The Book of Revelation

Back to the Future

By

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Revelation 1:1-8

Introduction

Dr. James Hamilton, in his commentary on Revelation wrote – "Persecuted people tend to feel persecuted. Persecuted people are not normally inclined to feel that God has blessed them, and persecuted people are not normally inclined to praise God". And I would add to that, that suffering people tend to only think about suffering. And people who live in a fallen and broken world tend to be conditioned in their thinking that this is all that there is. And those who live for the now tend to only think about the now. But the book of Revelation is intended to change our outlook on life. To move the persecuted person towards praise, the suffering person towards hope, the person who is conditioned to live in a fallen and broken world to believe that there is a better world coming and the person who tends to lives for the now to be warned that he or she will have to give an account for how they are living in the now in the future.

Background & Setting:

Many Bible scholars [theologians] conclude that the book of Revelation was written in AD 95 or 96 [during the reign of the Roman emperor Titus Flavius Domitian. The emperor had demanded that he be worshiped as "Lord and God" and the refusal of the Christians to obey his edict led to severe persecution. [Warren Wiersbe]

Therefore, the book of Revelation was written by a man who suffered for being a witness to the truth to people who were under the threat of suffering. This revelation wasn't given to a false health wealth prosperity preacher who claims that it is a sin for Christians to suffer or to name and claim person who wishes to escape from the reality of pain, or an idol worshiper of comfort, nor to one who compromises the truth in order to avoid suffering for Jesus, but to a man who was willing to suffer for Jesus. And here's an interesting truth, you will enjoy the book of Revelation more if you are of suffering in this life. Because suffering people are tired of suffering. And this book teaches that suffering people will soon suffer no more, that being tired of suffering doesn't mean you give up or give in, but you give it over to the Lord. But if you are not suffering, if life is pleasant for you, then this book will only be intellectually stimulating to you, it will be approached based on academic reflection and interpreted based on superstitious musings. But the true meaning of the book of Revelation is all about suffering and triumph for the people of God at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the first eight verses of Revelation introduce us to purpose of the book. This is referred to as the prologue.

Exposition:

Two reasons why reading the book of Revelation will bless the church: The 1st reason why reading the book of Revelation will bless the church is because: The church will be blessed in knowing that the time is near for evil to end [vv. 1-3]

[1] The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it [KJV "signified it"] by His angel to His bond-servant John,

Much of what we can understand about this book is given by the statement at the beginning of verse 1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" – the book is called "Revelation" because that is the first word at the beginning of the verse in the original. "Revelation" is the Greek word Apokalupsis, which when transliterated in English is pronounced "Apocalypse," which means [uncovering what was once hidden, a laying bare, to disclosure; nom. fem. singular]. The first point I want you to notice is that the book of Revelation is not written to confuse, obscure or hide its meaning but to clearly reveal God's plan concerning the future. The second point I want you to consider is that the book is referred to as the Book of Revelation, not the book of Revelations. It's singular not plural. There is only one Revelation being given here.

"of Jesus Christ" – states both the origin and content of this book. The origin of this book can be understood and translated as – "The Revelation from Jesus Christ" [subjective genitive] because the rest of the verse declares that this revelation was given to Jesus Christ from God the Father to show to His slaves. But also, since the content of the book is revealing what will take place in the future in and through Jesus the content of this book can be understood and translated – "The Revelation about Jesus Christ". This prophecy is centered in Jesus. You cannot talk about end time prophecy without mentioning the main subject of end time prophecy and that is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both the medium and the message of Revelation. The medium is seen in the next statement: "which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants" – "God gave Him" – **Scrip. Ref:** Eph. 1:9 – He [the Father] made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him; [10] the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth…. [the Father] who works all things after the counsel of His will – What Jesus Christ reveals from the Father is concerning Himself as it relates to the Father's purpose to exalt His Son before the world.

"His bond-servants" [tois doulois – to the slaves – refers to those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation. Christians are slaves because when God saves you, you have a desire to do His will. Christians are set free from being slaves to sin to being slaves to God.]. Now the message given from the Father to the Son to give to us is seen in the next statement: "the things which must soon take place" – this phrase is repeated in Revelation 1:19 – "the things which shall take place after these things". This refers to the content of the book. The book is concerning the things that will take place in the future. Now there are 4 interpretive views concerning what the phrase "the things which must soon take place" mean:

4 Interpretative Views: 1] The preterist perspective… suggests that most of the material in Revelation is about events taking place in the first century, often prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, in AD 70.

2]. Another approach has been called "historicism" …. Treating the book as a panorama of church history from John's time to the second advent. Revelation as predicting the major movements of Christian history. [there have been many esteemed advocates of the historicist approach – Wycliffe, Know, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Wesley, Edwards, Finney, Spurgeon]

3] The idealist view, the timeless symbolic approach… the allegorical or symbolic hermeneutic espoused by the Alexandrian church fathers… understands Revelation to depict the cosmic struggle of good and evil while forecasting the eventual triumph of God's purpose.

4] The futurist view of Revelation regards chaps. 4-22 as future prophecy. Therefore, we will interpret the phrase "the things that must happen soon" based on the futurist view. And here's the reason, the futurist view takes into consideration OT prophetic literature. In other words, we don't look outside the Bible to find the meaning to the book of Revelation we look inside the Bible. In fact, it has been estimated that 278 of its 404 verses in the book of Revelation all allude to OT prophecy from the book of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah. There are over 500 verses in the Bible that predict Jesus Christ's return, that factors into one out of every 25 verses in the NT affirming the truth of the Second Coming.

Scrip. Ref: Isa. 11:4 – But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked [10] In that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, and His resting place will be glorious

Scrip. Ref: Isa. 25:8 – He will shallow up death for all time, And the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth.

Scrip. Ref: Isa. 9:6-7 – For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness, From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

2 Tim. 2:12 – If we endure, we will also reign with Him

The message of Revelation is simple; the time is near for the end of all evil. "and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John"; "He sent and communicated it" – [KJV "signified it"]; "communicated it" ['semaino' – to make known – the word is translated in the Gospel of John as signs – so you can translated "to make known by signs" – so the communication of this Revelation is given in symbols, numbers, colors, names and creatures.] lit. "He made it known by way of having it sent" ["sent" apostello – aorist participle active, nom. mas. singular; modal participle]; – there are three intermediaries here – one divine, Jesus, the other angelic and the last human.

"John" is none other than the apostle John the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, the one who referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved in the Gospel of John. John outlived the rest of the apostles. **Scrip. Ref:** John 21:22 – Jesus said to him [Peter], "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me? As a result of this statement, it was rumored that John the apostle would not die but Jesus did not say that. But we know that John would not die until he had recorded the vision of Jesus' second coming.

[2] who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

"testified" [maptureo – to bear witness; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" refers to the book of Revelation, "even to all that he saw" – John suffered because of his testimony of Jesus.

[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.

"Blessed" [makarious – highly favored; this is a pronouncement of God's grace to enrich to your soul. This is not a wish but a prophetic pronouncement] This is the first of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation [14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14]; There is a 3 fold blessing: **1]** "he who reads" [anaginosko – to read; to know accurately; to distinguish between; present participle active nom. mas. sing.]. If you notice "he" is singular, "those who hear" is plural. In the early church there was a practice of the preacher reading the Scripture aloud to the congregation. This practice was borrowed from the worship services conducted in the synagogues. **2]** "those who hear" [who listen attentively] **3]** "and heed the things which are written in it" – "heed" [tereo – to keep, to observe, to obey; present participle active] There is a blessing for you when you apply the commands given in this book – keep reading, keep hearing and keep obeying is the only way by which God's grace will enrich your soul. Why should we do this? "for the time is near" – "time" [Kairos – fixed and definite time] The church age is the final age before the events leading up to the Lord's return take place [**Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 2:18 – Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that the antichrist is coming; 1 Pet. 4:7 – The end of all things is at hand; Rom. 13:11 – And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

The 2nd reason why reading the book of Revelation will bless the church is: The church will be blessed in knowing that the Triune God is for His people [vv. 4-8]:

[4] John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace and you to peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before the throne,

"to the seven churches" – This is the first of the number "seven" mentioned in this book. Next you will have seven Spirits, seven lampstands, seven stars, seven horns, seven eyes, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven angels, seven peals of thunder, seven heads, seven plagues, seven mountains, seven kings. Seven is the number of completeness.

These seven churches typify the spiritual condition of all the churches in Asia Minor [modern day Turkey] as well as all the churches throughout church history up till our present time. "Grace to you and peace" – this is the only book in the NT written to the churches that receives greetings from each member in the Godhead. And like the greetings in the NT letters grace always comes before peace. You need God's unmerited favor before you can experience God's uninterrupted peace. This greeting is not a prayer wish but an acknowledgement of what every believer has and will continue to experience because of who they belong too.

No matter what is happening in your life you are always under grace because you belong to God – it could be worse and it will work for your good; no matter what God purposes to happen to you on the outside, peace is always available to you on the inside. "from Him who is and who was and who is to come" – lit. "the One who is [being] and the One who was and the One who is Himself coming"; "the One who is" He is ever present, never absent; He governs time but He is never governed by time; "the One who was" – the One who was in the OT is the same One who is [now] – He has not changed He is still Jehovah Jireh, He is still Jehovah Nissi; He is still a Strong Tower, He is still the Most High God, He is still the Shepherd of Psalm 23, He is still the Great I Am, He is still the lily of the valley; and the One who is, is the same "One who is to come" – I Am that I Am.. God cannot change. "from the seven Spirits who are before the throne" – "seven" – the number of fullness; "Spirits" – some believe this is referring to angels, but angels are not in the place to pronounce to grace and peace on the same level with God. Plus, angels are not called "spirits" in Revelation. This is referring to the Holy Spirit: **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 4:5 – "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God"; Zech. 4:2 – And he said to me, "What do you see? And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on it; [5] So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." [6] Then he answered and said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." It's not by our might that we can make it through this life but only by His Spirit. Praise God, that the fullness of the Spirit is available to us not partial or half of His enablement. The church needs the fullness of the Spirit.

[5] and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood

"the faithful witness" – lit. "the Witness, the Faithful One" – Jesus is testifying throughout this book that those who persevere through suffering will be rewarded in the end. He who says this is Faithful – He won't let you down, He is absolutely reliable and dependable to bring about what He has promised. "Firstborn from the dead" – "firstborn" [prototokos – protos – first; tikto – to bring forth; to bear]; **Quote:** Paige Patterson – "this metaphor is particularly arresting since normally life can only emerge from existing life"; "and the ruler of the kings of the earth" – Jesus is right now the King of kings and Lord of lords. And how this truth applies to the book of Revelation is important because if Jesus is not the ruler of the kings of the earth, then He cannot

reveal in detail what is soon to happen if He cannot control what is happening now. If Jesus is ruling over the kings of the earth now, then He is also directing them towards God's predetermined ends. The exaltation of His Son. "to Him who loves us" [agapao - present participle active; dat. mas. sing.]; "and released us from our sins by His blood" – "released" [luo – to unfasten; to loose; to set free; aorist participle active; dat. mas. sing.] "by His blood" lit. "in His blood". The present tense of love and the past tense of released proves that Christ's death for our sins in the past is a continuous expression of His love for us in the present. The One who loosed us from our sins, is the One who never stop loving us since that time. Even when you sin, He still loves you because of what He already accomplished by His blood. Christ loves us in that He won't condemn us. He may cause us to suffer but He will never destroy us. He even loves us in our sufferings by strengthening us, sympathizing with us and interceding for us. If we did not have this ministry of Christ, we would be worst off. Love is not defined by receiving what you want but receiving what you need that you do not deserve, His support. This is how grace and peace is bestowed on you from the Father, the Spirit and the Son – the Father – the One who is, who was and who is to come – grace and peace; the Spirit in His fullness – grace and peace; the Son who loves you and released us from our sins – grace and peace.

[6] and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

"He has made us" – "made" [poieo – to make; aorist indicative active; 3rd sing.]; "to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father"; "kingdom" –the realm of God's benevolent favors ruling over His own. How do you become a part of this kingdom? **Scrip. Ref**: John 3:5 – Jesus answered, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"; "priests" [access]. If you are not in the kingdom, you don't have access. Being in the kingdom gets you into the theatre. Being a priest gives you direct access backstage to the Famous One. "kingdom" is the backstage pass at the concert. Being in the balcony doesn't guarantee a backstage pass. Sitting in the front row doesn't guarantee a backstage encounter. You need a pass to go behind the curtain and meet the stars. The kingdom gives us the backstage pass. Being priests means we have direct access – listen, worrying is refusing to us the privilege given to you to go directly to God for your needs, fear, doubt and discomfort. How does believing priests function? You persevere by performing your priestly duties – sacrifice and service; sacrifice – surrender yourself to the Lord; service – do His will no matter what.

"to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" – This first doxology is attributed to Jesus. He should be praise because of who He is and what He has done for us. Jesus is so worthy that there is no end to acknowledging it. Greatest Of All Time [GOAT] only fits Jesus because it will never be challenged or brought into question.

[7] BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

This is the first prophetic oracle in the book. "Behold" [idou]; "He is coming" [erchomai – to come; present indicative middle voice; 3rd person singular]; "with the clouds" – **Scrip. Ref**: Acts 1:11 – They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? 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. How did He go to heaven Acts 1:9 – a cloud received Him out of their sight; "every eye will see Him" – "will see" [orao – to see; to look at; **future** indicative [fact]; middle voice; 3rd sing.; lit. every eye will see for itself]; "who pierced Him" – "pierced" "those who pierced Him" – [ekkevteo – to pierce; aorist indicative; active 3rd person plural; same verb used in John 19:37 – "They shall look on Him whom they pierced" Zech. 12:10] Those who rejected and crucified Jesus did not witness His resurrection or His ascension. The only memory of Jesus they have was a bloody man with nails driven through His hands and feet, with a crown of thorns on His head. This cannot be the way the Son of Man is to be remembered by His enemies. He will come back not in humiliation but in exaltation and every eye will see Him; "will mourn" [kopto – to cut; to smite; **future** indicative middle voice; 3rd person plural]

Scrip. Ref: Dan. 7:13 – "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;

Zech. 12:10 – "And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, 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.

Matt. 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.

"So it is to be" [nai – yea, assuredly, even so,]; Yes, so be it. People mock, dismiss and ridicule the church now but when Christ comes back there will be weeping in terror. Even so, Amen!!!

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

"I am" [ego eimi = ego is emphatic – I and no other am]; Alpha and Omega – those who are being addressed in these seven churches are Greeks. So, John refers to the first and last letter of the Greek Alphabet to speak of the eternality and all-knowing nature of God. Letters make up words, words convey knowledge. God the Father is everything from A-Z:

God is **A**lmighty; **B**eautiful; **C**ompassionate; **D**eliverer; **E**verlasting; **F**aithful; **G**ood; **H**oly; **I**mmanent; **J**ust; **K**ind; **L**ovely; **M**erciful; **N**ear; **O**mniscient**; P**rovider; **Q**ualified; **R**efuge; **S**overeign; **T**rustworthy; **U**nchanging; **V**ictorious; **W**onderful**; X – Excellent**; **Y**ahweh; **Z**ealous for His glory

"the Almighty" [panto-krator – He who holds sway over all things [this title is ascribed only to the Father in the NT – 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22]; If He created and sustains the entire universe [planets, asteroids, comets, black holes, stars, suns, moons, and solar systems, why would you think He cannot sustain you?

Revelation 1:9-20

Introduction:

In the New Testament we are given Four Gospel accounts which record for us the life, ministry, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In these gospel accounts we are given proof of His humanity with His genealogical record, His place of birth, the place of His upbringing, His trade, His various human emotions during His earthly ministry of 3 years. As well as accounts of His deity as attested by His own statements of equality with God, and the demonstration of His power by signs and miracles.

But nowhere in these Gospel accounts are we given any descriptions of Jesus' looks. We are not told how tall Jesus was, what color was His eyes, His hair nor skin complexion. And yet, since the 4th century [300 AD] there have been hundreds of depictions of what artists and sculptors have assumed of His looks. Typically, these representations of Jesus reflect the culture and ethnic identity of the artist. The most common and popular image in the 20th century is an American representation is of a fully bearded Jesus with blue eyes and blonde hair. There are painting of Jesus depicted as an Ethiopian in the Coptic churches in Africa, as an Asian man in China, as a Spanish man, and as a Jamaican man. But those who hold to the biblical description of Jesus as a Jew would describe Him as having olive colored skin, brown eyes, long black hair and a hooked nose. A famous painting of Rembrandt entitled the "Head of Christ" shows a young olive-skinned Jewish man, only half-emerging from the shadows.

But I believe that the reason why the Holy Spirit would not allow Matthew, Mark, Luke or John to describe what Jesus looked like in His humiliation is because what's most important is not what He looks like but who He is.

Exposition:

Two reactions when the Church sees Jesus as He is: The 1st reaction when the Church sees Jesus as He is will be: The church will experience hope-filled fortitude in Jesus during the difficulties of life [v. 9]:

[9] **I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and the perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus**.

