

The Book of Revelation

Heritage Bible Church
Bible Study

These notes continue the study of the book of Revelation
from where we left off in the spring of 2018

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The Lamb and The Wrath (Revelation 14:1-20)

This chapter is several explanatory announcements about the events on earth in the final days, including the horrors of the judgments of those days. Of special interest are two items: (1) To make sure the gospel of Christ is preached to everyone on the earth, God dispatches an angel (14:6-7) to do the job. (2) It is revealed that all who receive the mark of the beast will not be saved (14:9-12).

It's wonderful and comforting to be absolutely sure about some things. The Bible is full of promises which are rooted in the character of God Himself, so they are completely certain. For example, you can know that if you trust Christ and you follow Him, you are saved for all eternity and you cannot lose your position in Christ:

*John 10:27-29: My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give **eternal** life to them, and they shall **never perish**; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one** is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

1 Peter 1:3-5: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is *imperishable* and *undefiled* and will *not fade away*, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are *protected by the power of God* through faith for a *salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*.

The chapter before us is essentially another way of reaffirming your _____. This chapter describes the ultimate triumph of Christ, so that you can be sure He will bring His kingdom precisely as promised in His word. Your part in reigning with Jesus Christ in His kingdom on earth is a glorious part of the future aspect of your salvation.

Don't forget that the book of Revelation has _____ and _____ to it. You need to make sure you understand where we are in the sequence of events guaranteed by this book.

There is a 7-year period yet to come on earth, during which God will finish doing all the things He promised to Israel in Daniel 9:24-27. In addition to God dealing with Israel and purifying a remnant of them (1/3 of those Jews alive at the beginning of the 7 years) that period will also include God pouring out His wrath on earth against all who refuse to believe in His Son. Those seven years are most often referred to as _____.

- Revelation 1: An introduction to Christ in His glory
- Revelation 2-3: Seven messages Jesus sent to seven churches near the end of the 1st century
- Revelation 4-19: The events of the Tribulation
- Revelation 19: The Second Coming
- Revelation 20: The 1000-year kingdom of Christ, and final judgment of all unbelievers at the Great White Throne
- Revelation 21-22: Eternity in the new heaven and new earth

During the tribulation, God will unleash _____ as He pours out His wrath. The first 7 are linked to Jesus opening 7 consecutive seals on a scroll given to Him by the Father.

The 7th seal unveils 7 angels, each with a trumpet. The next series of judgments are linked to the angels blowing their trumpets in sequence. The the 7th trumpet unveils 7 more angels, each given a bowl of the wrath of God. The final series of judgments are those angels pouring out their bowls on the earth in rapid succession just before the second coming.

As we arrive at chapter 14, we have heard the seventh angel sound his trumpet, and we are about to be introduced to the seven angels who will pour out the bowls of wrath. We'll meet them in chapter 15.

This chapter does not advance _____. Instead, it gives us several interesting and important matters of background information, woven together with promises that the end is very near. Chapter 14 is another declaration of the certainty of the end of the tribulation and the coming of the Lord and another assurance that God is absolutely in control and that He will make everything right in the end.

Sing A New Song (14:1-5)

This chapter opens with a picture of _____ and the _____, both of which we met earlier in the book (The Lamb in chapter 5, the 144,000 in chapter 7).

*Revelation 14:1-5: And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. 4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.*

Mount Zion is another way of describing _____. This scene is a preview of the beginning of the millennial kingdom. Scripture is clear that Jesus will return to Jerusalem.

The 144,000 must be the same ones we met in chapter 7. They are Jews, specially chosen by God, called to proclaim Him, and sealed with His name so they are protected from His wrath. There's an **obvious contrast** from the mark of the beast in that these have His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. Chapter 7 described them at the beginning of the tribulation, and here they are described at the end, or at the beginning of the millennium. This is here to explain to us what becomes of them.

They will have a special relationship with the Lamb, including a special _____. They will have been celibate during the tribulation, and they will have lived blameless lives as representatives of Christ. First fruits describes _____, offered to God.

It's possible they all will have been martyred and resurrected. 12:17 gives us a hint: *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.*

It's likely these 144,000 will not have taken refuge along with their fellow Jews in the place God provided, if it is their ministry to preach Christ throughout the tribulation. The sealing by God protects them from His wrath (just as you are sealed in Christ) but it does not apparently protect them from persecution and the wrath of Satan. Only the two witnesses will have that protection, and only temporarily.

Sidebar on Sacred Songs

Note the phrase they *sang a new song. There are a number of references in the Bible, especially at least a half dozen in Psalms, to singing to the Lord a **new song**. The kind of new song we should sing is always related to the character of God and the salvation He gives to us as a free gift. Though the 144,000 have their own specific song, the new song we should sing means a new **kind** of song, distinct from all other kinds of songs because it focuses on God's character and His grace.

The one and only thing that makes any particular song **sacred** or **Christian** is its **content**. And the only thing that makes singing any truly Christian song an act of worship is the **heart attitude of the one singing it**. Hebrews 13:15: *Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

Every instrument is a sacred instrument if it is in the hands of a true believer, intent on honoring God. Every song which exalts God is sacred music. **No instrument** is sacred **unless** it is in the hands of a true believer intent on honoring God. **No song** has anything to do with **worship** unless it is sung from a pure heart of a person intent on honoring God.

The only audience for worship is God. Worship doesn't take place on the platform at church, and it is absolutely impossible for a recording or a radio or TV to worship. Worship is **you** offering up a sacrifice of praise to God by the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart.

Psalm 19:14: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.*

The Eternal Gospel (14:6-7)

In the final days before Jesus returns (and us with Him) to set up His kingdom on earth, God will make sure that every person knows the gospel, so that those who reject are fully accountable. He gives a worldwide final invitation to salvation, by miraculous means, using an angel.

Revelation 14:6-7: And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.

midheaven is _____. This will be some kind of worldwide angelic visitation and proclamation of the gospel one last time before Jesus returns.

The gospel (good news) is the same gospel as always, and it is therefore the eternal gospel. The gospel is for one purpose only: to preach. And ***who is the gospel designed for?*** Every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

And ***what is the appropriate response to the gospel, the only way to be saved*** from all the terrifying judgments described here in the book of Revelation? Three things:

_____, meaning that you should have the utmost reverence for Him, and you should be scared beyond measure at the promise of His wrath falling upon you if you refuse His invitation.

_____ for the kingdom which is coming.

_____, because He is your Creator and the God to whom you will give account. You must accept His grace in Jesus Christ, or face His holy wrath against all sin.

Judgment Of Beast Worshipers (14:8-12)

Revelation 14:8: And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

This is our first introduction to Babylon the great. It refers to the world system of government, commerce, and false religion which will be centralized in a rebuilt city of Babylon during the tribulation. Ancient Babylon was in what is now _____. There are dozens of fanciful interpretations of Babylon the great, including that it really means **Rome**, but

there is no reason at all not to take it for what it says. Babylon apparently will be rebuilt in short order, just as the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt in short order.¹

Fallen, fallen is another prophetic past tense (epistolary aorist) like we have been seeing in the book of Revelation. It's so certain that it is described in the past tense, and it will be so dramatic that it is repeated for emphasis. All those associated with the end-times Babylon are in for a terrible outcome of their commitment:

Revelation 14:9-11: And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

This third angel delivers the promise of judgment. There is an interesting word picture here: the wrath of God . . . mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger. The Greek literally says that the wrath of God be " _____," an oxymoron which means that it **will not** _____.

The normal mealtime beverage in Bible times was wine, mixed with 3 to 10 parts water. To drink wine which was not diluted was considered crass and barbaric by godly people. For the wrath and anger of God against sin and against sinners committed to the Antichrist to be imbibed by them mixed in full strength means that it will be full and complete.

At that time, there will be **no more grace**. At the beginning of the torment of the ungodly, the holy angels and the Lamb will be present to witness it. Then, they will be banished from the presence of God forever. The fact they will be tormented with fire and brimstone forever and ever is an allusion to the Lake of Fire. We'll save the thorough description of that place—what we usually refer to as hell, for when we come to it in chapter 20. J. Vernon McGee understood that the Bible teaches a literal hell, and conscious eternal torment of the ungodly. He commented: "*Tormented with fire and brimstone [forever and ever], if **not literal, is something ten times worse.***"

The situation for those in the tribulation is: ***If you refuse the mark of the beast, you will be mercilessly persecuted and risk starvation; If you take the mark of the beast, you will end up in eternal torment.***

¹Here's a hint for Bible interpretation: Rome occurs 9 times in the Bible, and it always means **Rome**. Babylon occurs 294 times in the Bible, and it always means **Babylon**. You don't need a secret decoder ring to understand the Bible; you just need to do your homework.

That's why verse 12 is so significant:

Revelation 14:12: *Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*

In light of how tough it will be, God's grace and sufficiency for His own will be magnified as they endure until death or the second coming. Keep their faith in Jesus is literally, *keep **the** faith of Jesus*. The NASB translation emphasizes the human side of trusting Christ, but an equally-acceptable (and probably more precise) translation points to **the faith**, which emphasizes that the true believers will persevere in sound doctrine and in obeying God.

Blessed Or Judged? You Choose! (14:13-20)

If these events were to be unfolding this week in our world, which camp would you be in? Is there a price at which you would sell out? Is there an amount of pressure that would cause you to cave in? If you have a price, or if you will cave in, that means that you don't have Jesus Christ living in you. His true disciples are those who are faithful until death.

Revelation 14:13: *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."*

The fact is, many with true faith will not escape the persecution of those days. It's the same today, but the volume will be cranked up to unprecedented levels near the end. Do you know that the century during which the largest number of people have been martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ was the 20th century? And it's not slowing down!

This chapter concludes with another preview of the _____. It's described here in a symbolic summary of the events of the end of the tribulation. We see this general summary of the last outpouring of God's wrath before we are given the details of the wrath in the form of the seven angels with the seven bowls of wrath.

Revelation 14:14-16: *And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.*

The terminology of Christ as Son of Man and sitting on a cloud comes from Daniel 7. The imagery of Him swinging His sickle and reaping the earth is a vision of what follows in the book of Revelation and the results of the 7 final plagues.

Revelation 14:17-20: *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." 19 And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.*

The Son of Man—Jesus Christ—will return to earth as Judge and Victor over all His enemies. There will be severe worldwide judgment. It will happen at God's chosen time, described here as because her grapes are ripe, a picturesque way of saying that evil will finally have run its course under the grace and patience of God.

The fact that the instruction comes out of the temple which is in heaven means that it comes _____ . We read in many other passages that many angels will be involved with the judgments of the end times. This is the book of Revelation's version.

The bloodshed is described here in hyperbole. Jerusalem is spared most of it, but for all the length of Israel—about 200 miles—the blood will be splattered up to the height of the horses' bridles, or about four feet off the ground.

There's more detail in . . .

Revelation 19:17-21: *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; 18 in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. 20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Do we need to ask you to think seriously about which side of that battle you want to be on?

Angelic Super Bowls (15:1-16:21)

The next time you're tempted to say that things couldn't get much worse in the world, I commend you to this portion of God's word us today. What we're going to see is **as bad as it can get**. Not only will the world be fully in the hands of Satan, working on earth through his key man we call Antichrist, but there will also be this final flurry of the wrath of God being poured out on the world of unbelievers.

There's no particularly good reason for this section being two chapters, because it is all about the same thing—the so-called **Bowl Judgments**. The series of judgments unleashed by Jesus opening the seven seals on the scroll given Him by the Father will take approximately 3 1/2 years. The series of judgments unleashed by seven angels blowing seven trumpets will take most of the next 3 1/2 years. This final series of judgments will take only a matter of weeks to months, and they will leave the earth more devastated than at any time since the flood in the days of Noah. As you scour Revelation 15-16, you will see better than ever why Jesus said in:

Matthew 24:22: And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

Heavenly Song of Triumph (15:1-4)

This section begins with a celebration of God's wrath, because that will be the time when God's character will be vindicated, and all the evil deeds of all the ungodly against the people of God will be avenged.

Revelation 15:1: And I saw² another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

and I saw is that grammatical tipoff which tells you that this is another facet of the vision in progress.

another sign in heaven means this is another visual portrayal of something, a sign of the same kind as the previous signs of the woman and the dragon in chapter 12. The outpouring the wrath of God will be finished when the details of this sign unfold in real time on earth. There will be a great celebration over this conclusion of God's wrath because it brings us to _____ and to _____. It also avenges the blood of all the tribulation martyrs—of which there will be millions.

²At several points in our study, the quotes are from the New American Standard Bible 1973 version (before the 1995 update) because that translation best preserves the grammatical cues such as “And I saw.”

Revelation 15:2: *And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.*

as it were translates a Greek particle which tips us off that this is something that **looks like** a sea of glass mixed with fire. The sea of glass is probably some way of describing the _____, and the fire probably relates to His _____. It's not a literal sea, or the martyrs would not be standing on it. Harps are often used to accompany the praises of God's people.

Have you ever thought of rejoicing over terrible wrath being poured out? That will happen just before Jesus returns.

Revelation 15:3-4: *And they *sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations. 4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone art holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, For Your righteous acts have been revealed."*

This great celebration of praise will include *two songs*:

The song of Moses will be something like what you find in _____ and _____, where the words recount God's faithfulness to Israel. The song of the Lamb may well be the song sung by four living creatures and the 24 elders in Revelation 5:8-14. It focuses on the worthiness of Christ to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing.

Both before the Christ came, and after His death and resurrection, God's faithfulness, grace, mercy and righteousness have been demonstrated to His people. These things are described as Your righteous acts, and His marvelous works. *God is faithful, all the time!* Notice in 15:1-4 the things for which God is praised Great, marvelous, righteous, true, holy, and righteous (again). All those things go along with God's wrath.

Seven Angels (15:5-8)

John, in his vision, then got a peek into the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle.

Revelation 15:5: *After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,*

After these things I looked tips us off that this is something new. This heavenly place is mentioned also in 13:6, and it's referred to in Hebrews 8:5, but it's never explained. It's

probably there as a memorial of the work of redemption accomplished by Christ and pictured by all the sacrifices during the Old Testament era. This time, all we know is that these seven angels come from this place in dramatic style.

Revelation 15:6: *and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their breasts with golden girdles.*

These angels are dressed to paint a mental picture that they represent the holiness, purity, royalty, riches and a reflection of the glory of God. *These angels have important work to do on behalf of God.*

Revelation 15:7-8: *And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.*

The four living creatures are those lofty angels around the throne of God, along with the 24 elders. The golden bowls are _____, or _____, and they are full of the devastating wrath of God.

As we have arrive at this section of the book of Revelation, we see a shift of words used for wrath. Until the end, it is described as God's *orgé*, or His _____ toward sin. But when His wrath is poured out, or set into action, it becomes *thumos*, or _____. Mankind and fallen angels have always deserved judgment, but their account has been accumulating. It will all come due at once, and the full penalty exacted.

Seven Bowls of the Wrath of God (16:1-21)

Rather than dwell on chapter 16, let's observe it in its totality so you can let it hit you all at once. It's the record of the outpouring of the seven bowls of God's wrath.

As with the judgments associated with the seals, and with the judgments associated with the trumpets, six of them are stated, then some additional information is given, then the seventh one unfolds. This time, the interlude between the 6th and 7th is only four verses.

You get the impression by the context, which tells you these have to be very late in the tribulation, by the content, which relates to events which are part of the second coming, and by how they are "rattled off" in succession that these happen very rapidly.

This is definitely the chapter of _____. There's another way of looking at this chapter: It is the _____ of the Bible.

The Greek word great (*megalos*) occurs in verse s1, 9, 12, 14, 18, 19 (2X), and 21 (2X), or *nine times*. These judgments are more universal than the trumpet judgments or seal judgments. In the NASB it's translated *loud, fierce, huge, severe and great*.

The First Bowl: Revelation 16:1-2: *AND I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth." 2 And the first angel went and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.*

The loud (literally, *great*) voice seems to be God's voice.

This plague is some terrible physical affliction which causes extreme suffering. It is limited to those who receive the mark of the beast and who worship his image in the temple.

