervenes directly.
 - **"Fire came down from heaven and consumed them."** This is instantaneous divine judgment.
 - **Satan's Final End (v. 10):** The **Devil himself** is cast into the Lake of Fire.
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **One-Sided Conflict:** Emphasizes the utter futility of rebelling against God. The massive army is destroyed instantly by divine fire.
- **Amillennial vs. Premillennial Timing:**
 - **Amil:** Sees this as the same event as Armageddon (19:19-21), described from the perspective of Satan's role and final defeat. The "fire from heaven" corresponds to the "sword from his mouth."

- **Premil:** Sees this as a *second*, distinct battle *after* the 1,000-year reign, demonstrating the rebellion of those born during the Millennium.
 - **The Lake of Fire Reunion (v. 10):**
 - Satan is thrown in "**where the beast and the false prophet were.**"
 - This confirms their ongoing, conscious torment (mentioned in 19:20). The "unholy trinity" is reunited in judgment.
 - **Eternal Torment:** The description is explicit: "**tormented day and night forever and ever.**" This affirms the eternal, conscious nature of hell for Satan and, by implication (v. 15), for the unrepentant wicked.
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Fire from Heaven:**
 - **Ezekiel 38:22**, God's judgment on Gog: "I will rain upon him... **fire and sulfur.**"
 - **2 Kings 1:10, 12**, Elijah calls down **fire from heaven** to consume soldiers.
 - **Genesis 19:24**, The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by **sulfur and fire** from the Lord out of heaven.
 - **Lake of Fire Prepared: Matthew 25:41**, Jesus speaks of the eternal fire "**prepared for the devil and his angels.**"
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Ultimate Futility of Rebellion:** No matter how vast or powerful the forces arrayed against God seem, their defeat is instantaneous and certain when God chooses to act.
 - **Satan's Certain Doom:** Our enemy is real and deceptive, but his end is guaranteed. He is destined for the Lake of Fire. This gives believers confidence.
 - **Reality of Eternal Judgment:** This passage is a sobering affirmation of the doctrine of eternal, conscious torment for the Devil and, ultimately, for those who follow him.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the description of this "battle" (v. 9) with the battle in 19:19-21. What similarities and differences do you notice? How one-sided is the conflict in both cases?
 2. Why is "fire from heaven" such a common biblical symbol for direct, divine judgment?
 3. Verse 10 explicitly states Satan will be tormented "forever and ever" alongside the Beast and False Prophet. How does this passage counter ideas like annihilationism (that the wicked cease to exist)?
 4. How does knowing Satan's final, certain doom impact your perspective on spiritual warfare and the struggles you face today?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Choose Your Camp and Stand Firm."** There are only two ultimate sides: the "camp of the saints" or the doomed army gathered by the Deceiver.

- Reaffirm your allegiance to Christ, the one whose camp is eternally secure.
 - When facing temptation or opposition today, remember the utter futility of Satan's rebellion and the certainty of his defeat. Stand firm in the strength of the Victor.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God Almighty, You are the Righteous Judge. Though the nations gather and the Deceiver musters his final army, their end is sure. Fire from heaven is Your response. Thank You for rescuing me from that doomed camp and bringing me into Your beloved city. Thank You for the certainty of Satan's defeat and his eternal judgment. Keep me safe in Your camp, faithful to You, my victorious King. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 20, Day 6

The Great White Throne Judgment

Scripture Focus: Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to their deeds.

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Final Scene:** After Satan's doom, the final judgment of humanity occurs.
 - **"Great White Throne":** **Great** signifies ultimate authority; **White** signifies perfect purity and justice.
 - **The Judge:** "Him who was seated" - God Himself, with Christ as the agent of judgment (John 5:22).
 - **Creation Flees (v. 11):** The old, sin-stained heaven and earth cannot endure His holy presence and pass away, making way for the new (21:1).
 - **The Dead Stand (v. 12):** **All** the wicked dead ("great and small," echoing 6:15, 19:18) are resurrected ("Death and Hades gave them up," v. 13) to face judgment. Believers are not here (they were part of the First Resurrection, 20:6).
 - **Books Opened (Plural):** The divine record of every person's **deeds**.
 - **Book of Life (Singular):** The registry of the redeemed, those belonging to the Lamb (cf. 13:8).
 - **Judgment According to Deeds (v. 12, 13):** The basis of condemnation for the wicked.
 - **Death and Hades Destroyed (v. 14):** The last enemies, the state of death and the realm of the dead, are eliminated in the Lake of Fire.
 - **The Second Death (v. 14-15):** Explicitly defined as the Lake of Fire, the final destiny for anyone *not* found in the Book of Life.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Not the Believer's Judgment:** This is distinct from the "Bema Seat" judgment for believers' rewards (1 Cor 3; 2 Cor 5). This is the final judgment of the **unregenerate** of all ages.
 - **Two Sets of Books:**
 1. **Books of Deeds:** These are opened to demonstrate the *justice* of the condemnation. The recorded deeds prove the guilt of the unredeemed according to God's perfect standard. This is condemnation *by* works.
 2. **Book of Life:** This is the decisive book. Being *absent* from this book is the ultimate basis for condemnation. This confirms salvation is by grace through faith in the Lamb, whose book it is.
 - **Resurrection for Judgment:** Verse 13 confirms a physical resurrection for *all* people, either to life (First Resurrection) or to judgment (this one).
 - **End of Death:** Verse 14 marks the final fulfillment of **1 Corinthians 15:26**, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death."
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Throne Vision: Daniel 7:9-10**, "thrones were placed... the Ancient of Days took his seat... The court sat in judgment, and the **books were opened**."
 - **Creation Passing Away: 2 Peter 3:10**, "...the heavens will pass away... the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth..."
 - **Book of Life: Daniel 12:1**, "...everyone whose name shall be found written in the book." **Philippians 4:3**, "...whose names are in the book of life."
 - **Judgment by Deeds: Romans 2:6**, God "will render to each one according to his works." **Matthew 12:36**, People will "give account for every careless word."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Universal Accountability:** Every person will stand before God for judgment. Relativism offers no escape.
 - **God's Perfect Record:** "The books" remind us that nothing is hidden from God.
 - **Good News for Believers:** If your name is in the Book of Life through faith in Christ, the books of your deeds are covered by His blood. There is "no condemnation" (Romans 8:1).
 - **Bad News for Unbelievers:** If one's name is not in the Book of Life, their deeds, measured against God's perfect law, will condemn them. This underscores the urgency of the Gospel.
 - **Finality of Hell:** The Second Death, the Lake of Fire, is presented as the final, irreversible state for the unredeemed.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. What do the terms "Great" and "White" tell us about this final throne and judgment?
 2. Why must the old "earth and heaven" flee away (v. 11)?
 3. Explain the purpose of the two different sets of "books" (plural vs. singular Book of Life) at the judgment. Why are both necessary?
 4. Why is it significant that "Death and Hades" are themselves thrown into the Lake of Fire (v. 14)? What does this signify?
 5. Verse 15 gives the ultimate criterion for avoiding the Lake of Fire. How does one get their name written in the Book of Life?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Check the Book of Life."** You check if your name is in the Book by checking if your faith is genuinely in the Lamb who was slain.