"I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and the perseverance which are in Jesus"; "I, John" – this is the 3rd time John has identified himself in this book [1:1, 4]; "your brother" – he didn't write your apostle. By John stating he is our brother reminds us that the church is a spiritual family united to God who is our Father by the blood of His Son, Jesus, who is our elder brother; "fellow partaker" [sug-koinonos – a participant with others; fellowship with; one who shares together]; "in the tribulation" [thlipis – distress; pressure]; "and kingdom"; "and perseverance" [hupo-mone – steadfastness; endurance; lit. to remain under; bearing up under pressure] "which are in Jesus" – Every tribulation has a glory side to it, which is the kingdom intent to it, which enables us to persevere. There are some pressures in life you will have to deal with for the rest of your life – emotional grieving pressure, physical pressures, but what causes us to have hope-filled fortitude in these pressures is knowing that 1] it will not last always; 2] it will end in everlasting joy/victory; 3] Jesus will get me through this 'in Jesus' – in who He is – Savior, Strengthener, Sanctifier, Sympathizer, Helper, God with us, and God who is salvation; "in Jesus" – the fact that Jesus wants you to place your trust in Him in the midst of tribulations proves that you are suffering for Jesus while in Jesus. We share the same God, saved by the same Lord, redeemed by the same blood, and we share in the tribulations of life, the hope of the glory of the kingdom and the need to persevere in Jesus. There is one thing we have in common and that is we all have gone through difficulties, just came out of difficulties and about to go back into difficulties. You are not alone. You are in the right place if you have problems. We are here to encourage one another to persevere through our problems in Jesus. If you are in a trial, you are in the right place because we all are either in them, just came out of them or about to go back into them.

"was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." – "was on" [ginomai – aorist indicative; passive voice; 1 person singular; trans. "I came to be on"]; "Patmos" – was a small, rocky island about 8 miles long and 5 miles wide, located in the Aegean Sea some 40 miles southwest of Miletus. It may have been a penal settlement to which the Roman authorities sent criminals. Early Christian tradition says John was sent here during Domitian's reign over Rome [AD 81-96] and was forced to work in the mines. The apostle John was in his nineties when he was sent to the prison, which means he was still going through tribulations even until his retirement years, but because he is in Christ, he can endure. So, John is locked up on a prison island in his nineties. But just in case you draw the wrong conclusion for why John was there he quickly says – "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus."

John wants us to know that he was not sent there because of an outstanding parking tickets, driving without a license, shoplifting, switching price tags on products in the marketplace or lying on his taxes, not because of any sin was he locked up on Patmos but because of his stance on the gospel. If you are going to suffer, make sure the intent is to glorify God not ruin your testimony.

The 2nd reaction when the Church sees Jesus as He is will be: The church will have a healthy fear of Jesus that will sanctify [vv. 10-20]:

[10] I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

"I was in the Spirit" [ginomai – aorist indicative; passive voice; 1st person singular; trans. "I came to be"]; "the Lord's Day" – "The Lord's Day came to be the customary way of referring to Sunday by the end of the second century because it was the day of the week on which the Lord was raised from the dead." [Thomas]; [it is interesting to note that in Greece the first day of the week is called the Lord's Day…. In Portuguese-speaking countries the same phenomenon occurs: Sunday is Domingo [Day of the Lord]. The first day of the week, was considered "the Lord's Day" in the early church because that was the historical day Jesus rose from the dead. In fact, Jesus appeared to His apostles after His resurrection twice on the Sunday. The Lord's Day should be the day we give ourselves to observing the activity of worshiping on Sunday.

[11] saying, "[KJV - I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last] **Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea**."

"write" [grapho – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular; a sense of urgency]; send" [pempo – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular]; "to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea" – [Geographical Background: These cities were centers of seven postal districts… The order of the names of the seven cities indicates the route the messenger[s] would follow in delivering the Apocalypse to its immediate addressees… Starting from Ephesus and moving clockwise, the party of messengers would have proceeded northward about 40 miles to Smyrna and about 40 miles to Pergamum. From Pergamum they moved in a southeasterly direction about 45 miles to Thyatira, then about 30 miles south to Sardis, then about 30 miles east-southeast to Philadelphia, and finally about 40 miles southeast to Laodicea. A messenger from each city would present the scroll to his own church who would read and probably make a copy of it before the remaining messengers moved on with the original to the next city. Thomas]

[12] Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

"I turned" [epi-strepho – to turn back; to turn to; aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "to see" [blepo – present infinitive active; purpose infinitive]; "was speaking" [laleo – to speak;

imperfect indicative active 3rd person singular]; "And having turned" [epi-strepho – aorist participle active; nom. masc. singular; temporal participle – And (after) having turned]; "I saw" [eidov - aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "seven golden lampstands" – "seven" is the number of completeness; "golden" – gold is a precious metal. These lampstands represent all churches which are precious to Jesus; "lampstands" – were stands for portable oil lamps. This is our purpose for existing as a church, not for style, not for dress, not for pride in our church history, not for the location of this edifice but to be a light in a dark world/community.

[13] and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

"and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man" – "in the middle" is a picture of the omnipresence of Jesus. He is ever present in the midst of His church, not as an idle bystander but as a sovereign Lord directly, controlling, orchestrating, navigating and ordering our lives for His glory; "I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash" – "one like a son of man" – John borrows this phrase from Dan. 7:13 – "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like the Son of Man was coming". In the context of Daniel 7:13-14, the title Son of Man refers to His reign as King over the nations. Jesus is both Priest and King – we are priests unto God [6], but Jesus is our Great High Priest – He enters on our behalf to the Father to intercede for us, to sanctify us and to sympathize for us. What John records here is what he literally saw, but what he literally saw was the glorified and exalted Christ in symbolic form, which means these descriptions are symbolic of who He is in His person and work within the life of the church. He is the glorified Priest and King. Now these symbolic descriptions are repeated in some measure to 6 of the 7 churches in chapters 2-3. This lets us know that this is the depiction Jesus wants the church to have of Himself; "clothed" [enduno – to be clothed with; perfect participle middle/passive accus. masc. singular; trans. "having been clothed"]; "girded" [peri-zonuuo – aorist participle middle/passive voice; accus. masc. singular; trans. "having been girded" or "having girded Himself"]

[14] His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

"He head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow" – "gray or white hair" is a picture of wisdom; "eyes were like a flame of fire" – holy omniscience. Jesus sees everything. He sees us as exactly as we are not what we pretend to be. Holy omniscience sees right through us to our hearts, our true motives. Jesus sees us not as what we pretend to be but who we really are. But let's consider for a moment the relationship between the two attributes of Christ mentioned in verse 14 – wisdom and all knowledge. The relationship between these two attributes as it applies to our lives is comforting – the eyes of a flame of fire – sees everything, in other words, knows everything – everything actual, we call this reality – Jesus knows how you feel, what you are thinking, what you are trying to hide and all your inner secrets. He knows more about you then

you know about yourself; and He knows everything possible, some of the things you imagine, a wish, alternative scenarios, what if games – when we apply the attribute of His wisdom in this category, we deliver ourselves from seeking comfort in pretense, from trying to find escape into imaginary possibilities because when you put together the wisdom of Jesus with the all-knowing awareness of Jesus, you can only conclude that the reason why things are not as you would like them to be is because in the wisdom of Jesus He already saw what you are now imagining as a possible alternative to your life. But when He purposed your life before the foundation of the world it was He wisdom, the perfect determiner of the best plan for your life in light of His knowledge of all things possible, that decreed for you to be where you are, go through what you are going through, so that He might get the most glory by the deepening of your relationship with Him for your good. In other words, your life from Jesus' standpoint is not good but it could be better, but best because in His wisdom and knowledge there can be no better way that would bring Him the most glory: **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 46:10 – 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.'

In short, you cannot choose any better alternative to your life that will end as glorious as what Jesus has purposed for you. That's the point of the book, if you had the choice to change your life you would make life much easier to bear with, much more comfortable to get along with, less problems to deal with, but in the end you would not be as triumphant in the path Christ has purposed for you. Jesus doesn't want us to be so fixated on the journey that we lose sight of the destination.

[15] His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

"His feet were like burnished bronze" – "since feet in the ancient world portrayed the direction of one's life"; "has been made to glow in a furnace" [puro – to be on fire; to burn; perfect participle passive voice; genitive fem. singular]; Jesus moves among the churches judging our intentions for worship and service. The presence of Jesus in the church has a purifying purpose. Jesus wants His church to be holy not entertained; He wants His church to be pure, not carnal. And He will do whatever it takes to make us holy. Trials, sickness, spiritual warfare, death of loved ones, financial difficulty, or removal of some cherished idol. The burnished feet of Jesus is meant to stamp out sin in the hearts of His people. **Quote**: Corrie ten Boom – "You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have".

"and His voice was like the sound of many waters" – His voice changes from the sound of a trumpet to the sound of crashing waters. It changes for an alerting call to a commanding call. The comparison of His voice to many waters suggests that power flows from His voice. His speech alone exerts power – has the power to change things. Do you know that Jesus' voice is so powerful that whether it is spoken audibly or written it can create something out of nothing? His audible voice brought the whole universe into existence out of nothing.

His written voice brought new life out of total depravity in your salvation. There was nothing in you that could save you, your choice was dead in trespasses and sins, your will was dead in trespasses and sins, your mind was dead in trespasses and sins. But one day Jesus spoke to you through His written word, by either you reading it or someone proclaiming it and Jesus purposed that His voice would regenerate your nature so that you were born again. Jesus is so powerful, He just has to say the word and all of creation must irresistibly comply. **Quote**: Steve Lawson, "The biggest miracle God performs is not creating the universe out of nothing but creating saints out of sinners."

[16] In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

"He held" [echo – to have; present participle active; nom. masc. singular – "having" continuous]; "right hand" – the place of honor and protection; "came" [ek-poreuomai – to project; to come forth; present participle passive/middle nom. fem. singular]; "a sharp two-edged sword" – speaks of His words that cut, divide and judge. The most evil and misleading aspects of sin is not its ability to seduce you to do evil but its ability to deceive you into thinking Jesus will not judge you for it; "His face" [opsis – countenance; appearance; used 3 times in NT – John 7:24; 11:44]; "was like the sun shining in its strength" – – the glory of Jesus, like the sun at high noon cannot be looked at with the human eyes. You can't stare at Jesus; His glory will blind you. When you think about what Jesus looks like, all you need to know that His face is like the sun. I cannot look at it without the risk of going blind. Our natural eyes cannot behold the supernatural glory of Christ. Which means avoid trying to bring Jesus down on our level when we come to worship Him. Jesus is not someone you can be causal with, flippant with, indifferent too, He is Holy!!!

[17] When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last,

"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man."; "I fell" [pipto – aorist indicative active 1 person singular];"like a dead man" [nekros – lifeless];"He placed" [tithemi – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "saying" [lego – present participle active; nom. masc. singular; temporal participle "while saying"]; "Do not be afraid" [me – not; phobeo – to fear; to seize with alarm; to terrify; present imperative middle voice 2nd person singular – "stop yourself from being afraid"]; Jesus did not appear to John to kill him but to encourage him; "I am the first and the last" – "I am" [ego eimi] "the First and the Last" – this speaks of the eternal, uncreated nature of Jesus. When this title is used in the OT is it always closely connected to the Lord enforcing what He has predicted to happen in the future for the comfort of His people – I Am the First [I decreed it] and Last [I will bring it to past]; By Jesus calling Himself 'the First and the Last' this self-claim refers to being the beginning, before time and the One who stands of the end of human history, who is eternal. And yet, when these Scriptures mention this title, it is always in the context of God bringing to past what He has decree. In other words, Jesus proves He is the First and the Last by revealing what He had decreed at the First and bringing it to past at the Last.

If Jesus is the First and the Last, then that means I don't have to be afraid of what is before me or behind me because Jesus is the First [the beginning] and the Last [the end]. In other words, it doesn't matter which time period you are in because Jesus is already there. He was there at the beginning of time, and He is at the end of time.

[18] and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

"the living One" [ho Zao – articular present participle active nom. masc. singular]; Jesus is ever living, Jesus is alive. Dead gods cannot help, protect or provide for you. To worship a non-existent god is to live a useless/empty life. We serve a risen Savior; "I was dead" [ginomai – to be; aorist indicative passive voice 1st person singular – "I became dead"]; "I am alive" [zao eimi – literal trans. "I am living"]; "I have the keys of death and of Hades" – "I have" [echo – present indicative active 1st person singular – continue and present possession]; "the keys of death and of Hades." Isn't it comforting to know Jesus has authority over your last enemy? If He has authority over death and Hades, then surely, He has authority over other things that contribute or lead towards death – heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, pneumonia, genetic diseases and the flu. The keys are not in the devil's hand, not in the hand of the doctor, not in the hand of cancer, not in the hand of statistics, not in the hands of fate, chance or coincidence but only and always in the hand of Jesus. This is comforting for our lives are never in the hands of sickness or our enemies but only in Jesus. Only when it is time for you to die will you die. And that time has been determined by Jesus. Jesus has the keys of death – that means He can open and place you there but also, He can open and bring you out. Just like He brought Himself out from the realm of death. Jesus got the keys while in the grave and came out with them in His nail pierced hand. Jesus removed the keys while the devil was not looking as He died on the cross for our sins. The devil lost the power to scare the church with death because Jesus now has the keys. We can say like the apostle Paul, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." We can look in the casket of our loved ones and not have to have anyone try to console us with explanations of how our loved died because we know who holds the keys of death and Hades. **Quote:** Warren Wiersbe – "We don't live off of explanations but promises".

[19] "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

"write" [grapho – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "the things which you have seen" [1:12-18]; "the things which are" [chaps. 2-3]; "the things which will take place after these things" [chaps. 4-22]. This is the outline for the book of Revelation.

[20] "As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

"the seven stars are the angels" – the human messengers in each of the seven churches – Rev. 1:3 – "Blessed is he who reads [the angel, messenger or pastor in the church when he received this letter; he is singular] and those who hear [the congregation] the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near," "seven lampstands are the seven churches" – each local assembly is regarded by Christ as golden, meaning precious, because of being purchased by the blood of the Lamb [Rev. 1:5-6]. And each local assembly is pictured as a lampstand. To bring the light of the gospel to dark communities.

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction:

I want to take you on a visual trip back in time to the city of Ephesus. We just left the island of Patmos where John the apostle is imprisoned for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we set sail on the Aegean Sea to the city of Ephesus which is about a 40-mile trip. As we draw near to the city of Ephesus, we find ourselves struggling a little bit to make it up the Cayster river because of the silt or sediments on the water. But after some hours of rowing, we disembark at the harbor of Ephesus. And we come out to a wide and magnificent road called the Arcadian Way. And as we walk along the road we come into a city that is considered the fourth greatest city in the world after Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. The city's population boasted 250,000 people. This is a happening city, this is where athletic events were hosted that would rival the great Olympic games, this is the city that had month long festivals in the springtime. This is the city where we might run into famous people like Cleopatra who would come and spend the winter here. And as we come to the end of the Arcadian Road, we notice right in front of us the theater which is mentioned in Acts 19:29 that seated 24,000 people.

As we turn left and move south down the city we are walking on Marble Street where there is an agora to the right [a public square where people assemble as well as a market for buying and selling]. As well as Celsus Library, which was one of three extensive collections of 9,500 rolls of historical information in the Roman world. As we move further down the road we run into the temple of Hadrian who was an emperor and he demanded that he be worshiped as a god, the temple of Domitian who was responsible for sending the apostle John to the island of Patmos because he refused to acknowledge him as lord and god, and then we come upon a number of bath houses where there was prostitution. So, we know we are in the bad part of town so we turn around and proceed north we passed the stadium where they had the gladiatorial games, where prisoners and slaves would fight wild animals imported from Africa. And we figure that was a little too violent for the kids. Some of us wanted to go to the athletic games at Vedius Gymnasium across from the stadium but when we found out that the athletes performed nude, so we decided against that. Then we become hungry so we see across from the stadium the Meat Market, all we can think of is a salami sandwich, a hamburger, turkey burger, and pork sandwich, but when they responded by saying that all the meat that is sold had been offered up to false gods, we lose our appetites. Suddenly, we begin to see a crowd of people, some running and

some walking, some singing and some dancing, heading further north outside the city limits. We decide to follow them and discover a beautiful marble temple, greater than the size of a football field, 425 feet long, 220 feet wide, 127 pillars each 60 feet high, and inside this marble temple housed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. [**Cultural & Historical Background**: It was guardian of a statue to the goddess that was supposedly a meteorite from heaven –a somewhat shapeless, black, many-breasted rock…. As Acts 19:19-20 tells us, there was great interest in magic and sorcery. Grant Osborne]; the temple served as the center for the localized worship of Artemis, to whom the citizens of Ephesus were probably more devoted than were the citizens of almost any other ancient metropolis… The actual Temple of Diana sat approximately a mile from the edge of the city and was the first thing viewed when a ship came into the harbor.