The word used to describe the loathsome and malignant sore is the same word used in the LXX for the _____ . If you've ever had a boil, perhaps you've had just a taste of what will happen to people worldwide at that time.

The Second Bowl: Revelation 16:3: *And the second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.*

This plague of blood again sounds similar to what happened to the _____ . It may or may not be turned into literal human blood, but it will look like it and it will be just as gross and loathsome as if it were blood. This plague affects all the oceans of the world.

By the time these judgments run their course, the earth is going to be in a terrible mess. Jesus will set it right, restoring it to many of the same conditions that existed prior to the fall—except probably that there will still be seasons.

Next, the same thing happens to the fresh water sources of the world.

The Third Bowl: Revelation 16:4-7: *And the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." 7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

Just as a curious sidelight, notice the passing reference to the angel of the waters. There are myriad ministries of angels that we don't know about.

There is some wonderful irony in the poetic justice of avenging the blood of the martyrs by turning drinking water into blood.

The next one is like God taking a giant magnifying glass and focusing the heat of the sun on earth.

The Fourth Bowl: Revelation 16:8: *And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.*

There's a nuance in the Greek that you can't show smoothly in an English translation. Men is literally **the men**, with a definite article, which specifies that this applies to the people who are mentioned in 2, 5, and 6. Believers don't suffer from this miraculously selective heat wave. Tragically, we see the same result from this plague that we saw so many times in earlier judgments

Revelation 16:9: *And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory.*

The suffering seems to build and accumulate with the next judgment. The wording here makes it even more clear that these come in rapid succession.

The Fifth Bowl: Revelation 16:10-11: *And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.*

More blasphemy and bitterness; _____.

The Sixth Bowl: Revelation 16:12: *And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.*

This one dries up the Euphrates River, which runs through Babylon, and which will be blood at that time. What's interesting about this is that it makes possible a massive movement of foot soldiers, never before possible. The **unholy trinity** of _____, _____ and _____ command forces under the control of demons which will precipitate the final war.

That leads us to a brief digression about the battle of Armageddon. Armageddon literally means *hill of Megiddo*, which is on the southern rim of the valley of Esdraelon where a climatic series of battles will take place. That's where it will all start, but the battles will rage over the length of Israel.

Preview of Armageddon: Revelation 16:13-16: *And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.") 16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.*

We'll study the battle of Armageddon in chapter 19, but for now it will suffice for you to notice the words of Jesus inserted in verse 15: *"Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame."*

Are you prepared for meeting the Lord, like a _____ dressed and equipped for _____, or like a _____ who doesn't let his guard down so that a _____ can break in?

The Seventh Bowl: Revelation 16:17: *And the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."*

It is done refers to _____ . That's the end of the outpouring of the wrath of God on earth. The remaining survivors who are unbelievers will be carried away to judgment after Jesus arrives, and the final judgment of unbelievers is still to come, but this is it for this part of the judgment of God.

Revelation 16:18-21: *And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. 19 And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, *came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague *was extremely severe.*

The great city is Jerusalem. The splitting of the city into three parts seems to be connected to massive remodeling of the city for blessings to come in the kingdom, as well as whatever role it might play in the immediate judgment. There will be new springs of water from the city, and Jesus will split the Mount of Olives when He returns, so this is just the beginning of things about the city of Jerusalem as it will be during the _____ .

We met Babylon the great in the previous chapter, and here it's mentioned again. No need to say much now, because there is great detail given to us in chapters 17-18 concerning this future capital of everything Satanic on earth. There are incredible physical phenomena

which will happen, but again, **no repentance**. Indeed, there will be **no repentance** in those days. That's why the Bible says . . .

Hebrews 3:12-15a: *Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; 15 while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, . . .*

2 Peter 3:3-4a, 7, 9: *Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? . . . But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

2 Peter 3:10-12: *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, **what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness**, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!*

The Future of Religion (17:1-18)

Throughout our study of the book of Revelation we have said that—more than ever before—*the table is set* for the events of the tribulation and the second coming of Christ to happen on earth.

Some things are subtle, such as Revelation 11:8-9: *And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations **will look at their dead bodies** for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.* It was not until the _____ that it became possible in the human realm for that to be fulfilled literally as it says.

Another example is the references to _____ and the events which must take place there during the tribulation. There has not been a temple since A.D. 70. It wasn't until the last few generations that there have been Jews around the world gathering the materials in order to be quickly rebuilt when the time is right.

All that is overlaid on the issue of the _____. When Israel became a national entity in 1948—it became possible to see that God will literally keep his promises to Israel, including that He will purge the nation by allowing 2/3 of them to die in order that the remaining 1/3 will believe in their Messiah Jesus and welcome Him at His second coming. No generation alive before 1948 could see the human possibility of that like we now can see it.

Not until the advent of computers, satellites, the internet and other technologies could we understand how literally true it is that there can be a world system in which people cannot buy or sell without having the proper mark, as described in Revelation 13. And it goes on and on. *The table is set for the events of the tribulation to begin! And the imminence of the rapture of the church is more palpable than ever!*

Our next passage fits into that mindset in a different way. It isn't that chapter 17 couldn't be understood before now, but there has never been a time in the world in which events in the arena of religion are setting the stage for these things as discernibly as is now the case. We will minimize the amount of commentary on the details of chapter 17, so we can tie them in to essentially the same subject in chapter 18. The two chapters together paint a composite picture.

The gist of chapter 17 is: *All false religions will be united during the tribulation. After serving the purposes of Antichrist and helping persecute Christians, the final form of this one-world-religion will be destroyed. This chapter describes this evil religion and how it will be destroyed.*

Religion Is **NOT** The Answer: (Revelation 17:1-7)

You should recognize immediately that the forces that press for uniting all religion under one banner are _____. The forces which want to unite political power with

religion are equally misguided. Only when the world is ruled by the King of kings and Lord of lords will religion and government be appropriately connected. In chapters 18-19, you'll see that the term _____ is used both for a **city** and for a **system**.

It's like the expressions **Wall Street** or **Madison Avenue**. They're both literal streets in New York City, but they also stand for the whole system of our financial markets and advertising world. **The White House** is a literal high-class home for temporary residents, and **The White House** as an expression stands for the presidency.

Based on the text of the book of Revelation, we believe that Babylon will be a rebuilt city during the time of Antichrist, from which he will rule. The ancient city of Babylon has a long and sordid history of being a seat of ungodly leaders and ground zero for ungodly influences in the world. Even if Babylon is not literally rebuilt as a city, wherever the headquarters of the Antichrist and the false prophet are, the term Babylon and _____ describe a place from which evil does its work through human dupes of Satan.

Revelation 17:1-7: And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, 5 and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." 6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly. 7 And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

When man-made religion is married to political power in the hands of wicked people, it will be abundantly clear that **Religion Is NOT The Answer** to the problems of the world. Christ is, but He doesn't come until chapter 19. Here, sandwiched between the final outpouring of the wrath of God on earth and the Second Coming of Christ, are two chapters which tell us about the ultimate demise of man's political power and man's religion.

Notice the descriptions of Babylon by the terms used for it.

In verses 1-2, it is a _____. That refers to the idolatry and corruption of the system which claims to bring people to God, but actually _____ to a Christless eternity in the Lake of Fire. The tribulation church will flourish in power, enhanced by political clout

granted by Antichrist, but to get involved with that religion will be as poisonous to your soul as visiting a prostitute.

Verse 3 describes the tribulation religion's _____. Sitting on the beast means that the Antichrist will (at first) be under the power of the false prophet. The scarlet beast is the one who emerged out of the sea in 13:1. Just look at any nation in the world in which the political power is under the control of a manmade religion, and you get the idea.

Verse 4 describes this harlot of a religion's _____ by describing it like a gaudily-made-up woman of ill-repute. Nothing is more gaudy and disgusting to true believers than the ostentatious displays in temples of false religions. It seduces those who are wooed by displays of wealth, but it _____ God.

Verse 5 reveals the _____, or makes known what cannot otherwise be known unless God reveals it, that this "woman" is the ultimate religious head of what the wicked ancient city of Babylon was, and may be again. If that verse seems cryptic to you because you haven't read all the prophetic books of the Bible this week and you're a little rusty on ancient religions, this may help.³

Of primary importance in the study of Babylon is its relation to religion as unfolded in Revelation 17. In addition to materials given in the Bible itself, ancient accounts indicated that the wife of Nimrod, who founded the city of Babylon, became the head of the so-called Babylonian mysteries which consisted of secret religious rites which were developed as apart of the worship of idols in Babylon. She was known by the name of Semiramis and was a high priestess of the idol worship. According to extrabiblical records which have been preserved, Semiramis gave birth to a son who she claimed was conceived miraculously.

This son, given the name of Tammuz, was considered a savior of his people and was, in effect, a false messiah, purported to be the fulfillment of the promise given to Eve. The legend of the mother and child was incorporated into the religious rites and is repeated in various pagan religions. Idols picturing the mother as the queen of heaven with the babe in her arms are found throughout the ancient world, and countless religious rites were introduced supposedly promising cleansing from sin. Though the rites which were observed in the Babylonian false religion differed greatly in various localities, there usually was a priestly order which furthered the worship of the mother and child, practiced the sprinkling of holy water, and established an order of virgins dedicated to religious prostitution. Tammuz, the son,

³*The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary* by John Walvoord, p. 247.

was said to have been killed by a wild beast and afterward brought back to life, obviously a satanic anticipation of the resurrection of Christ.

You can tell from that and studying a smattering of false religions that Satan has been recycling the same stuff in new packaging for a long time. The description of this woman as _____ and of _____ means that religious Babylon has spawned all sorts of other false beliefs. This is the spirit of _____, tying together all things that sound similar.

Finally, verses 6-7 describe end-times Babylon not only as the center of false religion, but also the _____. This "woman" is drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. "She" clearly works in tandem with Antichrist in the end-times amalgamation of evil government and false religion.

Religion Is Powerful Deception (Revelation 17:8-13)

The next six verses describe more about Babylon.

Revelation 17:8-13: The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. 9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. 11 "And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. 12 "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 "These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast.

The reference to _____ makes some people think this refers to _____, because it is known as "the city of seven hills." Some like to link Roman Catholicism to this entire description. It's possible that Roman Catholicism, since doctrinally it is a perversion of the true gospel, will play a role in the end-times religion, but it's a stretch to let the text mean what it says and make it all fit Roman Catholicism. That shortchanges all the satanic forms religion in the world which don't even claim to be Christian.

The terminology of the _____ is from Daniel 2, and refers to a sequence of world empires, not literally seven mountains. The Antichrist's kingdom is said to be both the _____ kingdoms because of his supposed demise and resurrection. He is the _____ king before and the _____ king after his "resurrection" when he destroys the

harlot's religious empire and demands exclusive worship of himself. This end-times religion will be the most powerful force of deception the world has ever known.

Religion Will Be Destroyed By Its Allies (Revelation 17:14-18)

Religious Babylon, which for awhile will ride the crest of _____, will ultimately be destroyed by her own political allies. There's a lesson here for people who believe it is necessary to grasp for political power in our world. Fighting for political power in this world is a waste of time for Christians.

Verses 14-18 describe how completely and quickly this end-times Babylon will go from the pinnacle of power to _____.

*Revelation 17:14-18: These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." 15 And he *said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. 16 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her **desolate and naked**, and will **eat her flesh** and will **burn her up with fire**. 17 "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled. 18 "And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."*

We'll see in chapter 19 how they wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them. Notice for now how clearly verse 17 explains that even the most wicked and worldwide perversion of the truth will be _____. God's sovereignty is so majestic and unfathomable that it even incorporates the _____, and even the _____.

There will never be a hymn called "Gimme That End Times Religion" because religion in the final seven years before the Second Coming will be unbelievably wicked and deceptive. And it will be more powerful than ever. A legitimate and important application for us is to observe how the seeds of these terrible things are being sown now.

There is very good reason to believe that, even though the world is not yet into the events of the tribulation, and even though we believe with confidence that we will be raptured before the tribulation, we are nevertheless seeing prophecy begin to unfold.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4: *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from*

*us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless **the apostasy comes first**, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

According to that passage, the thing which must come before the Antichrist comes to power is the apostasy—a falling away from the faith. We are seeing unprecedented apostasy in our generation. We're not setting a date for anything, nor am we ruling out the possibility of a great revival, nor are we trying to get you to be pessimistic, or to sell everything and sit on the top of your house waiting for the rapture. We are merely observing the world around us, and the state of Christianity these days.

***The table is set,
more than ever,
for the events of the Tribulation to begin
Are you ready?***

The Future of Worldliness (18:1-24)

Revelation 17 and 18 stand alone as a section unto themselves, embedded in the context of the events immediately leading up to the Second Coming of Christ. All the promised judgments of God on earth have taken place. The end has been announced several times in several ways, and we're poised for the return of Christ, which comes in chapter 19.

At the close of the final series of judgments, when 7 angels pour out 7 bowls of the wrath of God, we have these two chapters. Their purpose in the word of God is easy to see: *Chapters 17-18 announce the end of man's political, religious, and commercial activities in the world.* Both chapters refer often to Babylon, which is a _____, a _____, and a _____ all at once. This author believes the Biblical evidence is strong that the city of Babylon will be built again during the tribulation. It's close to Baghdad, Iraq, in case you wonder about the location.

Babylon also refers to the _____ efforts to control everything. Thus it is also legitimate to say that Babylon is a symbol for the realm of man in which he ignores God and pretends he is in control. In that sense, the word Babylon is essentially the same as the New Testament word *kosmos*, most often translated _____.

Background: What Is “The World?”

The one who wrote the book of Revelation also wrote:

1 John 2:15-17: *Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.*

We introduce chapter 18 by painting the picture of what we mean by the *world* system which will show its final face in the form of Babylon the Great of the tribulation. The root meaning comes from the verb *kosmeō*, which means *to order, to arrange, to prepare, to adorn, or to furnish*. Can you see how we got the English word **cosmetics**? Among the array of definitions of the noun *kosmos* are:

- 1) an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government
- 2) ornament, decoration, adornment, i.e. the arrangement of the stars, “the heavenly hosts”, as the ornament of the heavens. 1 Peter 3:3
- 3) the world, the universe
- 4) the circle of the earth, the earth
- 5) the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human race

- 6) the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ
- 7) world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly
- 7a) the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc, which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ

That's why the New Testament says so much about how you should avoid being entangled with **the world**. The world is _____, as Jesus said:

John 15:18-19: *If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

Later in that discourse to the apostles, Jesus said how difficult it would be for His followers in the world:

John 16:33: *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*

Later that night, just before He was betrayed, Jesus prayed about you and me, living in the world until He comes for us.

John 17:13-18: *But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy made full in themselves. 14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

So, even though you need to live in this world, you need do all you can to make sure the _____.

Romans 12:2: *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Conformed means to be squeezed into something under pressure. Transformed is the Greek word for *metamorphosis*, which describes a complete change from the inside out. **The world will apply pressure to squeeze you into its mold; you must transform your mind so that you have the internal will to resist the pressure of the world.**

How does this help us with Revelation 18? Here's the deal . . . chapter 17 is The _____ . It explains how the Antichrist will use the False Prophet and his ecumenical One World Religion to help him gain political control of the world. Once he is in control, he sets himself up in the temple in Jerusalem as the object of worship for the world, and he destroys the end-times religious system. At the return of Christ, the politics and religion of the world will be destroyed.

Chapter 18 is about the demise of the world's commercial system. This chapter is _____ . This tells what awaits you if you are more attached to the things of the world than to Christ. The future for those who "marry the world" is not good!

Judgment IS Coming! (Revelation 18:1-3)

This chapter begins with one of those angelic announcements of what is going to happen.

Revelation 18:1-3: *After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."*

The judgment of the 5th bowl poured out by the 5th angel plunged the world into darkness, so this time the miracle is the opposite because when this angel appears _____ .