- Today, reaffirm your dependence not on your *deeds* (which condemn) but on Christ's *grace* (which saves).
 - Thank God that, through faith in Jesus, your name *is* written in the Book of Life, securing you from this judgment and the Second Death.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by the Dies Irae hymn)

What shall I, wretch-like, say? How shall I who to pray, when even the just may fear? O King of majesty dread, Who savest the saved by grace, save me, O Fount of pity! My deeds are in Your books. My name is not in my works. Lord, by Your grace, my name IS in Your Book through the Lamb. Thank You for saving me from the Second Death. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 1

The New Creation & The Holy City

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:1-2

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Then I saw...":** The final judgment (20:11-15) is complete. The old order is gone. This is a completely fresh start.
 - **"New Heaven and a New Earth":** This fulfills the Old Testament hope (Isaiah 65:17). The Greek word for "new" (*kainos*) means new in **quality**, not necessarily new in time (*neos*). It implies a **renewal and restoration** of the original creation, purified from sin.
 - **"First... passed away":** Connects back to 20:11 where the old earth and heaven "fled away" from God's presence.
 - **"The Sea was no more":** Profoundly significant. The sea represented:
 - The **source of the Beast** (13:1).
 - **Chaos, danger, the unknown.**
 - **Separation** (between nations, between John on Patmos and his churches). Its absence signifies the end of chaos, evil's source, and separation.
 - **"New Jerusalem, coming DOWN...":** Our eternal hope isn't escaping *up* to heaven, but heaven **coming down** to the renewed earth. It's the perfect union of God's realm and humanity's realm.
 - **"Prepared as a Bride":** The City **IS** the Bride (the Church, God's people). This fulfills the announcement of the Marriage (19:7). She is adorned *by God* for her Husband (the Lamb).
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Restoration, Not Annihilation:** The emphasis is on the *renewal* of creation, purged of sin's effects, rather than a completely different creation from nothing.
 - **Heaven Comes to Earth:** This counters the popular idea of disembodied souls floating on clouds. The eternal state is **physical** – resurrected bodies on a renewed earth, with God dwelling among His people.
 - **The City IS the People:** The New Jerusalem *is* the glorified Church, the community of the redeemed, described architecturally. Where God's people are, fully redeemed and in His presence, *that* is the Holy City.
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **New Creation: Isaiah 65:17**, "For behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth...**" **2 Peter 3:13**, "But according to his promise we are waiting for **new heavens and a new earth** in which righteousness dwells."
 - **No More Sea (Chaos): Isaiah 57:20**, "But the wicked are like the **tossing sea**; for it cannot be quiet..." (Its absence implies the absence of wickedness).
 - **The Bride: Isaiah 61:10**, "...as a **bride** adorns herself with her jewels." **Ephesians 5:27**, Christ presents the church "in splendor... holy and without blemish."
-

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our True Hope:** Our ultimate hope isn't escaping earth, but its **restoration** and God dwelling **with us** here. This gives meaning to our present stewardship of creation.
 - **The End of Chaos:** In a world filled with chaos ("the sea"), this promise brings peace. The final state is one of perfect order and security.
 - **The Church as the City/Bride:** We are part of something eternal and glorious. Our identity is not just individual, but corporate – we are the Bride being prepared, the City being built.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does John emphasize what *isn't* there ("first earth passed away," "sea was no more") before describing what *is* there?
 2. How does the idea of heaven *coming down to earth* change your perspective on eternity, compared to the idea of *us going up*?
 3. What does the absence of the "sea" symbolize about the nature of the new creation?
 4. If the City *is* the Bride (the people), what does this metaphor tell you about the Church's ultimate destiny and relationship with Christ?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Long for 'No More Sea'."** The "sea" represents the chaos, separation, and source of evil in our current world.

- Identify one specific "sea" in your life (a chaotic situation, a painful separation, a source of temptation).
 - Thank God that in the New Earth, that specific "sea" will be gone forever. Let this hope anchor you today.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of longing)

Lord God, Creator and Redeemer, thank You for the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells. We long for the day when the first things pass away, when the sea of chaos and separation is no more. Prepare us, Your Bride, Your Holy City, for that day when You come down to dwell with us forever. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 2

God Dwells with Man

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:3-4

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Loud Voice from the Throne":** The official, authoritative proclamation of the new reality.
- **"Dwelling Place" (Greek: *skene* - σκηνή):** This is the **Tabernacle**. This fulfills God's desire expressed from the beginning.
- **History of the Tabernacle:**
 - **Eden:** God walked *with* Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8) - Lost fellowship.
 - **Wilderness:** God dwelt *in a Tent (Tabernacle) among* His people (Ex 25:8).
 - **Jerusalem:** God dwelt *in a Temple* (1 Kings 8).
 - **Incarnation:** The Word became flesh and **tabernacled** (*skenoo*) among us (John 1:14).
 - **New Jerusalem (Here):** God *Himself* will eternally **tabernacle** *with* His people, perfectly and permanently.
- **Covenant Fulfilled (v. 3):** "He... their God... they... his people." This is the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant promise woven throughout Scripture.
- **The "No More" List (v. 4):** This is the **direct result** of God's unhindered presence. Because He is fully present:
 - "Tears" are wiped away.
 - "Death" (the First and Second) is gone (cf. 20:14).
 - "Mourning, crying, pain" (the consequences of the curse, Gen 3) are gone.

- **"Former things have passed away":** The entire old order affected by sin is eradicated.
-

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Immanuel Realized:** This is the eternal fulfillment of **"Immanuel"** (Isaiah 7:14) – **"God With Us."**
 - **The Essence of Heaven:** The ultimate joy and reality of heaven is not golden streets or pearly gates, but the **immediate, unfiltered, personal presence of God** dwelling with His people.
 - **Personal Comfort (v. 4):** God doesn't just stop future tears; He **personally wipes away** the tears stemming from the sorrows of the *past* ("former things"). This implies memory, but with divine healing and comfort.
 - **End of the Curse:** All consequences of the Fall described in Genesis 3 are finally and fully reversed.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Covenant Promise: Leviticus 26:11-12**, "I will set my **tabernacle** among you... I will walk among you and will be **your God**, and you shall be **my people**." **Ezekiel 37:27**, "My **dwelling place** shall be with them, and I will be **their God**, and they shall be **my people**."
 - **Tears Wiped Away: Isaiah 25:8**, "He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will **wipe away tears from all faces**..."
 - **No More Pain/Crying: Isaiah 65:19**, "...no more shall be heard in it the sound of **weeping** and the cry of distress."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Goal of the Gospel:** The purpose of Christ's work wasn't just to get us *into* heaven, but to get God *back to us*, restoring the intimate fellowship lost in Eden.
 - **The Cure for All Sorrow:** God's presence *is* the ultimate antidote to every pain, tear, and fear we experience now. This is the solid hope that sustains believers through present suffering.
 - **God's Intimacy:** He is not a distant deity but a personal Father who draws near to comfort His children.
-

Daily Reflection Questions

1. What does the word "Tabernacle" (dwelling place) signify about God's desire for relationship with humanity throughout history?
 2. Why is God's *presence* (v. 3) the necessary prerequisite for the *absence* of tears, death, and pain (v. 4)?
 3. The image is not "there are no tears" but "He will *wipe away* every tear." Why is this active, personal comfort so meaningful?
 4. What specific "former thing" (a past sorrow, a current pain, the fear of death) are you most looking forward to having "passed away"?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Long for the Tabernacle."** We easily get attached to the "former things" of this world.