[At the time John wrote the Apocalypse in AD 95, the inner parts of Artemis' temple were a safe haven for any thief, robber, slave trader, and plunderer of a temple. The level of morality among the city's population was notoriously low. The people were licentious, superstitious, vile and violent. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus, a resident of Ephesus, purportedly commented that 'the morals of the temple were worse than the morals of beasts, for even promiscuous dogs do not mutilate each other." Kistemaker]

So, after spending a day in the city of Ephesus, we got the sense of the type of lifestyle our brothers and sisters in the church of Ephesus had been saved out of. But we also, get the sense of how deep their conviction was in the truth to maintain their testimony in such an immoral and idolatrous city, where everything around them, including old friends and family members kept seeking to entice them back into the immoral and licentious lifestyle Jesus had save them out of.

2 observations Jesus made when He examined the Forgetful Church, so that our church may never forget what's most important: The 1st observation Jesus made when He examined the Forgetful Church was: It is good to never forget the importance of ministry in the name of Christ [vv. 1-3]:

[1] "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write" – "to the angel" – refers to the messenger or overseer/pastor to the church in Ephesus. The senior or lead pastor the church. In 1:3, it states "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear" – It doesn't read "Blessed are they who read" but "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear." And the reason why it is worded this way is because in the early church there was a practice of the preacher reading the Scripture aloud to the congregation. So, the angel of the church is the one who led the church in the exposition of the Scripture while the congregation listened. Therefore, the angel was not a heavenly messenger because what Jesus says to 5 of the 7 angels and their churches are rebukes for sin, which could not be true of an unfallen angel. The word "angel" can refer to a human messenger in the NT or in this context a pastoral guardian over the church; "of the church in Ephesus" – the church in Ephesus had a rich history – It was the only church in the NT that was led by two apostles, Paul

and John. Along with Apollos, Aquila, Priscilla, and Timothy. It was the only church in the NT that had seven letters written to it: The epistle to the Ephesians, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, 1st and 2nd Timothy. Along with the book of Revelation; ["the metropolis of Asia" as Ephesus was called but also of its heritage as the mother church of the region. Grant Osborne]; When the apostle Paul had written to this church over 40 years ago, he was writing to the first generation of believers who had made an impact in the city of Ephesus as well as the surrounding cities, the other 6 that are mentioned in chapters 2 &3. But now that first generation has pasted on and now Jesus commands the apostle John to "write" [grapho – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular – the tense of the aorist verb conveys urgency] – to the second generation:

"The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: - "the One who holds" [ho kratoo – to have power; articular present participle active nom. masc. singular; continuously holding by His power]; "the seven stars" – the overseers or guardians over the seven churches; "in His right hand" – position of power, authority, protection and control; these pastors are never under the control or authority of Satan nor ultimately under the control of the congregation but only to Christ; "the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands" – "the One who walks" [ho peripatoo – articular present participle active nom. masc. singular – continuous presence within the midst of the church]; "the seven golden lampstands" – Rev. 1:20 makes it clear that the seven golden lampstands represent the seven churches in Asia Minor. Seven is the number of completeness, which means that these literal churches are characteristic of local churches throughout church history. "says this" – lit. "these things says" [It was used to introduce with great solemnness a prophetic message or a royal letter or edict. The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek NT]

[2] I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

"I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance" – "I know" [oida – perfect indicative active 1st person singular; knowledge in the completed sense; to know fully]; "your deeds" – your ministry work, your church involvement, your conduct in all areas of life; "your toil" [kopos – labor]. I know that you are a busy church, a hard working church; "and perseverance" [hupomone – remain under pressure]; The noun 'endurance' [hupomene – 1:9; 2:2, 3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12] occurs seven times always in the context of pervasive evil. Osbourne];

"Perseverance" is one of my favorite words in the Bible because it teaches us how to face life in a broken world – "endure" to bear up under pressure; to persevere through adversity; to be steadfast in the face of temptation and trials – to trust the Lord in all things and obey Him in all things. To apply the commandments of God in your life as personal convictions so that you never waver in your faith when life hurts. To believe that God is for you when life is against you, that's how you endure. "and that you cannot tolerate evil men" – "cannot tolerate" [bastazo – to bear; endure; carry; aorist infinitive active; this same word is used in Gal. 6:2 – Bear one another's

burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ.] But in this context the Ephesian believers could not bear, carry the weight of "evil men" [kakous – wicked men; accus. masc. plural]; The Bible does not support Christians being tolerant or cordial with evil false teachers. We are to bear with the broken and repentant, not with the false and misleading. "and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles" – "to test" [peirazo – aorist indicative active; 2nd person singular]; They tested their doctrine, observed their character and evaluated them according to the characteristics of a true apostle. They just didn't receive them simply because they called themselves 'apostle,' 'bishop,' 'anointed' or prophet[ess] but you tested what they claimed themselves to be by the objective standard of the word. They did not allow their feelings, personal opinions or positive impressions to cloud their judgment or rob them of their discernment. But they tested their credentials against the Word: **Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 4:1-3 – Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. [2] By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; [3] and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

"and they are not, and you found them to be false" – "they are not" [eisin – present indicative active; 3rd person plural – they continue to not be true]; "you found them to be false" – "found" [eurisko – aorist indicative; active; 2nd person singular]; "false" [pseudes – deceitful; lying]; The Ephesian believers had heeded the warning the apostle Paul communicated to the elders of Ephesus over 40 years earlier: **Scrip. Ref**: Acts 20:28-30 – "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. [29] "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; [30] and from among your own selves' men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."

[3] and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

"and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake" – "you have" [echo – present indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "perseverance and endured for My name's sake" – "perseverance" – remained under the pressure of being unpopular in your community because of your uncompromising stance against false teachers and false teaching; "and endured" [bastazo – to bear; aorist indicative active 2nd person singular]

"for My name's sake" – the motive for removing false teachers from the church, perseverance amid a crooked and perverse environment was for the purpose of maintaining the reputation of Christ in the church; "and have not grown weary" [kopiao – to grow tired; exhausted; perfect participle active; nom. masc. plural]; You have been tired in the work but not of the work; Ministry is hard work but it is also heart work.

The 2nd observation Jesus made when He examined the Forgetful Church was: It is bad to forget the importance of ministry for the love of Christ [vv. 4-7]:

[4] But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love" – "But" [alla – a strong adversative; this is meant to mark a contrast between the good things that were being done in the name of Christ from the bad thing they had done in the church]; "I have" [echo – **present** indicative active; 1st person singular] "that you have left your first love" – **lit**. "**your love, the first, you left**". Your first love refers not only to your initial expressions of affection towards Christ when He first saved you but also "first" in priority.

Your First Love: **Elective Love** [**Scrip. Ref**: Deut. 7:6-7 – For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. [7] The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the people; Eph. 1:4d-5 – In love He predestined us]; The doctrine of election is simply God setting His love on you before the foundation of the world.

Effectual Love [aka Effectual Calling; Irresistible Grace] – **Scrip. Ref**: Jer. 31:3 – 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. **Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 4:19 – We love, because He first loved us.

Exceeding Love – **Scrip. Ref:** John 15:13 – "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

Enduring Love – **Scrip. Ref:** Romans 8:38-39 – "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

[5] 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place – unless you repent.

"Therefore remember from where you have fallen" – "Therefore" since I have against you that you have left your first love – "remember from where you have fallen" – "remember" [mnemoneuo – to call to mind; to be mindful of; **present** imperative active; 2nd person singular; "continue to call to mind";

"where you have fallen" [pipto – to fall; **perfect** indicative active; 2nd person singular; the perfect tense expresses an act that took place in the past with ongoing present results] You fell in the past and you still haven't gotten up.How should the believers at Ephesus "remember from where they have fallen"? First, they should remember their past before Christ saved them. How they were living in sin and had no peace. Going to the temple of Artemis, coming to the Meat Market,

spending their time at the athletic games and festivals but it brought no true joy, and it did not remove the guilt. You have forgotten how your 'first love' saved you when you were lost in sin? You have forgotten where the Lord Jesus found you and brought you from? You weren't born saved. You were born dead in trespasses and sins. Remember where Jesus brought you from? The hymn writer put it, "I was sinking deep in sin far from the peaceful shore, very deeply stained within sinking to rise no more but the Master of the Sea heard my despairing cry, from the waters lifted me now safe am I, love lifted me, love lifted me, when nothing else could help love lifted me. **Scrip. Ref:** Ps. 103:1-3a – "Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name. [2] Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; [3] Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases [soul diseases – anxiety, depression, discouragement, fear, sadness, hopelessness]; **Quote**: John MacArthur - forgetfulness is frequently the initial cause of spiritual decline.

Notice the contrast here: [1] "The One who holds the seven stars" [4] "you have left your first love". Remember where you have fallen and considered that while in that state of falling away from Him, He kept holding on to you [His right hand]. While your heart had drifted away from Him, His presence remained close to you [He walks in the midst]. The sin of indifference can be overcome when you think about how Christ loves you despite how much you have sinned against Him. **We are always sinning in the full experience of grace and mercy**. **Scrip. Ref**: Ps. 103:10 – He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. [11] For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness towards those who fear Him.

The command to "remember" entails: 1] the things you used to do that expressed your joy in worshiping Jesus – prayer, Bible study and fellowship; 2] when that joy began to fade. Let me help you understand how we can so easily forget that love for Jesus should be the priority and driving passion in our lives: 1] Typically we forget our first love when there is no time devoted to Him. How we schedule our time reveals what matters most to us. To the point that we make everything else in our life a priority, while time for Jesus is relegated to "I'll get to that later". When we begin to say yes to all things that advances our personal pleasures until Jesus is crowded out of our memory. To the point you begin to forget to read your Bible, when you begin to pray without adoring Him, you sing without delighting in Him, listen to the preach Word without treasuring Him. You know what keeps us fallen from our first love? Excuses. **Quote**: Billy Sunday said that an excuse is "the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie."

And the fact that Jesus warns the church and especially the leadership in the church that He will remove the lampstand if they don't repent proves that a failure to love Christ can disqualify a preacher from ministry; "and repent and do the deeds you did at first" – "repent" [metanoeo – to turn away from; to change your mind; aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular; aorist tense notes urgency]. You need to hate how you have allowed your relationship with Christ to be

relegated to religious formalism, ritualism, mechanical-ism and indifference. Repentance means I hate that I have turned from my love for Christ towards false substitutes that dishonors His worth; "or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent" – "I am coming to you" [erchomai – present indicative middle voice; 1st person singular – lit. "I myself am coming". This refers not to the second coming but coming to visit upon this local assembly the consequences for their sin; "will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent" – "remove" [kineo – future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "your lampstand" since lampstand represents the local church. **Jesus is threatening to un-church the church**; "unless you repent" [meanoeo – aorist subjunctive active; 2nd person singular];[**Historical Background**: Writing in 1861, archbishop RC Trench described in melancholy terms the situation of the Turkish town, which had been established on the ruins of Ephesus – "How awful for Ephesus the fulfillment of the threat [Rev. 2:5] has been… One who did so long found only three Christians there, and these sunken in such ignorance and apathy as scarcely to have heard the names of St. Paul or St. John". NT Cities in Western Asia Minor]; **Quote**: Grant Osborne – "A church that has forgotten to love is a church that has ceased to be a church".

[6] 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

"Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" – "you hate" [miseo – to detest; present indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "which I also hate" [miseo – present indicative active; 1st person singular]; You cannot love Christ without also hating sin. A church that is truly committed to the truth will hate that things that Jesus hates; "the deeds of the Nicolaitans" [**Historical Background**: Ireanaeus took the sect to be followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, one of the seven original deacons [Acts 6:5], a Jewish proselyte, who is said to have apostatized…. Added to Irenaeus are the testimonies of Tertullian, Hippolytus, Dorotheus of Tyre, Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius. They all say this was a sect of licentious antinomian Gnostics who lapsed into their antinomian license because of an overstrained asceticism. Hippolytus adds that Nicolaus was the forerunner of Hymenaeus and Philetus who are condemned in 2 Tim. 2:17. Thomas]

[7] 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

"He who has an ear" [this formula was repeated by Christ in His earthly ministry. It is a called to heed the warning to the Forgetful Church]; "let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" – "let him hear" [akouo – aorist imperative active; 3rd person singular]

"what the Spirit says to the churches" – the Spirit is speaking to us this morning do you hear Him?; "To him who overcomes" [nikao – articular participle active; dat. masc. singular; to conquer; to be victorious] Every true believer is an overcomer because of their faith in Christ. In other words, God will give you the grace to overcome your weaknesses and your challenges for His glory; "I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God" [**Cultural &**

Historical Background: Excavations, as well, as examination of historical sources, have led to the discovery that a large garden area was a part of the temple of Artemis in Ephesus… In the heart of that garden, there was a tree, either an oak or an elm… "marked by the fixed point of the ancient tree-shrine which was the place of 'salvation' for the suppliant, surrounded by an asylum enclosed by a boundary wall. But this 'salvation' for the criminal corrupted the city." This 'tree-shrine' was a special holy place for the worship of Artemis. Evidence suggests that it was, in fact, the most sacred of all the parts of the famous temple shrine and may even have been spoken of as a 'tree of life'. The image appears in some form on most of the coinage from ancient Ephesus along with the additional symbols of the stage and the bee, which were associated with the worship of Artemis. John's readers in the church at Ephesus knew well that tree could provide no life at all. Patterson]

Revelation 2:8-11

Introduction:

[**Cultural and Historical Background**: The city of Smyrna was remarkable for its beauty. Though rivaled by Ephesus and Pergamum… The city was surrounded by sturdy walls, and on the Pagos ['the Hill'] above the city were stately public building that, because of their orderly arrangement, were called 'the crown of Smyrna'. "The Street of Gold" curved around the sloping hill from east to west and had a temple to Cybele at one end and a temple to Zeus at the other… including temples to Apollo, Asklepios, and Aphrodite, the street was compared to a necklace of jewels around the neck of a statue. To some this was the ideal city on earth. The wealthy and beautiful city also lay at the end of a road serving the rich valley of the Hermus River on the interior… The protecting deity of the city was a local adaptation of Cybele, known as the Sybeline Mother. The Greeks identified her with Nemesis, the Greek goddess of retributive justice [the goddess over the nature world]… Only here in the Greek world was she worshiped. Another religion very important to the city was worship of the Roman emperor. This was an enthusiastic center for such because of its close ties with Rome. Under Domitian [AD 81-96] emperor worship was made… failure to comply meant death. Each year every citizen had to burn incense on Caesar's altar, after which he was issued a certificate.

To be without a certificate, as must have been the case for Christians obedient to Christ, was to risk discovery and the death penalty… Smyrna's modern name is Izmir, a city which still has a Christian church. Thomas]; [p. 91 – Ismir, the third largest city in modern Turkey, is literally built on the rubble of ancient Smyrna. Patterson]. It was believed that Homer the Greek poet who wrote Iliad and Odyssey was from Smyrna. There were two things the city of Smyrna was known for. To be a city of beauty and a city of suffering. And there was a church in that city that was going through a season of suffering.

Exposition:

Five reassuring truths Jesus announces to the suffering church, so that they may not lose heart: The 1st reassuring truth that Jesus announces to the suffering church is: I want you to focus on Me to endure your suffering [v. 8]:

[8] "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The First and the Last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write" – "the angel" refers to the pastoral guardian or preaching messenger in the church who was responsible for expounding this letter to the congregation; "Smyrna" [means bitter or myrrh. Myrrh came from a tree in Smyrna that produced a brown to reddish aromatic gum that when pounded gave off a fragrance. This aromatic gum was bitter to the taste but sweet to smell. This truth presents to us both the human and divine perspective of suffering. To the human side suffering is bitter as we find ourselves pounded in life. But from the divine side the pounding of suffering is meant to produce a sweet smelling aroma to His glory; "write" [grapho – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular; aorist tense is used for a note of urgency]; "The First and the Last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this" – "the First and the Last" – this speaks of the eternal, uncreated nature of Jesus. When this title is used in the OT is it always closely connected to the Lord enforcing what He has predicted to happen in the future for the comfort of His people – I Am the First [I decreed it] and Last [I will bring it to past]; By Jesus calling Himself 'the First and the Last' this self-claim refers to being the beginning, before time and the One who stands of the end of human history, who is eternal. In other words, the title the First and Last, refer to the prophetic nature of His claim to be the beginning and the end – if He is the first and the last then He should be able to tell us at the beginning what is about to happen in the end. Whenever this title is used, it is meant to prove that point [Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12 and in v. 10 of this passage]. This title is important when it comes to the subject of suffering, because amid suffering we tend to draw pessimistic conclusions. The First and the Last, lets us know at the beginning how things will end. For His glory and our good. The reason why some Christians complain or grumble against the Lord is because they thought He was bluffing when He promised us that we would have tribulation in this life. Jesus does not intend to keep us from suffering, but He does intend to prove to us that He can bring us through it. **Quote**: As one commentator wrote, "There are no promises of an easy life in Scripture".

"who was dead" [ginomai – aorist indicative middle or passive voice [middle voice: He laid down His life Himself meaning no one took it; or passive voice: He voluntarily gave Himself over to the Father's will; 3rd person singular]; "and has come to life" [zao – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular; ingressive aorist = beginning of the verbal action; this speaks of the resurrection]; The First and the Last speaks of His control over all things from the beginning to the end. The mention of His substitutionary death and resurrection is meant to remind us that He conquered sin, death and the devil. How can the First and the Last, die?