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! is the same declaration we saw proleptically in 14:8. This whole system will come tumbling down. Isaiah 47:11 and 51:8 promise a sudden judgment of Babylon which has never taken place. Since the current devastation of the region of Babylon is the result of slow decay, Revelation 18:2 is likely the ultimate fulfillment of the age-old promise that Babylon will be destroyed by God. This is another reason why it makes the most sense to take Babylon as a literal end-times city yet to be rebuilt.

When the destruction happens, the city of Babylon will be so thoroughly devastated it will leave the place to the demons who empowered the leaders there. Apparently, they will be abandoned there, as if _____ when the city is destroyed.

The worldliness we see all around us now will keep growing and keep people in its clutches in the end times even more than it does now. The words of verse 3 paint the picture of the sensuality and carnality of what the world offers.

Get Out . . . NOW! (Revelation 18:4-8)

As we've seen several times, there will be an amazing amount of evangelism during the tribulation, with millions coming to faith in Jesus Christ. For those who do not die as martyrs under the persecution of the unholy trinity of _____, _____, and the _____, there comes this call at the last minute to get clear of Babylon before she is taken down once and for all. For any believers who live in or near the future Babylon, comes this warning to get out, just like Lot was given his chance to get out of Sodom.

Revelation 18:4-5: And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; 5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

This time yet another angel calls out on behalf of God.

Come out of her, my people is the command. This is a call to leave a literal city in the end times, but beyond that it is also a call to shun the enticements of the world system which leads up to the corruption of that end times city. This is also a call from God to you to leave the enticements of idolatry, self-sufficiency, reliance on luxury, and violence. Remember, the book of Revelation is for you, not only for those who will be alive on earth during the days of the wrath of God. It's easy to become anxious because of the entanglements of the world, but it's a sinful waste of time to spend any energy worrying about it.

There's a similar call in different words in a different context, clearly addressed to us who live in the world right now.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17: Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.

That passage incorporates a composite of Old Testament quotes, and makes it clear that God wants you not to be entangled with the world. You have to walk a careful line:

On one hand you need to _____ because they need the gospel and you are called to use every bit of common ground you have (job, kids' activities, hobbies, neighborhood, shared struggles–whatever) in order to build relationships through which the gospel can flow.

On the other hand, you must always keep yourself from adopting the priorities of the world and falling prey to the _____ of the things of the world.

The judgment of this city and this system is described in graphic symbolism.

Revelation 18:6-8: *“Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. 7 “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’ 8 “For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.*

This pictures the world system and its people as arrogant and never backing down from their foolish self-sufficiency. Christian philosopher and apologist Francis Schaeffer defined the gods of this age as personal peace and affluence. Those are the carrots that forever dangle before the ever-pursuing world.

See Them Weep (Revelation 18:9-19)

The picture of the sorrow of the world over losing all its stuff is severe indeed. The prophecy needs no comment:

Revelation 18:9-19: *“And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’ 11 “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more; 12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, 13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives. 14 “And the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. 15 “The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance*

because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, 16 saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; 17 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, 18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?' 19 "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

Rejoice, You Saints (Revelation 18:20-24)

Finally, there is a call for rejoicing. The reason to rejoice is that this will be the _____ of the people who suffered at the hands of the world ever since Jesus promised that if we love Him, the world would hate us in return.

Revelation 18:20: *Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."*

Then comes another description of the end of these enemies of God.

Revelation 18:21-23: *And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. 22 "And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; 23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.*

There's one more reminder of why to rejoice at the fall of the evil world system:

Revelation 18:24: *And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.*

So, ***Are you ready for the glorious appearing of Christ?*** Stay tuned for chapter 19, coming soon to a pulpit near you, if not literally coming to earth!

How In The World Are You Doing?

Before we put chapter 18 behind us, it's important that we realize our own need to be vigilant about how easily the world wraps its tentacles around us. Let's go to the opposite end of the New Testament, chronologically speaking. Evidence is strong that James was the first book of the New Testament to be written, and we know Revelation was the last. Both teach the same attitude about the world.

Do you ever struggle with lack of contentment? Are you ever at odds with people around you? According to the word of God, chances are that if you are not content with what you have and you find it easy to be jealous of other people or you are easily offended or you squabble over things, ***you are probably in love with the world more than you are in love with Jesus Christ.***

James 4:1-4: *What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that **friendship with the world is hostility toward God?***

If you are an adopted child of God by faith, why would you want to dabble with things that get between you and your Lord? James 4 has some of the strongest words directed to believers anywhere in the Bible that are. In James 4:7-10 are **ten imperatives**, all of which in the Greek are worded in the strongest possible way. If you love the things of the world, let this sink in, then make the changes you need to make in order to enjoy the fullness of God's blessing which you are now forfeiting.

James 4:7-10 gives you the only antidote for worldliness. It comes in the form of these ten commands.

James 4:7-10: *Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

1. (7) Submit therefore to God.

2. Resist *the devil and he will flee from you.*

3. (8) Draw near *to God and He will draw near to you.*

4. Cleanse your hands, *you sinners;*

5. *and purify your hearts,* you double-minded.

6. (9) Be miserable Be miserable literally means *be wretched*. It's the only place this word occurs in the Greek New Testament. It refers to wretchedness of mind due to realizing your sin. Are you miserable about your sin because it grieves God, or are you miserable about your sin because you got caught and it wounded your pride?

7. *and mourn*

8. *and weep;*

9. *let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.*

10. (10) *Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

These ten urgent commands are a detailed picture of repentance. To repent from worldliness is nothing more complicated than seeing sin and worldliness as God sees it, and *turning from it decisively*. Now look at the three **promises** from God that describe the benefits of turning away from the world and toward Him.

1. (7) *He will flee from you.* This is picturesque! Flee is a translation of the word from which we get our word *fugitive*. When you stand on the authority of God's word in the power of His Holy Spirit, the devil cannot continue to influence your life. He knows he is a defeated enemy, but he will continue to pick on you by all means available to him through the things of the world and your own sinful flesh until you take a stand against him.

2. (8) *He will draw near to you.*

3. He will exalt you.

Would you like the devil to be a fugitive whenever he sees you coming?

Would you like God to draw especially near to you?

Would you like God to see that you are exalted at the proper times?

You know what to do!

Heaven Says Hallelujah! (19:1-10)

Remember the sequence of events to come. The next major event on God's calendar for earth is _____, the moment when all living believers in Jesus Christ will be removed from this world and taken to be with Him forever:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52: Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

The language in that passage means that the event Paul describes is **imminent**—it could _____. He would not have written it that way if something else had to happen first. For the words to mean what they say, the rapture has to be imminent. Paul wrote about it also to the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Jesus alluded to it in different words:

John 14:2-3: In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Following that imminent event comes a series of events which are _____ and described in many places in the Bible. It is framed in a 7-year period described in Daniel 9:27 which we usually refer to as the Tribulation, or the 70th "Week" of Daniel. It will include the sudden rise to power of a world leader who will unite the nations under his own control. We customarily call him by one of his biblical names, _____. He will use a religious leader we usually refer to by one of his biblical names, _____. The book of Revelation also calls these two _____. The false prophet will lead an ecumenical world religion which works hand in glove with the political world empire of Antichrist.

Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel, granting her peace in the land and the freedom to rebuild the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. We can confidently say that will be the only time Israel will have peace before Jesus returns—**and it won't last long**. After 3 1/2 years, Antichrist will desecrate the temple and set himself up as the object of worship for the world. Eventually he will destroy the religious empire of the false prophet entirely.

At the end of 7 years, Antichrist will amass a huge coalition army in the north of Israel, in a place the Bible calls _____, in the valley Megiddo, northwest of Jerusalem. They will gather to destroy Israel once and for all (they think), but Jesus returns and destroys all of them at His _____. That's what you will see in the next segment of our journey through the book of Revelation. All through those seven years of the reign of Antichrist, God will be pouring out His wrath on earth for all the sins of all generations since Adam. He will do it in an escalating sequence of three series of judgments, each series having seven individual judgments.

As we arrive at chapter 19, all three series of judgments are completed. They are described in significant detail in chapters 4-16. Chapter 17 is a recap of the ultimate end of the world's _____ exploits, and chapter 18 is a recap of the end of the world's _____ dealings.

To understand chapter 19, you need to look at the final command of chapter 18. Having described the ultimate fall of the end-times world empire whose capital will be Babylon, and the fall of the entire system described as Babylon the great, a powerful angel says to us

*Revelation 18:20: **Rejoice over her**, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.*

The beginning of chapter 19 is the response to the call from the strong angel in heaven to **rejoice!** God's vindication on earth is almost complete. The heavenly choirs are warming up. The heavenly orchestra is tuning up. The heavenly lighting crew is about to mess with things on earth again, temporarily turning out all the lights in the universe so that the glory of Christ will be all they see when He descends from heaven, with us with Him.

Some of the words of the famous *Hallelujah Chorus* have already passed through our minds when we studied the first announcement of the end, in:

Revelation 11:15: And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

In chapter 19 we have a different "Hallelujah Chorus," one shouted from heaven by myriad angels and saints of all ages. This chapter begins with all of heaven praising God for what is about to happen: The glorious return of Jesus Christ to earth.

Sing "Hallelujah" With Heaven! (Revelation 19:1-6)

Revelation 19:1: AFTER these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;

After these things is one of those grammatical features of the book of Revelation which helps us know the sequence of events. This is a _____. This comes after the tribulation, after Babylon the great is destroyed. This chapter serves as the bridge between the _____ and the _____ of Christ on earth.

This great multitude starts out with only a few billion angels. Others join in as we get to the later verses. It doesn't say for sure that they *sing*, but it's OK if you want to think of it as a choir. If they don't sing it, they say it in deafening unison, the likes of which you have never heard.

Their first line is Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; It literally says _____! _____. The word hallelujah is a Hebrew word that means literally _____. This Greek (and English) transliteration of it occurs only 4 times in the New Testament, all in Revelation 9:1-6. Whenever in the Old Testament you see "*Praise the LORD*," it's the Hebrew hallelujah translated into English.

The praise party in heaven continues:

Revelation 19:2: *BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER.*"

As usual in the book of Revelation, these words come from several Old Testament passages. They are not direct quotes, but they are the same terms used in Scripture.

Be Like John

There's a practical lesson to learn from the fact that the book of Revelation contains over 400 allusions to Old Testament passages, without ever directly quoting them. The lesson to learn is to keep filling your mind with Scripture until it becomes natural for you speak in the words God inspired. The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart (Matthew 12:34), so fill your heart with God's word. It was natural for John to phrase things in Bible terminology.

As was said of John Bunyan, we should not be satisfied until our blood is "***Bibline.***"

The great harlot who corrupts the earth with her immorality and which kills the saints is _____, the world system now under Satan's control with a certain amount of subtlety and sophistication. But during the Tribulation it will be overtly and blatantly his

under the leadership of Antichrist. You should never seek your own revenge (Romans 12:19), but it's OK to join in with the angels of heaven who _____ when God makes things right and destroys His enemies:

Revelation 19:3: *And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER."*

Do you long for the time when God's justice is satisfied? Do you hate sin and worldliness so much that you would like to see it destroyed forever? Do you love the Lord so much that it breaks your heart to see people not on their way to spending eternity with them? Will you tell them what they need to hear?

The circle of those crying "Hallelujah" widens:

Revelation 19:4: *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"*

The same two groups of _____ we met early in the book of Revelation do what they do best: They set the example of worshipping God. _____ is an interesting word. We all use it, so it's possible to slide over it without realizing what it means. Here's what one lexicographer says:

... so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled. It was a custom, which passed over from the synagogues to the Christian assemblies, that when he who had read or discoursed, had offered up solemn prayer to God, the others responded "Amen," and thus made the substance of what was uttered their own.

The word "*amen*" is a most remarkable word. It was transliterated directly from the Hebrew into the Greek of the New Testament, then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. It has been called the best known word in human speech. The word is directly related – in fact, almost identical – to the Hebrew word for "believe" (*amam*), or "faithful." Thus, it came to mean "sure" or "truly," an expression of absolute trust and confidence.

Next comes the instruction for everyone to join in with the angels praising God:

Revelation 19:5-6: *And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, **all you** His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great."6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "**Hallelujah!** For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.*

This seems to refer to all _____, because they are the only ones left in the presence of the Lord, who aren't already pouring out their hallelujahs.

Consider the words here: Lord means _____. God means _____ in the Bible. Our God means that _____. He's not far off and impersonal, He is *your* loving heavenly Father if you know Him by faith in Jesus Christ.⁴ The almighty is added as a separate emphasis of who the Lord our God really is. He is ***THE almighty one***. Only to Him belongs _____. And He reigns. This is one more announcement of the result of what will happen when the feet of Jesus touch down on the Mount of Olives at His Second Coming.

Five reasons for praise are in this passage: 1) God delivers His people from their enemies (v. 1); 2) God metes out justice (v. 2); 3) God permanently crushes man's rebellion (v. 3); 4) God reigns (v. 6); 5) God communes with His people (v. 7, see below).

How About You?

Is He your Lord? People can tell by whether or not you do what He says in His word. Is He your God? Do you commune with Him, speaking to Him in prayer and allowing Him to speak to you through His word?

Do you truly believe He is almighty? And do you act like it? On a Christian radio station, an announcer once mentioned an event to be held outdoors, and she didn't want it to rain that day. So she said "Let's pray real hard, and cross our fingers." I'm not sure God Almighty is very impressed with that kind of trust . . . *Don't insult The Lord our God, the Almighty* by how you address Him or refer to Him.

The Bride Is Ready (Revelation 19:7-9)

First comes an announcement about this bride, in the continued praise of the multitude in heaven. The marriage of the Lamb is a picturesque way of describing the celebration of our _____ with the Lord.

Revelation 19:7: Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

Jewish weddings consisted of three phases.

⁴Some manuscripts, and therefore some translations, such as KJV and NKJV omit our.

Betrothal. The future bride and groom were pledged to each other. It was a binding contract. We are said to be "betrothed" to the Lord now, and His Holy Spirit is like the ring He has given us to guarantee the marriage will be completed.

The presentation. This is the basis for several parables in the New Testament about the Kingdom of Heaven. Festivities could last for days, leading up to . . .

The ceremony. The vows were exchanged, and then the couple began to live together.

This description here is based on the background of Jewish weddings. There are several variations of interpretations among scholars, which tells you that the big picture is the most important thing, and the details aren't as clear. If you remember the interpretative axiom you will do well: ***The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things.*** The "plain thing" here is that there will be a great celebration which will go on for a long time, and it involves the union of God and His people, like a bridegroom and a bride who have been betrothed for a long time.

Some believe the bride is exclusively _____, so they see the presentation as referring to the time the church is with the Lord in heaven, and then this is the celebration when the church _____ for the millennium, and the celebration is the _____.

Others want to include all the redeemed in the celebration, so they delay the celebration until the _____. Therefore, some see the celebration as eternity in the new heaven and new earth.

Revelation 19:8-9: *And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he *said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *said to me, "These are true words of God."*

We need not spend a lot of time splitting those hairs, so we will revisit this when we get to the other references to the bride, in chapters 21 and 22. What we can see now is that the adornment of this bride is the righteous acts of the saints. That sounds like the _____, _____ and _____ which are the works of believers who are rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

Even if you can't be sure about every detail of these things, you can be sure that *you want to be part of the bride of Christ!* You can also know for sure that you want to be involved in this celebration—whether it's seven years with the Lord during the tribulation, or if it's the millennium, or if it starts with the millennium and continues for eternity. *You want to be part of this!*

There is an interesting thing here . . . Those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb are ___ the bride. The bride is the one who _____. We know they can't be unsaved people, because they will never be in the presence of the Lord. The explanation which fits best is that these are probably _____ other than the church, the body of Christ. *Who would that be?* It could include all who believed and died before Acts 2, when the church was born, it could include the tribulation saints, and it can include angels. All we know for sure is that *you want to be there!*

These are true words of God probably refers to everything from the beginning of chapter 17. The judgment on _____ will be complete, and the marriage supper of the Lamb will be glorious

Worship Only God (Revelation 19:10)

The last verse before the description of the Second Coming is this unusual little bit about John again getting involved in his own vision being shown to him by an angel.