- Today, meditate on the promise of God dwelling *with* you, wiping away every tear.
 - Let this eternal hope loosen your grip on temporary comforts and fears.
 - Pray: "Lord, increase my longing for Your presence and the New Jerusalem."
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(A prayer of longing)

O Lord God, You are our God, and we are Your people. You are our Dwelling Place. We live now amidst tears, death, mourning, and pain. We groan; we wait. We long for the Day when You Yourself will be fully with us. We long for Your hand to wipe away our tears. Let the former things pass away. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 3

"It is Done!" & The Free Offer

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:5-6

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"He who was seated on the throne":** This is **God the Father** speaking directly, a rare and momentous occasion in Scripture, emphasizing the certainty and authority of the declaration.

- **"Behold, I am making all things new":** (Greek: *Kainos*, new in **quality**). God isn't scrapping creation; He's **renewing** and **perfecting** it.
 - **"Write this down...":** Unlike the sealed thunders (10:4), this core promise *must* be recorded because it's the guaranteed hope ("trustworthy and true").
 - **"It is done!":** (Greek: *Gegonan*). This echoes the cry from the seventh bowl (16:17).
 - **16:17:** Wrath is **"Done!"**
 - **21:6:** New Creation is **"Done!"** It parallels Christ's cry "It is finished!" (*Tetelestai*, John 19:30) regarding salvation. God's plan is complete.
 - **"Alpha and the Omega...":** God Himself bookends all reality. He initiated creation and He brings it to its final consummation.
 - **"To the thirsty...":** Even in this final, glorious declaration, God extends a **Gospel invitation**.
 - **"Without payment":** (Greek: *dorean* - "freely," as a gift).
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Present & Future Newness:** "I am *making*..." (v. 5) is present tense. This can be seen as God *already* working to make things new (in Christ, in the Church – Amil view) *and* as a prophetic present declaring the certainty of the final New Creation event (Futurist view).
 - **The Gospel in Eternity:** Verse 6 encapsulates the Gospel:
 - **The Condition:** Be **"thirsty"** (recognize your need).
 - **The Source:** The **"spring of the water of life"** (God Himself, through Christ).
 - **The Cost:** **"Without payment"** (free grace).
 - **Sola Gratia:** The final invitation before the detailed description of the City emphasizes that access is **by grace alone**.
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Making New:** **Isaiah 43:19**, "Behold, I am doing a **new thing**..." **2 Corinthians 5:17**, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**."
 - **Alpha and Omega:** **Revelation 1:8**, God's self-declaration. **Revelation 22:13**, Christ's self-declaration.
 - **Invitation to the Thirsty:**
 - **Isaiah 55:1:** "Come, everyone who **thirsts**, come to the waters; and he who has no money... **Come, buy... without money** and without price."
 - **John 7:37:** Jesus cried out, "If anyone **thirsts**, let him come to me and drink."
 - **Revelation 22:17:** The final invitation: "Let the one who is **thirsty** come; let the one who desires take the **water of life without price**."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **God is the Re-Creator:** He doesn't discard broken things (including us); He **makes them new**. This applies to our sanctification now and glorification then.
- **Certainty:** "It is done!" Salvation is finished. The New Creation is certain. We live between these two secured anchor points.

- **The Only Qualification:** The requirement to receive eternal life isn't goodness, worthiness, or effort – it's simply being **"thirsty,"** recognizing our deep need for Him. Grace is truly free.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. This promise ("I am making all things new") comes directly from God on the throne (v. 5). How does the *source* of the promise affect its certainty and power?
 2. God commands John to "Write this down" (v. 5). Why was it crucial for *this specific promise* to be written and preserved?
 3. How does God's title "Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (v. 6) provide comfort and perspective in the midst of our temporary lives?
 4. The final invitation (v. 6) is only "to the thirsty." Are you truly thirsty for God, or are you trying to satisfy your thirst with other things?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"Be Thirsty and Drink Freely."**

- Acknowledge your spiritual thirst, your deep need for God.
 - Stop trying to "earn" or "pay" for His grace with your good deeds.
 - Today, in prayer, picture yourself kneeling at His "spring" (v. 6). Consciously receive the "water of life" freely, without payment. Simply rest in His grace.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Based on Isaiah 55)

Lord God, I am thirsty. I have no money, nothing to offer. You are the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. You say, "Come." You say, "Drink." You offer me the spring of the water of life without payment. Lord, I come. I drink. I receive. Thank You for this unspeakable gift. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 4

The Two Eternal Destinies Revisited

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:7-8

⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"The one who conquers":** The **seventh and final** occurrence of this phrase, summarizing the promises to the seven churches (Ch. 2-3). Conquering means remaining faithful to Christ through trial.
 - **"This Heritage":** Encompasses "all things new" (v. 5) and the "water of life" (v. 6).
 - **"I will be his God... he will be my son":** The highest inheritance: **relationship** with God, adoption into His family.
 - **The Contrasting List (v. 8):** Describes those excluded from the heritage, whose destiny is the "second death" (defined in 20:14).
 - **"The Cowardly" (*deilos*):** Listed first. Refers to those who **feared man (the Beast)** more than God, who compromised their faith for self-preservation, failing to "conquer."
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Great Divide:** Presents the two ultimate, mutually exclusive eternal states flowing from one's relationship (or lack thereof) with God.
 1. **Inheritance:** Relationship with God ("sonship") for those who conquer through faith.
 2. **Destruction:** The Lake of Fire ("second death") for those characterized by faithlessness and unrepentant sin.
 - **Final Gospel Warning:** Follows the free offer of v. 6. It clarifies the eternal consequences of rejecting the offer or failing to persevere in faith ("conquer").
 - **Character vs. Actions:** The list in v. 8 describes the **defining characteristics** of the unregenerate life, not necessarily isolated sins committed by believers who repent. The issue is a heart posture of faithlessness and rebellion, evidenced by these deeds.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Sonship Promise:** Fulfillment of the **Davidic Covenant: 2 Samuel 7:14**, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." Also **Hebrews 1:5**.
- **Heirs Through Suffering: Romans 8:17**, "...heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we **suffer with him** [conquer] in order that we may also be glorified with him."
- **Fear God, Not Man: Matthew 10:28**, "And do not **fear** those who kill the body... Rather **fear him** who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Eternal Stakes:** This clarifies the ultimate importance of faith and perseverance. There is no third option.
 - **Attitude Precedes Action:** The list starts with inner states ("cowardly," "faithless") before outward actions ("murderers," etc.), showing that our actions reveal our core allegiance. Cowardice (fear of man) stems from faithlessness (lack of trust in God).
 - **Cost/Benefit:** Contrasts the cost of compromise (taking the Mark for temporary ease -> eternal death) with the cost of faithfulness (enduring suffering -> eternal life and inheritance).
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. The inheritance (v. 7) is primarily relational ("I will be his God... he will be my son"). Why is this intimacy with God a greater inheritance than any created thing?
 2. Why is "the cowardly" listed first among those destined for the second death (v. 8)? What does this imply about the importance of courage rooted in faith?
 3. How do believers, who still sin, avoid being characterized by the list in verse 8? (Hint: The role of repentance and faith in Christ).
 4. How does verse 7 (the promise to the conqueror) motivate you to face the challenges mentioned or implied in verse 8 (cowardice, faithlessness, etc.)?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Choose Conquering over Cowardice."** The world system pressures believers to compromise faith for security or comfort.