The First and the Last became the Second Adam in His humanness and died as a substitute for repenting sinners on the cross. And rose from the grave on the third day. Two things that are impossible – it is impossible for God to die, but as man it became possible. And it is impossible for man to rise from the dead, but as God it became possible. The 1st reassuring truth Jesus announces to the suffering church is: I want you to focus on Me to endure your suffering – focus on who I am and what I have accomplished on your behalf. Listen, the fact that Jesus died and rose again on our behalf in the past means that He ever seeks to apply the benefits of His victory over sin, death and the devil to us in the present. Christ did not conquer sin and death in the past for us to lose in the present. So, when we are going through suffering we must focus on Christ to endure. The devil is not the first and the last; suffering is not the first and last; sorrow is not the first and the last; only Jesus is the first and the last. And listen, we are not called to understand why Jesus intended things to happen the way it happened, but we are called trust Him for who He says He is.

The 2nd reassuring truth Jesus announces to the suffering church is: I know about your suffering [v. 9]:

[9] I know your tribulation and your poverty [but you are rich], and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

"I know your tribulation" – "I know" [oida – perfect indicative active; 1st person singular; a perfect tense but used as a present tense; perfect tense entails an act that took place in the past with ongoing present results; translate "I have known your tribulation". Suffering has a way of making us feel like we are all alone. We tend to reason within ourselves that others don't feel like I feel. They don't understand what I am going through. They don't know what this is like. But here's the comforting part, Jesus says, "I know your tribulation" – He knows your pain, He knows your predicament, and He knows the source of your problems. Because I haven't removed you from your tribulation doesn't mean I haven't been aware of your tribulation.]; "tribulation" [the pressure of affliction you have been going through]; Jesus knows your pain; "and your poverty" – "poverty" [ptocheia – abject poverty; beggarly poverty; destitute of necessity type poverty]; Jesus knows you don't have enough money to pay your bills. Jesus knows that you are out of work. Jesus knows what will happen if the rent money doesn't come. Jesus knows that the money that you have is not enough to hold you till the end of the month. Jesus knows our financial and physical predicament; "and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" – Jesus knows the source of your problems; "and the blasphemy" [blasphemia – reviling; slander]; [**Historical/Cultural Background**: Since apparently the blasphemy here is toward Christians, they have chosen to render it "slander"…. These included the charge of cannibalism since Christians were heard to talk about "eating the body" and "drinking the blood" of Christ. Because they had 'love feasts' they were accused of immorality. Because they did not accept the Greek gods, they were accused of atheism… their unwillingness to pay homage to Caesar as lord earned them the accusation of disloyalty to Rome. [Patterson]

[In AD 155 the famous bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, was burned alive for refusing to call Caesar "Lord" during an extensive persecution instigated by the Jews. Osborne]. In fact, history records that the Jews in Smyrna help gather the wood to burn Polycarp on the Sabbath, when it was unlawful for them to work: "those who say they are Jews and are not" [These were physical descendants of Abraham but in the true sense of the meaning of the word "Jews," they were not. "Jew" is derived from the word "Judah" which means 'praise' or 'celebrated'. These Jews did not praise Jesus as the Messiah, as the God-Man, but spoke evil of Him and His followers. Jesus said it best in John 5:23 – He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. It's not who you say you are that proves you are genuine but how you live that proves whether your profession as a child of God is true. Thus, they blasphemed and were of the synagogue of Satan.]; "but" [alla – strong adversative]; "are a synagogue of Satan" refers not to the building but to the Jewish assembly who gathered there against the church, "of Satan" means adversary; How can you discern when Satan is attacking you? If you identify yourself as a follower of Jesus and seek to obey His will, whatever attack, persecution or slander you receive from other folk because of your commitment to Christ, is an attack from Satan himself. Satan loves to influence the sinful behavior of the unsaved. And sometimes he influences the carnal behavior of the saved. Persecution will come from religious people who falsely call themselves the people of God. "but you are rich" ["but" [alla – strong adversative] despite to the fact that you don't have any money in the bank; "you are" [eimi – present indicative active 2nd person singular]; "rich" [plousios – wealthy] spiritually because of who you possess –The First and the Last, the One who died and rose from the dead for your salvation; in what He has promised you – He will never leave you nor forsake you; will work all things together for your good. We are rich because we have a Sovereign Christ. This is the paradox of the Christian life that suffering oftentimes draws us to experience our riches in Christ. When we are made to feel at our lowest, Christ will make us to experience our riches. The church of Smyrna was the poor rich church.

The 3rd reassuring truth Jesus announces to the suffering church is: I am in control of your suffering [v. 10a]:

[10] Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days.

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer" – "fear" [phobeo – to terrify; to be afraid; present imperative **middle voice**; 2nd person singular – "Do not allow yourself to be afraid"]; "what" [relative pronoun; neut. nom. plural = what things]; "you are about" [mello – present indicative active; 2nd person singular; present tense – about to continually]; "to suffer" [pascho – present infinitive active]; How can we keep ourselves from being afraid when it comes to suffering? **[1] Believe** who Jesus says He is – the First and the Last – Sovereign over all things; **[2] Believe** what He did on your behalf – He died and rose again – this proves that He loves us and that He conquered sin, death and the devil for us; and **[3] Believe** in His promises – He will never leave you nor forsake you]

"Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days" – "the devil" [ho diabolos – slanderer] the devil will throw some of the believers in Smyrna in prison by means of the Jews slandering them. The Lord will allow the devil to use people to lie on you. To ruin your reputation by gossip and slander. Persecution is both physical and verbal attacks; "to cast" [ballo – present infinitive active]; "some of you into prison" – "some of you" [lit. "out of you all"]; "so that" [hina – purpose clause = what's the devil's purpose in doing this?]; "you will be tested" [peirazo – to test; to try; aorist subjunctive passive voice; 2nd person plural]; The devil seeks to test you with the intent to: **[1]** To get you to question the Lord instead of trusting the Lord; **[2]** To get you to complain against the Lord instead of obeying the Lord; and **[3]** To get you to take matters into your own hands instead of waiting on the Lord. But do you know that how you respond to your suffering will determine how Christ will deal with you? **Scrip. Ref**: 1 Pet. 5:5 – God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. God is biblically predictable on how He will respond to those who either humble themselves or promote themselves. If you humble yourself, He will give you grace. But if you become proud, He will oppose you. What the devil does to me in my trials doesn't determine how God will deal with me, I determine that. As the church of Smyrna humbled themselves under the pain of suffering Christ would grant them the grace to endure.

"and you will have tribulation for ten days" – "you will have" [exo – future indicative active; 2nd person plural]; "ten days" [literal meaning not symbolic; the context gives us no reason to spiritualize it]; Every test that the Lord allows the devil to have against us is limited. Every enemy of the church is under the authority of the Head of the church.

The 4th reassuring truth Jesus announces is: I promise to grant you victory at the end of your suffering [v.10b]

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

"Be faithful" ["Be" [ginomai – to become; present imperative **middle voice**; 2nd person singular; "keep on keeping yourself faithful" – Don't start questioning what you have known to be true about Christ all along – He does love you, He's in control of the situation; He did purpose this trial for His glory and your good. Therefore, keep trusting, keep praying, keep in the Word, keep yourself in fellowship, keep claiming the promises of God and keep waiting on Him to fulfill His word; For how long? "until death" – "until" [even to]; "and I will give you" [didomi – future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "the crown of life" – "crown" [ton stephanos – a wreath/garland given as a prize to victors in the public games; translated – "crown which is life or what true life is," epexegetical genitive: drawing out the meaning of something]

[**Historical Background**: The famous golden street that wound up Mount Pagus was studded like a crown with various public edifices and temples of notable architectural achievement. Therefore, for Smyrnans to speak of the city itself as 'the crown' was not unusual… In other words, it was a "winner's crown," and the Smyrnans are invited to see themselves, whatever their sufferings, not as losers but as winners. Patterson]. But Jesus promises a better crown, eternal life. And the point is, Jesus will cause all suffering to end in victory.] **Quote**: Amy Carmichael – It was this understanding of God's ability to fulfill the promise of Romans 8:28 that led Miss Carmichael to write, "A wise master never wastes his servant's time." As someone put it, "No matter what set of circumstances we receive, God will not waste an experience if we remain obedient to Him."

The 5th and last reassuring truth Jesus announces to the suffering church is: I will not abandon you in your suffering [v. 11]

[11] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

"He who has an ear, let him hear" [akouo – aorist imperative active; 3rd person singular]; "what the Spirit says" – "says" [lego – present indicative active 3rd person singular; presently and continually says]; "to the churches" – the Spirit is speaking to us as well; "He who overcomes" [nikao – to conquer; to be victorious; present participle active; nom. mas. singular]; Every truly born-again believer will conquer the sufferings in this life: **Scrip. Ref**: Psa. 34:19 – Many are the afflictions [rah – sorrows; bad things; calamities; miseries] of the righteous; But the Lord delivers him out of them all]; **Scrip. Ref:** Rev. 12:11 – "And they overcame him [the devil] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death" – It is the blood of the Lamb that enables me to face death knowing that there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ". Every believer is an overcomer because Christ is the One who enables him to persevere through sufferings. In fact, the perseverance of the saints is always the result of the preservation of God. Our faithfulness does not earn eternal life; faithfulness proves that one possesses eternal life. "will not be hurt by the second death" – "will not" [ou me – double negative in the original – lit. "no not"; the strongest negation in the Greek language – definitely not]; "be hurt" [adikeo – to damage; to harm; alpha-privative – not harm; not hurt; aorist subjunctive; passive; 3rd singular]; Jesus will not allow you to ever be hurt again after you die]; "by the second death" – **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 20:6 & 14 – Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power; [14] This is the second death, the lake of fire; **Scrip. Ref:** John 8:51 – Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death – thank God for double "truly" [This is truth, this is truth, I say to you] "he shall never see death."

You and I have not seen ultimate and eternal death; we have only seen temporal death, the body without the soul. But not eternal death, the soul with body in hell forever. Everyone will experience the first death but only the overcomer will not experience the second death.

Conclusion:

As Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, traveled to Rome to be martyred in about 117, he wrote letters to Smyrna and to its bishop, Polycarp. The aged Polycarp himself was to be martyred. The text which describes his death is the first of the martyr acts from the early church… Polycarp knew St. John at Ephesus. When the proconsul Quadratus adjured Polycarp to deny Christ, the venerable bishop answered in memorable words: Eighty and six years have I served Him and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me? [NT Cities in Western Asia Minor: Edwin Yamauchi]; **Quote**: Philip Doddridge [1702-1751] "I am more afraid of doing what is wrong than of dying."

Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction:

The city of Pergamum has a population of 120,000 people. But the city had zoning laws which divided the population into sections. At the foot of the hill is where the poor people lived. The next level was the business district and above the business district is where the rich lived and at the top of the hill is where you have important public buildings and temples. The local deities that they worshiped in these temples were Zeus, the savior god, Dionysos, the god of the royal family whose mystical name was Bull. The goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom and military, who was the daughter of Zeus. And Asklepios, the god of healing. It was his temple that attracted people from all over the world, because within the temple there were living non-poisonous snakes, slithering all over the floor in the temple. And what happened is the sick person would spend the night on the floor in the temple hoping that Asklepios would heal him through the touch of snakes. You might find it interesting to know that a medical symbol came from this religion that has been passed down to our modern day in the form of two snakes intertwined around a pole. This city is so well-known for its medical advancements because it was the birthplace of Galen who was second only to Hippocrates as the most famous physician in ancient times. It was Galen who perfected his medical skills by tending to injured and dying gladiators.

But also, Pergamum was known to have manufactured parchment out of animal skin, which was writing material. In fact, this parchment was called "pergamenized". This city was committed not only to medical science but also academics. It had the second largest library in the world with 200,000 volumes of material but Mark Antony gave the library to Cleopatra as an expression of his love for her.

But besides being a beautiful city seated on a hill overlooking the surrounding lands and being a city committed to medical science and education it was also the first city in Asia to have a temple dedicated to a Roman emperor.

[Historical/Cultural Background: It preceded both Ephesus and Smyrna with this distinctive. Compared to all the surrounding cities, Caesar-worship was the most intense here. In other cities a Christian might be in danger on only one day of a year when a pinch of incense had to be burned in worship of the emperor. In Pergamum, however, Christians were in danger every day of the year for the same reason. Thomas]

Exposition:

Four sharp reactions Jesus has towards the compromising church, so that we may learn how to conduct ourselves: The 1st sharp reaction Jesus has towards the compromising church is: Jesus commends the church for persevering in persecution [vv. 12-13]:

[12] "**And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this**:

"The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this" – Jesus addresses the letter to the preaching messenger of the church by identifying Himself as "The One who has the sharp two-edged sword" – this self-identification is taken from the vision the apostle John had of Jesus Christ as the Exalted Priest King whom John saw as having "a sharp two-edged sword" coming out of His mouth [Rev. 1:16]. This self-identification is not meant to be comforting or encouraging but is meant to strike fear. This large, sharp, double edge sword represents judgment.

Jesus doesn't want us to picture Him as the meek and lowly in His earthly humiliation. But as exalted and glorified in heaven. Yet, He is still loving, merciful, sympathetic and gracious but He is also holy and righteous. And we as the church would do well to ever maintain the balance of who He is. If we hold to Jesus as only being loving, gracious and merciful then we will tempt ourselves to downplay His warnings and commands in Scripture. However, if we also believe that Jesus is righteous and possesses a holy hatred against sin, then we will heed His warnings and commands. This picture of a large sharp two-edged sword, which speaks of Christ's precision to cut to the heart of the problem and execute judgment upon those who defy Him is meant to turn the focus of the congregation away from the fear of man to Himself. See, the Roman proconsul or governor in charge of the province of Asia Minor resided in Pergamum and the symbol of his sovereign control over every human life was the sword, which executed the enemies of the state. But Christ has a sharp two-edged sword, not in His hand but in His mouth, which means He judges His church with His words. And His first words to His church are words of commendation for persevering in persecution:

[13] 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."

"I know where you dwell" – "I know" [oida – perfect indicative active 1st person singular; "I have known" – Jesus has full and intimate knowledge of the circumstances of this church. He is fully aware of the context of your life. He knows the details of your situation. This knowledge is the caring knowledge not abstract knowledge]; "where you dwell" [katoikeo – to dwell; reside; **present** indicative; active; 2nd person singular]; Jesus knows the neighborhood these believers live in]; "where Satan's throne is" – "throne" refers to control and authority. There is debate among theologians on what "Satan's throne" represent. Some believe that it refers to the temple of Asklepios, the god of healing, whose temple floors were covered with slithering non-poisonous snakes. And since Satan is referred to as a serpent, then the throne of Satan must represent the snake religion of Pergamum. But other theologians believe that the throne of Satan refers to the imperial cult in Pergamum, emperor worship. If the early church did not give a pinch of incense in worship to the Roman emperor, they were in danger of being killed.

When Jesus addressed the church at Smyrna, He referred to the Jews of that city as belonging to the "synagogue of Satan". To the church at Philadelphia were also being persecuted by the Jews in that city, Jesus referred to them as belonging to the "synagogue of Satan" [3:9]. Many have the misconception that Satan is residing in hell. But the devil is not in hell, he is roaming back and forth on the earth seeking to devour the people of God. And he attacks the church through religious people and governing authorities. And the attack against the Christians through Roman authorities in Pergamum was so fierce that Jesus refers to them living where Satan's throne is. Basically, Jesus addressed this church as: The Church Where Satan Lives.

Yet even though Satan attacks the church through religious people and governing authorities, his power is always limited when it comes to attacking us. In the book of Revelation, the word "throne" is used 42 times. 40 out of 42 times the word "throne" always refers to God's throne, which means "throne" is only used twice in reference to Satan. In other words, Satan is not ultimately in control of our lives, God is. And the only reason why Satan attacks us is because God gave him permission to do so for His glory and our good. Now the question is: Why would God give the devil permission to attack us? I'll tell you what's not the answer: So that we may retaliate and curse folk out. Or that we may complain to others about it. But for two reasons: **[1]** That God might prove to the devil that no matter what he throws at His people He is able to keep them from stumbling [Jude 24]; **[2]** To show the devil that the church loves His Son more than comfort.

"and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith" – "you hold fast My name" – "hold fast" [krateo – to keep carefully/faithfully; to have power; **present** indicative active 2nd person singular; "you keep holding fast"]; "My name" – refers to who Jesus is. He is Lord. In other words, you refused to say Caesar is Lord and kept holding fast to Jesus is Lord;

"and did not deny My faith" – "and did not deny" [arneomai – to deny; aorist indicative **middle voice** 2nd person singular; aorist tense refers to an event in the past]; "My faith" – when these believers were tested as to whether they would deny Jesus as Lord, they did not deny but kept trusting in Him. Sufferings in and of itself doesn't make you a strong Christian. You may have been through a lot of things in life but that doesn't mean you are a strong person; it may mean that you are a stubborn person. Only faith in Christ can make you a strong Christian in suffering. If you suffer without faith, you will falter. These believers kept trusting in the Lordship of Jesus Christ even when their lives were threatened. **Quote:** Dr. Hamilton – "To deny the faith in the face of death would be to declare that one believes life in the here and now is better than Jesus, better than having the life He promises". These believers testified by their actions that seeing Jesus in death was better than denying Jesus in life.