*Revelation 19:10: And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he *said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

The last sentence in verse 10 seems to stick out, but it makes sense if you think about it: The _____ of all the prophecy of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, is _____. The angel was simply telling John that the only proper response to all he saw is to **worship Jesus**.

John got overwhelmed with of what he was seeing, and he fell down at the feet of the angel in awe and reverence. The angel immediately stopped him and rebuked him, because only God is worthy of worship.

Colossians 2:18-19: *Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.*

There are an amazing number of books these days which encourage Christians to seek encounters with angels, or to rebuke demons, or to ask God to send angels to help them. That's all wrong.

What you should do about angels is _____. God uses angels any way He chooses, including sometimes to do things for you.

Hebrews 1:14: *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

Don't pray to angels. Talk to God. Don't pray to saints, or to statues or to icons. Pray to God. Let God take care of His own ministering spirits. You'll have all eternity to get to know angels. *If you read or hear something in which a person claims to know the name of an angel other than the three given in the Bible, or tells you to talk to angels or demons, you are dealing with a heretic—someone who is deceived, and probably someone who is also a deceiver.*

Are You Ready?

Our next venture into the book of Revelation will be to look at the Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ. Here's a pop quiz to see if you're ready to study it, and if you're ready for it to happen.

Titus 2:12-14: *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to **deny ungodliness** and worldly desires and to **live sensibly, righteously and godly** in the present age, 13 **looking for** the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds**.*

Look at these instructions:

deny ungodliness and worldly desires
live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age
looking for the blessed hope
zealous for good deeds

If those aren't your priorities, repent and start making changes

The Second Coming (19:11-21)

The centerpiece of the book of Revelation is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Everything before it builds up to it; everything after it flows from it. It is not only the centerpiece of the book of Revelation, it's the centerpiece of all Bible prophecy. *This passage should deepen your yearning to see your Lord and to return with Him.*

As we look at the Second Coming of Christ, remember that this event will be preceded by a number of events which come before it. Therefore, it is _____. It is at the end of a seven-year period described in much detail.

What _____ that 7 years is the _____ event we look forward to—something that could happen at any moment. The rapture of the church—the time when all living believers will be taken away—is distinct from this Second Coming. There's a sense in which we look forward to both, because they are part of a package, and they are both part of what Titus 2:13 tells us to long for: . . . *looking for the **blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;***

The contrasts between the Second Coming and the rapture help us to know they cannot be the same event. The rapture is described in John 14:2-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. We know the fact of the rapture from those texts, but the exact timing of the rapture is a matter of legitimate and serious debate among theologians.

This author's conviction and the teaching position of Heritage Bible Church is that the rapture will precede the 70th week of Daniel, the tribulation, and therefore we are appropriately labeled "____-_____." There are other positions, held by true Bible-believers, but we believe they have more problems than the pre-trib position. The rapture and the second coming are not the same:

Rapture of the Church	Second Coming of Christ
Christ meets believers in the clouds	Christ comes to earth
No judgment	Severe judgment
Involves only believers	Involves believers and unbelievers
Takes people to be with the Lord	Brings the Lord to earth
Imminent	Follows 70th week
A mystery, revealed only in the New Testament	Revealed long ago, with more details given in the New Testament

King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:11-16)

We have arrived at the final segment of the book of Revelation. It's a long segment, but it all ties together. This segment all flows from the seventh bowl of God's wrath, which will be poured out on the earth by the seventh in a series of angels who will touch off the final series of judgments in the book of Revelation.

We have seen over and over that this book has _____ to it. Most people who interpret the book of Revelation get bogged down in the symbolic language and they get confused. But there is grammatical structure here, and being faithful to the grammar leads to a clear sequence of events.

When seven _____ on a rolled-up scroll are broken in sequence, a series of judgments unfolds on earth. The breaking of the seventh seal unveils seven _____, each with a _____ to blow. Blowing those trumpets in sequence unfolds another series of judgments. The seventh trumpet unveils seven more angels, each with a _____ to pour out on the earth. The last of these opens up to us the final section of the book of Revelation, as required by the grammatical structure of the book.

Revelation 16:17: *And the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."*

It is done is the announcement of the end, because all the rest of the events of the book are tied to that final bowl of wrath. Here's how it fits:

16:17-21: **Announcement of the 7th bowl.** No direct wrath of God occurs with this announcement, only a number of terrifying phenomena that provoke people to blaspheme God. The central focus of the announcement is proclaiming the fall of Babylon.

17:1-19:10: **Detailed description of Babylon's past, present and future.**

1. The doom of religious Babylon (17)
2. The doom of commercial Babylon (18)
3. Heavenly rejoicing over the fall of Babylon and the arrival of God's kingdom on earth (19:1-10).

19:11-20:15: **Events of the 7th bowl.** This is the actual series of eight scenes which tell you the chronological unfolding of the 7th bowl's judgment.

1. Second coming of Christ (19:11-16)
2. Summons of the birds to a human feast (19:17-18)
3. Slaughter of Christ's human opponents (19:19-21)
4. Satan's imprisonment (20:1-3)

5. Satan's release and final defeat (20:4-10)
6. Setting of the Great White Throne (20:11)
7. Sentencing to the lake of fire (20:12-15)
8. Sketch of the new Jerusalem (21:1-8)

21:9-22:5: Detailed description of the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem is part of the new creation, which is God's righteous replacement of Babylon, the evil world system destroyed by the 7th bowl.

1. The city's physical features (21:9-21)
2. The city's illumination (21:22-27)
3. Paradise restored (22:1-5)

Today, the second coming of Christ as described in the book of Revelation. Our next study will examine the parallel passage in Matthew 24.

King of Kings and Lord of Lords (19:11-16)

His Aim (11)

Revelation 19:11: And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

His aim is to _____. As John views this, it describes that the earth will see heaven opened. The perfect passive participle means that God flings open heaven, and no one closes the door until He closes it.

A white horse symbolizes that its rider is _____ of the host of heaven. When Jesus comes the next time, it is as the glorious Warrior-King, not as a baby in a manger. Next time He arrives at the gates of Jerusalem, it will be on this great white horse, not riding on a donkey. He is Faithful and True. In other words, He is _____ in fulfilling all His promises. He is, all at once, the Judge, the Warrior, and the King.

His Appearance (12-13)

Revelation 19:12-13: And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.

His eyes are a flame of fire, just as He is described in 1:14 and 2:18. This means _____.

He wears many diadems. because He is _____. It doesn't say where on His body, but He will bear a name which will remain secret until He returns. John saw it, but it was inscrutable to him.

His robe dipped in blood probably is an allusion to Isaiah 63:2-3, where it refers to the _____. This probably is another reference to Jesus _____ the blood of all the martyrs. Much more blood will be shed in the battle soon to come.

The last part of verse 13 gives another name to help you know for sure who this is: The Word of God. If you have any doubt who He is, go read the first chapter of the gospel of John again. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . .*

His Army (14)

Revelation 19:14: *And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.*

Here's a good place to invoke the interpretive principle we've seen many times: ***If the literal sense makes sense, _____***. Armies means "armies." White horses means "white horses." In heaven means "in heaven."

This is a huge group which will return with Christ. They are _____, and they take no part in the battle soon to come. They wear no armor, because they are _____. They are real armies on real horses, not imaginary ones. To make this symbolic doesn't make sense. Where would all the horses come from? Not a problem for The Word of God, by whom every atom in the universe was _____.

But, *who ARE they?* Sometimes, expressions like "armies of heaven" refer to angels. These could be angels. There are two reasons, though, why it refers to redeemed people:

1. **Their clothing.** The fine linen, white and clean sounds like 19:8, where the fine linen is the _____. When the same expression is used twice in the same context, it has to have the same meaning unless there's a strong reason otherwise.
2. **17:14** says that . . . *He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.* When you take that, along with the promise of 2:27 that we will _____, it makes sense to say that this is a group of redeemed people. The chosen and faithful are the redeemed ones.

His Authority (15-16)

Revelation 19:15-16: *And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

This sharp sword is the huge sword, called a *romphaia*, a weapon of destruction in those days. This is not the term which describes the scalpel-like precision of the penetration of the word of God into your soul and spirit (like in Hebrews 4:12-13). This connotes the _____ meted out when every person gets what he or she deserves—except for those of us who receive unmerited grace.

This describes how Christ will personally and single-handedly destroy His enemies. Ruling with a rod of iron is from _____. It's another way of saying the same thing as He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. Here comes the Judge!

He has already been described as ***Faithful and True*** (11). He has an ***unknown name*** (12). He is ***the Word of God*** (13), and now He is called ***King of kings and Lord of lords***. Bow down to Him now, or face Him in His wrath later.

The Battle of Armageddon (17-21)

The final five verses of this chapter is a summary of a battle which is described in many places in Bible prophecy. It is generally described (appropriately) as *The Battle of _____*, but several other locations are mentioned in other passages. The main staging area for this battle is the valley of Megiddo (Hebrew, *Armageddon*), and that's the most common description of the place.

However, several passages contribute pieces to the big picture. They are Revelation 16:14, 16, Joel 3:2, 13, Ezekiel 39:11, Isaiah 34, 63 and Zechariah 12:2-11 and 14:2. When you take them as a whole, looking at all the keys in every context, it seems best to say that this battle rages over all of Israel and is ended dramatically by Jesus' return. Many believe "Battle of Armageddon" refers to many battles throughout the last half of the Tribulation, but the grammatical structure of Revelation rules that out. This is part of a specific sequence of events flowing from the 7th bowl of wrath.

The culmination of it is when Jesus wipes out this giant army which gathers in the valley of Megiddo—apparently to exterminate Israel—and the battle ends in short order. It is more like an execution than a battle, when Jesus kills all who are arrayed against Him and against His people.

The Carnage (17-18)

Revelation 19:17-18: *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; 18 in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."*

The word picture here seems to come from Ezekiel 39. The point is obvious: No one who opposes Christ _____ . This is the same scene described in 16:14 as *the war of the great day of God, the Almighty*.

The Conflict (19)

Revelation 19:19: *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army.*

This war is planned by the beast and the kings of the earth, which refers to _____ and _____. They will believe they have an earthly goal to accomplish and they will believe they have an earthly military objective. The truth is that they will make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. This is the ultimate illustration of the _____ for everything God is and everything God does.

The Captives (20)

The actual battle of Armageddon, the climax of all the battles against God and Christ and Christians during the tribulation, is ended quickly. The first thing Jesus does is to _____. Imagine the chaos that will break out when the largest army in the history of the world, part of the largest world-wide coalition in history, will suddenly have its two most visible leaders removed!

Revelation 19:20: *And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.*

The beast is _____, and, even though he will have been stripped of most of his power by Antichrist, the _____ who helped the Antichrist gain power, will be taken with him.

What happens to them? These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire. Obviously, their bodies will be transformed so they will endure the endless torment of the lake of fire.

The lake of fire is mentioned five times from here to the end of the book of Revelation. It is the place we actually mean on most occasions when we use the word *hell*. It is the place of _____.

There are two places where it is described most vividly:

Matthew 25:41: *Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;*

When Satan rebelled and took 1/3 of the angels with him, God prepared this place for them which Jesus called the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. Eternal means _____. We are creatures bound by time; we have no other way to perceive things. But there is no time with God. He created time when He created the universe. Time is a way we measure things.

But the existence of God is _____ of time and _____ time. That's why God is described in the words of:

Isaiah 46:9-10: *Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*

God declares the end of things, from the beginning, because He knows it all simultaneously. He is _____, _____, and _____.

So when you are granted eternal life, it means that you partake in the quality of life known only to God. If you do not have eternal life in the presence of God, you have _____ which means torment apart from God, and is described as _____. The other most clear description of hell is in . . .

Revelation 20:10: *And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

As creatures locked in time, the only way we can describe being outside of time is in terms such as day and night forever and ever. And, since the time when the devil is thrown into the lake of fire is 1000 years after the time when the beast and the false prophet are sent there, it's clear that the concept that hell is _____ does not fit with Scripture.

Every description of this place uses terminology that requires that there is no moment at which the suffering ends.

The Conquest (21)

Once the leaders are dispatched alive into the lake of fire, the rest of the armies are slaughtered by the power of the Word of God.

Revelation 19:21: *And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

We will be there to _____ all this, then to _____ with Jesus Christ for _____.

The Second Coming In Jesus' Words

There are many references in the Bible to the Second Coming. We just studied the details in Revelation 19. The other most specific description of it is from Jesus Himself about when He will return to earth. It will happen immediately after the tribulation of those days, the days described in Matthew 24:4-28.

Matthew 24:29: *But **immediately after the tribulation of those days** THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, . . .*

This is going to be _____, _____ and _____. The order among the heavenly bodies will be shaken by God in an instant. For years we have sung about the faithfulness of God in the words “*sun, moon and stars in their courses above, join with all nature in manifold witness, to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. Great is Thy faithfulness . . .*” At the Second Coming, all those “courses above” will be upset.

To get the undivided attention of every living inhabitant of this planet, God will make these things happen. He **will** get peoples’ attention! Consider Luke’s parallel account of this message:

Luke 21:25-26: *There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

fainting literally means _____. Some people may actually **die of fear** when these things happen. The overall reaction of the people of the world will be dismay. They will realize that everything they consider stable and reliable is coming unglued.

All the astronomical bodies _____. The light of the sun will go out for a time. Either God will extinguish it, or He will cause it to be obscured from sight on earth. When that happens, the moon will no longer be visible, because it reflects light from the sun.

When it says the stars will fall from the sky, it seems that the stars will be released from their positions in the cosmos. It may also describe an unprecedented _____. Nearly all the cross references for all the passages with terminology similar to what Jesus said refer to specific times of judgment under the heading “_____.”

The “Day of the Lord” is a phrase used in two ways to describe certain times of judgment. In some passages, it refers to a historical time of judgment promised by God through one of His prophets. It’s God saying, in essence, “*you’ve had **your** day; now the **Day of the Lord** is coming upon you. You will be judged and held accountable for your deeds.*”

In other cases, the “Day of the Lord” is used for this _____ time of judgment on the whole world—starting with the tribulation. Some of the texts seem to be used of **both** a specific time of judgment on a specific nation or region or people, **and** a prediction of a final world-wide time of judgment.

Here, Jesus doesn’t use the words “the day of the Lord,” but He describes phenomena clearly linked to it elsewhere. Jesus’ summary is clear: and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Matthew 24:29: ***But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, . . .***

You’ll notice that the New American Standard Bible stops capitalizing the words here, indicating that these words _____ in any Old Testament text. They are Jesus’ own description of what will happen at that time. So what might He mean by the powers of the heavens will be shaken?

shaken means “*agitated*,” or “*shaken up*,” and it is in the passive voice, indicating that this will not just happen; it will be _____ by God Himself.

powers of the heavens seems to refer to the _____ which has for the history of the universe kept everything together. This often-ignored activity of God is described clearly in at least two New Testament passages:

Hebrews 1:1-3a: *God, . . . in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through whom also He made the world**. 3a And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**. . . .*

Those two key statements (in **bold**) tell us that the agent of God's creation is _____, and that it is an ongoing ministry of Jesus to keep everything in the universe together. Jesus Christ is the One who holds everything in its _____ and in _____ to everything else. That's why it is ridiculous to be a physicist or a chemist without being a Christian.

Colossians 1:15-17: *And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 For **by Him all things were created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together**.*

Do you see the same two things as in Hebrews 1 (in **bold**)? In this case hold together is a perfect tense of *sunistemi*, meaning that Jesus _____, and that He is and always has continued to be, the one who keeps _____ the way it is.

In the time immediately preceding His Second Coming, Jesus will stop keeping everything in the perfect stasis we have come to know, and instead, He will _____, and temporarily suspend some of the _____ of the universe as we know them. That is a terrifying prediction of the time when Jesus Christ will return to earth. God will have everyone's attention, whether they like it or not.

Now look at it all together:

Matthew 24:29-30: *But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.*

The first two words of verse 30 are crucial: and then. That is the moment at which Jesus Christ will return to earth. You ought to have some questions . . .

What is the sign of the coming of the Son of Man?

How will this sign appear in the sky?