- Identify one specific situation today where you might be tempted toward spiritual "cowardice" (e.g., staying silent about your faith, compromising a conviction for acceptance or advancement).
 - Choose instead to "conquer" by trusting God and standing firm, motivated by the promise of eternal inheritance.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by Pilgrim's Progress)

Lord, I am a pilgrim in this wilderness. The Beast tempts me toward cowardice, offering ease if I turn back. But You call me to conquer and offer sonship. Grant me true valor, O Lord. Let me not be cowardly, that I may inherit You. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 5

The Angel's Tour: The Bride Revealed

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:9-14

⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³ on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Same Angel:** One of the Bowl Angels, who previously showed John the **Harlot** (17:1), now shows him the **Bride**, highlighting the stark contrast.
 - **Two Viewing Locations:**
 - Harlot seen from the **wilderness** (17:3) - place of desolation.
 - Bride seen from a **great, high mountain** (21:10) - place of exaltation and divine perspective.
 - **The Bride IS the City:** The angel offers to show the Bride (people) and then shows the City (place), equating the two. The New Jerusalem *is* the glorified Church.
 - **Glory & Radiance (v. 11):** She possesses God's own glory, shining like **jasper** (the stone describing God on the throne, 4:3), signifying she perfectly reflects Him.
 - **City Structure (v. 12-14):**
 - **Wall:** Security and separation.
 - **12 Gates / 12 Tribes:** Entrance is through God's covenant with Israel.
 - **12 Angels:** Guardians of holiness.
 - **12 Foundations / 12 Apostles:** The city's (Church's) stability rests on the teaching of the Apostles.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Contrast is Key:** The parallel structure with Chapter 17 emphasizes the choice between two "women"/cities/systems: Babylon the Harlot and Jerusalem the Bride.
 - **Bride's Glory is God's Glory:** Unlike the Harlot's self-adornment, the Bride's beauty is the reflected glory of God.
 - **Unity of God's People:** The architecture (12 Tribes on gates, 12 Apostles on foundations) visually represents the one unified people of God, incorporating both Old and New Covenant saints. The Church doesn't replace Israel; it is built upon Israel's foundation and enters through her gates.
 - **Security & Access:** The high wall signifies perfect security, while the 12 gates facing all directions signify universal access for the redeemed from every nation.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Mountain Vision: Ezekiel 40:2,** Ezekiel is taken to a **high mountain** to see the vision of the new temple/city.
 - **God's Glory Upon Her: Isaiah 60:1-2,** "Arise, shine... the **Glory of the LORD** has risen upon you."
 - **Apostolic Foundation: Ephesians 2:19-20,** The household of God is "built on the **foundation of the apostles and prophets...**"
 - **Tribal Gates: Ezekiel 48:31-34,** Ezekiel's visionary city has gates named after the **tribes of Israel**.
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **See Glory After Judgment:** Understanding the fall of Babylon helps us appreciate the glory of the New Jerusalem.
 - **Our Identity:** We are citizens of this glorious City, the Bride of Christ.
 - **Reflecting His Glory:** Our task now is to pursue purity ("clear as crystal") so we can better reflect God's glory to the world.
 - **Unity in Christ:** The structure reminds us that Jew and Gentile are one in Christ, built into one holy city.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is it significant that the *same* angel shows John both the Harlot and the Bride? What contrast is emphasized?
 2. How does the description of the Bride's glory (like jasper, v. 11) connect her directly to God Himself (4:3)?
 3. What does the city's structure (12 gates/tribes + 12 foundations/apostles) teach about the relationship between Israel and the Church?
 4. If the Church is the Bride/City, how should this glorious vision impact how we view the local church and fellow believers today?
-

Call to Action

Your call is to **"See from the Mountain."** We often view the Church and our hope from the "wilderness" of present struggles.

- Today, consciously try to adopt the "mountain" perspective.
 - Read verses 10-11 again and ask the Spirit to help you see the Church (including yourself) as God sees her – possessing His glory, radiant like a jewel. Let this vision encourage you.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by St. Patrick)

Christ, as a light, illumine and guide me. Christ, as a shield, o'ershadow and cover me. Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me. Let Your glory be my light as I see Your Bride, Your City. Let me see her beauty through Your eyes. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 21, Day 6

The City Measured & Adorned

Scripture Focus: Revelation 21:15-27

¹⁵ The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ¹⁶ The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.

¹⁸ The wall was built of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the

Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Measuring Rod of Gold:** Signifies divine ownership and preciousness.
 - **Perfect Cube (v. 16):** 12,000 stadia (approx. 1400 miles) in length, width, *and height*. This immediately evokes the **Holy of Holies** in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:20), which was also a perfect cube. The *entire City* is the most holy place, the direct dwelling of God.
 - **Wall: 144 Cubits (v. 17):** 12x12, symbolic of the unified people of God forming its security. "Human measurement... also angel's" suggests perfect correspondence between earthly and heavenly reality.
 - **Materials (v. 18-21):**
 - **Jasper Wall:** Security founded on God's own glory (4:3).
 - **Transparent Gold City/Street:** Unimaginable purity and divine value.
 - **12 Foundation Jewels:** Recalls the High Priest's breastplate (Exodus 28), representing the 12 tribes. Here, the Apostolic foundations bear these jewels, unifying Old and New Covenants in the priesthood of believers.
 - **12 Pearl Gates:** Each gate a single pearl. Entrance through Christ, the "pearl of great price" (Matt 13:46), possibly formed through suffering.
 - **No Temple (v. 22):** Shocking for Jewish readers. The need for a specific place is gone because God and the Lamb *are* the Temple – direct, unmediated access.
 - **No Sun/Moon (v. 23):** God's own glory provides the light, mediated through the Lamb (the "Lamp").
 - **Open Gates / No Night (v. 25):** Signifies perfect security (nothing unclean enters, v. 27) and constant access.
 - **Nations Bring Glory (v. 24, 26):** Redeemed humanity brings its purified cultural treasures into the City as worship.
 - **Final Exclusion (v. 27):** Only those in the Lamb's Book of Life may enter.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The City IS the Holy of Holies:** The ultimate destiny is dwelling in God's immediate, unfiltered presence.
 - **Symbolic Measurements/Materials:** Emphasize perfection (cubed shape), the value derived from God's people (12, 144), divine glory (jasper, gold), priestly identity (foundation stones), and costly entrance (pearls).
 - **Fulfillment of Worship:** Direct access to God replaces mediated Temple worship. God's glory replaces natural light.
 - **Redemption of Culture:** Human culture ("glory of nations"), when purified, finds its place in the New Jerusalem as an offering to God.
 - **Absolute Purity:** The City's holiness is absolute and eternally secure.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Holy of Holies:** 1 Kings 6:20.
 - **Priestly Stones:** Exodus 28:17-21. Isaiah 54:11-12.
 - **No Temple Needed:** John 4:21-23.
 - **God as Light:** Isaiah 60:19-20.
 - **Open Gates:** Isaiah 60:11.
 - **No Unclean Entry:** Isaiah 52:1. Ezekiel 44:9.
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Ultimate Intimacy:** Our deepest longing for connection with God finds its fulfillment here.
 - **Access Now:** Through Christ, we can enter the "Holy of Holies" now by faith (Heb 10:19). The City is our destiny and, in part, our present reality in the Spirit.
 - **Value of the Church:** God sees His Church adorned with unimaginable beauty and value.
 - **Hope of Purity:** The promise of a place where sin absolutely cannot enter provides hope and motivates holiness.
 - **Book of Life:** Our eternal security rests solely on our name being written in the Lamb's book through faith.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is the fact that the entire City is the "Holy of Holies" (v. 16) such a climactic revelation? What does it mean for our relationship with God?
 2. How do the materials used (jasper, gold, jewels, pearls) convey the value, purity, and nature of the New Jerusalem and its inhabitants?
 3. What does the absence of a Temple (v. 22) and natural light sources (v. 23) teach us about the immediacy of God's presence and glory in eternity?
 4. Verse 27 gives the absolute requirement for entry. How does this final statement reinforce the importance of being rightly related to the Lamb?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Live as a Citizen."** You are already, by faith, a citizen of this glorious City (Phil 3:20).

