

# **An Introduction To Our Series Of Sermons**

## **On The Book Of Revelation**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

In 96 A.D. a miraculous thing happened on a rocky, desolate, six by ten mile island in the Aegean Sea. The Apostle John was walking alongside the ocean when the piercing sound, like a trumpet blast, grasped his attention. The majestic voice of God spoke from heaven bringing a message of cheer to believers who were struggling with a harsh burden of persecution from the Roman Emperor Domitian. The old disciple looked heavenward to see the clouds part and God revealing a most amazing vision of His plan for the ages. No other human had seen what John witnessed. The vision was written so all believers would be encouraged. This vision was the Revelation, the last book of the New Testament.

I. We begin a study of this marvelous vision with this lesson.

1. When one announces a study of Revelation there will be common reactions

. . .

a. Some will grimace and say, "Well, I just cannot understand what that Book says!" Others say, "Uh, Oh! This is going to be confusing."

These people see Revelation as impossible to understand. Such fail to understand that Revelation is not bewildering. The book is designed to inform, not to confuse!

b. Some say, "All right! Now we are going to get into the meat of the Word!" These delight in prophecy. They search for hidden meanings in every word, color, and number.

c. Some react, "Oh no! How irrelevant can you get!" These fail to realize this book is for you and me as we live every day - it contains down-to earth truths which should be studied!

d. These common reactions are discouraging because they accuse God of giving us a book that is incapable of meaning and application. In short, they make it useless!

3. As we study the book of Revelation two great questions arise. . .

a. Shall we forever abandon it? Surely not! We cannot agree with Martin Luther who refused to have it in his Bible. This is a book that

has been inspired and preserved by the Holy Spirit.

b. What will we do with it? If we are not going to reject it, we must strive to find its application to modern man. This question is one which has been met in several ways:

- 1) Some see chapters 1-3 and 21-22 as offering needed instruction, but chapters 4-20 leave them wandering in a hopeless maze.
- 2) Others have tried to force the whole book to speak to future matters while others restrict its message to past events.
- 3) Others have found in this book a clear history of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 4) Because of the way it is often treated this book is the most abused Book in the New Testament!

## II. Our purpose for studying Revelation briefly stated.

1. This book brings a much needed message and we need to study it.
2. This book is inspired and deserves study (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
3. Due to the widespread abuse we need to understand this book and be in a position to answer religious error (1 Peter 3:15).
4. We need to study Revelation because many are ignorant about its great message (Ephesians 5:17).

## III. Perhaps our "fear" of studying this Book can be attributed to one of the following reasons.

1. It is an "APOCALYPTIC" book.
  - a. It is written in an obscure manner using symbols which were familiar to its readers.
  - b. The symbolic language would conceal the message from political authorities who would punish those receiving the book or writing it.
  - c. Because of its apocalyptic nature many have turned away from a study of Revelation. After all, how do you react when you read about,

"rivers of blood; hailstones weighing 100 pounds; a dragon so large he knocks down 1/3 of the stars when he lashes with his tail; Death riding a horse, with the Grave following behind; a woman with the moon as a dress and the sun as a footstool; animals with many heads and horns; a dragon that casts from its mouth a river of water to destroy a woman who is flying through the air; a dragon, a beast, and a false prophet, each of which vomits up a frog which gathers an army"?

d. This symbolism is used in the numbers of Revelation.

2. Because of the general abuse of Revelation many arrive at conclusions which are so repulsive that true believers are incensed. Some of the most absurd - In Revelation you will find detailed references to Napoleon, the Balkans War, WW I, WW II, Emperor Wilhelm, Hitler, Mussolini, the peace treaty between Begin and Sadat, etc.

#### IV. Notice some of the general introductory matters about this book.

1. **AUTHOR** -- The author identifies himself as "John" (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). He was a Jewish Christian who lived in Galilee before moving to Asia Minor. He was a man of profound spiritual insight and who exercised unquestioned authority. He was one who framed his speech in positive terms. This "John" is usually identified as John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee.

2. **THEME** -- The theme can be simply state, "Victory in Jesus!" (cf 17:14).

3. **PURPOSE** -- The purpose of Revelation is to give encouragement to believers to persevere in Christianity. John wanted his readers to know that Christ will triumph and all who follow Him will be exalted in heaven.

4. **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND** -- This point is crucial to a proper understanding of Revelation. The Emperor of Rome at this time was Domitian who has gone down in history as the one who bathed the empire in Christian's blood. His persecution was for the purpose of enforcing emperor worship. The Emperor insisted that he was divine and had images of himself erected through the empire. Those who refused to worship were persecuted. Some were put to death, some exiled, tortured and property confiscated. The majority of this persecution fell on Asia Minor because Christianity was strongest in that area. When the basic tenets of Christianity were understood by Rome a sharp collision was inevitable. Note what caused Christianity to become so hated by Rome --

- a. **It attempted to proselyte** -- it could not be bound. Its purpose was to make Christians from others. For this it was outlawed.
- b. **It aspired to universality** -- Rome could not tolerate this rival.
- c. **It was exclusive** -- its followers refused to mix with heathen customs. This refusal made them enemies to the State's "gods."
- d. **The Christians were accused of evils** -- they met at night, they were accused of "eating flesh and drinking blood."
- e. **They refused to take an oath to idols of the State and wear uniforms which displayed idolatrous insignias.**
- f. **Christians were looked upon as wild fanatics** because of their enthusiasm.
- g. **Christians came in conflict with many of the merchants of Rome**-- priests, makers, and venders of sacrificial idols and animals (Ac 19:23ff).

The final "straw" came with the Christians' refusal to worship the Emperor. Because of these conflicts the Christians were blamed for all calamities -- if there was no rain Christians were blamed, if there was a flood Christians were blamed. Famine, earthquakes, military failures were all blamed on Christians.

When people were being killed, exiled, and robbed of their possessions for refusing to renounce Christ; when evil was threatening to strike a death blow to the church; is there any hope for the future? Revelation is God's answer to this question. In light of the severe historical background we can understand why believers were asking if God had lost his power and why He did not intervene. The Revelation is God's unveiling of answers to these questions.

## 5. STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE --

- a. The book is generally divided into 7 sections divided into 2 general divisions.
- b. In each of the sections we see the great conflict between righteousness and evil. Each time the conflict intensifies until the righteous are completely delivered and Christ is seen as the Supreme Victor. In the end Satan and his followers are vanquished and Christ greets His faithful in the riches of Heaven.

c. The message of these seven sections is clear -- The church always functions as a light-bearer, shining the midst of darkness because Christ is in it. Result? (Jn 17:14). The world always persecutes the church. Result? Divine judgements of every description fall upon the world, while the church is victorious. This struggle between the church and the world reveals a deeper conflict between Christ and Satan. Satan always employs three allies mentioned in chapters 12-14. They always, and especially on the Day of Judgement, go down in defeat. The victory is always ours!"

## 6. SOME CAUTIONS TO REMEMBER

- a. Do not attempt to study so deep that you try to find out what each tiny detail in the vision is.
- b. As you read ask 2 questions: What is the whole picture? How does this support the theme? (Rv 17:14)
- c. As you study, look to understand the message as the first century believer.
- d. Remember to be consistent with other inspired writings.

V. The universal practicality of this book is seen when you consider how the message applies for men today.

### 1. It has a message of hope and comfort.

- a. There is comfort for those who sorrow - it reveals that freedom from sorrow will come (6:10; 21:3b-4).
- b. There is hope for those who are discouraged - it tells them to lift up their heads and hearts for God has not abdicated His throne (3:4).
- c. Here is a book that speaks comfort and hope to those who struggle and are perplexed.
- d. Look at how hope and comfort are expressed --
  - 1) Believers may find their garments splashed and filthy but they wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14; 22:14).
  - 2) Believers may be "in great tribulation" but they will come out

of it (7:14).

3) Believers may be killed but they will rise to stand on their feet (11:11).

4) Believers may be persecuted by the dragon, beast, and false prophet, but in the end you see them standing victoriously on Mt. Zion. With the Lamb there are 144,000 (14:1) and these triumph over the beast (15:2).

2. It has a message of victory.

Throughout the Book Christ is presented as the Victor, the Conqueror (1:18; 2:8; 5:9ff; 6:2; 11:15; 12:9ff; 14:1, 14; 15:2ff; 19:16; 20:4; 22:3). He conquers death, Hades, the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, those who worship the beast, etc. (cf 17:14).

3. It has a message about the Omnipotent reign of Jesus Christ.

As you complete its reading and sit in reflection, you can see Christ seated at the right hand of God. Christ reigns and all are in submission to His will (19:6; 11:15).

4. It has a message for every age. This book is not just for those who first read it, it is for everyone (22:17; 1:3).

5. It has a message that says, "Do not trust in how things seem to be, trust in God!"

a. This wonderful Book tells us that things are not what they seem.

b. It seemed as if prayers were not heard (6:10), but God heard and answered (8:3-5).

c. It seemed that the saints were defeated (6:9-10), but in reality they reign -- on earth (5:10), in heaven (20:4), and forever and ever (22:5).

d. It seemed that Satan was the conqueror -- he rose as the dragon (12:3), the beast (13:1), the false prophet (13:11), and Babylon (14:8). But each went down in defeat!

e. Please remember - Things may not seem to be going the right way; everything may seem to be going against us, but in the end we will

triumph! (17:14).

6. It has a message of warning.

a. To the church there is a warning to keep pure and free from worldly entanglements.

b. To the enemies of the church it warns that the church through Christ will eventually triumph and all opposition will be broken by the righteous power of God (14:11-no rest!).

VI. We begin our study with excitement.

"Beautiful beyond description is this last book of the Bible. Where in literature do we find anything that excels the majestic description of the Son of Man walking in the midst of seven golden lampstands (1:12-20)? Where in Scripture do we find a more vivid and picturesque portrayal of The Christ, Faithful and True going forth into victory, seated upon a white horse, arrayed with a garment sprinkled with blood, followed by the armies of heaven (19:11-16)? Where again, do we find a sharper contrast than that between the doom of Babylon, on the one and the happiness of Jerusalem the Golden on the other (18, 19, 21, 22)? And where are the Throne set in heaven and the blessedness of heavenly life depicted in a manner more serenely simple, yet beautiful in its very simplicity (4:2-5:14; 7:13-17)?"

VII. We encourage all to heed the message of this great book.

1. Know that Christ will triumph (17:14).

2. Since you know that, determine that you will be a faithful follower (22:17).

# **Weary Days and Dreary Nights**

## **Revelation 1:1-18**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. Of all emotions which damage believers the greatest is despondency.

1. "Despondency" -- a combination of despair, and hopelessness.
2. The despondent person is controlled by the belief that all is useless; hope has been stripped away.
3. The despondent person simply gives up all resistance.
4. This danger is referred to in Scripture - Job 17:15; Psalm 77:7-9; Jonah 2:2-4; 1 Kings 19:4.

II. Try to imagine how despondent those who received the Revelation were.

#### **1. The Apostle John**

For 40 years he had followed Christ. He had been one of the Lord's closest disciples. It was he who is often referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." But his labors seemed a failure right now -- we have no record of any conversions during his labors; he had lived in Ephesus but the believers there had failed (2:4); and now, he was isolated on a prison island! Imagine how he felt right now. Despondency must have been gnawing away at his confidence.