"even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells" – "Antipas" – there is no information about Antipas in the NT besides this verse. But tradition says, "he had been roasted to death in a brazen bull during the reign of Domitian for standing against paganism (his name means "**against all**") Grant Osborne]; It is believed that since he was the only one killed and not the church that he might have died due to mob violence. But Jesus refers to Antipas as "My witness. My faithful one" ["witness" – martus – by the 3rd century the Greek word for "witness," martyr came to be used for Christians who died for the faith. Jesus calls those who are willing to die for His name "My witness, My faithful one". Can Jesus say that about you? Are you a witness for Jesus? Or are you a worldly wimp? It's easy to be a witness around those who agree with you but are you a witness for the truth of Christ around those you know will oppose you if you speak up. Antipas spoke up, he lived according to his name "against all". **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 10:32 – Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. [33] But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

The 2nd sharp reaction Jesus has towards the compromising church is: Jesus confronts the church for being passive when it comes to sinful members [vv. 14-15]

[14] '**But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immortality**.

"But I have a few things against you" – "But" [alla – strong adversative; Though I commend you for not being willing to deny Me before My enemies – "But I have a few things against you"; "because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam" – "you have" [eko – present indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "some who hold" [krateo – to hold fast; to not let go; present participle active; accus. masc. plural – "some who keep holding and will not let go"]; "the teaching of Balaam" – "Balaam" is the false prophet mentioned in the book of Numbers, chapters 22-24.

In the OT, Balaam is mentioned about 60 times because he is considered the prototype of all corrupt, money seeking, false prophets. All false prophets are the same, they are in it for the money, not for you to receive a blessing. And the context here seems to show that these believers did not participate in the false doctrine of Balaam but that they knew about it and did not nothing. That's why Jesus has a few things against you.

Sometimes, when the world is against you, your flesh and the devil will tempt you to find middle ground with those who are in sin to avoid further conflict. When you make enemies on the outside, you will be tempted to compromise with enemies on the inside: "who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immortality" – "who kept teaching" [didasko – imperfect indicative active 3rd person singular]; "Balak" – the king of Moab, who hired Balaam to curse Israel because he was afraid that Israel would destroy him. But instead, Balaam kept blessing Israel because the Lord confronted him and told him that he could not curse what God had blessed. So since, Balaam knew that he could not curse Israel in the name of the Lord, he counseled Balak to tempt Israel to sin in order that Israel may be judged by the Lord; So Balaam kept teaching Balak "to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality" – "stumbling block" [skandalon – means to cast a trap or snare; to place a bait in order to trap an animal; we get our English word "scandal" from this word – "a cause of stumbling"]; "to eat" [esthio – aorist infinitive active]; "to commit acts of immorality" [porneuo – aorist infinitive active; to have unlawful sexual intercourse; comes from the noun porneia; English word "pornography"; any sexual behavior outside the covenant of marriage between a male and a female]; Meat sacrificed to idols and fornication simply communicates the lie that God gives us a license to pursue our pleasures. In Numbers 25, it says that "the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab". And the Lord's anger burned against Israel that He sent a plague among them and 24,000 died.

Years ago, the United States Episcopal diocese voted to stop using masculine pronouns for God. This was their reason, "By expanding our language for God, we will expand our image of God and the nature of God". This is the sin of idolatry. By no longer referring to God in the masculine gender, which communicates headship and authority. They will address Him in the neuter gender to support their transgender and homosexual tendencies. These are Balaamites who keep putting a stumbling block before the church.

When you distort the God of the Bible, you have just created an idol with a Christian name. And if our teaching concerning Christ is different than His self-identification here in revelation, then we will be passive when it comes to sin. Now the question is, why does the church have these problems? Why does the church lack discernment today? How can people who have been raised in church all their lives be so gullible? You know why? Because their knowledge of the Christian faith is nothing more than watered down song lyrics and religious clichés rather than Scripture.

And here's what happens when a pastor seeks to conform the church to what the Bible teaches. There will be those in the church who are biblically illiterate who will have a problem with it. Everyone else who knows their Bibles see no problem with it because Christian common sense says, "Well, if we say that Christ is the head of the church, then His Word should be the authority in the church." That's simple. That's not complicated. But because some people's theology is nothing more than watered down song lyrics and Christian t-shirts their standard of measure is governed by compromise and sentimentality. People who claim unity but appeal to feelings as a measure of what is right. Thus, if it feels right, then it must be of the Spirit, since we have always attributed the movement of the Spirit to worship music. Therefore, when the truth of the Word is being applied it always feels off key. It feels stern, rigid, hard, unloving and judgmental. But the Spirit never moves apart from His Word nor against His Word. In fact, the Bible says that a Spirit-filled believer is a Word-filled believer [Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16]. In short, a compromising church is a church that divorces itself from the Word and measures everything subjectively. So why does the church lack discernment today? Because there are some in the church who want a feel good religion rather than a relationship with the true God.

[15] '**So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans**.

"hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans" – "hold" [krateo – to have; to not let go of; present participle active accus. masc. plural]; [Historical Background: Ireanaeus took the sect to be followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, one of the seven original deacons [Acts 6:5], a Jewish proselyte, who is said to have apostatized…. Added to Irenaeus are the testimonies of Tertullian, Hippolytus, Dorotheus of Tyre, Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius. They all say this was a sect of licentious antinomian Gnostics who lapsed into their antinomian license because of an overstrained asceticism.] That you can live in open sin with the blessing of God – libertarianism – one who believes he or she is free from obedience to God's commands to live however they want; antinomianism – grace sets a person free from adherence to the law. And listen, Jesus is against the church not because the church was believing or practicing these things but simply because they were passive in not confronting sinful members who were living this way.

Are we a compromising church? A passive church? A keep quiet church? A so let it be church? A cowardly church? For there are a number of churches in our community who are spiritually weak, carnal, immature and shallow because they are a congregation of compromisers. There is no spiritual power in these places. But there's a lot of God talk, a lot of shouting, a lot of activity, a lot gimmicks but what is absent is the glory of God, the exaltation of Christ and the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

The 3rd sharp reaction Jesus has towards the compromising church is: Jesus calls the church to repent of her compromising ways [v. 16]

[16] '**Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth**.

"Therefore repent" – In the original the word "repent" is placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis – "repent" [metanoeo – to hate and turn away from sin; **aorist** imperative active; 2nd person singular; aorist is used as a note of urgency] "or else I am coming to you quickly" – "I am coming" [erchomai – present indicative middle voice 1 person singular; I myself am coming]; "to you quickly" This coming is not referring to the second coming but a promise to visit this church in judgment in the near future; "and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth" – "I will make war" [polemeo – to fight; to war; from this word we get the English word "polemic" – controversial; a serious controversy is when the Head of the Church is about to fight His bride; future indicative active 1st person singular] "against them" – notice the statement before "I am coming to you quickly" – the "you" and the "them" is referring to the entire church; "with the sword of My mouth" – judgment. People think that sin should not be confronted in the church for fear of offending members, but Jesus says if we don't fight against sin He will fight against us. Therefore, judgment is necessary.

You don't have to agree with the person in the wrong to be a compromiser. All you have to do is ignore, excuse, pretend or be passive in not confronting that person you know is living in sin. But in the mind of Christ, you are just as guilty as the one committing the sin because you know it is wrong and you are not willing to love that person enough to confront them. If your idea of love is to turn a blind eye, then you don't understand the gospel. The gospel is God loving us enough to deal with us where we were, dead in trespasses and sins and on our way to hell. But He sent His Son to deliver us from our sins and sent His Spirit to turn us away from our sins. A love that ignores sin, is not the love of God but the hatred of Satan. And if we allow false doctrine and ungodly living to go uncheck Jesus will fight against His own church. Sin will always bring God's opposition in your life. If you reject the Word, the Word will attack you [Heb. 4:12]. Balaam was killed by a sword from Israel – Josh. 13:22

The 4th and last sharp reaction Jesus has towards the compromising church is: Jesus confirms a promise of eternal rewards to those who overcome compromise [v. 17]

[17] '**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.**

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" – Everyone wants to hear the Spirit speak now and days, but not when He is confronting the church; "To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it" – "To him who overcomes" [nikao – to conquer; to be victorious; present participle active; dat. masc. singular; a victorious Christian is not a compromiser but is one who demonstrates that he or she is truly saved by being faithful in living out the truth of God's word.]; Two promises are given to the overcomer: "to him I will give some of the hidden manna" – "hidden" [krupto – to conceal; perfect participle passive voice gen. masc. singular; "which has been hidden";

["manna" - "Tradition says that at the time of the destruction of Solomon's temple, Jeremiah, or others say an angel, was told by God to take the ark and hide it underground at Mount Sinai, there to await the eschaton, when the Messiah would place the ark in the new temple [Jer. 3:16; 2 Macc. 2:4-7]; This manna is not referring to Jesus who is the true bread, because He has not been hidden from us. This is heavenly food.]; "I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it" – "I will give him a white stone" – "I will give" [didomi – future indicative active 1st person singular]; "a white stone" – a smooth white stone]; [**Historical/Cultural Background**: Such a white stone with one's name on it was the basis for admission to special events. It was also a well-established custom to reward victors at the games with such a token enabling them to gain admission to a special feast… The white stone is, then, a personalized tessara, which would serve as his token of admission to this great future feast. Thomas]; "and a new name written on the stone" – "new" [kainon – fresh; unused; unworn; "new" does not mean new in contrast to what is old, but something that is different in nature. Clearly the new name is the recipient's own name, a new one, reflecting his status as belonging to Christ. Thomas]; "the hidden manna" is in contrast to "eating food sacrificed to idols" and "a white stone with a new name" contrasts with "committing fornication". The "hidden manna" and the "white stone" are symbols of the Messianic feast that we will participate in when He returns. Jesus provides true food that comes from God that satisfies and Jesus provides true intimacy as opposed to cheat and immoral substitutes.

Revelation 2:18-29

3 penetrating discoveries Jesus reveals about the ministry philosophy of the tolerant church, so that all churches be warned: The 1st penetrating discovery Jesus reveals about ministry philosophy of the tolerant church is: It is a church that strives to become better at loving others and serving the community [vv. 18-19]:

[18] "**And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this**:

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write" – "the angel of the church" as you remember refers to the pastoral messenger and guardian over the local congregation. The pastoral leadership is held responsible for what happens in the life of the church; "in Thyatira" means "perpetual sacrifice or continual offering". For the sake of context, you need to know this about Thyatira: [**Cultural Background**: It was known "for its numerous guilds [roughly equivalent of today's labor unions]. Thyatira's main industry was the production of wool and dyed goods [especially purple goods] but inscriptions also mention guilds for linen workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave dealers, and bronze smiths. [There is one person we are all familiar with who came from this city. According to Acts 16:14, when the apostle Paul arrived in Philippi, he met "a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics."]

The primary god worshiped by the Thyatirans was the Greek sun god, Apollo. The pressure faced by the Christians in Thyatira came from the guilds. To hold a job or run a business, it was necessary to be a member of a guild. Each guild had its patron deity, in whose honor feasts were held – complete with meat sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality. Christians faced the dilemma of attending those feasts or possibly losing their livelihood. MacArthur]. It is like the intimidation that takes place in some secular environments, where a Christian is expected to agree with secular beliefs or deny his own beliefs under the threat of termination. This is the environment that these believers lived in. And maybe one of the reasons why Lydia left Thyatira. Therefore, knowing that the tension was high Jesus commands John the apostle "to write" to this church with a sense of urgency to remind this church of who He is. He is: "The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this" – "Son of God" – the Greek god Apollo was also known as the son of Zeus. Jesus begins with this self-identification of the "Son of God". The True Son of the Living God, the One possesses the very nature of God the Father. This is the only time this title is used in the book of Revelation. And it used here to call the church to realize that there is only One God they should be concerned about in pleasing and that is Jesus, the Son of God, not the god of the culture. It is a way of reminding the church of who is the true authority over the church; "who has eyes like a flame of fire" – "who has" [ho echo – present participle active nom. masc. sing; articular participle; lit. "the One who *continually* has eyes like a flame of fire; this speaks of holy omniscience. Eyes that pierces through to the inner most being and exposes what is hidden. This is not a causal glance but a look of scrutinizing judgement; "and His feet are like burnished bronze" – is meant to convey that Jesus' feet is at war against sin, seeking to stamp out rebellion in His church. The holiness of Jesus is no abstract concept. The holiness of Christ must be expressed and experienced in the lives His people both to sanctify us and scared us away from sin. Christ is not just manifesting His sovereignty over the church, but He also intends to manifest His holiness in the church.
Quote: Old Scottish philosopher "Men never thought of painting a picture of Jesus until they had lost His presence in their hearts."

[19] 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

"I know your deeds" – "I know" [perfect (with a present meaning) indicative active 1st person singular]; "your deeds" – your actions; your behavior; your lifestyle. In this context this refers to both their attitude and actions articulated in the rest of the verse – "and your love and faith and service and perseverance" – "your love" [agapen – sacrificial love for God and others; a love governed by the will]; "and faith" ["pistis" refers to trust in the Lord]; "and service" [diakonian – ministry service to the needs of others; out of the seven cities this is the only church that was commended for both its love and service].

The first penetrating discovery Jesus reveals about the ministry philosophy of the tolerant church is a very good one. It is a church that strives to get better in showing love, exercising faith, commitment to service and continuing to persevere through the difficulties of life. Not all tolerant churches have unloving and unkind people in fact you might meet some of the nicest and most sincere people in these settings, more than those in a lot of doctrinally sound churches sad to say. What use is it to know the truth and be so unkind and uncharitable? But the balance of our Lord's first assessment of this church is to first see the positive side before the negative side. "and that your deeds of late are greater than at first." – "greater" in quantity "than at first" – the attitudes of love and faith, that manifested itself in the actions of service and endurance was growing and expanding in this church.

The 2nd penetrating discovery Jesus reveals about the tolerant church is: It is a church that tolerates sin to avoid being rejected by the community [vv. 20-23]:

[20] '**But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

"But I have this against you" – "But" [alla – strong adversative; Not "But" on a lesser note; "But" despite the good "I have against you"]; "I have this against you" ["I have" – echo – present indicative active; 1st person singular]; "that you tolerate the woman Jezebel" – "you tolerate" [aphiemi – to permit; to allow; not to hinder; present indicative active 2nd person singular] "you" refers to the whole church collectively. Jesus accuses the whole church of tolerating – "the woman Jezebel" – now this is not the woman's real name, but it is a symbolic designation given by Jesus because her character and actions in the church were Jezebel like. As you recall Jezebel of the OT was the Canaanite wife of King Ahab, who ruled over the Northern kingdom. Jezebel led the nation of Israel in the worship of Baal. In 1 Kings 21:25, it says that "there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife incited him". When your behavior is such that Jesus refers to you by the name of the evilest woman in history that is saying something. This is sobering! I wonder when the Lord looks at our lives do we live in such a way that our behavior reminds Him of a godly saint of old or a wicked person? Would Jesus call you a son of Abraham or Sarah by the demonstration of your faith and obedience? Or would He call you a Jezebel or a Judas by the behavior of your life? "who calls herself a prophetess" – "who calls" [lego – to say; present participle active; fem. nom. singular]; "herself a prophetess" – when someone gives himself/herself a title of authority doesn't automatically mean that God has called them to that position; "and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray" – "teaches" [didasko – present indicative active; 3rd person singular; this means that she was teaching over the whole congregation of men and women in clear violation of 1 Tim. 2:12-15 on a continual basis.]; "leads astray" [planao – present subjunctive active; 3rd person singular; from this verb we get the English noun "planet" a wandering body]

"so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols" – "commit acts of immorality" [porneuo – to commit fornication; to have sexual relations outside the covenant of marriage between a male and female; aorist infinitive active]; "to eat things sacrificed to idols" – "to eat" [esthio – aorist infinitive active]; Today it would be to consume/ingest a belief system that teaches that Christians can still be considered Christians even though they prize the valuable system of the world above Christ.

A tolerant church typically selects its leadership based on furthering its reputation in the community rather than selecting leadership that will help the church to grow in its relationship to Christ. It might be that this Jezebel had to first convince these believers that in order to maintain their jobs and be a witness in the community that had to participate in the pagan ritual of fornication that came after eating food to idols knowing that eating food to idols would lead to immorality. False teachers always seek to remove the shock value from something that is deem wrong in order that people might feel more comfortable indulging in evil. So, they will talk openly about sex until the hearts and minds become desensitized to immorality. In other words, false teachers seek to normalize sin. They will even sprinkle throughout the congregation those who follow them to seduce the church into thinking it's okay to do sinful things since grace covers it. God wants you to experience the freedom from guilt by indulging in sin. The lies of the devil.