- Reflect on its characteristics: direct access to God, filled with His light, perfect purity, absolute security.
 - Let these realities shape how you live today. Pursue intimacy with God (access), walk in His truth (light), strive for holiness (purity), and rest in His protection (security).
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by the City's description)

Lord God Almighty, You and the Lamb are our Temple, our Light, our all. Thank You for the promise of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, where we will dwell in Your presence forever. Thank You for its perfect purity, its unshakeable security, its radiant glory. Keep our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and help us live today as citizens of that heavenly City, longing for the day when You make all things new. Amen.

Week 22 (Chapter 22): The River of Life & Final Exhortations

Revelation Bible Study: Week 22, Day 1

The River and Tree of Life

Scripture Focus: Revelation 22:1-2

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **The Return to Eden:** This is a direct, unmistakable return to the **Garden of Eden** (Genesis 2).
 - **Eden Had:** A river flowing *out* (Gen 2:10) and the Tree of Life *in the midst* (Gen 2:9).
 - **New Jerusalem Has:** A river flowing *from the throne* and the Tree of Life *on either side*.
- **"River of... Water of Life":** This isn't just water; it's the *source* of eternal life itself.
- **"Flowing from the Throne":** God and the Lamb *are* the source of this life. It's not stagnant; it's a constantly flowing river.
- **"Tree of Life":** Access to this tree was *lost* after the Fall (Gen 3:24). Now, it is *restored* and *abundantly available* ("on either side").
- **"Twelve Kinds of Fruit... Each Month":** Signifies *constant, unending, diverse* provision and satisfaction.
- **"Leaves... for the healing of the nations":** This is *not* medicinal healing (there's no sickness, 21:4). The Greek word *therapeia* also means "service" or "restoration." The leaves signify the *full restoration* and *ongoing health* of the redeemed nations dwelling in perfect harmony.

Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Eden Restored & Perfected:** This isn't just going *back* to Eden; it's going *forward* to something *better*. Eden had *one* tree; the City has trees lining the river. Eden *could be lost*; the City is *eternally secure*.
 - **Life Flows from God:** Eternal life isn't a "thing"; it's a continuous flow *from* the presence of God and the Lamb. Our eternal existence depends on constantly drinking from His river.
 - **The Tree is Christ?:** Many see the Tree of Life, with its constant fruit and healing leaves, as a symbol of **Jesus Christ Himself**, the source of all life and restoration.
-

Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Eden: Genesis 2:9-10**, The Tree of Life and the river. **Genesis 3:24**, Guarding the way *back* to the Tree.
 - **Ezekiel's Temple River: Ezekiel 47:1, 12**, A river flows *from the Temple*, bringing life wherever it goes, and trees grow on its banks bearing fruit *every month* whose leaves are for **healing**. (This vision is fulfilled here).
 - **Jesus is the Water: John 4:14**, "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty... a spring of water welling up to **eternal life**." **John 7:37-38**, "...If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink... 'Out of his heart will flow **rivers of living water**.'"
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **The Source of True Life:** All the "life" the world ("Babylon") offers is temporary and ultimately unsatisfying ("broken cisterns," Jer 2:13). *True, eternal* life flows *only* from the throne of God and the Lamb.
 - **Access Restored:** Through Christ, we already have access to this "Tree of Life" spiritually (we partake of His life). In the New Jerusalem, that access becomes full and physical.
 - **Healing for the Nations:** The Gospel *begins* the "healing of the nations" *now* by breaking down hostility. In the City, that healing is perfected.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Compare the River and Tree here with the ones in Genesis 2. What's similar, and what's significantly *better* in Revelation 22?
 2. The River flows *from the Throne*. What does this teach about the *source* of eternal life?
 3. The Tree bears fruit *every month* and its leaves bring *healing*. What do these details symbolize about the *quality* of life in the City?
 4. If the Tree of Life represents Christ, how do we "eat its fruit" and experience its "healing" *today*?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Drink from the River Today."** Jesus offers this "water of life" *now* (John 4).

- Take a moment today to consciously "drink" from His presence through prayer or His Word.

- Acknowledge Him as the *only* source that can truly satisfy your soul's thirst.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Inspired by Ezekiel 47 & John 4)

Lord Jesus, You are the River of Life, flowing from the throne. You are the Tree of Life, bearing fruit in every season. Let Your living water flow through me today. Heal me with the leaves of Your grace. Satisfy my deepest thirst, that I may find all my life and nourishment in You alone. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 22, Day 2

No More Curse, Seeing His Face

Scripture Focus: Revelation 22:3-5

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"No longer... anything accursed":** (Greek: *katathema*). This is the **complete reversal of the Curse** from **Genesis 3:17** ("cursed is the ground..."). All effects of the Fall are totally removed.
- **"The Throne... will be IN IT":** God doesn't just "visit"; He *moves in*. His presence permeates the entire City.
- **"His servants will worship him":** The word for "worship" (*latreuo*) often refers to the specific, priestly service of the Levites in the Temple. Here, *all* of God's servants engage in this direct, priestly worship.
- **"They will SEE HIS FACE":** This is the **ultimate blessing**, the **highest hope** of Old Testament saints, which was **forbidden** under the Old Covenant due to sin.
 - **Exodus 33:20:** God told Moses, "You *cannot* see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