#### **2. Those who were to receive Revelation.**

They were being tortured, imprisoned, and deprived of basic needs. They had seen godly brethren mutilated and burned alive. No doubt they were in the deepest parts of despondency. Their faith was shaken. Can you blame them for looking toward heaven and saying they could not understand what was happening? Surely some asked, "If Christianity is SO GOOD, why are things going so bad?"

III. Our God looked into the hearts of these saints and His great love set in motion John's inspired pen. From this opening chapter to the conclusion we read one continuous message designed to rescue the despondent soul. Inspiration's pen



offered comfort and consolation. Look at how this marvelous message begins.

**Body:**

I. The world was forcing believers to "look down," to focus on things of this world. John wrote telling them to "Look up!" What was the basis for John's optimistic message?

A. They needed to "look up" because of God!

1. His care and concern are evident in the wonderful gift of His Word to us (v. 1a).

a. God answered our brethren's cry for "Why?"

b. He "revealed" - literally APOKALUPSIS. A compound Greek word which referring to a radical uncovering or breakthrough of what was previously hidden. God was going to pull back the curtain and show His faithful followers what was really taking place.

c. God gave these distressed believers answers to their questions in this Book (1:19).

d. He desired to encourage His followers and He took the initiative. Such reveals His care and concern for us.

2. God has promised blessings to those who look up to Him and follow His will (v. 3).

a. If our brethren needed blessings they needed to look to God.

b. "Blessed" - "Happy, deeply delighted, satisfied." His revelation was not given to start or satisfy some prophetic curiosity but to change our lives and encourage faithfulness.

c. Only by looking to God could our first century brethren be truly blessed.

B. They needed to "look up" because of JESUS CHRIST.

Notice how this single chapter urged them to keep faith in Christ and never give up.

1. Christ is the only source of true comfort.

a. He is pictured as standing in the midst of the lampstands - a picture of how His presence comforts (v. 13).

b. He is pictured as offering comfort because He eliminates every fear (v. 17-18).

2. Christ is all-sufficient - He answers every needs (v. 5-6).

a. As the Faithful Witness He testifies that one can follow God, lose life yet be exalted!

b. As the First-born from the dead He holds the only answer to death.

c. As the Ruler of earthly kings He assures us that there is One who is in control.

d. As the Lover of mankind He extends love and acceptance to the unlovable and unacceptable.

e. As the Saviour He offers redemption and freedom from sin's tragedy.

f. As the Sovereign of God's Kingdom He is the Head of the Kingdom/ Church and has all power and authority.

g. As the Great High Priest He offered the perfect sacrifice, established a priesthood for all believers, and opened access to God for all who desire to draw near to Him.

3. Christ is coming back! (v. 7). It was this point which comforted the Thessalonians (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

4. Believers need to look up to Christ because He is unlike and unequal to anything or anyone else (v. 8, 13-16). Knowing this should keep their sight focused on Him and heaven.

C. They needed to "look up" because of FELLOW SAINTS.

1. A strong fellowship would enable these persecuted believers to remain strong.

- a. They would know they were not suffering alone (v. 9).
- b. They would be realistic - faith would invite persecution! (v. 9; cf. John 17:14).
- c. Their fellowship would comprise a family unit which would afford strength (v. 9) "brethren."
- d. Their association with Christ would identify them as "the kingdom of God" - they would know they belonged to a force greater than any the world could call together.

2. John told these brethren to "look up" because they shared a wonderful relationship with one another. This fellowship would enable them to focus on the blessings of the future.

## II. From this wise counsel we discover some practical lessons.

A. We need to follow John's advice - when the world causes to look down, look up!

- 1. Trials and sufferings cause us to look at this world for answers and hope.
- 2. But we need to look up! (cf Colossians 3:2).

B. We can find great comfort only by trusting in spiritual things --

- 1. Trust in God for He cares and is concerned (1:1).
- 2. Look to Christ for He answers every need (1:8).
- 3. Lean upon fellow-saints for they will support and encourage (1:9).

## **Conclusion:**

I. The theme of chapter 1 is do not give up because you have so much going for you! This world often tempts us to look away from God; to search for answers elsewhere. But the believer knows that no matter how bad things get, the only answer and the only source of support is found in God, Christ, and fellow-saints.

II. Learn the simple lesson of chapter one - "When the days are weary, the long nights dreary," realize with confidence that our loving Saviour truly cares!

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# **CAPITULATION THWARTED**

## **Revelation 2-3**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. John was writing his discouraged brethren. He sought to rekindle their devotion and dedication to God. They faced many trials and pressures because of their faith and many were ready to give up. Immediate attention was required if Satan's objectives were to be foiled.

II. The way God chose to strengthen the members of the 7 Asian churches was through their memories. The basic message of these 7 letters is "remember!"

1. The call to remember would cause these readers to contemplate life and know that God really cares about them. Such an exercise would change their viewpoint.

2. The primary question which we should answer in times of sorrow and trouble is, "Where will we stand?" John urged his readers to remember that their strength was found In God not in the world.

III. This is needed counsel for many today. When sorrow strikes it is so easy to forget God. We must "remember" just as our brethren in these 7 churches did. Note 4 things which believers need to remember in trying times.

### **Body:**

#### **I. REMEMBER GOD**

A. Throughout this book John reminds his readers to focus on God.

He urged them to remember their Almighty Creator.

B. A careful reading reveals that John wanted his readers to remember the following things about God.

**1. Remember His promises** (2:7, 10-11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21). Each letter closes with a promise to the believer who remains faithful -- heavenly blessings are promised to those who persevere.

a. 2:7 -- Enjoyment of heavenly blessings. We find a beautiful garden specially prepared full of delights.

b. 2:10-11 -- A trophy of victory (Jas 1:12) and they will be saved from the second death (20:6, 14). Eternal joy and victory are pictured here.

c. 2:17 -- Believers will find themselves at home in the great banquet feast (the wedding supper) feasting on heavenly manna (Jn 4:31-33; 6:35). They will find eternal identity with God - "white stone and a new name."

"The white stone was a symbol in the Roman world used in legal trials, academic grading systems, and at athletic games. The stone with the Roman letters SP imprinted upon it was given in Roman games as an award for valor.

Also it was first-century practice that after a serious illness a patient who recovered would often take a new name to signify his or her complete victory. The point is dramatically symbolized for the Christians at Pergamum. Their drift into sinfulness does not need to be the last word for either themselves or for others. In spite of the harm that has happened, there can be healing - a new identity to fulfill the identity distorted by sin;

healthy food from God who knows of the human need to be fed and healed, and made whole."

d. 2:26-28 -- The victorious believer, because of faith, will help vanquish all evil (22:5). Faithfulness enables them to spend eternity with Christ, the bright and morning Star (22:16). Believers will be given the morning "star," a symbol of deity. This cannot refer to a millennial reign of 1,000 on earth, for this takes place in heaven.

e. 3:5 -- Those who remain steadfast will be registered in the roll of heaven. Standing in heaven the believer will be recognized as a colleague of the Lord's.

f. 3:12 - The blessings of eternity will be secure. This security is possible because the believer has identified himself with God, the church (Jerusalem), and the Redeemer.

g. 3:21 - Marvelous fellowship is available. This fellowship begins in this life and is perfected in the hereafter when believers sit and reign.

h. NOTE: John encouraged his brethren to remember these wonderful promises and they would remain faithful to God!

## **2. Remember God's majestic and awesome power.**

a. Revealed to Ephesians (2:5) - He demands repentance and has power to remove the "lampstand" (1:20). God can cause a church to cease existing!

b. Revealed to Smyrna (2:10) - God's power can assure calm. "10 days" - a number represents completeness. When the suffering is complete God's power assures us that there is an end to problems.

c. Revealed to Pergamum (2:16) - God can handle the situation with the power of His Word.

d. Revealed to Thyatira (2:21-24) - God's power will handle the impenitent ("Jezebel"). He offers time for repentance but will not always be patient!

e. Revealed to Sardis (3:3) - God is so powerful that only He can demand and expect active service.

f. Revealed to Philadelphia (3:9-10) - God is the divine Protector.

g. Revealed to Laodicea (3:18-19) - God's power can satisfy all of our needs - we must "buy" from Him if we are to be satisfied (Isaiah 55:1-3a).

**3. Remember God's great love** in sending Jesus to save our souls and intercede for us.

a. Jesus Christ is the focal point of this book. Believers must look to Him if they are to survive. Believers must realize that He is supremely great and allow nothing to take their devotion away.

b. To impress his readers with the greatness of Christ, John presents Him in majestic terms.

1) 2:1 - He rules the angels and is ever present among believers.

2) 2:8 - He has conquered death, the great enemy of man, and is now forever alive!

3) 2:12 - He possesses a power greater than any earthly force.

4) 2:18 - He sees all things and will reward accordingly. His feet are shod to trample evil.

5) 3:1 - He possesses the ability to offer life to dead churches.



6) 3:7 - He possesses absolute authority.

7) 3:14 - Christ is the One in Whom we can find true faithfulness. He is also the "beginning" (source) of God's creation (cf John 1:3, 10).

c. Believers needs to remember (Romans 8:32; Galatians 4:4-5). As we remember this fact we will be faithful.

**4. Remember God's Omniscience - HE KNOWS!** (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). God is aware of our struggles and will not forget them!

II. 3 other points which should be remembered so we will never surrender to the Devil.

**A. Remember that it is essential to remain involved.**

1. Involvement will help keep our commitment strong and will renew our devotion (2:5). 3:8 - "Open Door."

2. Caution - it is possible to be too involved and fail to possess love (2:4). There may be a deep sense of duty but no devotion; a response from guilt but not from appreciation and thanksgiving (John 14;15).

3. John reminds his readers to "hold fast" (3:11) - to be active and involved.

**B. Remember what true values are in the world.**

1. Smyrna was impoverished yet was rich beyond measure (2:9).

2. Philadelphia had "little power" but was connected to a power source of unlimited strength (3:8).

3. Laodicea trusted in the values of the world and found herself in abject poverty (3:17).

### **C. Remember to face trials without fear.**

1. Even though you may live and work where Satan's strength is the greatest, you can face your foes without fear (2:10a).

2. When God is for you and you are obeying His will there is nothing which can cause you eternal harm (Matthew 10:28).

### **Conclusion:**

I. It is easy to give up and surrender to Satan. John urges us to "remember" and remain faithful!

II. A blacksmith known for his strong faith, had a great deal of illness. He was challenged by an unbeliever to explain why God would let him suffer. He explained, "I take a piece of iron, put it into the fire and bring it to a white heat, then I strike it once or twice to see if it will temper. I plunge it into water to change the temperature, put it into the fire again, then I put it on the anvil and make a useful article out of it. If it will not temper when I first strike it I throw it into the scrap heap and sell it for a 1/2 penny per pound. I believe that God is testing me to see if I will take temper. I have tried to bear it as patiently as I could, and my daily prayer has been, 'Lord, put me into the fire if you will; put me into the water if you think I need it; do anything you please only don't throw me on the scrap heap.'"