What does it mean the all the tribes of the earth will mourn?

How will He come on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory?

When the moment comes for Jesus Christ to step into human events once again, there will be no doubt that God is taking over—it is the pinnacle of the _____. Those who do not “love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8) will be scared as never before.

In the midst of this description of the phenomena comes a pinpoint time reference that nails down the sequence of events:

and then means _____. It is after the tribulation of those days. It's just at the time when the lights have all been turned out, and God has everyone's attention. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. This is the phenomenon of all phenomena. This is the instant when Jesus Himself _____ to the inhabitants of earth.

There has been much speculation over the centuries about the meaning of the sign of the Son of Man. A popular interpretation goes back to early church fathers, including Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Origen. They said this will be an **enormous blazing cross** which will appear to the entire world, piercing dramatically the total darkness created by Jesus blotting out the sun and the stars. Others through the centuries have theorized that it will be the brilliant and sudden display of the Shekinah glory of God's presence made visible to all the earth.

Either of those would be dramatic, and either one of them fits the spirit of the context, but there's a clear exegetical indicator that neither is correct. It's better to take of the Son of Man as a subjective genitive, so the sense is that the sign is _____.

There are several reasons why we know this what the text means:

1. In this same verse it says they will see _____. That clarifies the earlier phrase.
2. The allusion in this text to all the tribes of the earth will mourn comes from Zechariah 12:10-11, which specifies that what the people will see at that moment is _____: “. . . so that they will look on **Me** whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for **Him**, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.”

3. Luke's parallel account words is just enough different to show what Jesus meant: Luke 21:27: "And then **they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**

The sign of all signs is the personal glorious appearing of Jesus Christ!

An interesting phenomenon you've seen in the book of Revelation is that on a number of occasions when God pours out His wrath upon unbelievers, the main response is **not** to repent, but to ____ _____. That's typical of fallen human nature—when you get caught doing something wrong, your natural reaction is to get mad at whoever caught you, and/or to shift the blame for your sin to someone or something else.

But at the moment of the Second Coming, there will be a different response from many. When we compare this to Revelation 19, you understand that this response is _____. Jesus must confront a huge army of His enemies when He returns, but there will be many from among every nation who will _____ at that very moment. **God's grace extends to the very end of human history!**

Matthew 24:30: *And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.*

The response is all the tribes of the earth will mourn. This terminology is very similar to Zechariah 12, which describes the salvation of the entire surviving Jewish nation at the moment of Jesus' return.

Did you spot another pinpoint _____? And **then** all the tribes . . . There are some people who are going to repent and believe in Jesus Christ at the very moment of His appearance in the sky. Somehow, there will be some who have not taken _____, even to the very end of the tribulation. Remember how we've seen that the gospel will be preached with great vigor during the tribulation. That preaching in the last days of earth's history prior to the Second Coming bears fruit right to the end.

This glorious event is summed up by Jesus in His words, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. This is specific and revealing terminology used by Jesus. We know exactly where it comes from:

Daniel 7:13-14: *"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an*

everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

Jesus uses the term *Son of Man* more often than any other when He describes Himself. Several crucial ideas are included in those two verses, and they're directly relevant to Matthew 24:

Notice the connection to the _____. That terminology is associated with the reign of the Son of Man all the way back to the time of Daniel.

Notice He is a Son of Man. That describes the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The King of Kings is _____.

Notice that He receives this authority to rule and this kingdom from _____—described as the Ancient of Days, to emphasize His _____.

Notice He is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. He has the authority to rule, His rule is majestic, and it is a literal kingdom. Through Daniel, many earthly kingdoms are mentioned in prophetic perspective. They are literal kingdoms (Babylon, Greece, Rome, etc.), so the kingdom of the Son of Man _____.

Notice this kingdom is _____. It includes *“all the peoples, nations, and men of every language.”*

Notice that this kingdom _____. It was revealed to Daniel as an *“everlasting dominion, which will not pass away, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”* All the other kingdoms Daniel presents come to an end; the kingdom of Jesus Christ does not. In Revelation it is explained that He rules on earth for 1000 years, then in the New Heaven and New Earth forever.

Thus Jesus made it clear that He is the one described in Daniel. This Second Coming immediately precedes the inauguration of the kingdom on earth for 1000 years.

Matthew 24:30: *And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.*

Next, notice *how* He will return to earth: on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. Compare this to when Jesus ascended to heaven:

Acts 1:9: *And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*

The angels said after He ascended to heaven:

Acts 1:11: . . . *This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.* **A cloud received Jesus into heaven; His return will be “on the clouds of the sky.”**

As the angels said, His return will be “**in just the same way** as you have watched Him go . . .” There will be one important additional touch: Jesus’ return to earth will be with power and great glory. That’s not to say there was nothing of the power of God involved in Jesus’ ascension to heaven. But when He returns, _____ . His glory will be shining at full brightness.

Imagine clouds lit up by the brilliance of the glory of God. How brilliant is the glory of Jesus Christ, the glory of God? Look what is said of the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21:23: *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for **the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.***

Revelation 22:5: *And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because **the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.***

Jesus spoke of it here. Revelation tells us about it in the future. Zechariah had it revealed to him in the past.

Zechariah 14:6-7: *And it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.*

See how consistent the prophecies are? What Jesus said about turning out the lights of the universe is an elaboration of what God revealed to Zechariah. What Jesus said about then lighting the darkness with His glory further echoes Zechariah’s prophecy. And we saw the same thing in Revelation 19.

Choose Your Resurrection

There are only two eternal destinies. You will either be in ***the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels***, because you fell for the devil's deception, or you will be in ***the new heaven and new earth*** with God for eternity. ***Which resurrection are you headed for?***

John 5:24-29: *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. 26 "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

The Second Coming of Christ is the basis of many exhortations and commands:

Be alert and watchful; Don't be complacent or shoddy about how you live

Be sober, or clear-thinking

Repent of your sins. Don't hide them

Be faithful to your Lord and to your earthly commitments

Be unashamed of Christ

Do not be lured into the temptations of worldliness

Be moderate in what you do

Be patient until the Lord comes

Put to death the deeds of the flesh

Be sincere

Be sanctified; live a holy life

Preachers must be faithful to preach only Scripture, and they must be diligent to care for the flock and maintain purity

Endure trials and resist temptations

Endure persecution, and be faithful until death

Love the brothers and sisters in faith

Remember your heavenly citizenship

Love His appearing

Have confidence that Christ will finish the work He has begun in you

Hold fast to your hope

Separate from worldly lusts and live godly in this world

Guard against hasty judgment

Pursue heavenly reward, and don't let anyone lead you away from it

Comfort one another, knowing the final outcome of things

Live in hope

Remember it every time you come to the Lord's table, and keep celebrating the Lord's table until He comes

The Kingdom Comes! (Revelation 20:1-10)

It's interesting that within the first two lines of Jesus' answer to the request "Teach us to pray," He included a prayer for the kingdom to come to earth:

Luke 11:1-2: *And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, **teach us to pray** just as John also taught his disciples." 2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. **Your kingdom come.** . . .*

Matthew gives a fuller version of what Jesus said, without the request from the disciples to learn how to pray:

Matthew 6:9-10: *Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 **Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.***

The request for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven means that you realize that in this ____ - _____, things are not what they should be, and they are not what they will be when Jesus comes and makes them right. For all the times in your life you have recited the "Lord's Prayer" (which was never meant to be a ritual prayer), and for all the times you have prayed in your own words some form of a prayer that God would make things right, you have been asking for the event to come which is described for us in the next paragraph of Revelation. This passage spells out that the reign of Christ on earth (and us with Him!) will last _____. As we study it, we'll take a side trip to learn what the Bible teaches about the "Netherworld."

The Netherworld

In the book of Revelation we have encountered terms such as the abyss, or the lake of fire. We looked at Jesus' description of eternal fire in Matthew 24. These are some of several terms used in the Bible to describe places you have never seen. I refer to these places as **The Netherworld**. "Nether" is an old English word that means "under."

We speak of the netherworld as if it is something which lies beneath the world in which we live. These places are not literally "under" the earth, but in the anthropocentric language of the Bible, that's how they are described. We instinctively say that heaven is "up" and hell is "down." God used those terms to describe to us things that we cannot comprehend as well in other terms.

God could have said "*I dwell in a completely different dimension you cannot relate to. I live outside of time, which is concept you cannot fully comprehend because you live*

in the temporal world I created for your physical existence. So, when I speak of someone being transported to the place where I dwell, I will use the preposition 'up,' and when I speak of someone leaving the world you live in and going to a place of the spirits of the dead, I will use the preposition 'down.'" But God didn't do that; He simply used expressions we're used to.

So when we speak about the netherworld, it is to explain what the Bible says about spheres of existence of men and angels which are _____. This is a good place to insert this side trip, because we have in chapter 20 references to the abyss, the prison, hades and the lake of fire. We will stretch the meaning of netherworld to include **all** the places which are not earth, including those "above," not only those beneath.

Sheol and Hades

The Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* mean the same thing. There is some unnecessary confusion about this word in our language because in the King James Bible, the translators often chose hell as the translation of *Hades* and *Sheol*. Because we think of hell as the ultimate place of eternal torment, many people mistakenly think that Sheol and Hades are the same as the lake of fire. The NASB, which we use in our study, is pretty consistent in transliterating the Hebrew and Greek words into English, leaving us with *sheol* and *hades*, both as proper nouns.

The New International Version never uses either *sheol* or *hades*, preferring usually to use the grave. The problem with translating these words as the grave is that we think of a grave as a burial plot in the ground. Flesh and bones go into the grave, but souls do not.

Sheol and *hades* describe the world of _____, both believers and unbelievers. If you look up all the uses of *sheol* and *hades* you will observe that the righteous dead are blessed in their existence, and the unrighteous dead are getting a foretaste of the torment they will endure for eternity.

In the past, all the dead were described as in *sheol/hades*. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, you see that the place called by that name has two parts to it: A place of blessing for believers and a place of torment for unbelievers.

in the present, only the unrighteous dead are there, because when a believer dies (since Christ ascended), he or she goes directly into the presence of the Lord.

In the future, no one will be in *sheol/hades*, because all believers will be with the Lord, and all unbelievers will be in the lake of fire, where Hades itself will be taken.

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Sheol (Old Testament) Hades (New Testament)	General word for the world of the dead; both believers and unbelievers	Most common word
Past: _____	Present: _____	Future: _____

Abraham's Bosom

“Abraham's Bosom” is used by Jesus in Luke 16:22 to describe the place of blessing within Hades where believers were. It's associated with Abraham, because he is the prototype of all believers, so to be with him was to be in the place of God's great blessing.

The view expressed here is known as the "**two compartment**" theory of Hades. Some scholars believe that believers always have gone directly to be with the Lord, and that the passage in Luke 16 is a case of Jesus using the mistaken terminology of the rabbis, merely in order to make His point. We don't agree (though it's a small matter), because it says that the rich man lifted up his eyes *in Hades* and saw Abraham far away with a great gulf between them. We believe the two-compartment theory best fits the Biblical data.

In the past, the righteous dead were in Abraham's Bosom.

In the present, no one is there, because the righteous who believed prior to Christ have been escorted into the presence of God.

In the future, no one will be there.

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Abraham's Bosom	A “compartment” of <i>sheol/hades</i> for the righteous dead before Christ.	Luke 16:22ff.
Past: _____	Present: _____	Future: _____

Gehenna

Gehenna is a Hebrew word which was translated into Greek, and in some translations, into English as well. It comes from the *Valley of Hinnom*, which was a deep ravine on the southwest side of ancient Jerusalem. There, the city's trash was dumped, and the blood from the temple sacrifices was drained. The trash was burned, and the blood and fire made it a very unpleasant place. Fires were always smoldering there, so it came to be a metaphor

for _____, and it's used that way about a dozen times in the New Testament. Therefore, it is another term for eternal fire, or the lake of fire, what we usually mean when we say that someone goes to _____.

In the past, no one has been there.

In the present, no one is there.

In the future, all of the unrighteous dead will be there. Since it is actually a synonym for the lake of fire, you can also include all the demons in it.

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Gehenna	Place of everlasting punishment	Matthew 5:22, 29, 30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 33, Mark 9:43, 45, 47, Luke 12:5, James 3:6
Past: __ __	Present: __ __	Future: _____ _____

Paradise

Paradise is used to describe the _____ __ ____. In that sense, it is a synonym for _____. Jesus promised the thief on the cross that he would be with Him that day in Paradise. Paul said He was caught up to Paradise, which he also describes as the third heaven. Therefore it's straightforward to say:

In the past, no one was there (because the unrighteous dead were in Abraham's Bosom).

In the present, all the righteous dead (Old and New Testament believers) are there.

In the future, the same will be true.

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Paradise	Abode of the righteous dead since Christ's death	Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 2:7, cp. Philippians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
Past: __ __	Present: _____	Future: _____

The Pit

The pit is a translation of the Greek word *abussos*. This Greek word is where we get our word "abyss." It describes a deep and foreboding place. It's used in one specific way, to describe the abode of demons. You can't be more specific. Therefore,

In the past, it was occupied by demons.

In the present, it is still occupied by demons.

In the future, no one will be there, because demons will be sent to the lake of fire.

Word	Meaning	Scripture
<i>Pit (abyss)</i>	Abode of demons (general word)	Romans 10:7, Luke 8:31, Revelation 9:1, 2, 11, 17:8, 20:1, 3
Past: _____	Present: _____	Future: __ __

Bottomless Pit, Prison, Tartarus

These terms seem to describe the same place. In Revelation 9, we saw that some demons (fallen angels) are imprisoned in this place until certain times in the future. Some demons will be released—within the plan of God—to wreak havoc on men and on the earth. Some of the demons there will _____ be out until the moment of their _____.

In the past, demons were there. Apparently some were sent there by Jesus during His ministry when He cast demons out of people (Luke 8:31).

In the present, demons are there, some until judgement, some until the tribulation.

In the future, no one will be there, because all demons will be in the lake of fire.

Words	Meaning	Scripture
<i>Bottomless pit Prison Tartarus</i>	"Shaft of the abyss." Three terms seem to describe the same place, where demons are bound until certain times in the future. Probably a "compartment" of the abyss.	Revelation 9:1, 2, 11, 2 Peter 2:4, 1 Peter 3:19, Jude 6
Past: _____	Present: _____	Future: __ __

Eternal Fire, Lake of Fire

This is the place we refer to almost always when we use the word **hell**. The descriptions of it are intended to be as strong as possible. We recently mentioned two of them:

*Matthew 25:41: Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the **eternal fire** which has been **prepared for the devil and his angels**.*

*Revelation 19:20: And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into **the lake of fire which burns with brimstone**.*

Words	Meaning	Scripture
Eternal Fire Lake of Fire	Final place of conscious eternal torment of all unrighteous humans and angels	Matthew 25:41, Revelation 19:20, 20:10, 14, 15, 21:8
Past: __ __	Present: __ __	Future: _____

Netherworld Summary

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Sheol (Old Testament) Hades (New Testament)	General word for the world of the dead; both believers and unbelievers	Most common word
Past: All the dead	Present: Unrighteous dead	Future: No one

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Abraham's Bosom	A "compartment" of <i>sheol/hades</i> for the righteous dead before Christ.	Luke 16:22ff.
Past: Righteous dead	Present: No one	Future: No one

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Gehenna	Place of everlasting punishment	Matthew 5:22, 29, 30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 33, Mark 9:43, 45, 47, Luke 12:5, James 3:6
Past: No one	Present: No one	Future: Unrighteous dead

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Paradise	Abode of the righteous dead since Christ's death	Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 2:7, cp. Philippians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
Past: No one	Present: Righteous dead	Future: Righteous dead

Word	Meaning	Scripture
Pit (abyss)	Abode of demons (general word)	Romans 10:7, Luke 8:31, Revelation 9:1, 2, 11, 17:8, 20:1, 3
Past: Demons	Present: Demons	Future: No one

Words	Meaning	Scripture
Bottomless pit Prison Tartarus	"Shaft of the abyss." Three terms seem to describe the same place, where demons are bound until certain times in the future. Probably a "compartment" of the abyss.	Revelation 9:1, 2, 11, 2 Peter 2:4, 1 Peter 3:19, Jude 6
Past: Demons	Present: Demons	Future: No one

Words	Meaning	Scripture
Eternal Fire Lake of Fire	Final place of conscious eternal torment of all unrighteous humans and angels	Matthew 25:41, Revelation 19:20, 20:10, 14, 15, 21:8
Past: No one	Present: No one	Future: All God's enemies

With that background, and now that you know more about the theology of where souls and demons abide than anyone else on your block, let's study Revelation 20.