- **"His name... on their foreheads":** This fulfills **14:1**. It signifies **ownership, identity, intimacy**, and **perfect conformity** to His character.
 - **"Night will be no more... God will be their light":** This repeats **21:23, 25**. Emphasizes the **constant, direct presence and revelation** of God, replacing all lesser, created lights.
 - **"They will reign forever":** This fulfills the promises from **5:10** and **20:6**. Our destiny isn't just passive worship; it's active participation in God's eternal kingdom.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The End of the Curse:** This signifies not just the absence of sin, but the removal of *all its consequences* – futility, decay, suffering, separation.
 - **The Beatific Vision:** "They will see his face" is the theological concept known as the **Beatific Vision** – the direct, unmediated, soul-satisfying sight of God Himself, which is the essence of eternal joy.
 - **Priestly Service:** All believers fulfill the role originally intended for Israel (Ex 19:6) and carried out by the Levites – direct, joyful service in God's immediate presence.
 - **Eternal Reign:** Believers share in Christ's eternal dominion, ruling with Him over the perfected creation.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **The Curse:** Genesis 3:17-19. Zechariah 14:11, "...there shall be **no more curse**..."
 - **Seeing God's Face:** Exodus 33:20. Psalm 17:15, "As for me, I shall behold **your face** in righteousness..." 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then **face to face**." 1 John 3:2, "...we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall **see him as he is**."
 - **Name on Forehead:** Revelation 3:12, Promise to Philadelphia: "I will write on him the **name of my God**..." Revelation 14:1.
 - **God as Light:** Isaiah 60:19, "The LORD will be your **everlasting light**."
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Ultimate Hope:** More than escaping hell, our hope is the removal of the curse and seeing God's face. This is what our hearts were made for.
 - **Living the Future Now:** While the fullness awaits, we experience *foretastes* now: the curse is broken in Christ, we serve Him as priests, we bear His name, we walk in His light, and we begin to reign over sin.
 - **Motivation for Holiness:** The promise of seeing His face motivates us to pursue purity now (1 John 3:3).
-

Daily Reflection Questions

1. What does "no longer will there be anything accursed" (v. 3) mean practically? What specific effects of the curse (Gen 3) are you most looking forward to being gone?

2. Why was seeing God's face forbidden in the Old Testament, and why is it the ultimate blessing in the New Jerusalem?
 3. What does having His name "on their foreheads" (v. 4) signify about our identity and character in eternity?
 4. Verse 5 says "they will reign forever." What does it mean for *us* to "reign"? What kind of authority might this involve?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Seek His Face Now."** While the full Beatific Vision awaits, we are commanded to "seek his face always" (Psalm 105:4).

- Today, set aside a few minutes specifically to quiet your heart and simply **seek His presence**, not asking for things, but desiring Him.
 - Practice turning your face toward His in worship and adoration.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

(Based on 1 John 3)

Father, what marvelous love You have lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are. We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. Lord, purify us, just as He is pure, that we may be ready to see Your face without shame, but with exceeding joy. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 22, Day 3

The Angel's Attestation & Imminent Return

Scripture Focus: Revelation 22:6-7

⁶ And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

⁷ “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"He said to me..."**: This is the **angel** guide (likely the same one from 21:9, 17:1) giving his **final validation** of the entire vision John has received.
 - **"Trustworthy and true"**: This echoes God's own validation from 21:5. The message is doubly certified.
 - **"God... has sent his angel"**: Emphasizes the divine origin and authority of the revelation. It comes *from God, through the angel, to John, for the servants* (the Church).
 - **"What must SOON take place"**: This repeats the opening statement of the book (1:1). It creates **bookends**, emphasizing the **imminence** of these events from the perspective of the original audience (and God's perspective).
 - **"Behold, I AM COMING SOON" (v. 7)**: This is **Jesus Himself** speaking directly (like the "break-in" warning in 16:15). This is His personal promise and warning.
 - **The Blessing (v. 7)**: The **Sixth Beatitude** of Revelation.
 - **"Blessed is the one who KEEPS..."**: This echoes the *first* Beatitude (1:3, "Blessed are those who hear, and who keep..."). The blessing isn't just for *hearing* or *reading* or *understanding* the prophecy, but for **obeying** it ("keeps").
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Certainty of the Word**: The repetition of "trustworthy and true" underscores the absolute reliability of the prophetic message.
 - **Imminence ("Soon")**:
 - **Preterist View**: Takes this literally – most events were fulfilled "soon" after John wrote (AD 70).
 - **Futurist/Idealist View**: Takes this as "imminent" from God's perspective (could happen at any time) or certain to happen swiftly *when* the end-time sequence begins. It creates a sense of **urgency** for every generation.
 - **Focus on Obedience**: The final beatitude shifts the focus from eschatological *speculation* to present *obedience*. The practical purpose of prophecy is not just to know the future, but to live faithfully *now* ("keep the words").
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Trustworthy Words: Revelation 21:5. Revelation 3:14** (Jesus is the "Faithful and True Witness").
 - **"Soon": Revelation 1:1.**
 - **"I am coming soon": Revelation 3:11** (to Philadelphia), **22:12, 20.**
 - **Blessed is the One Who Keeps: Revelation 1:3. Luke 11:28**, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and **keep it!**"
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Our Anchor:** In a world of lies, God's Word ("these words") is utterly "trustworthy and true." It's the only reliable source.
 - **Our Urgency:** Jesus's promise "I am coming soon" should create a sense of **expectancy and urgency** in our lives. We don't know the day or hour, so we must live in readiness.
 - **Our Responsibility:** The blessing comes from **keeping** (obeying) the words of Revelation. This involves:
 - **Endurance** through suffering (like the churches).
 - **Worshipping** God alone (rejecting the Beast/Harlot).
 - **Living** in holiness (preparing as the Bride).
 - **Holding** fast to the testimony of Jesus.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why is the "trustworthiness" of these words emphasized so strongly by both God (21:5) and the angel (22:6)?
 2. What does Jesus's promise "I am coming soon" (v. 7) mean to you personally? Does it evoke excitement, fear, or urgency?
 3. The blessing is for the one who *keeps* the words. What is one specific command or exhortation from Revelation that you need to focus on "keeping" this week?
 4. How does the emphasis on *obedience* ("keeping") balance the prophetic/future elements of the book?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Keep the Words."** The blessing isn't for merely *reading* this study, but for *obeying* it.

- Choose **one** specific action point or conviction you've felt during this entire study of Revelation.
 - **Commit** to "keeping" that word today. Put it into practice.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, Your words are trustworthy and true. Thank You for revealing what must soon take place. Thank You for the promise, "Behold, I am coming soon." Grant me the grace not just to hear these words, but to keep them faithfully, that I may receive the blessing You promise. Keep me watchful and obedient until You return. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 22, Day 4

Worship God Alone! (Again)