Let us trust in God to deliver us and care for us when we have needs. When times become difficult and the burdens press us to give up and give in - REMEMBER! "God's Sky is over us yet!"

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# **Inducements to Capitulate**

## **Revelation 2-3**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. The Kingdom of God is invincible! It cannot be shaken and is eternal in scope.

Those who oppose this divine institution do so in vain!

1. Satan's opposition was doomed to failure before he enlisted the aid of the fallen angels as his comrades.

2. Even though his efforts are doomed to failure, Satan is ever-ready to encourage God's servants to surrender.

a. The blessed Lord was faced with this temptation (Matthew 4:1ff).

b. Our early brethren were tempted to give up and Scripture urges all to beware! (2 Corinthians 4:8-9; Hebrews 10:32-34; 1 Peter 5:8; Jude 17-23).

II. The 1st century believers in Asia Minor were targets of Satan's evil schemes.

Satan tried to persuade them to give up their faithfulness.

1. Seven churches were specific targets. Upon these were focused evil trials.

Satan used these trials, hoping to causing capitulation in his favor.

2. These brethren were struggling with Satan's "inducements to capitulate." A careful study of these points will give us instruction to help us live in devoted allegiance to the risen Saviour.

### **Body:**

I. Surrender to Satan is actually a two-part process. As we consider the lesson text we will see how these two parts work together to bring about the downfall of believers.

A. The process begins when Satan uses certain events to undermine faith in God.

1. There is one supreme target of the Devil - our minds, our thought processes. Once he gains control of our minds he has us in subjection (cf 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

2. The text reveals how Satan is able to gain control. Note: Control is not achieved instantly. It is often a long process that begins only when we allow

our trust in God to "crack." Satan then works on that crack, prying it open and causing us to question God's care for us.

3. From Rv 2-3 we see how Satan caused our early brethren to begin questioning God's care . . .

a. He brought stress and pressure on them (2:9).

"Tribulation" - early Greeks used this word to describe the torture of being slowly crushed to death beneath a huge rock. They faced serious trouble which was crushing them.

b. He caused them to focus on material things (2:9).

"Poverty" - refers to one who has nothing. These brethren lived in one of the most prosperous cities, but because they believed in Jesus they were deprived. Imagine how terrible it would be to look around and see everyone enjoying life. But you have nothing, all because you believe in Jesus Christ. They had lost their jobs, houses, all things!

c. He caused abuse to be hurled at them (2:9). "Blasphemy" - others eagerly accused with lies. They were slandered. The children and adults all shared the embarrassment of this evil mockery, and ridicule. Can you imagine how much a parent would hurt when this evil speech made their little child cry and break their heart? The only alternative was to surrender to Satan!

d. He surrounded the faithful believers with people who were under his authority and influence. This was done so that Christians thought they were all alone (2:13). Everywhere they turned, looked, or went, they saw Satan's subjects. How distressing it is to be in the persecuted minority when you could easily join the majority. How quickly the thought arises -- "Why should I continue when everyone else is doing differently and they are all right?" How hard for parents to tell children they can't go with school friends, etc. Can you imagine how hard it was to remain true when you lived in a place that was so filled with evil it was known to be "Satan's seat"?

e. He caused open hostility, persecution, and ill-treatment (2:13). "Antipas" - nothing more is known about him. He did hold firm to the end even in Satan's home base. Think of receiving a message as in 2:10a - you will suffer because you believe. Think of Satan's implied message, "If you do not want to wind up like Antipas you had better change."

B. Once Satan has caused us to begin questioning the care of God, a small

crack appears in our armor. At that moment, if we are not careful, the second point becomes evident - we begin to surrender! Notice how this surrender is portrayed in Rv 2-3.

1. Our love for God begins to erode (2:4; 3:1-2, 17).

a. Slowly and silently faith begins to creep out of our lives.

b. "Left" - "to release, let go, leave behind."

c. Devotion vanishes - it has eroded away and suddenly we discover, "I just don't feel as close to God as I once was!"

d. When we allow our trust in God to lessen, we will become as Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea! How frightening it is to realize that this will occur without our knowing it! (Hebrews 2:1-4).

2. We begin to tolerate open compromise of God's will and eventually find ourselves encouraging false teachers (2:14-15, 20). Believers begin to think they can have peace with Satan and with God. They look for the "easy way" out.

3. We will ultimately settle into a false confidence (3:17). Here is the picture of one who has completely surrendered to Satan! The war is over, capitulation is complete!

II. From this passage we are able to focus on vital lessons for each believer

A. We need to understand that Satan will use at least 5 ways to discourage us spiritually.

1. Stress and pressures which appear to "crush" us (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7).

2. Materialism (1 Timothy 6:6-10; Job 1:21).

3. Ridicule, mockings, verbal abuse (1 Peter 2:21-23).

4. The majority surrounding us devoted to evil (Psalm 56:3-4, 11, 13).

5. Open persecution and ill-treatment (Matthew 5:10-12).

B. We need to understand that Satan will make surrender very appealing - he really dresses compromise so it appears to be the best way. "Just think, you can avoid \_\_\_\_\_ if you will follow me." Such did not work on our Lord and it should not on us.

C. We need to understand how concerned God is about our surrendering to Satan.

He has described the devices of Satan to us; He has strongly urged faithfulness; He has revealed how deeply grieved He is when we fail.

D. We need to realize how tragic it is when we give up to the Devil (Rv 3:17b). Surrender begins slow, and it is so easy -- but it has the promise of eternal ruin in the end!

### **Conclusion:**

I. Towards sunset of the long, bloody day of Waterloo, when the surviving remnants of the Old Imperial Guards were summoned to lay down their arms, the scarred veterans of fifty victories cried out, "The Old Guards dies: it never surrenders!" This should be the motto of every Christian!

II. How is Satan inviting you to capitulate? What weakness has he discovered in your life and is using it to cause you to stumble?

III. We are involved in a tremendous struggle with Satan. We should not sleep without a sentinel or march without a scout.

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# **Guarantees Of The Throne Room**

## **Revelation 4-5**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. "There are no guarantees in life!" This cynical remark is often made by one who has lost something of value. The phrase states that we just cannot believe in anyone or anything.

1. It is not uncommon to see people struggling to locate something that gives them a firm hold in life. They have searched and failed; they have trusted and were often betrayed. To such people life indeed hold no guarantees.

2. In Revelation 4-5 we are told that guarantees do exist. We discover some very important guarantees for believers.

II. Note the connection chapters 4-5 have with 1-3.

1. The letters to the churches gave the sense of impending persecution which might have startled the brethren. God begins to comfort believers by pointing out that He and Christ sit upon the great Throne and are in control of everything. Knowing this believers should be able to overcome the trials and ordeals they face.

2. John is invited to "come up" to heaven and look at things from the heavenly viewpoint.

### ***EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON OUR POINT OF VIEW!***

An admirer of a painting once stood gazing at its portrayal of a Highland scene of great strength and glory. The owner of the picture walked over to the admirer and said, "I am afraid you won't get the light on the hill." He was right. From where the man stood he saw a dark, stormy landscape and failed to see any light on the hill. After moving to where the owner suggested the entire scene changed to one lit with the wonderful lights from above.

Such is what John urged his readers to do. Change their viewpoint from the earth to heaven. If they could see matters from heaven's perspective then the entire scenes of life would change!

From Patmos John saw a dark picture, but when he looked from God's view everything changed. From heaven's viewpoint there was no question about the



outcome of believers' struggles - they are guaranteed victory!

3. Notice the importance of the word "throne." 18 times it is used in these 2 chapters. John's readers were familiar with earthly thrones, and presently were troubled by Caesar's throne. But John is impressed with the great Throne which is above every other throne! He is taken into this great Throne Room and there finds guarantees which are secure!

### **Body:**

I. Notice the beauty of the Great Heavenly Throne Room which John was invited to enter (Rv 4-5).

#### **A. General remarks on chapter 4**

1. Heaven is described as a great room and John was able to look through an open door. He saw a throne upon which a glorious Being sat (2). This Great Being is God.

2. The scene is described by John in terms which describe the beauty and majesty of God (3, 5).

3. There 24 Elders who rule in a position lower than God. It is commonly thought these represent the 12 tribes of Israel (OT) and the 12 apostles (NT), thus signifying the completeness of God's powerful plan for redeeming man.

4. The 4 Living Creatures appear to be the same as in Ezek 1, 10 which are described as the cherubim, a very high order of angels. These are responsible for guarding the holy things of God. The animal likeness which describes each is thought to be characteristics of their service to God - strength like a lion, hard service like an ox, intelligence like man, and swiftness like an eagle. These traits are elsewhere ascribed to angels (cf. Psalm 103:20, 21; Hebrews 1:14; Daniel 9:21; Luke 12:18; 15:10; etc.).

5. The picture is one of worship to God. So great is God that all orders of creation pay reverence, humility, and awe to Him. All stand ready to carry out His will. All heavenly intelligence renders obedience to God, so should man. God is seen as One who is powerful and majestic - Caesar cannot match Him!

#### **B. General remarks on chapter 5.**

1. John's sight is focused upon the Throne and he sees God holding a Scroll sealed with 7 seals. This Scroll symbolizes the eternal plan of God, as long as it remains

sealed God's plan is unknown and unable to be executed. To open the Scroll means God's will would triumph and His children will be protected in the hours of bitter trials.

2. A challenge was made for anyone to open the scroll; to complete God's great plan; to offer struggling man some hope -- but no one was able to do this. John wept because of the hopelessness of the situation.

3. One of the Elders comforted John by pointing to a Lamb of God - Jesus Christ. Christ was able to open the Scroll because He has overcome.

4. Christ is described as having 7 horns and 7 eyes. This revealed His power to do whatever was necessary and to possess inspiration to see and know what should be revealed to man.

5. The ability of Christ to meet our needs is stated in simple terms (7). After He had taken the Scroll the heavenly throng worshipped Him. Their song in v. 9-10 reveals His part in redeeming man.

6. The greatness of God and Christ is universally recognized (v. 13; cf. Psalm 148:7-10; 99:1).

II. From these chapters we are able to see that God and Christ reign - What guarantees result from their reign? What can God guarantee to His children who are desperately searching for some assurance as they are troubled and persecuted?

A. They guarantee that prayers will be heard (5:8).

1. Our brethren were being persecuted on earth, but in heaven their prayers were so precious that they were held in golden bowls and presented to God!

2. It is easy to forget this point when we are persecuted and troubled. We must realize this fact--our prayers are heard and will be answered! (John 15:7; Matthew 7:7; Luke 18:1).

3. Whenever you are tempted to quit praying because it seems that praying is not working; when your prayers seem to go unheard and unanswered; remember this guarantee! (Note: Daniel 10:1ff).

B. They guarantee that true blessings are found only in the lives of those who follow the Lamb (5:10). In this verse we discover 3 blessings offered to the faithful.

1. They are a Kingdom - not earthly like Rome but one that will outlive Rome, it

was eternal.

2. They are priests - They render service to God.

3. They are rulers - They "reign." Believers reign because they are in the Kingdom; by leading, directing, and restraining evil.