Bound For The Abyss (1-3)

Revelation 20:1-3: *And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.*

And I saw means that this is another _____. Remember, this is all part of the same vision which began with the seventh angel which poured out the seventh and final bowl of God's wrath. This is the fourth scene in this final vision.

An angel coming down from heaven is one of those angels given a special task by God. It probably won't surprise you to hear that over the centuries, various people have suggested this angel is Christ, the Holy Spirit, the 12 apostles, one of the popes, and Constantine the Great. Take the text for what it says, and _____!

This angel will be coming down, because Satan has been banished to earth, as of chapter 12. He has the key of the abyss, meaning that he has the ability to _____ the prison. He also has a great chain in his hand. This is obviously not a physical chain, because it binds and restrains a spiritual being. Immediately after the battle of Armageddon, this angel will bind Satan _____, and throw him into the abyss, where he will be imprisoned and unable to influence anyone on earth. This is different from Satan being cast down to earth back in chapter 12. That limited him from accessing the place where God dwells, but this keeps him out of the way completely for 1000 years.

This is the only passage in the Bible that speaks of Satan being bound. It is something that will take place in the future, only when God determines it will happen, and it will take place at the hand of an angel chosen by God to do it.

One of the silly and tragic fads swept through evangelicalism teaches people to pray prayers to bind Satan from having any influence in a certain situation. Despite the bad theology and Scripture-twisting, some still pray such prayers. It is terribly misguided, for several reasons: _____ can do that, and there's no place in the Bible which gives you the authority to do any such thing. Beyond that, if you pray that way and really believe that it accomplishes something, it could cause you to _____ because you put Satan over in the corner to try to work his way out of the chains you put on him.

Another obvious problem with that kind of praying is that it clearly _____! With all the thousands of times he has been bound, you would think he would be severely limited in what he can do. The condition of the world says otherwise. And then there is this:

1 Peter 5:8: *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, **prowls around** like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

Revelation 20:1-3: *And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.*

In 12:9 we saw that one description of Satan is that he deceives the whole world. In 13:14, he is described as working through the Antichrist and the false prophet, through whom he deceives those who dwell on the earth. When he is removed from the scene, it is *so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed*;

That is part of the bliss of the reign of Christ on earth. There will be _____ going on for 1000 years. During that time, Christ will reign on earth in peace, many aspects of the curse on the earth will be reversed, righteousness will be the order of the day, and we will reign with Him! More on that to come.

1000 years is mentioned for the first time in verse 2. The Latin word for 1000 years is _____. The interpretation of this 1000 years is one of the battlegrounds of the ages among Bible-believing theologians.

What it says, and what it means, is that there is a future period of 1000 years during which Jesus reigns on earth and Satan is bound. That is what the text says, and that's what it means. There is nothing in the text that tips us off that it doesn't mean what it literally says.

As a matter of fact, this period of 1000 years is mentioned _____. The context and the structure of the book of Revelation require that this be in the future, following the physical Second Coming of Christ to earth.

Every time the word year is used in the Bible, along with a _____, it always refers to a _____. Since there are no exceptions in the entire Bible up to this point, it is unacceptable to say it should be interpreted differently in this case. We have studied this at length, but here is a summary:

The literal interpretation of the book of Revelation, along with the consistent interpretation of all other Bible prophecy, requires us to be _____. That means the Jesus will literally return to earth _____ a 1000 year period during which He will reign.

Postmillennialism takes the exegetically impossible position that 1000 years does not mean "one thousand years." Postmillennial interpretation says that 1000 years is symbolic of a golden age of righteousness which will come to earth as the gospel spreads to every nation and Satan is subdued because he has no one willing to follow his deception. Postmillennialism was essentially dead following World Wars I and II, but it has resurfaced in the last few decades.

Amillennialism also teaches that 1000 years does **not** mean 1000 years. They say it is symbolic of a long period of time. Some amillennialists (including the Roman Catholic Church) believe this period of time is now being fulfilled in the church, and others believe it refers to eternity heaven.

Chance Of Reign: 100% (4-6)

As if having Satan out of the picture isn't enough to get you excited, here comes the really spine-tingling part of this passage.

Revelation 20:4: And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

This is pretty easy to understand for the first five words. Then comes the issue of who are _____? To whom was it granted to sit on these thrones, to whom was judgment given?

Some commentators jump to the _____ from chapters 4-5, because they are associated with thrones. But it can't be them, because they are nowhere in this context, and this is thrones without a number attached. Since they are already described in detail, already sitting on thrones, and not in this passage, it's hard to say it's them.

Others think these are the _____ mentioned throughout the book, including being mentioned in this very verse. Good idea, but not possible for two reasons: One is that the martyrs are not resurrected until _____ "they" are seated on their thrones. Again, John was inspired by God to write the sequence of events just the way it is, and God is not ambiguous. Two, the rest of the Bible is very clear that _____ faithful one, not only the martyrs, will share in Christ's future reign.

Still others look to what Jesus said to the 12 about sitting on thrones and ruling Israel (Matthew 19:28), and say that this is the same thing, but again there is no reason to read in to the context that this has to do only with the apostles or that the number of the thrones is limited to 12.

So, who ARE **they**? Since there is not a noun in the sentence to describe them, you look for a natural antecedent in the context. Admittedly, there isn't an immediate antecedent in the preceding sentence or two, but there is a very good possibility in:

Revelation 19:14: *And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.*

The best interpretation is that the ones who sit on these thrones are _____ who comprise the _____ who come with Him when He returns. It is a universal principle that those who win a war become the ones who assume the rule over those they conquer. The ones on the thrones, since they're apparently on earth, must already have risen from the dead and been judged. The only ones who fit the description are the ones who are the _____ (19:7-8).

In other words, this is *not obscure*. It is another way of reaffirming the promise that we who trust the Lord now, and who follow Him, faithful to death, are the ones who will reign with Him in His kingdom. There are hints of this in other places. There is the amazing promise to the faithful believers in the city of Laodicea:

Revelation 3:21-22: *He who overcomes, I will grant to him to **sit down with Me on My throne**, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

This is an incredible promise! Jesus says that the way He will reign when He returns will include **sharing His reign with us!**

2 Timothy 2:12: *If we endure, **we shall also reign with Him**; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;*

Jesus promised the apostles they would one day sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19, Luke 22). He told us all, through Paul, in Romans 8:17, that we are . . . *heirs of God and **fellow heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him*. The inheritance which belongs to Christ, which is _____, also belongs to us because we are **in Christ**. All those glorious promises are topped off by this passage in which the time when this will happen is described in the context of the time when Jesus returns to earth and begins to reign.

The next thing that caught John's eye in this scene was . . .

Revelation 20:4: . . . **the souls of those who had been beheaded** because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

He did not see their _____, he again saw their _____. At that very time they were raised from the dead, because the full number of those who were to be martyred has been fulfilled. Clearly, that's what happened, because they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Here is another case where there is a distinction between _____ and other groups of believers. The church is the bride of Christ. Those who believed from among Israel prior to Christ, and those who believe during the tribulation—whether they survive to the second coming or they are martyred—are just as saved, just as blessed, and just as certain to reign with Him, but they are not the church. The martyred tribulation saints are given special attention, and their resurrection is singled out for special note, so we know they are not overlooked.

Verse 5 describes the ones who are not raised by that time, and it gives us a label to put on the group who are raised to reign with Christ.

Revelation 20:5: *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.*

the rest of the dead refers to the _____ who are physically dead. We've already seen that the bride of Christ is raised in time to return and reign with Him, and the martyrs have been added to the group of righteous dead who are raised by the start of the kingdom. These will not come to life until the thousand years [are] completed. Their resurrection and their judgment are described in the next paragraph.

This is the first resurrection summarizes the resurrection of _____.

It does not happen all at the same moment. It began with Christ's resurrection. Many will be resurrected at the moment of the rapture, according to:

1 Thessalonians 4:17-18, where it says: . . . **the dead in Christ shall rise first.** *17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Then comes the resurrection of the tribulation martyrs, described here in Revelation 20:4. We know from what the next verse says, that this first resurrection has to include all the righteous ones, because those who are not part of the first resurrection will face the second death, which is eternal fire.

The rest includes . . .

- ☹ Those who **believe that they're good enough** to get into heaven on the basis of their own good deeds and good intentions.
- ☹ Those who **believe God would never send anyone** to the lake of fire.
- ☹ Those who **believe in any God other than Jehovah**, the one true God, the God of the Bible, who exists eternally as three Persons in one Essence.
- ☹ Those who **believe they can be saved by accruing merit** through religious sacraments and rituals.
- ☹ Those who assuage their guilt by **telling themselves that there is no God**, or that no one can know God for certain.
- ☹ Those who **believe Jesus Christ is anything less than God** in human flesh.
- ☹ Those who **believe in Allah or Buddha** or any of the gods of Hinduism, or who believe that everything is God.
- ☹ Those who **say** they believe in Jesus Christ, but belie their own profession of faith by their unwillingness to follow Him and submit their lives to Him.
- ☹ Those who make a mockery of Christianity by pretending to worship but **not believing in resurrection**.
- ☹ Those who are **too busy for God**.
- ☹ Those who **deny that they are sinners** in need of God.

The next verse is a summary, in the form of one of the **beatitudes** or "blessings" in the book of Revelation. This is the fifth of seven beatitudes in the book.

Revelation 20:6: *Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

How could it be more clear? All who "qualify" for the first resurrection (by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ) will reign with Him for 1000 years!

Gog And Magog (7-10)

If you are into asking "Why?" questions which are very hard to answer, the next four verses will be fertile ground for you. **There is no specific explanation as to WHY God will do things this way.** Don't _____ God, _____ Him!

As promised in verse 3, Satan will be released for a short time.

Revelation 20:7: *And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, . . .*

Though you are not told **why**, you are told **what** Satan will do when he is released from his prison:

Revelation 20:8: *. . . and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.*

Gog and Magog is the interesting and cryptic name given to this army of rebels and their leader at the end of the millennium. Gog and Magog were names of ancient enemies of Israel. Magog was a grandson of Noah (Genesis 10:2), and he led a kingdom north of the Black and Caspian seas. Gog is apparently the prophetic name given to the leader of this army which is collectively called Magog.

This battle is a lot like one which took place centuries ago, described in Ezekiel 38-39. Because both of these battles focus on Jerusalem and they are driven by forces of wickedness, the same name is used because of the similarity, even though one was a long time ago and this one is at the end of the millennium. This battle is even more dramatically _____ than the battle of Armageddon. Look at the description:

Revelation 20:9: *And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.*

The beloved city is _____, where Christ will reign. Apparently the believers in the world will be in and around Jerusalem when this battle takes place.

You might be wondering where Satan can get an army together against Christ, which is so big that the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. Here's how it works. At the end of the tribulation, the only ones who are left on earth will be _____ in Jesus Christ, who survive the persecution of Satan and Antichrist. The unbelievers will be taken

away to await judgment, according to Matthew 25:31-46. The population of the earth at the beginning of the 1000 years will be 100% true believers in Jesus Christ.

During the 1000 years, life spans will be long, as they were before the flood:

Isaiah 65:20: No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Shall be thought accursed.

With long life spans, the earth returned to the friendly environment it was before the fall, and the earth's population decimated at the start, there will be unprecedented population growth during the millennium. All born in the millennium will be born just like we were, with the flesh able to corrupt their desires and thoughts, and with a fallen nature. Unless people born in the millennium put their faith in Jesus Christ, they will be lost. It is from among those who are _____ in the millennium, who _____, that Satan is able to amass this army. Since Christ will rule with a rod of iron, outward rebellion will not be an issue. The unbelief of people will be kept under wraps until the time when Satan is released and he deceives them into following him in his suicide mission against Christ.

Immediately after the battle of Gog and Magog, Satan meets his eternal doom.

Revelation 20:10: And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

What About You?

Remember, the book of Revelation is not included in the Bible merely so you can draw charts of what is going to happen in the future. The blessing to be received from this book is for one specific group:

*Revelation 1:3: Blessed is he who **reads** and those who **hear** the words of the prophecy, and **heed** the things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

Did you catch the implication of the last several verses we read, about how many people will reject Christ, even when He is physically present, and even when Satan is completely out of the picture? ***That tells us how sinister and poisonous our own flesh—our innate love of sin—truly is.***

Romans 7:18-20: *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

You get to choose your resurrection (see pages 226-227), and regardless of the exact timing, you will be included in one of two groups. Jesus made it clear, and it all depends on whether or not you're willing to recognize your sin and the wickedness of your flesh and turn to Him to deliver you.

John 5:24-29: *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. 26 "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

The Second Death (Revelation 20:11-15)

If you ask people how to get to heaven, the most common answer is "live a good life." If you press people who believe that, they will say that it comes down to facing God, who will weigh their good deeds against their sins.

Most people believe that if their "good deeds" outweigh their "bad deeds," they will be admitted to heaven. That belief is one of the worst lies of all time!

Peter said, when preaching to a group of Jews who had been taught wrongly by the Pharisees that their works would justify them, and that Jesus was a blasphemer:

*Acts 4:12: And there is salvation **in no one else**; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.*

If there is salvation in no one else, then there is no possibility of salvation in you, apart from Christ. Nothing you can do can get you one inch closer to God.

*Acts 16:30-31: [Jailer in Philippi, speaking to Paul and Silas] "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.**"*

That's how Paul and Silas answered a Gentile who was terrified by a miraculous earthquake he had just experienced. There was nothing at all about "live a good life; hope that the good outweighs the bad in the end." It was all about _____ .

*Romans 5:8-10: But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** 10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life.***

When you believe in Jesus Christ, you are justified, or _____ in God's eyes. That's the one and only way you can be reconciled to God, from whom you are alienated because of your sin and His holiness.

*Ephesians 2:8-10: For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 **not as a result of works**, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Salvation is by grace through faith, _____. That doesn't mean there are not good works in your life—but the works are the result of the salvation, not the basis of it. It's by _____; it is _____ and _____, performed by _____.

Titus 3:5: *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*

This passage describes the "second death" that awaits those who believe the lie that there is any other way to heaven other than on the basis of the work of Jesus Christ.

The Throne and the Judge (11)

The sixth scene of the final bowl judgment introduces you to the Judge of all who reject Him.

Revelation 20:11: *And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.*

This is the great white throne, which is different from all the other thrones in the book of Revelation. This is a throne _____, different from the thrones of verse 4, where we will sit, along with Christ, while we reign with Him for 1000 years.

Him who sat upon it is _____, as has been the case throughout the book. The wording of this verse comes mainly from Daniel 7:9-10, where the One on the throne is _____, the Father. This verse anticipates what is described in the beginning of chapter 21, and in 2 Peter 3:10, when the present heavens and earth will be burned up and they will be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth. That's what it means when it says earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

20:11 is the shortest scene of this vision, followed immediately by the seventh scene, which describes the judgment which comes from the Great White Throne.

Even though it doesn't say it here, the rest of the Bible makes it clear that Jesus sits with the Father at this judgment, where He concurs with the judgment and participates in executing it.

John 5:26-27: *For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and **He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.***

This Great White Throne is located somewhere in a dimension outside of this physical world and outside of human history. It will take place after the 1000-year kingdom, and it will be accomplished before the new heaven and new earth appear.

Revelation 20:12a: *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life;*

Put on your thinking cap, and put together the pieces you've learned from this chapter. All who believe, all who are saved, are part of the first resurrection.