3 warning signs of a false teacher/preacher – **1]** self-appointed – "calls herself a prophetess". They are not Spirit-led and Scripture qualified leaders but self-promoted and self-appointed, even in matters where a pastor may ordain them to the office. These are ones who don't submit themselves to the authority of Scripture. This is my main concern when it comes to women preachers. It has nothing to do with ability or giftedness in comparison to men but everything to do a refusal to submit themselves to the authority of Scripture that clearly says that a woman ought not to teach or exercise authority over a man [1 Tim. 2:12-15]. There is and there has never been a biblical or exegetical basis for ordaining women preachers. You can't find a woman pastor in the NT, because there were none. So, these women undermine the authority of Scripture by appointing themselves as leaders in the church. There are 3 ways the Bible can be lost in the church: 1] when the preacher doesn't preach from it; 2] when the Bible is no the authority in the church but tradition, by-laws or church committees are the authority; 3] when the leadership and congregation places themselves before the Bible as the source of divine revelation; **2]** teaching that leads God's people away from the truth – "and teaches and leads My bondservants astray" – like people like priest. All self-appointed leaders have bad theology. Why? If a self-appointed leader does not submit to the authority of Scripture, then that means they have appointed themselves as an authority. And when you are the authority as opposed to Christ being the authority, then your teaching will reflect an anti-Christ theology. Thus, in this case, the woman Jezebel was teaching in such a way that it was causing the bondservants of Christ to be led astray. If you have unqualified leadership, you will have a mislead people;

3] worldly behavior is tolerated in the church – "so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols" – all unqualified and disqualified leadership espouses false doctrine, whether it relates to distorting the Christian belief system or Christian behavior. This woman Jezebel like woman had no virtue or sacred honor for the marriage bed. She was sensual, exotic and profane in teaching the whole congregation that Christian living is not living holier than thou but indulging in the sins of the world. And this woman practiced what she preached. Loose doctrine always leads to loose living.

Therefore, false teachers will get you to believe that your sin betters your witness. Nobody in the world wants to be around someone who's perfect, because perfect people are condemning people. But imperfect people can better relate to lost people. So, flaunt your sin as a witness for God. Is that how you reason away the call to live a holy life? But the gospel says that we are to let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Christians are not perfect people nor they just forgiven people, they are new creatures in Christ. Good service in the church and the community is no substitute for tolerance of false teachers, false doctrine and sinful lifestyles in the church.

[21] 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

"I gave her time to repent" lit. "and I gave her time so that she might repent" – "I gave" [didomi – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "time" [chronos – a countdown from the time she was warned to the present time; the Lord may have given her months or years]. This time to repent probably came from the group within the church who did not agree with her sinful behavior and confronted her about it. Listen, when the Lord has not judged you for your sin, it doesn't mean that He doesn't have a problem with your sin. Don't interpret the patience of God as the permission of God. The patience of God towards sin has a purpose "so that" [hina – in order that; purpose clause]; "to repent" – lit. "she might repent" [metanoeo – aorist subjunctive; active; 3rd person singular];"and she does not want to repent of her immorality" – "she does not want" [ou thelo – not desire; not intend; not determined; present indicative active 3rd person singular]; "to repent" [metanoeo – to turn away from; to change her mind which would lead to a change in behavior; aorist infinitive active]; "of her immorality" [tas porneias – her sexual promiscuity]; I have dealt with people like this in the church. Instead of repenting, they say pray for me.

[22] 'Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

"Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness" – "Behold" [See]; "I will throw her" [Ballo – to cast; present indicative active; 1st person singular]; "on a bed of sickness" – lit. "into a bed"; It's a play on words here. The Lord is saying, "If Jezebel wants to be in bed. I'll put her in bed. Her sickbed."; "and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds" – "those who commit adultery" [tous moicheuo – present participle active mas. accus. plural; the men of the church were cheating on their wives in the name of Christian liberty.];

"into great tribulation" – not the end times tribulation detailed in chapters 4-19 of Revelation but a great physical affliction; "unless they repent of her deeds" – this entails turning away from submitting to her false doctrine of sexual sin and idol worship. Safety from judgment is found in repentance from sin. Notice that Jesus extends grace to His bondservants if they repent but not to false teachers who refuse to repent.

[23] 'And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

"And I will kill her children with pestilence" – "I will kill" [apokteino – to kill; future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "her children" – this doesn't mean Jezebel's biological children but her spiritual children, her followers; "with pestilence" [thanoto – death but in this context a disease that leads to death; this same word is translated "pestilence" throughout Revelation (6:8; 18:8]; How do you know the ones who are children of Jezebel from those who are children of God in the church? Listen, Jesus says that those who tolerate professing Christians living in open sin are children of Jezebel not of God. You can always spot Jezebel's children in the church. They support her teaching and defend her lifestyle. They shout in support of her false teaching and post it on social media. And they defend or attack those who speak against her and her lifestyle. Are you a child of Jezebel? Are you tolerant of false teaching and ungodly living in the church? Jesus will judge Jezebel's children. "and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts" – "will know" [ginosko – future indicative; **middle voice**; 3rd person plural – lit. "and all churches will themselves know"; "that I am He who searches the minds and hearts" – "I am" [ego eimi]; "He who searches" [ereuvao – to examine into; present participle active; nom. mas. singular; "continually searches or examines "the minds and hearts" [mind literally means "kidneys" – the feelings and desires; heart – the thoughts, motives and will]. Every hidden aspect of our being is continually searched by Jesus.

"and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds" – "I will give" [didomi – future indicative active; 1st person singular – this is a promise]; "according to your deeds" – Jesus tests the mind and judges the actions, which means He doesn't buy into the philosophy that you can do wrong and yet your motives can be right. He judges the deeds as a reflection of your motives. If Christ must choose between Himself being dishonored while you indulge in unrepentant sin or Him being honored while you suffer for sin. He will always choose His honor.

The 3rd and last penetrating discovery Jesus reveals about the tolerant church is: It is a church that has some members who stand for the truth against the immoral standards of the community [vv. 24-29]:

[24] 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them – I place no other burden on you.

"But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them – I place no other burden on you." – "the deep things of Satan, as they call them" was Jezebel's boasting that Christian can participate in idol worship and fornication because in essence there are not gods, but the One true God and His grace will cover our sin. "I place no other burden on you" – the burden or vexation of being in a church where the leadership teaches error and the people are living ungodly.

[25] 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

"what you have, hold fast" – refers to the Word of God, the gospel. The only instrument that will guard us from being led astray into error and sinful living is the Word of God; "until I come" – for His church.

[26] 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end" – "He who overcomes" [nikao – to conquer; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "he who keeps" [tereo – to guard; to observe; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS" – This is a quote from Psalm 2:8 where the Father promises His Son, the Messiah authority over the nations of the world. This is referring to the time of Christ's second coming. And here the church is promised to share in Christ's reign over the nations. In other words, instead of enslaving ourselves to the standards of the culture realize that one day you will be reigning over it.

[27] AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father;

"AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES" – this speaks of punishing rebellion against the Lord; "as I also have received authority from My Father" – "have received" [lambano – perfect indicative active; 1st person singular; received authority to reign over the world Christ also has given to us the promise of reigning over the world with Him.

[28] **and I will give him the morning star**.

"the morning star" refers to Jesus Christ [Rev. 22:16]. The morning star is the brightest star that appears at the break of dawn. When Jesus Christ comes back, we will reign with Him. So why group yourself with a culture who one day will be subdued under your feet? Why would winners want to live like losers? Why would you want to be accepted by those who will one day be defeated? The challenge when times get dark is to give in to the darkness, to compromise or be tolerant of evil, but the night is always darkest before the dawn. The morning star is Jesus Christ. A new day is coming [Rev. 22:16]

[29] 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'.

"let him hear" [akouo – aorist imperative active; 3rd person singular]; The Spirit is speaking to us this morning. It may not be what you want to hear but it is what we need to hear. Are you listening?

Revelation 3:1-6

As we come to the city of Sardis, we notice that it is two cities, which explains why the word "Sardis" is plural in the original. One city at the foot of a large hill and the oldest city 1,500 feet at the top of the hill. It was the city at the top of the large hill that was wealthy, luxurious and at one time thought to be impregnable: [At any rate the city was a military power that rarely lost a battle and was feared by all. The city also attained great wealth through commerce and trade. Legend stated that Midas left his gold in the springs of Pactolus that ran through the city, and that legend may have come from the presence of gold dust in the springs that added to their wealth. Sardis was the first to mint gold and silver coins…

[the city was defeated by Cyrus of Persia due to the city guards' failed caution. Herodotus relates how the city was fortified except for one area with a sheer cliff. As one of the Persian soldiers observed a guard of the city retrieving his dropped helmet, the Persian figured he too could climb up the cliff; along with others he did and took the city by surprise attack. Polybius describes the fall of the city to Antiochus III in 214 BC occurring similarly from careless negligence. At an unguarded point in the wall, considered impossible to take, some brave and cunning soldiers put ladders against that spot one night and at dawn entered the city as the main force struck at the city's main gate... New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek NT]; [Sardis fell after only 14 days of the siege in 546 BC. This so astounded the Greek world that "capturing Sardis" became a saying for achieving the impossible.

Sardis had a large Jewish community that dated from the fifth or fourth century BC… One of the largest synagogues ever excavated was built there in the second century AD. Since it is part of a gymnasium complex, it seems Jewish and Hellenistic life had a remarkable confluence… this may demonstrate a Jewish and Christian accommodation to pagan surroundings, syncretism with the local culture. While Christian syncretism cannot be known from outside sources, there are some indications in this letter that would support such a conclusion. Osborne]

One of the main blind spots of Christianity in America is syncretism. "Syncretism is the attempt to assimilate differing or opposite doctrines and practices. Syncretism of the gospel occurs when its essential character is confused with elements from the culture" [Dictionary of Theological Terms]. This strange mixture leads to assimilating white supremacy with the Christian faith; Black liberation theology with the Christian faith; secular humanism and psychology with the Christian faith [intergration]; market driven business philosophies with the Christian faith; legalism with the Christian faith; libertarianism with the Christian faith and here paganism with

the Christian faith. We do well in mixing two mutually exclusive beliefs together and call it Christian. But these strange and poisonous mixtures have the potential of killing a church.

Exposition:

4 warning signs of a dead church: The 1st warning sign of a dead church is: A church whose purpose is to be popular in the community not pure in its relationship to the Lord [v. 1]:

[1] "**To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead**.

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write" – "To the angel" – this letter written by the apostle John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the very words of Jesus is addressed "to the angel" the angel refers to the human messenger in the church, whose responsibility is to deliver God's Word to God's people, the pastor; "of the church in Sardis" – "church" [ekklesias – a congregation of professing believers who have been called out of the world to Christ]; "in Sardis" – According to one historian the city of Sardis was a city that was not only wealthy but also of softness and apathy. And it is a concern for Christ has He addresses this church, that the church has become like the city. In fact, unlike the other churches we have studied thus far where Jesus gives a compliment before a compliant. He gives no compliment to this church. What He has to say to this congregation is serious and urgent. Therefore, you have the command given by Jesus to John "write" [grapho – aorist imperative active 3rd person singular]; "He who has the seven Spirits of God" – "He who has the seven Spirits of God" – "He who has" [ho echon – to have; to hold; present participle active nom. masc. singular]; "the seven Spirits of God" – we saw this expression used in reference to the Holy Spirit [1:4]. It doesn't mean that there are seven Holy Spirits. The number "seven" is being used figuratively here to represent fullness or completeness of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has under His authority the corporation of the Holy Spirit to bless those with His fullness whom the Son chooses.

[**Cultural Background**: Pagan religions throughout the area attributed healing power to their deities, but in Sardis special emphasis focused on the power to restore life to the dead. This special power was connected with a hot springs about two miles from the city. [Thomas]

Only the seven Spirits of God, the fullness and completeness of the Holy Spirit could revive, restore and renew fallen, broken and dead lives. When we grieve the Holy Spirit by pride and unconfessed sin, the Spirit will refuse to empower us with His sanctifying graces. But when you yield to the Holy Spirit's control by confession and through humility, He will infuse your soul with the attitude fruit of His presence in you – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control and will empower your action to walk in holiness and contentment. Are you yielded to the Spirit? Conflicts have nothing to do with personality but everything to do with disobedient Christians refusing to yield to the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

"and the seven stars" – Jesus also has authority over the seven stars. According to Rev. 1:20, the seven stars represent the seven pastoral messengers to the seven churches. For Jesus to describe Himself as having under His authority the seven stars is meant to communicate that no pastor, no matter what context of his ministry he is in, has the right to do ministry anyway he wants too.

"says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead" – "I know your deeds" – "I know" [oida – perfect w/ a present tense; indicative active; 1st person singular; "I have known"]; "your deeds" – the individual lifestyle of each member, your behavior inside and outside the church. But here "your deeds" refers specifically to how they had worked so hard to achieve a certain status – "that you have a name that you are alive" – "you have" [echo – present indicative active 2nd person singular]; "a name" [means a reputation; a distinction; an honor]; "that you are alive" [Zao – to live; to be alive; present indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "Alive" here doesn't mean existing but to have fullness of life, joy of life, that your life is like Deacon Will Smith used to say, "If it got any better I couldn't stand it" sort of life. This was their assessment of themselves as an alive church. But Jesus had a different assessment – "but you are dead" – "you are" [eimi – present indicative active; 2nd person singular; "you are (in fact) dead"] lit. "you have a name that you are alive, and you are dead" [nekros – lifeless]; The church was diagnosed by Jesus as dead because the church culture catered to the world culture – you could hear it in the worship music, where themes about Christ, God, the cross, salvation and holiness were missing. You could hear it in the sermons where there were more themes about pursuing one's dreams, how to get your blessing, how to keep the enemy from stealing your blessing, than themes about Christ, God, the cross, sin, salvation and holiness. Since the theme of the culture is all about you, then that becomes the theme of the church. If the theme of the world is not about Christ, the true God, the cross, sin, repentance and salvation, then that cannot be the theme of the church. That's the reasoning of the dead church.

Quote: Charles Spurgeon – It is a remarkable fact that all the heresies which have arisen in the Christian Church have had a decided tendency to dishonor God and to flatter man.

It is sad when a church believes because of its numbers, its size, its wealth and reputation in the community that it is a church with life, while in the eyes of Jesus it's really a dead church. It's a corpse with makeup. It's a stuff animal that looks alive.

The 2nd warning sign of a dead church is: A church whose pulse is fading in the essential ministries that are the heartbeat of the church [v. 2]:

[2] 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

"Wake up" – [gregoreo – to watch; to be alert; present participle active; nom. masc. singular; imperatival periphrastic]; lit. "Become of yourselves alert" [Become of yourselves – ginomai – present imperative middle voice; 2nd person singular]; The city of Sardis was situated 1,500 feet

at the top of a large hill that the inhabitants felt invincible against enemy attack but twice the city was broken into because the soldiers fail to be watchful.

Spiritual watchfulness comes by realizing that no matter how far along you think you are in your Christian journey, no matter how many victories you have had over besetting sin, no Christian is immune to falling into sin again. The reason why we get catch off guard when it comes to sin is because we have listened to what we think of ourselves instead of what Christ thinks of us. We must never believe the lie that we need less dependence upon the Lord; "and strengthen the things that remain" – "strengthen" [sterizo – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular; sense of urgency]; "the things that remain" [neuter plural] the things that remain refer to spiritual matters not people; "which were about to die;" – "were about" [mello – to be about; imperfect indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to die" [apo-thnesko – to die; present infinitive active]

The essential ministries that are the heartbeat of the church are: **1]** Biblical preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God; **2]** Discipleship – maturing believers towards godliness; **3]** Church Discipline – holding one another accountable in laying aside sin and pursuing holiness. When the church avoids preaching the truth, developing ministries for the purpose of Christian maturity and not committed to holding one another accountable for holiness, the church is in a process of dying no matter how big its church attendance is or how well it's doing financially.

"for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God." – "found" [eurisko – perfect indicative active; 1st person singular]; "your deeds completed" – "completed" [pleroo – **perfect** participle passive voice nom. neuter plural; lit. "your deeds having been completed"]; "in the sight of My God." We are here to serve the Lord not serve ourselves or do what we want to do. Each of us in this church has a divine assignment from the Lord. Do you know your assignment? To come to church with an attitude to worship Christ and serve one another in the spirit of Christian love. Are you doing that?

The 3rd warning sign of a dead church is: A church whose biblical past has been forgotten and therefore is on the verge of judgment [v. 3]:

[3] '**So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you**.

Three commands are given in verse 3 as means by which the church can go from being dead back to life. These three commands are three steps to corporate revival. If the church is willing to receive these commands the Lord will send the fullness of the Holy Spirit upon this church. "So remember what you have received and heard" – verse 3 begins with the command to "remember". It is placed at the beginning for emphasis. "Remember therefore" – "remember" [mnemoneuo – present imperative active; 2nd person singular; recall to mind]; "what you have received and heard" – "what" [pws - how] should be translated "how" as you have it in the KJV; "you have received" [lambano – perfect indicative active 2nd person singular];

Jesus just doesn't want them to remember what they received as far as the content of the gospel but how it was received – Acts 20:24 as Paul met with the Ephesian elders for the last time in his farewell address he mentioned that he did not shrink from declaring to them the whole purpose of God [which is another of saying the gospel or the kingdom [that's what he taught them] (27) but (31) He tells them how he taught them – "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears."