4. Note: These blessings can only be found by faithful obedience to Christ. If we follow Christ we are guaranteed these 3 things!

C. They guarantee that NO ONE (either in the physical or spiritual realms) can seriously challenge the Throne of God and Christ (4:2, 8, 10-11).

1. The Throne of God stands unchallenged - it is invincible (cf Hebrews 12:28; Daniel 2:44; Rv 12:7, 8).

2. The Throne of God is occupied by One who has real power. God's power will assure triumph over evil. 4:8 -- "Almighty".

3. Since our God is truly powerful, we need to know that His power will remain forever! (Rv 5:11)

D. They guarantee believers an avenue of triumph that is found only through Christ (5:2-5).

1. Jesus Christ is the only One who was worthy to satisfy and reveal God's great scheme for saving man (v.3).

2. The access to God, opened by Christ for man, is offered to all who are willing to follow (9b). He offers hope and comfort to the world. Come to Christ, enter in His way and you are guaranteed joy, peace, and hope (John 14:27; Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:4-7).

III. Since God and Jesus Christ guarantee us these things, what should result in our lives?

A. We should know that **suffering will come but it will only be temporary** if God is our defender! We are guaranteed that God is the invincible Sovereign thus His way and His people will triumph (5:10).

B. We should know that **genuine victory will be given** to God's faithful. Victory is assured because Jehovah sits on the Throne. He is "holy," "almighty," filled with "power," and is the "Creator." He has the right to do whatever His wisdom and justice demand (5:13b).

## **Conclusion:**

I. This section closes with a thrilling scene of triumph for saints. Such will bring courage and hope to John's readers whether they are in the 1st century or 20th century. Believing in the power of God (4) and the redeeming love of Christ (5), there is no enemy or force of evil which we need to fear.

II. Gain courage from the promises of God. Looking at the message of these 2 chapters we can be bold as lions, laugh at troubles, allow no affliction to trouble us, but if we forget this message will become very fearful of even the least anxiety (Colossians 3:2).

III. When you are perplexed by the world, you need to do as John did in 4:1, "go up" to the heavenly Throne Room of God and there find consolation in the guarantees which God extends to His children! Note these guarantees:

1. Prayers will be heard.
2. Obedience yields true blessings.
3. God is in control.
4. Believers will triumph.

# **The White Horseman Rides!**

## **Revelation 6-7**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. John has just witnessed the Lamb taking the Scroll from God's hand. Immediately the Lamb begins to open each of the seven seals. As each is opened its symbolism is released. This Scroll symbolizes God's eternal plan and as it is opened John will receive answers to his questions about his brethren's plight. This section gives a panoramic view of God's dealings with man. We see the introduction of Christ to the world; the response of the world; and, the final fate for those who follow Christ and those who follow the world. This panoramic view was given to encourage our bewildered brethren. They would be encouraged to continue because they would know reward would be given to them in the end.

II. The connection of the 7 seals with the events just studied is clear. Christ has just been crowned the conquering Lamb and was seated at the right hand of God. Now His will moves out to ride over the world. Soon evil opposition bathes the land in blood as harsh persecution occurs (John 15:19). Christians are barely able to live while their enemies live in luxury. But Christ reigns and those who trust in him will overcome and enjoy the beauties of heaven.

III. Observe how the message of the 7 Seals bring courage to weak hearts. We focus on the Rider of the white horse as the central theme.

### **Body:**

I. Carefully consider the following facts that are revealed about this Rider on the white horse.

#### **A. His IDENTITY and MISSION (6:2).**

1. This speaks about Jesus Christ.

a. 5:5 - He is the One who has conquered (John 16:33; Rv 17:14).

b. The horse is "white" - indicates holiness.

c. "Crown" - a victory wreath. He is victorious.

d. This same symbol is found in 19:11.

2. His mission was to go out and conquer. He has conquered sin and death and He continues to conquer when men hear and obey His invitation.

3. Once again we find ourselves focusing on the fact that Jesus Christ is supreme - Lord of Lords, King of Kings! NO ONE is able to stand in His way!

#### **B. His OPPOSITION (6:3-11).**

1. As this Conquering Commander rides forth to complete His mission His followers will find great opposition from the world.

2. Notice 4 methods which are used to oppose these followers of Christ.

##### **a. Religious persecution of believers (6:3-4, 9-11)**

1) "Slaughter" used to refer to the killing of sacrificial victims offered to God (cf. Rv 5:6, 9,12; 18:24).

2) When Christ brings the gospel to the world there will always be conflict (Matthew 10:34).

3) "Sword" signifies the sacrificial knife.

##### **b. Economic suppression and injustice (6:5-6).**

1) This indicates two extremes - some will barely live while others would enjoy luxury.

2) Believers were forbidden to join the trade guilds by which employment was gained because they would not worship images of the Emperor. Their refusal meant loss of job, money, and ability to purchase food.

3) When people worshipped the Emperor's image they would receive a token, or "mark" on paper indicating they had performed the required worship. All who did not have the "mark" were unable to buy and sell (Rv 13:17).

4) Believers today are often crowded out of jobs, business, or professions because they remain true to conviction. Even today the Black Horse is riding!

##### **c. Physical Death (6:7-8).**

1) Believers were not exempted from the sting of death. They would suffer death just like those in the world. Christianity did not offer them miraculous protection!

2) 4 methods by which death would claim the believers are given to John . . .

a) War - "sword" here refers to the battle sword.

b) Famine

c) Pestilence - plagues and diseases

d) Wild beasts

3) Note: The believers were subjected to these just as unbelievers. No doubt many began to ask if there was any virtue in being a Christian since they suffered just like others and even more!

d. The apparent success of the enemy (6:9-11).

1) It seemed that Satan had won and the Lamb lost! They had witnessed dear loved ones maimed, tortured, and killed.

2) It was, and still is, hard to keep from asking, "Why Lord?" (cf. Jeremiah 12:1-4). Yet God tries to give an answer that will be understood to this frustrating question (v. 11; cf. 2:10).

3. Opposition was tremendous. Many succumbed to it, their strength was not sufficient. But the Rider on the White horse is not left facing this opposition, in the next seal the apparent success of those fighting against Christ is only temporary.

### **C. His COMPLETE VICTORY (6:12-7:17).**

1. We see that His mission is completed, the souls under the alter were vindicated - Christ's victory is complete.

2. The victory of the White Horseman strikes terror into the hearts of His enemies (6:12-17). The "great day" came. It came in a moment, there was no time to prepare. A crashing universe and frightened humanity is unable to surrender now. Here is a picture of the terror of the great day, voices of thousands scream in agony.

3. The victory of the White Horseman offers protection to the believers (7:1-8). What is the fate of believers on this great day? All who have been sealed will be protected for they are God's people (Ephesians 1:13-14). All men bear a mark, either of evil or good. Those bearing the mark of God will be saved, all others are lost (cf. Ezekiel 8:4-5).

4. The victory of the White Horseman guarantees eternal happiness (7:9-17). The picture is of the heavenly redeemed. Those sealed on earth will find a wonderful

paradise. There is victory because of righteousness. Physical ills will be removed and they will find freedom (16, 17). The joyous song is "Victory" (v. 10), because they have followed the Lamb of God! (7:13, 14)

II. From this passage we are able to discover some vital lessons for modern men.

A. There is a war going on and we are involved in it. Satan's opposition is great but it is limited! Each of his oppositions is restricted. God is in control!

B. The way of victory is not in compromise but in faith. Believers will find themselves involved in tribulation but they must endure and come through it!

C. The trials we face will strengthen and refine us so we will be prepared to enjoy heaven (1 Corinthians 3:13).

D. It is impossible to possess Christ without conflict (Matthew 10:34).

E. God's patience is seen as He waits for men to be saved. But He will not wait forever (6:10; 7:3; 2 Peter 3:9).

F. The sober question, "Who is able to stand before God?" is answered clearly - only those who have been sealed! (6:17-7:4; Ezekiel 9:4-6).

### **Conclusion:**

I. The message of the Seals - The Lord Jesus Christ is now conquering, exercising His spiritual and universal kingship. He will ride victoriously even though Satan tries to oppress. Christ is the Victor - He rides forth conquering and to conquer!

II. The only way you can "come through" the tribulation of this world is by following the Great White Horseman. If you do then let the 4 winds blow, they will no harm God's people. Let the Judgements fall they will not hurt His elect!



# **Stay Tuned For Urgent Announcements!**

## **Revelation 8-11**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. In the previous passage John has revealed that Jesus will ultimately triumph. He showed that Satan would never be victorious over God. But John's brethren were still struggling with trials and persecutions and the promise of Christ's victory "sometime" in the future did not offer much encouragement. In this passage God reveals that believers are being vindicated and this serves as warning to God's enemies to repent before it is too late!

II. We are introduced to Seven Trumpets in this section.

1. The emphasis on "trumpets" is to be understood as God's message of warning (Ex 33:3). What are the announcements made here? God announces that human evil does not go unnoticed, God has His own way and time for dealing with it.

2. It is important to note several things connected with these trumpets --

a. They are not final - only 1/3 suffer and this is a warning, a call to repentance.

b. The trumpets are not to be understood in a literal way. We must view the whole scene. Many details are given for added emphasis.

c. We should remember the first readers - they were the objects of severe oppression. They needed to know how God was helping all who faithfully followed Him.

3. Notice how these Trumpets announce destruction for the ungodly, salvation for the righteous, and issue a call for repentance to all!

### **Body:**

I. As these 7 Trumpets are considered we observe that they announce 5 urgent truths.

#### **A. GOD ANNOUNCES - PRAYER IS EFFECTIVE! (8:2-5).**

1. John sees the prayers of saints presented to God and observes the effect of these prayers on God.

2. From this paragraph the following facts about prayer are revealed --

a. The prayers of believers are very important to God. They are placed on a golden altar. Prayers are valuable!

b. The prayers of believers are the catalyst which sets the judgements of God in motion (v: 5). What are the real powers behind the works of God - John says it is the power of saint's prayers!

c. Prayer is more powerful than all the dark, mighty forces of earth.

3. Believers need to know that prayer is not a lonely venture. It often seems like we pray and are all alone -- no one hears or answers. There is heavenly help -- our prayers do reach God! (Luke 18:7). The One sitting on the Throne sees the sighs and sufferings, He hears the requests of His children in tribulation.

## **B. GOD ANNOUNCES - NATURAL TRAGEDY SHOULD BRING REPENTANCE! (8:6-12).**

1. The first four Trumpets are connected with the forces of nature. God, as Sovereign of the land, sea, fresh waters, and heavenly bodies, uses these to punish and to call erring man to repent.

2. "One third" - commonly used to refer to a large part.

3. Because of these natural disasters (referred to even today as "acts of God") the wicked will find sorrow and bitterness in the world.

4. The message to the evil men should be clear. God says, "I can rule the natural elements to do My will, knowing this you should follow My will!"

5. What about the believers' conditions during these calamities? See Psalm 46:1-3 for the bold and confident trust which should be present.