*Revelation 20:6: Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the **first resurrection**; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

When John says And I saw the dead, the great and the small, he describes the group he called "**the rest of the dead**" back in verse 5—in other words, all who are not part of the first resurrection. This includes _____ of all times in all places, of all social strata, the great and the small (in the eyes of the world). Everyone who will stand before God the Father and God the Son at the Great White Throne will have one thing in common: They will all have _____ and to be saved.

Revelation 20:12a: And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life;

You can paint the mental picture in your mind. The books were opened. Again, the wording comes mainly from Daniel 7:10. The judgment of God is not _____. Everything every person has done has been "recorded" in the books.

God is omniscient. Nothing escapes His notice. There is no such thing as a _____.

*Matthew 12:36: [Jesus speaking] And I say to you, that **every** careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.*

*Hebrews 4:12-13: For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is **no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.***

Salvation is by grace through faith, but the overall character of your life—including whether or not you believe God—is revealed by the pattern of your life, recorded in the books opened before God.

There is another book, which is _____.

The book of life originally contained the names of all for whom Christ died—which Scripture says is **the whole world**. But at the judgment of the Great White Throne, many blank spaces will be evident because of the removal of the names of all who never believed in Christ for salvation.

Remember Jesus' warning to the people in the church at Sardis:

Revelation 3:5: *He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; **and I will not erase his name from the book of life**, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.*

1 John 2:2: . . . *He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of **the whole world**.*

The reason a person is condemned is for rejecting the free gift of grace, by _____ .

John 3:18: *He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, **because he has not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Keep putting together the pieces of your systematic theology here! Either your name is written forever in the book of life or you will be judged by what is written in the books which contain the record of your life. This is very clear. It hardly requires comment:

Revelation 20:12b-13: *and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.*

When it says the sea gave up the dead (same with death and Hades), it means that those who were dead are _____ at that moment. These unrighteous dead rise to receive their sentence. This is the **resurrection to death** which corresponds to the earlier **resurrection to life**. This is the _____, and everyone included in this group ends up in the lake of fire.

Both Greeks and Romans attached great importance to being buried in the ground, and they believed strongly in the inviolability of the tomb. They considered it horrible to think of death by drowning or even burial at sea. That's probably why there is special mention of those who died and/or were buried at sea.

An important point here is that God's judgment is always based _____. This passage does not prove salvation by works—quite the opposite. It does prove _____. You do not receive salvation through works, but neither do you receive it without works:

Ephesians 2:8b-10. . . *it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Notice that death and Hades are personified. That's a literary device where you speak of an abstract noun as if it is a person. That same idea continues in the terribly somber words which wrap up this chapter.

Jesus told us exactly what would happen. We've already seen (John 5:25-29) that we look forward to a _____ . But here is the other side of the story.

Revelation 20:14: *And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

The second death refers to _____. As used in the Bible, the essence of death is _____. Separation of the soul/spirit from the body is **physical death**. The separation of you from God is **spiritual death**. If you die physically while you are in the state of spiritual death—because you have not been saved by grace through faith—you will be separated from God forever in the lake of fire. This is the **second death**, or **eternal death**.

In a rare case of good theology reduced to a bumper sticker, you have likely seen this truth about being spiritually dead until you are born again by faith encapsulated in "**Born _____, die _____; Born _____, die _____.**"

You might be tempted to think that this is harsh. Countless people reject this clear teaching of the Bible because it offends their concept of a "Loving God." But, please, resist the temptation to ignore this. God is indeed "Love." But God is also holy and righteous. In His great love, He provided a way for us to come to Him which also satisfies the righteous demands of His holiness. He sent His own Son to die in your place.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the _____ (1 John 2:2). The only way you will experience the lake of fire is if you do not accept the free gift of life in Christ Jesus. That's why the final verse of this chapter says:

Revelation 20:15: *And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Are You, or Are You Not?

When we speak of **being saved**, we are talking about the lake of fire. It is conscious eternal torment, day and night forever and ever, that you will reap because of your sin. Only being "in Christ," by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone can rescue you from the eternal punishment you deserve.

Consider an excerpt of a sermon from Charles Spurgeon, on Ezekiel 16:6 "*When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live.*"

Saved one, consider gratefully this mandate of mercy. Note that this fiat of God is **majestic**. In our text, we perceive a sinner with nothing in him but sin, expecting nothing but wrath; but the eternal Lord passes by in His glory; He looks, He pauses, and He pronounces the solitary but royal word, "Live." **There speaks a God**. Who but He could venture thus to deal with life and dispense it with a single syllable?

Again, this fiat is **manifold**. When He saith "Live," it includes many things. Here is judicial life. The sinner is ready to be condemned, but the mighty One saith, "Live," and he rises pardoned and absolved. It is **spiritual life**. We knew not Jesus—our eyes could not see Christ, our ears could not hear His voice—Jehovah said "Live," and we were quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Moreover, it includes **glory-life**, which is the perfection of spiritual life. "I said unto thee, Live:" and that word rolls on through all the years of time till death comes, and in the midst of the shadows of death, the Lord's voice is still heard, "Live!" In the morning of the resurrection it is that self-same voice which is echoed by the archangel, "Live," and as holy spirits rise to heaven to be blest for ever in the glory of their God, it is in the power of this same word, "Live."

Note again, that it is an **irresistible mandate**. Saul of Tarsus is on the road to Damascus to arrest the saints of the living God. A voice is heard from heaven and a light is seen above the brightness of the sun, and Saul is crying out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

This mandate is a mandate of **free grace**. When sinners are saved, it is only and solely because God will do it to magnify His free, unpurchased, unsought grace.

Christians, **see your position**, debtors to grace; show your gratitude by earnest, Christlike lives, and as God has bidden you live, see to it that you live in earnest.

Please, we beg you, receive this great gift of God, which is **free grace**. Receive the majestic gift of spiritual life, which leads to eternity in glory, and live the rest of your life in earnest gratitude for what God has given you freely—in place of the lake of fire you deserve.

New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-27)

There are many fanciful ideas about heaven. One of the silliest is that God is in heaven, Satan is in hell, and they are strategizing against each other like two generals of opposing armies. That's nonsense! Satan is **not** in hell (the lake of fire), and will not be there until after the tribulation, after Jesus comes again, after Jesus reigns on earth for 1000 years during which Satan will be imprisoned, and after he is released for a short time to lead one final rebellion. Satan now _____ like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). He does have an army of demons who do his bidding, but he is not the equal opposite of God. He is a created being, inferior in every way to God, and he can do only what God allows him to do.

Another silly idea is that people now with the Lord have no idea about what is happening on earth. Nothing in the Bible comes close to saying that! Quite the contrary, as we will see soon. All who have died are conscious and aware. They are not haunting people on earth; they are either with the Lord, or they are in the place of torment in *Sheol* or *Hades*, as described in Luke 16, where they realize the tragedy of their rejection of Christ, but they cannot communicate with those on earth.

There are people who claim to help people get in touch with others who have "crossed over," as they call it. Such people claim to be mediums, but in reality they are extra-large hoaxes and scam artists. There may also be a demonic component to what they do, but what we know for sure is that there is no communication back and forth between the living and the dead.

If you want to know what God has actually revealed about where you will be for eternity, this is the place—Revelation 21-22.

This Place Is *All New* (1-8)

One more scene rounds out this final portion of the book of Revelation. It shows the totally different destiny of those who trust God, compared to those who will be in the lake of fire. This is the 8th and last scene of the 7th bowl judgment. Bear in mind that this is a _____, described in _____. John used the best words he could, directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit, to describe this place.

Revelation 21:1: *And I saw a **new** heaven and a **new** earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.*

This comes sequentially after the _____. As is usually the case, John used words which are very similar to Old Testament passages, especially Isaiah 65 and Psalm 102. The key word here is _____. It occurs 4 times in 21:1-5.

There is a New Testament word that means relatively newer, or younger, or something which follows in the sequence of something older, like you might get rid of your old car and

get a new car. But this word means something _____, of a different kind than anything that came before it. The meaning of this Greek word, as it's used here, is *of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of*. This isn't a new and improved model of heaven and earth; This place will be **completely new** in every way, and of a completely different kind.

2 Peter 3:10: *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*

Revelation 21:1: *And I saw a **new** heaven and a **new** earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.*

It's interesting that there is no longer any sea. That says a lot more than it might at first sound like. In this world, 3/4 of the earth's surface is water, and the hydrological system of the earth is crucial to everything we consider normal. No longer will the environment be dependent on oceans and a water cycle. It will be a kind of living completely **new**.

Revelation 21:2: *And I saw the holy city, **new** Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

The centerpiece of this new heaven and new earth is the holy city, new Jerusalem. This entire city is holy, or _____ to God, for His use and for His glory according to His plan. It is also new, reiterating that same word and reinforcing that this is unprecedented and completely different from anything ever seen or conceived in this world.

There's a good opportunity here for some confusion, because the word _____ is used to describe this city. The _____ is the Church, as we saw in 19:7. In this case, it simply says that this new city is something incredibly special to behold, a bride adorned for her husband. We are going to be as excited to see this city coming down from heaven as a groom when he sees his bride come down the aisle.

As soon as he sees this spectacular city, John hears dramatic announcements about it. All these things have to do with the newness of this city.

Revelation 21:3-8: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things **new**." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.*

I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Here's a summary of the characteristics of heaven and the new Jerusalem.

1. It will be the _____ with men. Tabernacle is a word that means *dwelling place*. The essence of what is so spectacular about this place is that it is **God dwelling with men**. That's possible only because God made it possible by sending His only Son to die in our place so we can enter the presence of a holy God.

2. The experiences we associate with living in this world are _____
Ponder the list in verses 4-5, all things you will never have to deal with in heaven:

He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. Sorrow and regret and remorse and second-guessing will be _____. Notice the singular: **every** tear. Not one single tear will ever be shed in heaven!

there shall no longer be any death. Why? Because death is the _____, and there will be no more sin and no more consequences of sin.

there shall no longer be any mourning or crying, or pain. Mourning, crying and pain are also impossible without sin. The reason you can be comforted in this world is that you look forward to the _____ with God.

the first things have passed away is the summary. This current world contains the first things, all of which were cursed when Adam rebelled and took us with him into a world turned upside-down because of sin. Then comes the contrast from the first things.

3. God Himself announces Behold, I am making all things new. Apparently John must have forgotten to keep writing, because he was told again Write, for these words are faithful and true. What will be among the new things?

Complete satisfaction: All _____ will be gone forever. No remorse, no regrets, no tears—all because there is no more death and no more sin, because those things are part of this fallen world, which by then will be destroyed and replaced.

Full inheritance: All the fulness of everything God has ever _____ will be yours without limit.

Full fellowship: *I will be his God and he will be My son* encapsulates the absolutely unhindered fellowship you will enjoy with God because you have _____.

4. Certain people are going to be excluded from this place forever. Verse 8 describes them, all the people who are described by those 8 traits. Notice it does not say "those who have ever done any of these things." It refers to those who are accurately described by those things. A person who has told a lie isn't necessarily a liar as a habit of life. A person who was once immoral is not necessarily an immoral person. We are all sinners, and we who have trusted Christ are the ones who:

Romans 5:1-2: . . . *have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into **this grace in which we stand.***

Tour The New Jerusalem (9-27)

The rest of the chapter is a description of a tour of the city offered to John by one of the angels who one of the seven bowls of wrath. Remember, both the church and this city are described as a beautiful bride, made up for presentation to God, the bridegroom.

Revelation 21:9: *And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."*

The glory of the city (10-11)

Revelation 21:10-11: *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.*

This city comes _____, brought, as it were, to the new heaven and new earth in a grand entrance, like a great gift from God. Try to imagine a city which is illuminated by the glory of God! The radiance of the character of God which will dominate this place.

The construction of the city (12-14)

Revelation 21:12-14: *It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

The mention of a great and high wall is a way to communicate in the cultural and historical context of the 1st century, that this place is _____.

Notice also that both _____ and _____ are recognized, and they are distinct from each other, though both are fully in this place. The names of the 12 tribes of Israel are on the 12 gates, and the names of the 12 apostles are on the 12 foundation stones.

The measurements of the city (15-17)

This is quite a place! You need to remember as you see this, that you are talking about a dimension of existence completely different from anything you have ever known. This city is a _____!

The tetragon was the Greek symbol of perfection. The Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple was a perfect cube, as were several items in the tabernacle. To give directions will require north, east, south, west, _____!

Revelation 21:15-17: And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.

Isn't it a relief to know that human measurements are the same as angelic measurements. That was probably included because it was measured by an angel, and you might wonder if the reckoning is the same. You will not need to bring a weights and measures conversion chart with you to heaven.

The materials of the city (18-21)

Try to picture this!

Revelation 21:18-21: And the material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Jasper is green. Sapphire is blue. Chalcedony is another kind of green. Emerald is yet another kind of green. Sardonyx is brown and white. Sardius is red. Chrysolite is yellow. Beryl is still another shade of green. Topaz is yellow. Chrysoprase is apple green. Jacinth

is blue. Amethyst is purple. Each gate is made of one giant pearl. The streets are made of a kind of gold which is transparent.

Try to imagine, and know while you're imagining that it will exceed anything you can imagine!

The relation of the city to God (22-23)

Revelation 21:22-23: *And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

No temple means that there is no need for a place for God and man to meet, because God Himself is in this city. You come straight to God, and enjoy full fellowship with Him all the time. When Jesus died, God tore the veil in the temple—the partition which kept people from the Holy of Holies—from top to bottom, to symbolize that we can come to Him directly by faith in His Son Jesus Christ. In heaven, there is no mediator—it is eternal, unhindered fellowship and joy.

There is no need for sun or moon, because God's glory lights the whole place. Maybe there will be a sun and moon in the new heaven and new earth, but the New Jerusalem does not need them.

The relation of the city to the nations (24-27)

Revelation 21:24-27: *And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. 25 And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

There will still be _____ in the new heaven and new earth. All will constantly honor God, but people and nations do not lose their identity in heaven. The chapter closes with the declaration that nothing and no one who is _____ has access to the new Jerusalem.

Bonus Thoughts About Heaven and “With The Lord”

One of the silliest concepts of heaven is that it will be boring, and that it has nothing to do with earth or this life at all. If your concept of God allows you think for a moment that fellowship with Him for eternity will not be the greatest joy possible, full of unending wonder and discovery, you need serious improvement in your ideas about God!

The place described in Revelation 21 is where you will _____. But *what about people who have died and are _____ now?*

Recall when John saw under the altar in heaven, the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and their testimony. They asked, (Revelation 6:10) "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*"

We've seen throughout the book of Revelation that one purpose of the judgments which come upon the earth is avenging the blood of these martyrs. First, they're told to wait awhile longer, then comes the promise that there will be no more delay, and then they are avenged. But there's more implied by that passage in Revelation 6. Notice:

They know _____, and they know their murderers haven't been judged. They remember _____, including how they died.

The people who say that when you are with the Lord, you will have no awareness of life on earth because knowing about evil would tarnish your joy, are *wrong!* At the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared on earth, having been summoned from heaven. They spoke with Jesus, and knew of His departure soon to come. They were _____ of life on earth and what God was going to do.

Consider also what Jesus said:

Luke 15:10: *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

It's interesting that He didn't say there will be rejoicing ___ the angels, but He says _____ the angels. That must include saints in heaven, who are overjoyed by the salvation of people on earth—especially those they knew and loved. I agree with Randy Alcorn, who wrote a book titled *Heaven*. He answered this question: "*My mother recently passed away. She was a Christian and I know she's with the Lord, but can she see me from heaven?*" Alcorn cited the Scriptures above, then said:

I believe Scripture clearly suggests your mother, who's now in heaven, is witnessing God's unfolding plan on earth. She lives in a place where joy is the air she breathes, and nothing she sees on earth can diminish that. If you're following Jesus, no doubt your mother is rejoicing over you. She's looking forward to your great reunion. In fact, when you enter heaven, I think she'll be among those right there with Jesus to give you a rich welcome.