Therefore, considering the fact there would be savage wolves coming in among the flock, I admonished I warned for the three years I was with you in Ephesus with tears". What's the point? When you consider how this truth was deposited to you, you will see how you should not take this truth for granted – Christ died to redeem you, His apostles suffered to communicated this gospel to you, people down through church history denied themselves of comfort, riches and safety in order for you to have the truth in your hands; pastors who have come before me died while in office for the sake of gospel and you. In other words, "the how you received it" is just as important as "what you received" in order that you did not downplay the gospel. The church was purchased by the blood of the Shepherd of the church. And now, you want to make the church a place where it is all about you? Now you don't want to consider joining the church because churches have problems? You don't want to be committed to the church because you have better things to do? Don't you know that Christ gave His life for the church? Don't you know that the apostles suffered and died for this truth? Don't you realize that Christ's death for our sins was for the purpose of us having life? And you are content being a dead church? The "how" we received what we have receive is so important because it refers to the spirit in which we have received this truth – literally in blood, sweat and tears. Therefore, don't try to disown your heritage to be liked by a fickle culture. It is offensive to God the Father, to Christ and to the Holy Spirit for a church to boast that it is rich because it has removed the offense of the cross to be accepted by the world.

"and heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active 2nd person singular]; "and keep it, and repent" – "keep it" [tereo – to observe; **to guard**; present imperative active; 2nd person singular] "and repent" [metanoeo – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular]; "Repent" of your sinful actions in light of the cross. How could you live so carelessly, indifferently and worldly considering what Christ done for you? Do you realize the pain and agony of separation from the Father Jesus felt in His humanness as He bore the sins you are living in right now? Do you know that Christ had to go through hell for you as He underwent the wrath of God on the cross? Your heart ought to be broken to the point of hating how your sins offend your Lord and Savior that you are willing to turn away from them towards Christ.

"Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you." – "Therefore" – The first "therefore" at the beginning of this verse in the original "Remember therefore" communicated to the church how to turn itself around from death to life. The second "therefore" tells them why they ought to turn itself around from death to life; "if" lit. "If therefore" [3rd class condition of more probable future probability] "you do not wake up" [gregoreo – to be alert; to watch; aorist subjunctive active; 2nd person singular; "if you

should not wake up"]; "I will come like a thief" [exo – future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "and you will not know at what hour I will come to you" – "you will not know" [ou me – double negative; ginosko – to know; aorist subjunctive active 2nd person singular; you should definitely not know]; "at what hour I will come to you" [lit. "upon you"] ; A church can be so far gone in the dying process that their hearts won't even respond Christ's words. I've seen it before, you plead with people, you confront people, you reason with people from the word of God and they have this look on their face as if to say, "Can you please shut up and let me alone. Me and Jesus are during just fine. Stop overreacting." And like the city of Sardis, the Lord will catch believers by surprise.

This promise of judgment is meant to remind the church at Sardis that just as your city was invaded by your enemies because the city failed to watch so shall Jesus invade your church like a thief if you fail to watch. I don't know about you, I want Jesus to come back for us but not as a thief. If Jesus is coming upon the church as a thief that's not something to look forward too. It means He will come unexpectedly and catch us at a time when we are not living right. I want to be found faithful not careless when Jesus returns. In this context, it means that Jesus will visit this church in judgment soon.

As we go through the book of Revelation there will be warnings given to both the believer and the unbeliever. Now here is how I want to caution you with, the failure to heed these warnings will not be because they are difficult to comprehend or understand but only because of unbelief. And unbelief feeds off lies produced by one of two belief systems: **1]** Jesus cannot be serious; or **2]** Jesus is not addressing me. The first belief system denies the truthfulness of God's Word. The second belief system rejects the Bible as applying to them.

The 4th warning sign of a dead church is: A church whose purity is found in only a few people whom Jesus has promised to bless [vv. 4-6]:

[4] '**But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy**.

"But you have a few people in Sardis" – "But" [alla – but in contrast to the ones who say that they are alive and doing well spiritually but are actually dead]; "you have" [echo – present indicative active 2nd person singular]; "a few people in Sardis" [lit. a few names]; a church with a mixture of nominal Christians, false professing Christians with a few of godly Christians. And yet Jesus knows the names on an intimate level of those who faithfully live for Him, even in a midst of dead congregants; "who have not soiled their garments" – "soiled" [moluno – to pollute; to stain; to defile; to contaminate; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; It was Sardis that had claim for itself the discovery of how to dye wool. [**Cultural Background**: the language recalls the inscription found in Asia Minor announcing that soiled garments disqualified the worshiper and dishonored the god…[The New Linguistic and Exegetical key to the Greek NT]

"and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" – "they will walk" [peri-pateo – future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "with Me in white" – "white" is a picture of purity and celebration; "for they are worthy" –"for" [hoti – because]; "they are" [eimi – present indicative active 3rd person plural]; "worthy" – their worthiness comes by the grace of Jesus dispensing the fullness of the Holy Spirit upon these faithful few to live holy before Him despite the compromise around them. None of us as Christians are worthy in and of ourselves to live for Christ on our own. He makes us worthy by His Spirit and His word.

[5] '**He who overcomes will 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**.

"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments" – "He who overcomes" [ho Nikon – the one who overcomes – present participle active nom. masc. singular]; "be clothed" [peri-ballo – to throw around; to put around; to put on; future indicative middle/**passive** 3rd person singular]; "in white garments"; "and I will not erase his name from the book of life" – "I will not erase his name" [exaleipho – to blot out; to wipe off; future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "not" [ou me – **double negative** – **I will definitely not; I will no not erase**]; This is a promise not a threat. [**Cultural Background**: In John's Day, rulers kept a register of the citizens of a city. If someone died, or committed a serious crime, their name was erased from that register. Christ, the King of heaven, promises never to erase a true Christian's name from the roll. MacArthur]; "from the book of life": **Scrip. Ref:** Rev. 13:8 – Everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.; Rev. 17:8 – 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; Rev. 20:15 – And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Our names were not written at the moment we believed, or at the moment we were baptized, or at the moment we die and go to heaven. Our names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. Before we before we existed, before we did anything good or bad, which means our names were written and placed in the book without any conditions on our part. The names that were written were not determined by our actions but by the blood of the Lamb. My name was not put in because I made reservations and then decided to cancel. My name was put in because the Father chose me to be His in Christ before the foundation of the world; "and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" – "I will confess his name" [confess – homo-logeo – future indicative active; 1 person singular; this is a promise]; "before My Father and before His angels." **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 10:32 – Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Dead churches who refuse to confess Christ's name openly as the exclusive Lord and Savior to whom all will have to give an account will be denied by Christ before the Father on that day. Any ministry that wishes to replace Christ with the generic word "God" to remain subliminal will not have their names confessed before the Father and the angels in praise.

[6] 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' – "let him hear" [akouo – aorist imperative active 3rd person singular]; "what the Spirit says to the churches" – the Spirit is speaking to each one of us this morning. Are you spiritually dead before Christ or are you alive to Christ? Do you only have a name that you are a Christian or is it by your lifestyle and biblical convictions show that you are Christian? Are you real or are you fake?

Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction:

Many years ago, the famous Evangelist Vance Havner stated that, "God is faithful, and He expects His people to be faithful. God's Word speaks of faithful servants, faithful in a few things, faithful in the least, faithful in the Lord, faithful ministers. And all points up that day when He will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

What terrible times we have in our churches trying to keep people faithful in attendance and loyalty! How we reward and picnic and coax and tantalize church members into doing things they don't want to do but which they would do it they loved God! The only service that counts is faithful service. True faith shows up in faithfulness. Not everyone can sing or preach, but all can be faithful.

Historical Background:

As we continue our journey throughout the churches in Asia Minor. Escorting the letter carrier as he seeks to fulfill his assignment given to him by the great apostle John we travel 30 miles southeast of Sardis, from the church we last visited, to the church at Philadelphia. The city of Philadelphia has an interesting history that connects well with what Jesus has to say to the church that ministered there. It was the most recent [or youngest] of the seven cities, founded sometime after 189 BC by either Eumenes II, king of Pergamum, or his younger brother Attalus Philadelphus, so-called because of his love and loyalty for his older sibling. He lent his name to the city, which became known as the city of "brotherly love" and was proud of its origins. The area around Philadelphia was volcanic and known as "the burnt land". [Kistemaker]

The one problem was its proclivity to earthquakes. While active volcanoes made the soil fertile, the earthquakes made it difficult to live there. The same earthquake that devastated Sardis in AD 17 also leveled Philadelphia, and there were apparently aftershocks for some time that led much of the populace to live outside the city and farm… Writers like Strabo spoke of the walls of the city being constantly cracked; the people lived in insecure buildings and made all their plans with earthquakes in mind. As a result of the havoc caused by the AD 17 earthquake, the emperor

removed their obligation to pay tribute to Rome for 5 years so they could recover economically and reconstruct the city. [Osborne]

In gratitude the citizens renamed it Neocaesarea ["New Caesar"]. Later the name was changed to Flavia, and this, along with Philadelphia, continued to be its name through the second and third centuries AD. Later, the establishment of the emperor cult in the city earned it the title "Neokoros" or "Temple Warden". In the fifth century, it was nicknamed "Little Athens" because of its proliferation of festivals and pagan cults. [Expositor's Bible Commentary]. This was a city known for economic and structural instability due to earthquakes and to have many names due to emperor worship. Yet, the Lord planted a church in this city to be a light in a dark place.

Exposition:

3 Marks of a Faithful Church: The 1st mark of a faithful church is: A church that holds fast to His name because they believe in who Jesus is and what He can do [vv. 7-8]:

[7] "**And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this**:

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write" – "to the angel of the church" – as we have learned in our study of these seven churches that "the angel" refers to the pastor of the church whose responsibility is to communicate God's message to God's people. "Angel" means messenger; "of the church in Philadelphia" – "church" means "call out from". Christ has in salvation called out these believers from the world, Satan and the flesh to be His people. And therefore, since every born-again believer belongs to Christ; "in Philadelphia" – this is the second to the last letter written to the seven churches. And as you will discover the church at Smyrna and the church at Philadelphia are the only churches out of the seven Jesus issues no rebuke but only commendation. Not only that but both churches were being persecuted by Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah and yet claimed to be the people of God. If you notice in Rev. 2:9 and 3:9, Jesus refers to these Jews as being of the "synagogue of Satan". So, Jesus, as the Head of the church commands the apostle John to "write" [grapho – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular] with urgency to these believers who are in a spiritual battle. And as John writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the dictation of Christ there are 3 affirmations Jesus gives of Himself to encourage these believers amid spiritual warfare. And it is interesting to know that none of these descriptions come from the vision given of Himself in 1:13-16 but come from the OT. The Jews in Philadelphia rejected Jesus as the Messiah, but Jesus speaks of Himself under the descriptions given of God in the OT. And we would do well to remember these descriptions of our Lord when we undergo spiritual attacks: "He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David" – "He who is holy" [lit. the Holy One]; "Holy" when we think of Christ as Holy. It typically is pictured as an attribute that is opposite of sin. But before sin came into the world God was holy. So, holiness doesn't just comprise being set-apart from evil. This quality which is only connected to deity describes Christ as pure, unique, distinct, infinitely

sacred, and transcendent in every aspect of His being. In other words, Jesus Christ is the Holy One, the thrice Holy One of the OT; "who is true" [lit. the True One – alethinos – as oppose to what is factitious or counterfeit. I say this with reverence, but Jesus is the real thing. He is the real Messiah, not a false one. He is the True God with the Father, not a false god [1 John 5:20].

Our faith is strengthened not by experience but by believing who Jesus says He is. In other words, when Jesus commands us to trust Him, He is not setting us up for failure but to be glorified in us. When He says He is your Shepherd, He is a true Shepherd you can trust that He will care for you even when you go through the valley of the shadow of death. When Jesus says He is Provider, He is a true Provider you can trust when there is no food on the table that He will make a way out of no way. When Jesus says, He will never leave you nor forsake you, He means it, therefore you can trust that no matter how bad things get He is there whether you realize it or not. When Jesus says that He loves you, you can trust that nothing will ever separate you from His love. He is who He says He is.

"Who has the key of David" [ho echon – articular participle **present tense** active; nom. mas. singular – lit. "the One who continually has"] "the key of David" – this phrase is taken out of Isa. 22:22 – "Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder, When he opens no one will shut, When he shuts no one will open." The context of this verse is referring to Eliakim, who was a steward or prime minister to King Hezekiah. Therefore, his office had control of access to the king. When Jesus says He has "the key of David" He is saying that as the Christ [the Anointed One of God] He alone has control and authority of access into His kingdom: "who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, – "who opens" [ho anoigon – articular present participle active nom. masc. sing – lit. "the One who opens"] – Jesus has the authority to place the key of David into the door of the kingdom and grant any sinner He wants access into that kingdom. "and no one will shut" – "shut" [kleio – future indicative active 3rd person singular] The Jews in Philadelphia were saying to the church of Philadelphia that they were shut out of the kingdom because Jesus was not the true Messiah, the true son of David.

[**Historical Background**: Jewish people who converted to Christianity were no longer tolerated in synagogues after the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem in AD 70. Two decades later Jewish leaders met in Jamnia to acknowledge the canon of the Scriptures and to formulate the so-called 18 Benedictions. The 12th petition in this prayer pronounces a curse on the apostates: For apostates let there be no hope, and the kingdom of insolence mayest thou uproot speedily in our days; and let Christians and the heretics perish in a moment, let them be blotted out of the book of life and let them not be written with the righteous. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who humblest the insolent." [Kistemaker]

No one who denies Christ can shut you out of the kingdom of Christ: "and who shuts" [kleion – present participle active nom. masc. singular – lit. "and having shut"]; "and no one opens" – "opens" [anoigo – present indicative active 3rd person singular]; Jesus possesses three keys – the keys of Death and Hades [Rev. 1:18] and the key of David. In Matt. 16:19 – Jesus says to Peter – "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" – this is the gospel. In other words, as Peter and the apostles proclaimed the gospel if anyone believed he would be granted access to the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, we don't determine who enters and who does not but Jesus who has the key of David does that. We simply observe who has been granted access and who hasn't based on how they respond to the gospel.

[8] I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

"I know your deeds" – "I know" [oida – perfect (with a present tense use) indicative active 1st person singular]; "Behold" [idou – look; used 3 times in this letter]; "I have put before you an open door" – "I have put" [didomi – to give; perfect indicative active 1st person singular; "I have given"]; In other words, I have given you a gift; "an open door" – lit. "a door having been opened" [anoigo – to open; perfect participle passive tense; accus. fem. singular]; "which no one can shut" – "can" [dunatai – to be able; to have power; present indicative middle voice; 3rd person singular]; "shut" [kleisai – aorist infinitive active – "to shut"]; This gift of an open door refers to two things: **1]** the gift of access into the kingdom from which the Jews could not bar these believers from.

After Jesus concludes His address to the seven churches in chapters 2-3. Chapter 4 of Revelation begins: **Scrip. Ref:** Revelation 4:1 – After these things [the church age] I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven [after the rapture – 1 Thess. 4:13-5:2; 2 Thess. 1-12]

2] the gift of opportunity to be a witness for the gospel [Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Col. 4:3]; "because you have a little power" – "you have" [echeis – present indicative active 2nd person singular]; "little" [mikran – small; little of quantity; a few members; a small church]; "power" [dunamin – strength] – though there may not be many of you in the church, a little power, a little influence, I can still use you to reach the lost. The success of a church is not measured by size, but by Jesus. And Jesus can do much with little [multiplied bread out of 5 loaves].

"and have kept My word, and have not denied My name" – what are the marks of a faithful church that proves that the kingdom belongs to them? A faithful church keeps God's Word; **1]** "have kept My word" [tereo – to guard; aorist tense indicative active 2nd person singular] this speaks of a past event in the life of the church. There were many times this church was being tempted to deny Christ and yet each time they remained faithful to the truth; **2]** "and have not denied My name" – "denied" [arneomai – aorist tense indicative middle voice 2nd person singular]; His name refers to who He is Jesus Christ, the Lord.

A faithful church holds fast to who Jesus is. This is what makes a faithful church as opposed to a false church. So, the 1st mark of a faithful church is: A church that holds fast to His name because they believe in who Jesus is and what He can do [vv. 7-8]

The 2nd mark of a faithful church is: A church that holds fast to His word because they believe Jesus loves them enough to fight their battles and bless their future [vv. 9-11]:

[9] '**Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie – I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you**.