6. This list of natural disasters commonly struck the Roman Empire during John's time. Of the natural calamities used by God to rain judgement upon His children's enemies were the following which would be remembered by the readers of John's Revelation . . .

a. A few years before this writing (Aug 79 AD) Mt. Vesuvius had erupted pouring a fiery flood which engulfed Herculaneum and Pompeii and many other smaller villages with a horror long remembered. In this calamity ashes fell upon ships far out to sea, many who eluded the lava flow were suffocated by sulphurous fumes which reached far away. The sky was darkened so that in the hours of brightest sun there was pitch black!

b. The island volcano Santorin had erupted giving onlookers the suggestion of a burning mountain. Fugitives told of fiery blasts destroying vegetation, sulphurous vapors killing fish, and water turning red like blood. [From: Worthy is the Lamb, p. 156-157].

7. These natural disaster failed to move men to repentance, thus three more trumpets sound.

### **C. GOD ANNOUNCES - WOE TO THOSE WHO REFUSE TO REPENT!** (8:13-9:21).

1. With this trumpet we move into the spiritual realm. Those who refuse to repent are warned that a rejection of God's will leads to disaster. When men fail to obey God's gracious invitation they become prey of horrifying demonic forces led by Satan.

2. An eagle (symbol for evil and disaster) announces that the 3 remaining Trumpets are far worse than any of the first four.

3. Satan opens the shaft of the abyss and fills the world with his wicked demons, influences, and operations.

4. These forces of Satan influence and operate in the hearts of men. They fill their victims with terror, dread, and hopelessness (9:6).

5. 4 evil angels are released with the purpose of plunging mankind into all kinds of horrors.

6. The purpose of this - repentance (9:20-21). Evil men should recognize that God is Almighty; He offers safety and security in natural disasters; He protects from the ravaging forces of Satan. Yet in spite of all of these warnings, God does not see repentance. Evil man is determined to follow his disastrous course in life.

### **D. GOD ANNOUNCES - CONFLICT BRINGS COMFORT TO THE CHURCH!** (10:1-11:13).

1. What happens to God's saints while sinners are being led by Satan? In this section God tells us that they are performing duties and suffering trials and troubles.

2. Believers had tasted the sweet gospel Word but, as they lived in devotion to it, life became bitter (10:10). Even in the face of bitterness, proclamation must be made (10:11).

3. This conflict, which makes the sweet gospel bitter, will surround the church. 2 witnesses show us the progress and the opposition of the church. Their work is begun and accomplished. When it is finished Satan appears and seems to overcome them. But Satan's victory is brief.

4. Bitter conflict leads to the believer's ascension into heaven (11:12). The life of believers will be hard, but triumph is in sight! There is a limit on the bitterness, it has an end so Christians should not give up!

#### **E. GOD ANNOUNCES - THE MYSTERY IS FINISHED! (11:14-19)**

1. The trumpet announces that happiness is found only as we follow the Lamb. We will find dark days but the inevitable outcome will be victory!

2. Encouragement is seen as the full power of God's sovereignty is displayed. God reigns forever and ever. This victory is announced in song by the heavenly throng (cf. Psalm 2:7ff; Daniel 7:14; Luke 1:33).

3. This is the Judgement Day - the faithful, who have persevered, will receive their reward while the wicked will be destroyed (Matthew 25:31ff).

#### **II. From these 7 trumpets we discover some vital points.**

##### **A. There is a God in heaven who cares for all who decide to follow His will.**

1. God is in control of all things. "Given" stresses that evil forces have no independent authority.

2. God has great patience which enables Him to wait for evil men to repent. He chastens with the goal of repentance. He allows delays in the final Judgement Day so men will repent.

3. God will provide answers to all "mysteries" now (10:7). The perplexing trials of today will be explained by God.

B. There is a fate worse than death (9:6; Job 3:21; Jeremiah 8:3). When one decides not to obey God and yields to Satan, living life becomes worse than death. This person will find peace nowhere! This is the sad fate awaiting all who permit the powers and influences of Satan's hellish demons to operate in their lives.

##### **C. Sin has an awful effect upon mankind . . .**

1. He refuses to repent (9:20-21).

2. He becomes short-sighted and fails to look beyond the immediate to the future (11:9-11).

3. He becomes deluded, thinking death will excuse one from God's judgements (11:18).

**Conclusion:**

I. The thrust of this section - God's saints receive vindication now as well as later! God sends chastisements to man on earth and these are designed to prod men to repentance and lead them to trust in the heavenly Father. God's aim is not to hurt but to show the tragedy of sin. How do you react to God's chastenings?

1. Some hide their heads like ostriches. Enjoy ignorance!

2. Some curse God for misfortune.

3. Only a few repent in the face of His powers.

II. There is only one way to escape the fate of the 7 Trumpets -- Be among those who wear the seal of God and are found measured in God's Temple. Those who are thus saved can join in the celebration of God's grace and justice (11:18b).

# **The Heat of The Battle**

## **Revelation 12-14**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. With this section the tone and movement of Revelation changes. Our attention is focuses upon spiritual Beings and events in the "heavenly places" which overshadow the churches, seals, and trumpets revealed thus far. In this section John begins to understand that the terrible conflict which his brethren are facing on earth is rooted in events in the spiritual realm. One word serves to relate the events of this section -- CONFLICT!

II. This conflict is often stated in Scripture,

1. Genesis 3:15 - conflict is between Christ and Satan.
2. Those who follow the Saviour must be prepared for conflict!(2 Cointhians 4:8-11; 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-19; 2 Timothy 2:3, 4, 10-12a).
3. John's readers could understand this conflict. They werehaving a hard time seeing how victory could go to Christ since they saw the battle going so bad.
4. John's message is - Do not think your present trials are of little signifi cance, they are all part of the great struggle which is being waged between evil and good!
5. Comfort can be gained by looking at the overall battle scene. Note the following points which are brought into focus as this battle is fought.

### **Body:**

I. The **CAUSE** of the conflict (12:1-4).

A. John sees a great sign - a woman dressed in radiant glory about to give birth. Standing before the woman is a hideous monster waiting to destroy the woman's child.

1. This woman has been interpreted in a number of ways, we choose to see her as a symbol for the people of God in the Old Testament, through whom the Saviour came.
2. The dragon is obviously Satan.

3. John's message - Satan has always tried to destroy Christ. All through the OT we see conflict between the woman's seed and the dragon (Genesis 3:15).

B. This explains why Christians are suffering conflict today. Satan is opposed to Christ and is trying to destroy Him.

1. Satan's early attempts to destroy Christ failed and at His ascension Christ rose to sit on the throne (Matthew 2:13; v. 5).

2. But the dragon refused to admit defeat and directed his attacks at the rest of the woman's seed (Christian v. 17). Thus conflict rages.

3. The reason why we suffer - Satan is still fighting against God. The Devil is still trying to destroy Christ. Since Christ has ascended into heaven where Satan cannot touch Him, Satan has turned against believers - if he can destroy them he can strike Christ!

## II. The **CAMPAIGNS** of the conflict (12:1-17).

A. John is told that this great war is composed of 4 dramatic battles.

1. The First (12:1-6). From the time of His birth to His ascension Christ was in combat with Satan. The devil appeared to be victorious when Christ was crucified, but God's power raised Him and exalted Him. Satan lost the battle!

2. The Second (12:7-12). Failing to destroy Christ on earth Satan tried to invade heaven. Michael and the angelic army met Satan and defeated him. Steadfast devotion to God enabled the victory to be won (v. 11). Satan lost again!

3. The Third (12:13-16). Satan tried to attack Israel but her place with God is secure and no force can harm here. Satan loses the third battle!

4. The Fourth (12:17). The dragon turned his attention to the church - the "offspring" of God's faithful. Those who remain faithful to Christ will be subjected to Satan's wrath. This battle is now in progress but the outcome is clear -- Satan will once again lose! (v.10-12)

B. This fourth battle is described in chapters 13-14 so that brethren should gain encouragement to continue their fighting.

1. Brethren must not give up because the final battle of the war is most crucial to them.

2. Believers must understand that they have victory but only IF they hold fast to their commitment (v. 11). Satan has only a "short time" (v. 12).

III. The **TWO FORCES** of this conflict are described (13:1-14:14).

A. Satan enlists the help of the following allies.

1. **The Beast from the sea** (13:1-10). John sees a horrible beast. Daniel 7 speaks of 4 beasts which are here combined into 1. In Daniel the beasts were worldly empires. Satan uses ungodly rulers to persecute and oppress believers. In the day of John this beast was Rome.

2. **The Beast from the earth** (13:11-18). This beast symbolizes false religion. It is a deceiver of masses (cf. 16:13; 19:20). It appears like a lamb but inwardly it is the dragon (Mt 7:15; 24:24). These false teachers will strengthen the power of Satan by allowing evil governments to persecute believers.

3. **Babylon, the great harlot** (14:8). This enemy is briefly mentioned here to show the complete army of Satan's allies. The city was a symbol of worldly seduction and captivity of believers.

4. **Those who wear the mark of the beast** (13:16). This refers to all who follow Satan in thought, speech, writing, and action; unbelievers who persist in evil practices.

5. This is the evil horde which is summoned to the final battle with the forces of righteousness.

B. The power of Lamb of God is the only force necessary to vanquish Satan's army (14:1-14).

1. Christ stands with those who have followed His will and have overcome (cf. 17:14).

2. Although Satan tried to make them unfaithful, not a single one of the 144,000 is missing!

3. Believers need to look at this picture.

a. They had been assured that the power of the devil is limited (3 1/2 yrs), but that fell short of giving them full hope.

b. Thus a bright and glorious picture of hope was given. They are permitted a view



from God's perspective of how things will turn out.

4. Even though He appears outnumbered, victory will be given to Christ! Christ will win the fourth and final battle!

IV. The **END** of the conflict (14:8-20; 13:16).

A. Even before the 2 forces meet in final combat the end is announced (v. 8-11). The end will see the Lamb of God treading over the evil allies.

B. Notice the encouraging factors revealed here.

1. V. 9-10, 13 - There is a final rest for the saint but unending torment for sinners.

2. V. 18 - The prayers offered at the altar (5:8; 8:3) will be the force behind the judgement!

3. V. 15 - The judgement will take place when God knows it is time! (10:6; 6:11).

4. V. 16 - The judgement will be on ALL (v. 20).

5. Christ will triumph because Satan and his allies are failures to begin with - "666" (13:18). Repeated the number means perpetual failures or imperfections.

### **Conclusion:**

I. Properly understood this section will cause great joy in the hearts of believers who are faced with struggles on earth.

1. The forces of Satan may appear invincible; life may paint a scene that appears hopelessly dark; but the forces of righteousness will ultimately triumph!

2. John told his brethren to look at the battle from heaven's viewpoint. He gave his readers a view of the conflict from the beginning to its triumphant conclusion. From the beginning God's people have faced Satanic opposition but they are destined to triumph over every foe.

3. Satan's efforts are frightening and powerful. But he knows he is defeated and only has a short time. Let us take courage! We will suffer but we will eventually sit and reign with Christ.

II. As we face the heat of the battle what must we do to be prepared?

1. **Stand WITH Christ** being among the 144,000 (14:1).