We cite Alcorn's conclusion for two reasons:

1. To make sure you don't confuse the new heaven and new earth with the place where people are now "with the Lord," called _____, (see p. 231) or the third heaven. The new heaven and new earth are the permanent place where we will be when time is no more.
2. To make sure you are confident that loved ones who have died in faith—while they are completely full of joy—are quite aware of life on earth, and that *there is a reunion awaiting you*. Nothing in the Bible should diminish your confidence in that.

There is one primary point of application:

2 Peter 3:10-13: *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, **what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness**, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE OUGHT YOU TO BE IN HOLY CONDUCT AND GODLINESS?

A River Runs From It (Revelation 22:1-9)

There's no good reason for a chapter break after 21:27, since chapter 22 continues on with the word and. John was getting a tour of the new Jerusalem from one of the angels who poured out the final plagues on earth prior to Jesus returning. The NASB⁵ unfortunately updated and to then, as did the New International Version. We re-join the tour in progress:

Revelation 22:1-2: And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

This is interesting, because part of the description of the new heaven and new earth is that there is no longer any sea (21:1), so there is no longer the hydrological cycle as we know it, which plays a huge role in the seasons, which are triggered by the tilt of the earth's axis as we orbit the sun.

So this river of the water of life obviously is more than just a river as we know it.

It is the water _____. It comes directly from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it is in the middle of the street. This is **not** like any river you have ever seen—but New Jerusalem is also not like any city you have ever seen.

There's no reason not to take it as a literal river, but obviously it has symbolic meaning beyond being river of water. Since it is described as the water of life, it represents the constant, never-ending flow of _____ which flows from God to every inhabitant of heaven. It is clear as crystal, because there is no _____ of any kind of in heaven.

By the banks of the river of the water of life is the tree of life. God placed the tree of life in the _____. When man chose to disobey God, he lost his access to that tree—and God placed angels (cherubim) and a flaming sword at the entrance of the Garden to keep Adam and Eve from having a chance to get to the tree of life. Apparently in the New Jerusalem, there is a veritable forest of these trees, and they are unlike any tree you have ever seen, just like the river is unlike any river you have ever seen. These trees bear fruit every month, a different fruit each month!

It doesn't say anything about eating the fruit of the tree of life, but it is implied. That's what fruit is for—eating. The further implication, which matches the references to the tree of life in Genesis, is that eating this fruit is associated with immortality.

⁵In these notes we use the original NASB rather than the 1995 update because it is more consistent with the detailed connecting words that indicate the outline of the book of Revelation.

Genesis 3:22-24: Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, **and eat, and live forever**”— 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.

It was an _____ that God barred fallen man from the tree of life when he was in sin. The implication is that if Adam had eaten from the tree at that time, he would have been confirmed in his fallen state forever.

There's a further benefit from this tree: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. It's interesting that there are still nations in the new heaven and new earth. That tells us in another way, that in heaven we will not lose the identities we know each other by now—including national identities. People from all nations will be redeemed, but there will be no more barriers or exclusiveness based on politics or culture or race. Somehow, the leaves of the tree are part of God's provision to make it all work for His glory in heaven.

The rest of the description rounds out the picture painted by John's words when he saw the new Jerusalem:

Revelation 22:3-5: And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; 4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.

It appears from several descriptions, especially in Isaiah, that during the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth, that many aspects of _____ will be lifted from the earth. Nature will be in harmony, the lion will lie down with the lamb, the child can play at the den of the viper, and people will live hundreds of years, as it was in the beginning. But for whatever is made so much better in the millennium, it will be made completely perfect in the new heaven and new earth: There shall no longer be _____ curse.

We cannot yet comprehend all of what that means, because we have lived all our lives under the curse. Nothing will remain that will bar the fellowship of God and man, and nothing will remain that will turn any man against any other man. It will all be about our joyful and unhindered service to God and the Lamb. His name shall be on [our] foreheads, because we will be His _____, since He redeemed us by His blood.

they shall see His face more significant than it might at first seem. No un-glorified human can ever "see God's face" and live, because the glory of unbridled holiness would _____. But the time is coming—when time is no more—when we shall see His face.

This is the ultimate **then** that we look forward to:

*1 Corinthians 13:12: For **now** we see in a mirror dimly, but **then** face to face; now I know in part, but **then** I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.*

Now means "during this time under the curse." Then is what we're seeing in Revelation 22.

This new world will never have any night. The Lord God shall illumine them. We don't know how to describe that any further. You'll just have to imagine it until you are there to see for yourself. This is when God's universe is once again completely in the state which reflects His glory. Referring to God and the Lamb . . . they shall reign forever and ever.

Heed The Words of the Prophecy (22:6-7)

The angel who has given John the tour speaks again, taking us back to the same instruction we heard at the beginning of the book.

Revelation 22:6-7: And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place. 7 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

This is the start of the epilogue to the book. Final words from an angel, from John, and from Jesus take us to the end. These words are faithful and true sums it up. This is not _____. This is not just _____ about how things might be. This is not a matter of speculation. This is not wishful thinking. The book of Revelation—and the entire Bible—is words which are faithful and true. They are true, in that they are _____ from God, containing everything you need for life and godliness.

They are faithful in that they are _____. You can count on them. If you don't rely on them, you are a fool, and you bring needless trouble on yourself. These words are true, and if you do not believe them, you miss out on all the blessings in the new heaven and new earth that you have been learning about.

Worship God! (22:8-9)

John gets carried away again, just like he did back in chapter 19. He is rebuked by an angel, but it serves as a lesson for us.

Revelation 22:8-9: *And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 And he *said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God."*

The command is simple: Worship God. Do you worship the true God? Do you come to church to open your heart and soul to God? Do you sing praise to Him because He is worthy, or do you pass judgement on whether you "like" a song? Do you come here to see friends, or do you come here to exalt God with other members of His beloved and blood-bought family?

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:10-21)

Have you ever peeked at the last chapter of a book to see how it ends? No matter what part of the Bible you might be reading at any given time, you should always keep in mind how it ends. The essence of the ending of the Bible is an invitation to enjoy the blessings it makes available to you in Jesus Christ. We put special emphasis on a person's last words on earth. How much more should we pay attention to the last words God gave us in His word! Today we hear them.

Hear The Angel's Warning (22:10-11)

Revelation 22:10: *And he *said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."*

The _____ by Christ must remain open for everyone to be able to read. Back in 10:4, John was told to _____ something he had heard. Daniel was told three times to seal up certain things given to him. But this book was given to all in the church, for us to know with certainty things which shall take place after these things.

From the beginning (1:11), John was told to write this down and send it to the churches. Lest you forget just how urgent it is that you know these things, the angel repeats the exact words from 1:3: . . . *for the time is near*. That's in contrast to what Daniel was told, that the fulfillment of his prophecies were to come *many days* [in the future] (Daniel 8:26).

The next sentence comes abruptly. The implied connection to verse 10 is cause and effect: The time is near, so let people make their way and live with their choices.

Revelation 22:11: *"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."*

The message is *change while there is time to change*. You don't know if you will be able to draw another breath and be given another moment of divine patience to allow you to get right with God through Jesus Christ.

The wise will continue to be wise and walk in holiness. The foolish will continue to fritter away their eternal joy on worldly dissipation. *Which will it be for you? WRONG and FILTHY, or RIGHTEOUS and HOLY?*

Will you hear the angel's warning? God has given you all you need for life and godliness through His Son Jesus Christ. Have you received the gift? Do you live in the wonderful certainty of the hope of eternity with Him?

Suddenly, it is Christ who is speaking. It takes some study to discern that who is speaking in these verses, but the best conclusion is that it is the words of Christ all the way through verse 19. This is the ultimate altar call. This the final invitation in the word of God from the Son of God.

Revelation 22:12: *Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.*

We took a side trip to 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 to see about the Judgment Seat of Christ. That's where He will judge His own. Every good thing you have done by His grace, through His power, and for His glory, will be rewarded. Everything else will be burned up and forgotten.

Your eternal reward in Christ is based on what stands the test of fire—described in 1 Corinthians 3 as *gold, silver and precious stones*. The rest is *wood, hay and straw*, which will be consumed and never again remembered. The size of your reward depends on what is left after the test of fire. We saw in 20:11-15, that all unbelievers will receive the eternal "reward" for their unbelief, meted out to them for eternity in the lake of fire.

Jesus' invitation includes the reminder of Who He is:

Revelation 22:13: *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*

Jesus is eternal. He is God. The three titles He uses for Himself give you assurance that He is indeed qualified to reward each person. He is your Judge!

John 5:22-24: *For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. 24 "Truly,*

truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

At this point, Jesus pronounces the seventh and last beatitude of the book of Revelation:

Revelation 22:14: *Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.*

Wash their robes is a metaphor for receiving the _____ in place of your own unrighteousness. We saw that terminology in 7:14, where the multitude of people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation who stand before God are described by: *they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

And if you are included in that group, you have the right to the tree of life, that tree in the new Jerusalem, which gives you _____ in the presence of God, and you may enter by the gates into the city—also referring to the new Jerusalem.

If you don't want to come to God on His terms—by grace through faith, plus nothing—you will justly receive the opposite destiny.

Revelation 22:15: *Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

Several examples are used to describe the kind of people who will not be in the presence of God. The ugly list here is almost the same as 21:8.

dogs In New Testament times, most dogs were not domesticated like our beloved pets. Used as a metaphor, dogs refers to people of especially _____. Some who are called dogs are male prostitutes, unbelieving Gentiles, hypocritical Judaizers, and unfaithful leaders who lead people astray in the name of God. In Revelation 21:8, this group was called abominable.

sorcerers are those who falsely claim to have spiritual knowledge.

immoral persons describes people who are given over to sexual things of all kinds other than with your spouse in marriage.

murderers means just what it says. And remember, in Matthew 5:21-23, Jesus explained that anger is essentially the same as the sin of murder. The difference between anger and murder is only in degree. Those people who refuse to let go of anger by the grace of God—whether they actually commit murder or not—are proving that they do not belong to Christ.

idolaters describes everyone who worships _____ than God Himself.

everyone who loves and practices lying is obvious.

Next, Jesus recites the purpose of the book again, along with two more of His titles:

Revelation 22:16: *“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”*

My angel refers to the angel who was just speaking to John, along with all the other angels who play roles in the visions described in this book, which is for the churches.

The root and offspring of David means that Jesus is _____, the fulfillment of all the promises made to _____, that there would one day be one of his descendants on His throne who would reign forever. The bright morning star is a title also used in 2:28, in one of Jesus' promises to the overcomers who believe in Him. He is the Star who shatters the night of man's darkness in sin, and who brings the dawn of God's glorious day, in which His own glory will light the new heaven and new earth at all times.

The punch line of this book is:

Revelation 22:17: *And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*

Some interpreters think this verse is John's reply to the words of Christ in verse 16, but the flow seems to fit better if we see Jesus as the speaker all the way through verse 19. Jesus says that the invitation of His Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of prophecy, and the One who convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment, and the Bride, the people of God, is simply **Come!**

Is that what describes you? Does your life and do your words constantly cry out the invitation to come to Jesus Christ for life and for forgiveness? And if you haven't yet come, has this message of the book of Revelation made you thirsty? You can have the water of life, which is eternal life, without cost.

Romans 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Matthew 11:28-30: ***Come to Me***, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.* 30 *“For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”*

Weary and heavy-laden is another way of describing a thirsty soul. *Is that you?* COME!

This invitation is to come to God on His terms and on His terms only. There is no negotiating your own deal. It's either your sin or His righteousness. It's either heaven or hell. It's either the new Jerusalem or it's the lake of fire. The terms are spelled out in great and glorious detail in the Bible. This final book of the Bible calls out this final invitation to come and take the free gift of God which comes to you without cost on your part, even though it cost Jesus Christ His sinless life, which He gave in your place.

Lest you think there is any way to wiggle out of the conditions God gives, this final invitation includes this ominous warning.

Revelation 22:18-19: I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

The direct application is obviously to the book of Revelation. But the book of Revelation is the final book of the Bible, and this _____ . This is the close of the word of God. Don't mess with it, don't add to it, and don't take away from it.

All the false religions in the world and all the corruptions of Christianity which damn people equally thoroughly either take away from the words of this book or they add to it. Either way, they corrupt it so as to negate its message. The three main places that people corrupt the message of the Bible are obvious.

Many attack _____. Denying the Creator, and the fact that He created everything in six literal solar days is very popular. Modern popes have affirmed evolution, proving their utter disregard of God's word, while they claim to be the vicar of Christ on earth. Every form of evolution and every explanation of where we came from other than the one in Genesis 1-2 is a sign of people who are going to come to the end and not find their names in the book of life; they will have no access to the tree of life or the holy city.

Many attack _____ of the Bible. People love to mock the book of Revelation. Others like to say it's important, but that it doesn't mean what it says. In the words of Jesus Himself, they will receive all the wrath of God contained in all the plagues recorded in this book.

And, of course, every attack on the Bible is ultimately a way of rejecting its centerpiece, _____ Christ. He is not Michael the Archangel who became man. He is not a highly enlightened One. He is not a spirit child of a God named Elohim and one of his spirit wives. He is not the spirit brother of Lucifer. He is not "a god." He is not a good man, upon whom the Christ-spirit descended. He is not merely a good teacher.

He was either a _____, a _____, or He is ____ _____. He is the God-man, the only begotten one, full of grace and truth. He is God, who became flesh, lived a perfect sinless life, and died voluntarily in your place so that you could be forgiven and have eternal life.

Don't add to the message. Don't take away from it. Learn it, love it, embrace it, believe it, trust it, and share it.

The final two verses are John's words. John heard the message of his own book, and he believed it.

Revelation 22:20: *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Quickly is our final reminder of imminence. Jesus is coming quickly for His bride. Are you ready? John's reaction is what should be yours. **AMEN!** Do you pray, Come, Lord Jesus? Our Father, who is in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

This book closes with the most common beginning and ending of books of the New Testament:

Revelation 22:21: *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

Are you standing in the grace of God? Can you say "Amen?" Our Father, who is in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

The *Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps and Time Lines*⁶ devotes a page to summarizing a lot of what we've been studying the last few weeks. It comes in two parts:

Biblical Descriptions of Hell

A place of weeping and gnashing of teeth	Matthew 25:30
A place of outer darkness	Matthew 22:13
A place of torment	Luke 16:23
A place of sorrows	2 Samuel 22:5-7
A place of everlasting destruction	2 Thessalonians 1:9

⁶*Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps and Time Lines*. Torrance, California, Rose Publishing, Inc., 2005. Page 99. Printed with permission.

A place where people are tormented with fire and brimstone	Revelation 21:8
A place of worms that don't die	Mark 9:43
A place where fire is not quenched	Mark 9:43
A place where there is no rest	Revelation 14:11
A place that will ultimately be the lake of fire	Revelation 20:14
A place of hopeless agony	Luke 16:24
A furnace of fire	Matthew 13:42, 50
A place of separation	Matthew 13:49
A place filled with the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars	Revelation 21:8
A place shut out from the presence of the Lord and the majesty of His power	2 Thessalonians 1:9
A place where fallen angels dwell	2 Peter 2:4 Jude 16

Biblical Descriptions of Heaven

A Throne of God	Deuteronomy 26:15 Psalm 11:4 Isaiah 66:1
A reward	Matthew 5:12
A place safe from theft and destruction	Matthew 6:20
A place of rejoicing	Luke 15:7
A place where there will be no marrying or giving in marriage	Matthew 22:29-30
A house with many rooms	John 14:2
A home of righteousness	2 Peter 3:13
A garden paradise	Revelation 2:7

A place without hunger, thirst, tears, hot sun, or scorching heat	Revelation 7:16-17
A place of victory and playing harps	Revelation 15:2
A holy city	Revelation 21:2
A place where God dwells with us	Revelation 21:3
A place without sadness, death, or pain	Revelation 21:4
A place of brilliance like that of very precious jewels. The walls are made of jasper and the city made of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls are decorated with precious stones. The twelve gates are each made from one single pearl	Revelation 21:11, 18-21
A place that is lit by the glory of God	Revelation 21:23
A place with no night	Revelation 21:25
A place where no impure thing or person exists	Revelation 21:27
A place of life and healing	Revelation 22:1-3
A place where God reigns forever	Revelation 22:5