Scripture Focus: Revelation 22:8-9

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ⁹ but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **John's Attestation:** John explicitly identifies himself as the eyewitness recorder, adding his personal authority to the angel's validation (v. 6).
 - **John's Second Mistake:** Astonishingly, John repeats the *exact same mistake* he made in **19:10**! He is again overwhelmed by the glory of the revelation and the messenger, and falls to worship the angel.
 - **The Angel's Second Rebuke:** The angel's response is identical and immediate: **"Stop it! You must not do that!"**
 - **The Angel's Identity:** He defines himself in three ways:
 1. A **"fellow servant"** (*sundoulos*) with John.
 2. A "fellow servant" with the **"prophets"** (connecting John to the OT prophets).
 3. A "fellow servant" with **"those who keep the words of this book"** (connecting John and the angel to *all obedient believers*).
 - **The Final Command: "Worship God!"** This command, repeated twice (19:10, 22:9), serves as a crucial concluding theme of the entire book.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **The Danger of 'Angel Worship':** This repeated incident strongly warns against any veneration of angels or other intermediaries (saints, etc.). Angels are glorious, but they are *servants*, not objects of worship. This was a relevant warning against Gnostic or pagan tendencies in the early church (cf. Col 2:18).
 - **The Humility of Heaven:** Even the glorious angel who reveals these final mysteries instantly deflects worship and identifies himself as merely a "fellow servant" alongside human believers. This contrasts sharply with the arrogance of the Dragon and Beast who *demand* worship.
 - **The Focus Remains on God:** The entire purpose of the revelation, the prophecy, and the angelic messengers is to point *away* from themselves and *toward* God alone as the only one worthy of worship.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **John's First Mistake: Revelation 19:10**, The exact same event and rebuke.
 - **Worship God Alone: Matthew 4:10**, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 to Satan: "You shall **worship the Lord your God** and him only shall you serve."
 - **Angels as Servants: Hebrews 1:14**, "Are they not all **ministering spirits** sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?"
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Subtle Idolatry:** We may not bow to literal angels, but we are constantly tempted to "worship" the messengers or the means God uses, rather than God Himself. We can idolize:
 - **Pastors or leaders.**
 - **Spiritual experiences or gifts.**
 - **The Bible itself** (bibliolatry) instead of the God it reveals.
 - **Our theological systems.**
 - **Level Ground at the Cross:** The angel reminds us that *all* who serve God – angels, prophets, ordinary believers ("those who keep...") – are fundamentally "**fellow servants.**" Our shared relationship with God through Christ levels all hierarchies in the context of worship.
 - **The Constant Call:** "Worship God!" This remains the primary calling and the constant guard against all forms of idolatry.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. John, the beloved apostle who saw incredible visions, makes the *same mistake twice*. How does this demonstrate the subtle and powerful temptation toward misplaced worship, even for mature believers?
 2. The angel defines himself as a "fellow servant" alongside prophets *and* those who simply "keep the words." What does this teach about the dignity God accords to simple obedience?
 3. What are some modern "angels" (people, experiences, things related to faith) that we might be tempted to "worship" instead of God alone?
 4. Why is the command "Worship God!" repeated as a final, crucial instruction in the book?
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Call to Action

Your call is to "**Check Your Worship.**"

- Honestly examine your heart: Is there any person, experience, or even good thing related to your faith that is receiving the awe, reverence, or ultimate trust that belongs only to God?
 - Consciously redirect your worship today. Acknowledge God alone as the source and object of all true worship. Practice the angel's humility by seeing yourself and others primarily as "fellow servants."
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord God, You alone are worthy of worship. Forgive me for the times I am tempted to give that worship to Your messengers, Your gifts, or even Your words, rather than to You Yourself. Help me see myself, and all others who serve You, simply as fellow servants. May all my focus, all my awe, all my worship be directed only to You, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 22, Day 5

Do Not Seal the Book & The Final Divide

Scripture Focus: Revelation 22:10-15

¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹ Let the one who is doing wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to do right; let the holy person continue to be holy."

¹² ("Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.")

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **"Do not seal up..." (v. 10):** This is the **direct opposite** of the command given to the prophet Daniel.
 - **Daniel 12:4:** "But you, O Daniel, **shut up the words and seal the book**, until the time of the end."
 - **The Message:** The "time of the end" that Daniel saw from afar *has arrived* with Christ. This prophecy is *not* for a distant future only; it is for *now*. Its message is urgent.
 - **"The time is near" (v. 10):** Echoes the opening of the book (1:3). The end is imminent, always "near" from God's perspective, demanding immediate attention.
 - **Final States (v. 11):** This stark statement isn't a command *to* sin, but a declaration that at the very end, people's *established character* becomes fixed. There are no more chances for change; judgment confirms the path chosen. It reflects the hardening seen after the bowl judgments (16:9, 11, 21).
 - **"Dogs" (v. 15):** In Jewish context, "dogs" was a derogatory term for **Gentiles** or, more specifically, the **unclean, the profane, those outside the covenant community** (cf. Philippians 3:2). It denotes those who are spiritually defiled and excluded from the holy city.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Imminence:** The nearness of "the time" underlines the urgency of Revelation's message for every generation of the Church. The end could come at any moment.
 - **Character Solidification (v. 11):** This verse emphasizes human responsibility and the sobering reality that continued rejection of God leads to a fixed state of rebellion, while continued faithfulness leads to a fixed state of righteousness. Judgment reveals and finalizes what people have become.
 - **Jesus Speaks (v. 12-13):** These verses interrupt the angel's voice, highlighting Christ's imminent return and authority.
 - **"Coming soon":** Reiterates imminence.
 - **"Recompense":** He returns as Judge, bringing reward and punishment.
 - **"Alpha and Omega...":** His eternal nature and absolute sovereignty over all history, reinforcing His authority to judge.
 - **Sixth Beatitude (v. 14):** "Blessed are those who wash their robes..."
 - Connects directly back to **7:14** ("washed their robes... in the blood of the Lamb").
 - This "washing" (salvation through Christ's blood) grants **two rights**:
 1. **Right to the Tree of Life:** Access to eternal life/God's presence (cf. 22:2).
 2. **Right to Enter the City:** Membership in the New Jerusalem.
 - **Those Outside (v. 15):** This list parallels the list of the damned in **21:8**. It defines those **excluded** from God's presence by their unrepentant character and deeds, rooted in falsehood.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Sealing/Unsealing:** **Daniel 12:4, 9** (Seal); **Revelation 5:1-5** (Scroll sealed until the Lamb).
 - **Time is Near:** **Revelation 1:3**.
 - **Fixed Character:** **Daniel 12:10**, "...the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand."
 - **Coming/Recompense:** **Isaiah 40:10**, "Behold, the Lord GOD comes... and his **recompense** is with him." **Matthew 16:27**, "For the Son of Man is going to come... and then he will **repay** each person according to what he has done."
 - **Alpha/Omega:** **Revelation 1:8, 21:6**.
 - **Washing Robes:** **Revelation 7:14**. **1 John 1:7**, "...the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."
 - **Tree of Life Access:** **Genesis 3:22-24** (Access lost); **Revelation 2:7** (Access promised to the conqueror).
 - **Outside:** **Revelation 21:8, 27**.
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Urgency:** "The time is near" applies to us. We must live with readiness and urgency in sharing the Gospel.
- **Character Matters:** Our choices *now* are forming our character, which judgment will ultimately confirm. We cannot remain neutral indefinitely.
- **Christ is Coming as Judge:** The returning King is also the Judge who repays according to deeds.
- **Salvation's Blessings:** Faith in Christ ("washing robes") grants the right to eternal life and citizenship in God's kingdom.

- **Exclusion is Real:** There is a final, definitive separation between those inside the City (the redeemed) and those outside (the unrepentant). Loving and practicing falsehood leads to exclusion.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. What is the significance of the command *not* to seal this book, compared to Daniel's instruction?
 2. How does the statement in verse 11 ("Let the one who is doing wrong continue...") function as a warning rather than permission?
 3. Jesus interrupts (v. 12-13) to emphasize His imminent return and judgment. How should this reality impact how you live today?
 4. According to verse 14, what is the *basis* for having the right to the tree of life and entry into the city? How does one "wash their robes"?
 5. Compare the list of those outside (v. 15) with the list in 21:8. What overarching characteristic leads to exclusion from God's presence?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **"Ensure Your Robes are Washed."** The requirement for entry is clear.