2. **Live so that our work will comfort us in heaven (14:13).**
3. **Remember - the Reaper is coming to harvest the world (14:14).**
4. **Be among those who live so as to overcome Satan (12:11).**
5. **Respond and obey God (14:7).**

# **Treasures of Wrath!**

## **Revelation 15-16**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. The encouraging message of John begins to deepen as it reveals the complete victory of the Lamb and His followers.

1. In this section the theme is final judgement. We find emphasis on the completeness of God's judgement.

2. The trumpets had announced partial judgement (1/3) on the wicked but now we see the bowls are fully poured out, indicating the final and complete judgement.

3. The picture symbolized in this section is God's overthrow of all evil!

II. It is good to pause and look at this section as John's readers would view it.

1. They had been told of God's trumpets of judgement. They had witnessed the calamities resulting. But they had also seen the hard, impenitent result (9:4-6, 28, 21).

2. They were probably asking, "What happens now? Does God allow such hardness and impenitence to go unpunished?" The answer is given in this section. God's punishments come now in this life and also in the final Judgement. All who continue to follow evil will find their treasures have yielded a tragic harvest which will be paid with God's terrible wrath (cf. Ro 2:5).

3. The bowls of wrath present a terrible experience to the world. Faithful Christians need fortification to be prepared for it, they need to see it from heaven's viewpoint. So in 15:1-4 the joy of saved believers is presented. There will be certain victory for the Lamb and His followers.

4. The joy and celebration of the saints is in marked contrast to the evil men. The evil have treasures awaiting them but their end is far different! Just as God gives peace He can give calamity (15:6; 16:1). Note the following about these treasures of wrath which the evil will get.

### **Body:**

I. We observe the **PAYDAY** of these treasures.

A. Evil and wickedness have a definite payday coming (Galatians 6:7-8). This payday cannot be avoided (Hosea 12:2b).

B. From John's message we notice the following about this great payday of the treasures of wrath.

1. It comes when time is "completed" (15:1; 16:17; 10:6; 6:11). The word refers to the end of time. There is going to be a point when God says "It is time! Time is no more!" When this time comes nothing can stop the final judgement. God's wrath, so long restrained, will be fully exposed.

2. When this completed time arrives all who are unsaved will be forever lost (15:8). The sanctuary, where intercession is made, will be closed - "tomorrow" has never arrived and doom is present. Men will cry out but their pleas will not be heeded (Jeremiah 8:20).

3. This payday will come suddenly and at a time unexpected (16:15). Knowing this we need to keep our "garments" (symbol of Christianity, Ephesians 4:21-4ff) spotless so we will be prepared. Those who fail to do this will be put to shame (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:8ff).

4. This payday will arrive with terror to those unprepared (16:18ff).

## II. The NATURE of these treasures.

A. These treasures of wrath will be paid while some are on earth.

1. The first 4 Bowls affect man's natural environment.

a. He is physically affected (v. 2).

b. His commercial efforts fail (v. 3).

c. His ordinary life support system fails (v. 4).

d. His world and universe, that which he worshipped, will become his enemy (v. 2, 3, 4, 8).

2. Man's life will be affected!

B. These treasures of wrath will be paid in eternity (16:19). God will not forget sins, evil deeds, and the harm committed against His church. His anger will be experienced throughout eternity! (14:10).

### III. The **CAUSE** for these treasures of wrath.

A. **Blasphemy** (16:9, 11, 21) Man has rejected God's word, His nature, and His salvation. Foolish man spurned the many opportunities of reaching out to grasp God's mercy!

B. **Injustice to others** (16:5-6) God is concerned about His children and will not allow their abuse to go unpunished (Matthew 18:10; 1 Peter 3:12-14). God is going to vindicate His children who suffer (6:10). 16:7 - those in 6:10 answer God.

C. **Submission to Satan** (16:2b) Those who are marked, recognized as the followers of Satan, will be judged (Mt 12:30).

### IV. The **RECIPIENTS** of these treasures.

A. All men who wear the "mark" of the beast (16:2b). These are those who fail to obey God and live by His commands.

B. Satan and his army of dark demons will receive the unmixed wrath of God (16:12-16).

1. The frogs represent all the evil governments, false prophets, and false religions which unite to draw men from God. These foes are Satan's greatest allies for their lies and deceptions persuade millions to follow them.

2. Their constant opposition is pictured in the great Battle of Armageddon. This war is never fought!

### **Conclusion:**

I. Matthew 6:19-21 - every man is laying up some kind of treasure. What kind of treasure are you expecting?

II. From this section we are reminded that we are in one of two possible groups. You are either a part of the Lamb and His followers, or you are a part of the Beast and his followers (Matthew 12:30). Notice the great contrast presented in this section.

1. The Lamb and His followers (15:2-4).

2. The Beast and his followers (16:10-11). Note 16:6b

3. With which do you wish to spend eternity?

.....III. The message of the 7 Bowls - No evil can triumph over God's people. It does.....  
little good for Satan to send out his allies because God's judgements are coming and  
no one can withstand! It is folly to reject God or to turn your back on Him after  
obeying His will!

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obeying His will!

# **The Verdict Please!**

## **Revelation 17-19**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. Imagine a courtroom with a trial in progress. On trial are 5 defendants accused of oppression, persecution, and ill-will toward Jehovah God. The trial is conducted so that all evidence is openly displayed and then the jury is sent to deliberate the verdict. The jury returns and the verdict is read aloud for the justice to be given.

1. Such an event transpires in our present section. God is sitting as Judge to carry out the verdict.

2. The defendants are:

a. Those who wear the mark of the beast. (These have already met their fate in Rv 15-16).

b. Three others will receive their sentence in this section - Babylon the great harlot; the beast from the sea; and, the beast from the land (the false prophet).

c. In the next section we see the final verdict on the dragon (Satan) pronounced.

II. John's readers were awaiting the news of these verdicts. Look now as these verdicts are read. In this section we note a stress on the Judgement of God (cf. 17:1; 18:5-8, 20; 19:2, 15). "Now John fixes his eyes firmly on the end-time. He concerns himself not with the apparent triumph of the evil, but with their final and complete overthrow. He sees God as casting down every stronghold and hurling His judgements against the wicked. No might of theirs avails. God is completely triumphant."

### **Body:**

I. The verdict regarding **Babylon the great harlot** (18:1-24).

A. We are introduced to this woman (17:3).

1. There have been many theories as to what Babylon means - a literal city, apostate church, the city of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church, etc.

2. In order to understand this symbol consider the following points.

a. It is called a "great harlot" which indicates something that allures, seduces, or draws one from God.

b. It is worldly - ancient Babylon was a pleasure mad city (Isaiah 13:1, 11).

c. Babylon in Revelation stands as a symbol of worldly allurements which seeks to seduce humans and draw them from God. It symbolizes the luxury, vice, and glamour of this world (1 John 2:16).

3. This great harlot is an enemy of God's people. Being persecuted and deprived they must have been tempted to compromise. Babylon could have made persecution cease, and make their lives rich and comfortable (cf. Luke 12:15-21).

B. John's readers were informed about the true verdict on the world's allurements.

1. The world looks good and promises great things but the look is deceptive and the promise false (17:4).

2. The world will fall and will be subject to the wrath of God (18:1-24). Because of her persuasive allurements many will have their hearts set on the things of the world and in the end all who have followed her will see their hopes and dreams collapse! (18:9,11,17).

3. In the end the great harlot proves to be a disappointment - total ruin and collapse await all who pin their desire to the world (18:21).

C. The message for today - beware of the temptation and allurements which the world offers (1 Timothy 6:6-10). Satan uses the world's allurements to cause many to fall (18:4-5; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 Timothy 5:22b).

II. The verdict regarding **the beast from the sea** (17:8-14).

A. This scarlet beast is the same as in 13:1ff and symbolizes the worldly governments opposed to Jesus. 17:9 identifies to John's readers which government is referred to - Rome. We apply the principle.

B. The angel tells John the following facts about the wicked governments:

1. They will remain just for a little time (v. 10).

2. They will ultimately go to destruction (v. 11).

3. They are the servants of Satan (v. 13).

4. They will be used by God to achieve His end (v. 17).

5. They will become disappointed with the pleasures of this world but it will be too late because their hearts are too hard to repent (v. 16; 9:6).

C. The message for today - Evil and wicked governments exist and persecute believers. Their action against God results because they are infatuated with the world. They will be punished (19:20).

III. The verdict regarding **the beast from the land** (19:20).

A. This beast is the false prophet, the great deceiver (Rv. 13:11-14). It symbolized false religions which were used by Satan to trap believers.

B. Brief attention is paid to this beast for his fate is tied to that of the first beast.

IV. The verdict regarding **all who oppose God** (19:11-21).

A. Satan's allies have gathered many together in opposition. Once again we see battle lines being drawn for final combat.

B. But before the battle the result is announced (v. 17). All who oppose God are destroyed! Being cast into the lake of fire signifies utter destruction. Those in opposition are fighting a hopeless battle!

### **Conclusion:**

I. Once again John presented a picture urging his readers to persevere. There are only 2 groups in the world and only one is safe.

1. Some believers failed to see the urgency of the situation - they were ready to compromise with Babylon and follow the beast's directions.

2. From the standpoint of the persecuted church it might seem that evil men were getting away with sin. But from heaven's standpoint it is plain that God is not mocked - He remembers (18:5)!

II. As the final verdict is rendered we see these 2 groups clearly described --

1. Those who are the called, chosen, and faithful sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" in heaven's eternity (19:1-9).

2. Those who have yielded to the world, succumbed to evil pressures of the world, and have been deceived by error will taste the wrath of God as the wine press is

trod (19:11-21; Isa 63:1-6). The smoke of their destruction will rise forever (19:3).

III. We have thus seen 4 enemies of Christ's destroyed. All have gone to defeat. One foe, the leader of them all, remains. It is the dragon, Satan. His ruin is described in the next section.

# **The 1st Resurrection In Revelation 20**

## **Revelation 20:4-6**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. The lesson text "the most debated chapter" in the entire Bible. The symbols and figures of the text have encouraged many to develop sensational hysteria regarding their teachings as they distort and twist the Holy Scriptures. Consequently the honest reader is anxious about what the text means. Look at the picture and notice the marvels it presents to our mind's eye (paraphrase the text).

II. The greatest perversion of this text is found in the Premillennial doctrine. The text is taken and twisted to teach the following errors:

1. Christ did not establish His Kingdom. The church was an accident and is to remain until the Kingdom can be established in Jerusalem.
2. After a period of terror (the Great Tribulation) Christ will come to earth to establish His Kingdom in Jerusalem. When He comes back the dead saints will be raised but the ungodly will remain in their graves. This is the 1st resurrection of 20:5.
3. Following the first resurrection Jesus will establish His Kingdom and those who had a part in the first resurrection will reign with Christ from earthly Jerusalem. During their reign there will be Universal Peace and brotherhood; ALL Jews will be saved and go out as missionaries to convert the world; the Temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices resumed.
4. This is to last for 1,000 years.
5. The popularity of this error is prominent. It is so common that many accept it as fact! (1 Peter 3:15).
6. Let's look at this marvelous passage and see what it has to say to the followers of God today.

### **Body:**

- I. The error of this doctrine is supported by the following statements:

A. The advocates twist Scripture to "support" these points --

1. It is claimed that there will be "thrones" in Jerusalem and saints will sit on them (20:4).
2. The co-regents are faithful servants of God who have been physically resurrected (20:4).
3. They reign with Christ 1,000 years (20:4) in the "Millennial Kingdom."
4. The resurrected saints will exercise priestly services (20:6).
5. The ungodly will not be a part of this "1st resurrection" but will be resurrected AFTER the 1,000 years (20:5).

B. To support this error the following symbols must be taken literally:

1. Thrones
2. Resurrections are physical
3. Christ literally reigning on earth
4. Priestly service in a literal Temple with literal sacrifices
5. A literal period of 1,000 earth years

II. Even a casual reading of other texts reveals the error that is suggested above. A literal interpretation is not satisfactory because:

A. It forces Christ to contradict Himself.

1. John 18:36 - this error makes the "kingdom" one "of this world."
2. Hebrews 6:20-7:25 - this error forces Him to practice contradictory to God's Scriptures.
3. Jeremiah 22:30 - this error makes God a liar (Matthew 1:11).

B. It compels us to accept absurd conclusions.

1. How can a literal "soul" sit on literal "thrones" (v. 4)?
2. How will modern saints qualify under the requirements of 20:4 -- the advocates state the "mark of the beast" will be at a specific time. If not in our day there is no hope for us! Thus God is to blame for our damnation!



3. Those who wish to make one symbol literal and another figurative must "pick and choose" what they want -- such a study habit is foolish.

C. A literal rendering "reads into" the text things that are contrary to God's will and these things are not even hinted at in the text!

1. Christ reigning upon the earth.
2. The reigning taking place in Jerusalem.
3. The Temple and sacrifices restored.
4. That "Universal Peace" and brotherhood exist.
5. That ALL Jews are saved.

D. A literal interpretation requires Christ's reign to begin when the saints' reign begins. Such opposes the Bible (Acts 2:33-36).

E. A literal interpretation contradicts the Bible's teaching of only one resurrection of the physical body (John 5:28, 29). Note - when ALL that are in the graves). Also John 6:40 -- believers will be raised on the "last day" not 1,000 before the last day!

F. A literal interpretation regards the death of Jesus as useless for animal sacrifices must be restored and observed! (Hebrews 9:11,12; 10:4).

III. There is an approach that avoids the pitfalls of literalism. If the figures are understood as symbols of concepts, acts, and ideas the passage becomes clear.

A. We must follow this principle -- Interpretation of symbolic figures must remain consistent with other texts that are clearer. Any new doctrine based upon a symbolic passage should be avoided at all costs.

B. Approaching this scene as symbolic we discover the following.

1. The picture is of the saint's triumph over Satan's forces.
  - a. 20:1-4 Satan is bound, restricted, limited.
  - b. "Thrones" symbolize honor, privilege, power.
  - c. "Life" refers to one's union with Christ and God. Without God they remain "dead" (Ep 2:1). As long as one is "dead" there is no "throne" (honor, privilege).
  - d. "Priests" refers to saints' position of serving Almighty God (Rv 1:6).

e. "Reign" refers to our influence and actions in the world.

f. "1,000 years" is figurative (10x10x10) representing an indefinite period of completion.

2. We must be able to verify our conclusions with other texts to see if they are consistent.

a. Saints do sit on "thrones" now (Rv 1:9; 5:10; Ephesians 2:6; 1 Corinthians 4:8). This signifies spiritual status and honor. By virtue of sitting on the thrones we "reign" but not with worldly power (Romans 5:21).

b. Saints who sit and reign do so because they are "priests" serving God (20:6b). This priestly service is going on NOW (1 Peter 2:5,9). If Christians are priests NOW, before physical death, they are also reigning with Christ NOW!

c. Thus, the chapter symbolized the faithful of God who endure. As such they are exempted from "the second death" (Hell; 20:6,15).

d. There is one thing which qualifies us to enjoy these blessings - having part in the 1st Resurrection (20:6a)!

1) "Blessed" because they enjoy the benefits.

2) "Holy" because they enter into a sanctified lifestyle; no longer bound by sin they anticipate Heaven, not Hell!

e. What is the act which enables man to enjoy this? What action can be termed "a resurrection"; where we rise from death to life and gain the blessing stated here?

IV. The symbolism of the "first resurrection" refers to the obedience of believers to baptism through which they are saved.

A. Note how the "rebirth" of our soul's spiritual status is termed "a resurrection" (Ephesians 2:1). It is so called because sin kills our souls (Isaiah 59:2; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:21).

B. In obeying Christ spiritual life is changed from death into life (John 5:24,25; 11:25).

C. Thus the "1st Resurrection" of Rv 20:5 is a resurrection of our souls from spiritual death and is accomplished when we hear and obey the gospel (Ephesians 2:5-8). This conclusion appears from the fact that those participating in the "1st Resurrection" are "priests" and "reign with Christ" (Rv 20:6b). These terms can only

describe an obedient believer. One becomes a priest by being called into light (1 Peter 2:9). This calling takes place when the gospel is preached (1 Peter 1:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). By the power of the gospel we are made priests and are saved (Romans 1:16). In salvation, becoming priests, we are delivered from darkness to light (1 Peter 2:9b; Colossians 1:13). This deliverance or "translation" takes place at baptism, which is the "1st Resurrection" (Ephesians 4:17-24; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

D. The act of baptism is required if we are to participate in the "1st Resurrection" (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:2-6, 11-13). Without baptism it is impossible to share in the "1st Resurrection." Thus the message is clear. Although symbols are used we can understand the meaning. The triumph, reign, honor, and privilege awaits only those who are baptized! Thus the imperative of Acts 22:16. Knowing these facts Acts 10:47a!

### **Conclusion:**

I. The Book of Revelation is only "nonsense" to those who allow themselves to be blinded by ignorance and error. Let all follow God's complete will -- it is plain and simple.

II. Realize the urgency of Rv 20:6. It speaks directly to you today.

# **Victory In Jesus!**

## **Revelation 20:1-15**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. The present section of Revelation is one of the most hotly debated chapters in the Bible.

1. There are a number of symbols to interpret and extreme caution should be taken so that we will not be guilty of fashioning Scripture to suit our beliefs.
2. Our approach centers around the question, "What was the meaning of this scene to John and his readers in 96 A.D.?" "What is there in this section which could bring comfort to the beleaguered saints?"
3. The theme of this chapter is the overthrow of Satan. We find a symbolic setting forth the final victory of persecuted saints in Asia Minor.

II. Throughout this book we have observed how the theme, "Victory In Jesus" has been used to encourage believers as they face the struggles and trials of this earth.

1. Christ is not unmindful of His afflicted disciples. He offers them comfort so they will remain faithful to the end.
2. As Revelation ends the church receives the clearest picture of victory given yet.
3. This chapter details the triumph of Christ over Satan and this time the picture of the final Judgement is so clear the oppressed believers will know for sure that Christ and His church would triumph!
4. Look closely now at this comforting message.

III. In an overview of this chapter we see that it is summarized in symbolic pictures. An angel came down from heaven with a key to the abyss and a strong chain in his hand. He chained the devil and cast him into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years in order that Satan might not deceive the nations for 1,000 years, after this he was to be loosed for a little time. Another scene shows the fate of those who had lost their lives for the testimony of Jesus. These had refused to worship the beast or his image. They are shown alive and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years. This is called the first resurrection, and blessings are pronounced upon those who have a part in it. When the 1,000 years of the devil's being bound were up, he was loosed and began

his old tactics once again: deceiving the nations and gathering them for an attack on the city of God. Fire came down out of heaven and destroyed them. The devil was cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet had been cast in chapter 19. Judgement from the great white throne followed.

## **Body:**

### **I. VICTORY! Promised in picture (19:1-10)**

A. God shows us that victory is possible because Satan has been bound (v. 1-3).

1. Satan is chained and cast into the abyss for 1,000 years. This symbolizes his inability to function freely in the world.
2. His binding took place when the Lamb triumphed on earth (Colossians 2:15; Matthew 12:29; Hebrews 2:14).
3. Believers need to know that Satan is bound so that all who believe on Christ are free from his "deception" (Romans 10:11). But Satan is still loose and able to deceive all who fail to obey God (Rv 13:13-14; 9:4-5).
4. Satan may be able to kill the physical body but never the spiritual body of the saint (Matthew 10:28).

B. God shows us that the chosen, called, and faithful are the true victors! (v. 4-6).

1. John sees the triumph of believers who had suffered the anguish of the attack of the beast, false prophet, and Great Harlot.
2. These saints are victorious! They are no longer under the throne asking "How long?" They are on the thrones rejoicing and reigning. The cup of God's wrath has been emptied. The oppressors are defeated, the oppressed glorified!
3. These saints reign 1,000 years - not literal. 10 is a complete number and 1,000 is symbolic of ultimate completeness. Thus a picture of perfect blessedness (cf. 22:5).
4. This was a message which would bring great comfort to the saints in Asia Minor!

C. God presents a picture of Satan's utter defeat (v. 7-10).

1. We have seen this before (6:12-17; 11:7-13, 18-19; 14:8-20; 16:12-21; 19:11-21), and once again it is announced and described as happening in a short time!
2. Even though he has been defeated, Satan still tries to destroy Christ. He gathers his evil forces and surrounds the saints, but before any harm can come Christ returns

and Satan is defeated.

3. It seems that this world will be influenced by Satan to become more and more wicked until the Judgement comes, not by water but by fire! (2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1:7).

## **II. VICTORY! Presented to the persevering (20:11-15)**

A. Believers are told what will take place when Satan is finally defeated - Judgement!

1. A great white throne - much greater in detail than described in chaps 4-5.
2. As it appears heaven and earth flee (2 Peter 3:10; Romans 8:21).
3. All men will be resurrected and final sentence will be given (John 5:28-29).
4. Judgement will be just and solemn. Note the solemn picture here (v. 12; Daniel 7:10).

B. Here is a message of cheer --

1. Victory is presented to saints.
2. Total defeat is presented to Satan.

## **III. From this picture of victory we notice the following lessons of great value.**

A. Let us learn that Christ is not bound today and those who obey him will be protected (Colossians 2:15; Rv 7:3; Rv 9:4-5; 14:1; Matthew 10:28; Rv 20:6).

B. Let us understand that even though Satan is bound he is still able to work in the hearts of wicked people.

1. His influence is not totally destroyed. His evil allies still function.
2. Satan can still do much if he is permitted by man! (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

C. Let us understand it is far better to suffer a few years on earth with Christ and spend eternity with Him than to suffer for eternity by spending a few years of peace on earth (Romans 8:18). Let us learn that Satan's deceptions will eventually be exposed (v. 10). He deceives many today into thinking they can fight God and win!

D. Let us take sober note of verse 15.

**Conclusion:**

I. Revelation is a series of images given for the assurance of God's people. Christians can believe that Christ is going to be victorious. For the Christians of John's day this assurance was given by showing Christ's victory over the system of Emperor worship. This same assurance is given to Christians in every age. Find the greatest enemy of Christ (whether corrupt religion, godless governments, social anarchy), put it in the place of emperor worship, and see its eventual failure as the living Christ, the redeeming Lamb, marches to victory over chaotic world conditions.