- Reflect honestly: Are you relying on your *own* righteousness, or have you "washed your robes" in the blood of the Lamb through faith and repentance?
 - Live today in the blessing and assurance that comes from being cleansed by Christ, granting you the right to the Tree of Life and entry through the gates.
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, Alpha and Omega, You are coming soon with recompense. Thank You for washing my robes in Your own blood, granting me the right to the Tree of Life and entry into Your City. Keep me from becoming vile or doing wrong; help me continue in righteousness and holiness by Your grace. Keep me from loving or practicing falsehood, that I may dwell with You forever. Amen.

Revelation Bible Study: Week 22, Day 6

The Final Invitation & Warning

Scripture Focus: Revelation 22:16-21

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Historical Context (The Original Audience)

- **Jesus Testifies (v. 16):** Jesus *Himself* authenticates the entire message. He sent the angel; the message is *for the churches*.
 - **His Titles (v. 16):**
 - **"Root and Descendant of David":** Affirms His **Messiahship** – both David's *source* ("root") and his *fulfillment* ("descendant").
 - **"Bright Morning Star":** Symbol of **hope, dawn, and the coming new day** (cf. Numbers 24:17; 2 Peter 1:19). He is the herald of the eternal morning.
 - **The Triple Invitation (v. 17):**
 - **The Spirit and the Bride (Church):** *Together*, they issue the call to "Come."
 - **The One Who Hears:** *Anyone* who hears the message is commanded to *echo* the call: "Come."
 - **The One Who is Thirsty:** The *direct Gospel invitation* again (cf. 21:6), open to anyone who recognizes their need. **"Without price."**
 - **The Final Warning (v. 18-19):** A solemn warning protecting the **integrity of this specific prophecy**. Adding to or subtracting from God's revealed Word invites severe judgment – experiencing the plagues or forfeiting eternal life. This echoes warnings about tampering with Scripture generally (Deut 4:2).
 - **The Final Promise & Prayer (v. 20):**
 - **Jesus:** "Surely I am coming soon." (His last recorded words in Scripture).
 - **John/Church:** "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (The proper response of longing and faith).
 - **The Final Blessing (v. 21):** The book ends, as it began (1:4), with **grace**.
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Prophetic Views & Interpretation

- **Christocentric Message:** Jesus Himself is the source, the subject (Testimony of Jesus = Spirit of Prophecy, 19:10), and the climax ("Come, Lord Jesus!") of the book.
 - **Universal Gospel Call:** The invitation is extended freely to all who are thirsty, right up to the very end.
 - **Sanctity of Scripture:** The strong warning emphasizes the divine authority and finality of this revelation. It must not be altered.
 - **Imminent Hope:** The repeated "I am coming soon" frames the entire Christian life as one of hopeful expectation.
 - **Grace Frames Everything:** The final word is "grace," underscoring that our salvation, perseverance, and hope rest entirely on God's undeserved favor through Christ.
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Cross-References (Echoes from the Past)

- **Root of David:** Isaiah 11:1, 10, "A shoot from the stump of Jesse... the **Root of Jesse**..." Revelation 5:5, "the Lion... the **Root of David**..."
 - **Morning Star:** Numbers 24:17, "a **star** shall come out of Jacob..." 2 Peter 1:19, "...until the day dawns and the **morning star** rises in your hearts."
 - **Invitation:** Isaiah 55:1, "Come, everyone who thirsts..." John 7:37, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me..." Revelation 21:6.
 - **Warning Against Altering Scripture:** Deuteronomy 4:2, "You shall not **add to** the word... nor **take from** it..." Proverbs 30:6, "Do not **add to** his words..."
 - **"Coming Soon":** Revelation 1:7, 3:11, 22:7, 12.
 - **"Come, Lord Jesus!":** 1 Corinthians 16:22, "*Maranatha*" (Our Lord, come!).
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Connecting to Today (Modern Relevance)

- **Jesus is the Key:** All of Revelation, and all of Scripture, points ultimately to Jesus – His identity, His work, His return.
 - **Our Mission:** We, as the Bride who hears, are called to echo the Spirit's invitation: "Come." Our lives and words should invite thirsty souls to Christ.
 - **Respect God's Word:** We must handle Scripture faithfully, neither adding our own ideas nor ignoring difficult parts.
 - **Live in Expectation:** The promise "I am coming soon" should shape our priorities, giving us urgency and hope.
 - **Depend on Grace:** From beginning to end, our relationship with God depends entirely on the grace of the Lord Jesus.
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Daily Reflection Questions

1. Jesus gives three titles for Himself in verse 16. What does each title (Root/Descendant, Morning Star) reveal about Him?
2. Verse 17 contains three invitations to "Come." Who issues each invitation, and to whom is it addressed? What does this tell you about God's heart?
3. Why is the warning against adding to or taking away from the prophecy (v. 18-19) so severe?

4. The book ends with Jesus' promise ("Surely I am coming soon") and the Church's response ("Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"). Is that response the genuine cry of your heart today?
 5. Why is "grace" (v. 21) the perfect final word for this book filled with prophecy, judgment, and glory?
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Call to Action

Your call is to **Echo the Invitation**. The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." Let the one who hears say, "Come."

- **Pray:** Ask the Spirit to make you thirsty for Christ and to give you opportunities to invite others.
 - **Speak:** Find one way today to echo the invitation – share a verse, offer encouragement, invite someone to church, or simply pray for a thirsty soul you know. Be part of the final "Come."
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Questions, Comments, Discussion

(Use this space for group notes, insights, or questions that come up during your final discussion.)

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Closing Prayer

O Lord God Almighty, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, who was, and is, and is to come.

We thank You for this journey through the Apocalypse, the unveiling of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

We have stood in awe before Your throne, surrounded by the elders and living creatures, joining their unending hymn of "Holy, Holy, Holy." We have seen the Lamb, slain yet standing, Lion of Judah, worthy to open the scroll and worthy of all praise.

We have trembled as the seals were broken, the trumpets sounded, and the bowls of Your righteous wrath were poured out. We confess that Your judgments are true and just, even as they challenge our understanding. We have seen the stark reality of sin's consequence, the horror of rebellion against Your holiness in the Harlot Babylon, the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Dragon. We acknowledge the certainty of the Lake of Fire, the Second Death, for all whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

But Lord, amidst the warnings, You have shown us overwhelming hope. We have seen the saints sealed, the great multitude standing victorious, washed in the blood of the Lamb. We have heard the Hallelujah Chorus celebrating Your reign and the Marriage Supper prepared for the Bride. We have beheld the King of kings returning in glory, His Word the sword that brings final justice. We have glimpsed the New Jerusalem, radiant with Your glory, where You Yourself will dwell with us, wiping every tear away, making all things new.

Forgive us, Lord, for the times we have feared the Beast more than You, drunk the wine of Babylon, or grown weary in our witness.

Grant us, we pray, the endurance and faith of the saints. Help us to keep Your commandments and hold firmly to the testimony of Jesus. Seal Your Name upon our foreheads, clothe us in the fine linen granted by Your grace, and keep us from the mark of compromise. Make us watchful, pure, and ready, knowing the time is near.

Fill our hearts with longing for that final day, for the river of life, the tree of life, and the light of Your face. May our lives echo the cry of the Spirit and the Bride.

Come, Lord Jesus!

To You, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

Amen.