II. Do you share in this sweet victory of Jesus? Will you join with the redeemed and rejoice in experiencing the "first resurrection" with Christ? (Romans 6:4, 8-11; Ephesians 2:1, 6; Colossians 1:13; 2:10ff; John 5:24-29). Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life?

# **A New City With An Old Name!**

## **Revelation 21:1-22:5**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. We come to the closing scene in Revelation. Here is the most comprehensive section of encouragement for struggling brethren. Throughout this book there have been hints of immortality: the promises to the Conquerors, the white-robed multitudes, the triumphant song of Moses and the Lamb, the wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride. Now at last John is given a vision that surveys the promised land. In some ways this is the most important part of his book, as it is certainly the most familiar and beloved.

II. As this section is read you cannot help but recall a number of OT passages, thus once again we find an intimate connection with the prophets of old (Isaiah 25:8; 65:17, 19; 66:22; 55:1; 60:20; Ezekiel 36:28; 37:28; 48:31ff; 47:12; 2 Samuel 7:14; Zechariah 14:6-8; Genesis 3:22ff; etc.).

III. In this section there is a marvelous message to believers - "Do not give up because you have wonderful destiny ahead!" The destiny of the redeemed is to be in the "new" Jerusalem. Literally "the new city of peace." In contrast to their present trials and burdens they would share in grand blessings. It is this beautiful city of peace which brings great comfort and cheer to struggling saints.

### **Body:**

I. Notice how cheer would be brought to believers as they come to know about this eternal home of the saved.

A. This city of peace provides **ETERNAL FELLOWSHIP** with God (21:1-8).

1. V. 3-4 explain, in symbolic language, the beauty of this promised fellowship. This fellowship allows saints to find access to high joy.

a. God dwells with them in one tent (Rv 7:15).

b. The Lamb is their Shepherd (Rv 7:17).

c. God wipes every tear out of their eyes (Rv 7:17).

d. They are constantly worshiping in the sanctuary (Rv 7:15).



e. They sit with him on the throne and He sups with them (Rv 3:20, 21).

2. The beauty of this fellowship is enhanced as we see that it is offered absolutely free (v. 6; 22:17b). Surely the sensible person will see the necessity to remain faithful so he can inherit this wonderful fellowship! (v. 7).

3. A greater emphasis is added when the reverse is considered. Those who fail to establish and maintain fellowship with God now will not find it in eternity (v. 8; Romans 6:23). God's city of peace will not include any who associate with Satan! (v. 27).

B. This city of peace is blessed with **ETERNAL PROTECTION** by God (21:9-26).

1. John's readers knew the need to be protected. Knowing you are kept safe brings great security and peace. The essence of protection was a great city surrounded by a great wall. Here we read of such a place described in symbolic language.

a. 12 gates - abundant entrance where no one who desired would be forbidden entrance.

b. 12 foundations - such a perfect foundation could never be shaken.

c. "4 Square" - this city will have enough room for all the redeemed under the OT and NT (12b, 14b).

2. The description is of a strong, spacious, perfect, and beautiful city where God's redeemed will live with Him in perfect fellowship! To try to make this a literal city on earthly Jerusalem destroys the symbol.

3. No where else can man find a more appealing description of God's home for saved souls!

C. The city of peace is supplied with **ETERNAL PROVISIONS** from God (22:1-5).

1. So great is this new Jerusalem and so magnificently designed by God, it does not need many things that are essential to present life.

a. There is "no temple" (21:22). No sins need atonement and saints are in God's presence always.

b. There is "no sun or moon" (21:23). The radiance of the Lamb is all that is needed.

c. There is "no night" (22:25). There is no darkness for God is light. There is no need for labors have ceased.

2. Note the provisions offered by God . . .

a. The garden - Eden will be restored and eternally enjoyed.

b. Water of Life - Symbolic of salvation. It is offered full and free (Psalm 46:4a). The beauty is marvelous (22:1).

c. Trees of Life - Not just one but whole rows on either side of the river. And fruit is always present.

d. Throne of God and the Lamb - The sovereignty of God will be the center of attention. This throne dominates so that God's will is supreme - never again will the saints battle against the Dragon for God is supreme!

3. What a striking picture! Pause and reflect on it and sense the strong assurance it offers! What greater provisions could we seek?

D. This city of peace is a place of **ETERNAL SERVICE** to God (22:3,5).

1. It is misleading to assume heaven will be a place of leisure where all desires are immediately provided angels (7:15b -"day and night").

2. Notice how service is pictured in v. 3, 5.

a. The entire population will offer priestly service.

b. Service is rendered and is focused on God.

c. Here is a continuation of service which has been offered on earth! Note Matthew 25:21--service on earth leads to service in heaven. We must understand this simple point (Matthew 25:26-30).

d. Heaven will be populated **ONLY** by those who love to serve God on earth, in the church!

II. From this final vision we discover the following . . .

A. God answers our desires to know what the future will bring. In symbols He has told us that heaven is a beautiful city of peace where we will find eternal fellowship, protection, provision, and service to God.

B. In this section we have a dramatic contrast with chapter 20. We have here

encouragement to remain faithful because eternal destiny will be lived in either the New Jerusalem or the Lake of Fire! (21:27).

C. Our ability to enjoy heaven depends on how much we enjoy the church on earth. It is hard to imagine how some will enjoy an eternity of that which appears to be intolerable on earth!

1. Eternal fellowship with brethren.
2. Eternal worship assemblies of praise to God.
3. Eternal service to God with the redeemed.

D. Those with whom we identify on earth will be those we will identify with in eternity! You cannot live in Babylon on earth and the New Jerusalem in eternity! (18:4)

E. We discover an answer to the problem of earth's evils (v. 4). God lists some of the more prominent evils which will cease. The Lamb has conquered and has answered the problems of the world.

F. Entrance into God's heaven is not open to just anyone, but only to those who have been given the right (21:27). We must make preparations to enter now or else run the risk of never being admitted! (Luke 13:24-29).

### **Conclusion:**

I. This is a beautiful section from Revelation. It is filled with hope, cheer, and encouragement.

II. John's message closes with a most practical message. The reason why a Christian is not to surrender to the temptation of distress is because of the "home over there." There is perfection and peace so "Don't give up!"

# **The Time Is Near!**

## **Revelation 22:6-21**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

### **Introduction:**

I. John has seen the picture of God's care over His followers in their conflict; the certainty of their triumph over the terrible conditions of the day; and, the glory which is beyond the grave. All that remains is the necessity of impressing upon them the importance of this message.

II. The best way to emphasize the message of Revelation in these closing verses is to remind his readers of the 2nd coming of Christ.

1. At least 6 times Christ's return is mentioned in this closing paragraph.
2. V. 10 - "the time is near" could refer to either the second coming or the trials and persecutions referred to in this prophecy. Either way this is a good phrase to use as a closing exhortation. Note 5 points which John is careful to stress here.

### **Body:**

I. The time is near - **BELIEVE GOD'S WORD!** (v. 6, 7, 10).

A. There is a temptation to treat God's Word lightly - to fail to show it proper respect.

1. It is this failing that v. 18-19 rebukes.
2. John's readers must be careful to read God's word and not tamper with it. They must heed what is written. No modification or evading should ever be seen.

B. To help believers remain true to God's Word, John gives 3 basic reasons. Do not reject it because . . .

1. It is faithful and true (v. 6). Here is the only trustworthy message for man. We must be careful not to neglect it!
2. It originates from God (6). It comes from the very God who had given the Old Testament prophets their messages. No other message can claim this.
3. It provides great blessings (7). People have always found the right way (blessing) when they follow God's Word.

C. John wanted his readers to know that in possessing such a message they were burdened with duty! (v.10). This message must not be hidden, it must be studied and applied.

II. The time is near - **KEEP THE FELLOWSHIP PURE!** (v. 8,9,14,15,18,19).

A. Once again John's readers hear that there are only 2 groups in the world (v. 14-15).

1. There are the righteous.

2. There are the impenitent who defy God.

B. To make his readers remember what was required to be among the righteous God stresses 3 facts.

1. We must keep washing our robes (v. 14). This is in the present tense (cf. 1 Jn 1:7).

2. We must keep separate from evil (15). Some things are not to be found in the holy city (church). These will not be tolerated by God and should never be tolerated by Christians.

3. We must recognize and obey Scripture's authority (v. 18-19). We must reverently respect God's Word. We should never correct God's requirements. This principle applies to all Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Rv 30:5-6; Jeremiah 26:2; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:6-8). Fellowship can be pure only if we do not tamper with Scripture -- its teaching, application, and obedience.

III. The time is near - **PREPARE TO MEET JESUS!** (v. 12,13,16,11).

A. Are you prepared to face the One described? (13, 16).

1. Here is One with the most exalted titles possible. He is the messianic King who came from Judah's royal house. As "the Root" He is the eternal King. As the "Alpha and Omega" He expresses the complete-ness of God's revelation, eternity, and authority.

2. He can send angels, command kings, conquer Satan. He is Lord of lords, and King of kings!

B. Are you prepared to receive your "wages" when He comes? (v. 11,12b).

1. "Reward" - literally "wages" that are due.

2. When the Lord comes the good and evil will receive a just recompense.
3. "Every" man will receive, none will escape! Each will be paid according to his practice in life.
4. Surely this is a great motivation to remain faithful to God.

C. Are you prepared for His sudden return? (v. 12). "Quickly" can mean soon but it can also mean "suddenly" or "unexpectedly." Believers should live conscious that the Lord may come at any moment!

#### IV. The time is near - **ACCEPT CHRIST'S INVITATION!** (v. 17).

A. This invitation comes from the highest source. The Spirit speaking through the prophets, the church speaking to the world, the individual member exhorting all to obey.

B. This invitation is extended to all. Those who would like to meet the Lamb are encouraged with the open invitation, "Come!"

C. This invitation supplies what cannot be purchased. It is a summons to join the ranks of the Conquerors, to share the glorious reward of eternity, to possess the water of life (cf. Romans 6:23).

D. This invitation places a burden upon men. They must "come." The only qualification is a willingness to accept. This is what men must do if they wish to be saved. Unless men "come" they will be lost. God has done everything He can and now it is up to man (Matthew 11:28ff).

#### V. The time is near - **BE EXCITED ABOUT CHRIST'S RETURN!** (v. 20,22).

A. Our brethren longed for Christ's return (1 Corinthians 16:22). They knew He was coming and they could not wait. They knew that when He came it would be the final victory, Armageddon would end, the saved would be glorified.

B. One has to wonder if modern believers share this same excitement about Christ's return. Are you excited and eager? How often do you pray this prayer of John's?

#### **Conclusion:**

I. Thus we see the grand book concluded. As the heavenly vision darkens and forever ceases John is brought back to Patmos. But now this 6x10 mile rocky island in the Aegean Sea seems less foreboding. John now has the answer and through his

message his brethren can find hope as persecutions intensify. Christ is on the throne above all thrones and is reigning. Let believers take cheer and courage!

II. This message is extended to you and me tonight?

1. 1:3; 22:7 - Are you enjoying these blessings?
2. 22:14 - Here is what you must do!