"Behold" – a command to consider something that is meant to encourage. Notice there's a promise given which is identified by the phrase "I will" mentioned two times: "I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie" – "I will cause" [didomi – to give; present subjunctive active; 1st person singular; lit. "I should give" – this is a gift that will give to the faithful church, to each faithful believer and that is the gift of vindication – "I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie" – "they are" [eisiv – present indicative active; 3rd person plural; "not but lie" – "but" [alla – strong adversative; "but they are the opposite of true Jews]; "lie" [pseudomai – present indicative **middle voice**; 3rd person plural; they themselves keep lying]. Jesus refers to Jews as belonging to the synagogue of Satan not of God because they deny the gospel and oppose God's true people, the church. To hate the church is to be a follower of Satan. To hate a fellow believer is to lie that you are a believer: **Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 2:22 – Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son; 1 John 4:20 – If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

"behold, I will make them come and bow down at your feet – "I will make" [poieo – to do; to create; future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "them come and bow down at your feet" – "bow down" [KJV "worship"; proskuveo – to kneel; future indicative active 3rd person plural] Jesus will not cause our enemies to do homage or pay respect by bowing. The homage of these false Jews will prove that what the Christians at Philadelphia testified concerning Jesus as the Christ was true. **Scrip. Ref:** Rom. 12:19 – Never take your own revenge beloved, but leave room [lit. give a place] for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

The lie of seeking personal revenge is not that we don't believe God will deal with it but that we don't believe He will deal with it as good as we can. Listen, nothing we do can cause someone to bow with sincerity at our feet. God can make your enemies bow at your feet and verbalize that they were wrong. That "Jesus Christ is Lord." [Phil. 2:9-11] **Quote**: Warren Wiersbe – If we take care of God's work, He will take care of our battles.

"and make them know that I have loved you" – "make them know" [ginosko – aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "I have loved you" [agapao – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; Jesus will prove by vindicating His people on the last day that He loves us. When Jesus says, "I have loved you" it doesn't mean "I have exempted you from problems." But "I am with you to help you through your problems and bless you by being the solution to your problems". Therefore, the love of Christ is not a **pampering love** [that gives us what we want when we want it and how we want it]. It's not a **sentimental love** [a love that wishes it could fix our problems but is weak and powerless to do so]. But a **conquering love** that allows threats, illnesses, tragedies and even death to enter our lives to prove that not even in these situations His love for you will not be absent nor impotent to bring you through. But when you fail to focus on who God is your perception of reality will always be distorted and inverted. As if you are looking at your circumstances through a microscope and God through a telescope. You know the difference between a microscope and a telescope, right? A microscope makes little things appear big and a telescope makes big things appear small. But when you look to Jesus through the lenses of His Word you will see everything in proper perspective. That your circumstances are small and your God is big. In short, you don't want your circumstances to distort your view of God. You want your view of God to clarify your circumstances.

[10] '**Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth**.

"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance" – "Because" [hoti] gives the reason why Jesus will bless His faithful church in the future; "you have kept" [tereo – to guard; to protect; aorist indicative active 2nd person singular]; To keep the word is to believe and obey the Word; "The word of My perseverance" [hupomone (from the verb to remain under) – endurance; steadfastness]; This refers to the Scriptures that record the testimony of Christ's endurance on our behalf, which motivates us to endure on His behalf: **Scrip. Ref**: Heb. 12:2-3 – fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [3] For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

Listen, the reason why we allow ourselves to get to the point of becoming spiritually tired or tempted towards depression or pessimism, is because we have taken our eyes off Jesus. That's why He is referred to as the author and perfecter of faith. He is the author meaning He is the One who is the source of your faith, and He is the perfecter of faith in that He is the completer or consummator of it. Thus, the reason why we get spiritually tired and on the verge of fainting is not because our circumstances are too heavy, we haven't had a vacation in a while, or there's too much on our plate. But because we have forgotten who Jesus is and what He has done for us. We have forgotten that discouragement cannot remove that one virtue that keeps us from being defeated and that is our faith. Because Jesus is the One who gave it to us and the One who keeps

it in us [1 Pet. 1:5-8]. What am I saying? When we trust in Christ we are protected from worry and fear. But here's how we fight depression, worry and despair. By realizing that Jesus went through far more than we could ever go through in life when He endured the wrath of God on the cross, the penalty for our sins on the cross, and the abuse of sinners on that cross. Therefore, Jesus knows how to endure trials, so look to Him if you want to endure yours.

"I also will keep you from the hour of testing" – "keep you from" – this phrase is one of the most important phrases in the book of Revelation. For theologians have interpreted from this phrase whether the church will go through the tribulation or not. Now there are three positions regarding the church and the tribulation: **pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation** and **post-tribulation**. Pre-trib believes that the church will be raptured before the tribulation begins. Mid-trib believes the church will be rapture in the middle of the tribulation, right before the great tribulation. Some theologians refer to this view as pre-wrath rapture. And post-trib which believes that the church will go through the entire tribulation and be raptured up as Jesus is coming down from heaven.

The phrase "keep you from" can be translated "keep you out of" – "keep" [tereo – future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "from" [ek – out of]; Jesus doesn't use the preposition "until," or "until to"[heos] [or with the genitive "as far as"], which would fit the mid-tribulation view. Or "through," or "in" which would fit the post-tribulation view. But the preposition "ek" in the original which translates "from" or "out of," which would fit the pre-tribulation view, that the church will be raptured before the tribulation begins. What tribulation? "the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" – "hour of testing" – refers to the hour of affliction. "Hour" does not refer to 60 minutes but to a time of God's judgment upon the earth; "that hour which is about to come upon the whole world" – this statement lets us know that the hour is future. It hasn't happened yet but when it comes it will come upon "the whole world" [the whole inhabited world]; "to test those who dwell upon the earth" – "to test" [peirao – aorist infinitive active]; the purpose for this hour is to test where people's hearts really are through the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments and the bowl judgment recorded in chapters 6-16 of Revelation. Who will be the people that will be tested? "those who dwell upon the earth" – this phrase is only used in the book of Revelation with regard to unbelievers [6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8]

[11] '**I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown**.

"I am coming" [erchomai – present indicative **middle voice** 1st person singular]; this is a future promise stated in the present tense for the purpose of certainty; "quickly" [tachu – speedily]; "hold fast what you have" – "hold fast" [krateo – to have; to keep carefully; **present imperative** active 2nd person singular; continually keep]; "what you have" – refers to the truth of the gospel. Hold fast to the Word of God. Stay committed to believing the Word and obeying the Word. Why? "so that no one will take your crown" – "so that" [hina – purpose clause; here's the reason]; "no one" [the devil working through lost and religious folk] "take your crown" [tove stephonon – prize, honor];

To take your crown is to take away your joy of hearing Christ say, "Well done, good and faithful servant". Listen, here's how you can keep someone from taking your crown: **1]** don't allow anyone to cause you to quit church or quit ministry. Don't allow them to steal your crown; **2]** don't anyone to tempt you to compromise your responsibility to obey God's word. Don't allow them to steal your crown; **3]** don't allow attacks and slander to tempt you to quit trusting in the Lord. Don't allow them to steal your crown. **Quote**: Warren Wiersbe – Unbelief sees the obstacles, but faith sees the opportunities! Every challenge is an opportunity to demonstrate your faithfulness to the Lord by holding fast to His Word.

The 3rd and last mark of a faithful church is: A church that holds fast to His promises because they believe Jesus has prepared a better place for them [vv. 12-13]:

[12] '**He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name**.

In this verse there are 3 promises given to the faithful church: 1] "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God" – "He who overcomes" [ho nikon – present participle active; nom. mas. singular] You can only overcome by being faithful; "I will make him a pillar" – "I will make" [poieo – future indicative active 1st person singular]; "a pillar in the temple of My God" [stulon – a column; a picture of strength and stability]; to be a pillar is speaking metaphorically or figuratively of stability and permanence. [**Historical Background**: As already noted, the city of Philadelphia was constantly threatened by earthquakes. Often the only parts of a city left standing after a severe quake were the huge stone temples columns. Christ promises to set believers in His temple as pillars. [Expositor's Bible Commentary]

2] "and he will not go out from it anymore" – lit. "and out of it no not he should come anymore" [double negative in the original]. The residents of Philadelphia never felt safe in the city due to earthquakes, so they lived on farms outside the city. The constant tremors cause them to leave. Jesus is saying in glory there are no disturbances, neither outward nor inward that will cause you to feel unsafe and unprotected in God's temple.

3] "and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name" – "I will write" [grapho – future indicative active; 1st person singular]; Here's comfort for those who feel that God has forgotten them in the midst of suffering. Rev. 3:5 – says that your name is written in the book of life, in a heavenly ink that cannot be erased. And in the future Christ will write the name of His God and the name of the city of His God on your forehead. All of this means that He cannot forget about you because you belong to Him. **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 49:14-16a – But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me." Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. [16] Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands."

This is our hope that we need to hold fast to in our days. One day, we will never be shaken again. As one person said, "Depression doesn't have eternal life". Neither does insecurity, fear, worry or uncertainty. All these have no admittance into God's eternal kingdom. Did you know that Satan is subject to God's promises towards you? He cannot hinder God's promises from being fulfilled in your future. That's a stability that cannot be shaken.

[13] '**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches**.

Revelation 3:14-22

Historical Background:

Antiochus II [261-246 BC] who named it for his wife Laodice [Lay – o – dis] whom he divorced in 253 BC…The name Laodicea is derived from combining 'laos' [people] with dikao 'to rule']. It conveys the sense 'the rule of the people' i.e. a democracy. [Thomas] Laodicea an important center of trade and communication. Its wealth came from the production of a fine quality of famous glossy black wool… Laodicea had a famous school of medicine; and a special ointment known as "Phrygian powder," famous for its cure of eye defects, was either manufactured or distributed there, as were ear ointments also. [Expositor's Bible Commentary]

Laodicea was the more important member of a tri-city formation with Hierapolis 6 miles north and Colosse 10 miles east; all three cities were part of Phrygia. [6 miles to the north you had Hierapolis]: As a resort area the warm and hot springs with their heavy mineral content provided the ideal place for those seeking relief from certain kinds of ailments to come and find relief basking in those hot mineral baths. [10 miles to the east you had Colossae] known for its cool, clean and refreshing water springs.

[Laodicea] As there were no springs at Laodicea and as the waters of the Lycus were not dependable, the Laodiceans utilized aqueducts… It is true that the waters for the aqueducts were drawn from hot springs, as the calcareous deposits which have almost completely blocked sections of the aqueduct attest. By the time the waters reached Laodicea they would have been tepid… such water would be neither therapeutically hot nor refreshingly cold. [NT Cities in Western Asia Minor] Examination of the pipes, led to the discovery that large mineral deposits [calcium carbonate] had accumulated in the pipes across the years, indicating that the water arriving for use in Laodicea was mineral laden and hence nauseating, not very tasty. [New American Commentary]

Exposition:

3 symptoms of a lukewarm church: The 1st symptom of a lukewarm church is: It measures success based on outward results which promote self-sufficiency, rather than inward regeneration that exalts Christ [vv. 14-17]:

[14] "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write" – "to the angel of the church" – "angel" [angelo – messenger] refers to the pastor of the local congregation who is responsible to communicating God's message to the church; "in Laodicea"; "write" [grapho – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "The Amen" – that He is called "The Amen" meaning He is the So Be it One, the Truth incarnate. Everything that He does in accordance with the Father's will is Amen because Christ is the personification of Amen. When you think about Jesus, you don't arrive at the conclusion of perhaps or maybe, but Amen. Christ is the promise of God to us – everything He is and everything He does can be summarized as Amen. He is Faithful, Amen. He is a Provider Amen. He is Holy Amen. He is Righteousness Amen. He is Gracious Amen. He is Good Amen. He is our Helper Amen. He is Sovereign, not Maybe or Perhaps but Amen.

"the Faithful and True Witness" – Jesus is Faithful – He is reliable and dependable to bring about what He has promised; "and True Witness" – what He bears witness too, what He testifies about is real not false. If Jesus says something about you that you don't like, that doesn't make Him a liar, but a true witness; "the Beginning of the creation of God" – "the Beginning" [arche – originator; initiator] "of the creation of God" – In the epistle of Colossians, the apostle Paul confronted a false teaching that was spreading throughout the church, which would later be labeled as Gnosticism. It comes from the Greek word "gnosis" [knowledge] taught that Jesus was a created being, one of many emanations of God. But Paul states in Col. 1:16-18, that by Christ all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth. Since, Laodicea was the neighboring city, this heresy was beginning to make inroads within that congregation as well. Therefore, "beginning of the creation of God" means Christ is the initiator of God's creation. The Father planned creation and the eternal Son call it into being.

"says this" – lit. "these things says"

[15] I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

"I know your deeds" – "I know" [oida – a perfect tense [with a present tense usage] indicative active; 1st person singular]; "your deeds" refer to behavior or action that reveals one's true character; "that you are neither cold nor hot" – "you are" [ei (eimi) present indicative activel 2nd person singular – **you are in fact**]; "neither cold nor hot" – "cold" [psychros] "nor hot" [zestos – hot; boiling hot; used only here in the NT]. Now "cold" doesn't represent "spiritual indifference" and hot "spiritual fervor". The cold waters of nearby Colossae were refreshing to the thirsty and the hot spring waters of nearby Hierapolis was healing to the body. In fact, the hot water springs of Hierapolis were measured as high as 95 degrees Fahrenheit. These springs were used as spas for those in need of healing. Therefore, for Jesus to prefer that the Laodicea church to be cold or hot means that He desired that they be a church that would bring spiritual refreshment to weary souls or hot in order to bring spiritual healing to wounded souls. But the church provided neither. It was lukewarm, which means its ministry was worthless to the soul.];

"I wish that you were cold or hot" – "I wish" [ophelov – present optative active 1st person singular]; "you were" [es [eimi] present subjunctive active 2nd person singular – you might be] "cold or hot".

[16] 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

"So because you are lukewarm" – Jesus identifies their deeds here – "I know your deeds" – "you are lukewarm" – "you are" [eimi – present indicative active 2nd person singular – **you are in fact**]; "lukewarm" [chliaros – used only here in the NT]; "and neither hot nor cold"; "I will vomit you out of My mouth" – "I will" [mello – to be about to; present indicative active 1st personal singular – "I am about to"]; "vomit" [emeo – to throw up; use only here in the NT; aorist infinitive active; from this word we get the English word "emetic" – any agent which causes or induces vomiting]; We drink either hot tea or cold tea but lukewarm tea is disgusting. Jesus is literally saying to this church, "You make Me sick." **Quote**: MacArthur - Some churches make the Lord weep, others make Him angry, the Laodicean church made Him sick.

Let's make it clear of what type of church this was. It was not a complacent church, it was not a compromising church, it was an apostate church. A church filled with unsaved folk who claimed to be saved. In **2 Timothy 3:1-5**, the apostle Paul predicted that there would be a group of people who professed to be the church, who would profess to be truly born again but in reality, unsaved: **[1]** "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **[2]** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **[3]** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **[4]** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; **[5]** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power." Paul's description of the attitude and behavior of religious individuals in the last days is the church realized here in Laodicea. The lukewarm church. **Quote**: John Stott – Perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to the 20th century church than this. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today. Our Christianity is flabby and anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion.

So, Jesus begins by giving a self-description of who He is – the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness and the Beginning of the creation of God because a low and erroneous view of Christ will always lead to a high and erroneous view of self.

[17] 'Because you say, I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

"Because you say" – "Because" [hoti – Jesus gives the reason why He is about to vomit them out of His word – Because] "you say" [lego – present indicative active 2nd person singular – you keep saying; you always say; you continually say]; "I am rich"; "and have become wealthy" [peplouteka – perfect indicative active; 1st person singular – I have been wealthy; I have always

been rich]; They believed that material blessings was a sign that they were in the favor of God. But God's favor is seen in our spiritual life not our material possessions; "and have need of nothing" – lit. "and no need I have". When your desire for material possessions or achievements is the controlling factor in your life rather than your desire for spiritual growth then in your heart of hearts you are communicating that you don't need the Lord. This church was so rich materially that it did not see a need for the Lord spiritually. One of the key symptoms of a lukewarm church is its lack of dependence upon the Lord when it comes to their spiritual condition. Churches like this focus more on material and numerical results as a sign of being in the favor of God. It boasts of building programs, financial growth, congregational size and its influence among the affluent in the community. Nothing is said about the spiritual condition of the congregation. They neglect accountability around godliness, love for Christ and a turning away from worldliness. A lukewarm church is an unspiritual church. Isn't it interesting that the wealthiest nation in the world, the USA, is also the nation with the most psychologists and psychotherapists in the world? According to a study years ago, America has more divorce lawyers per person of its population than any of 29 countries studied. Being wealthy doesn't necessarily mean that you are healthy.

"and you do not know" – "know" [oida – perfect tense [with a present tense usage] indicative active 2nd person singular]; "that you are wretched" – "you are" [eimi – present indicative active 2nd person singular – you are in fact]; "wretched" [ho talaiporos – the wretched one – the only other time this word is used in the NT is in Rom. 7:24, when the apostle Paul referred to himself as "wretched man that I am!". The only difference here is that this congregation was totally unaware that they were wretched. Why? Because this church was spiritually dead. A spiritually alive person, who is growing in holiness will come to know himself to be wretched. But a church of professing Christians who don't know that they are wretched is a sign of being spiritually desensitized to their own sin. Do you recognize yourself as wretched before God? Name your wretchedness. If you cannot name it, you are simply pretending to be spiritually alive.

"and miserable" [eleeinos – used twice in the NT (1 Cor. 15:19)] – one who is too stubborn to admit that he has a problem, his life is miserable because he will not humble himself to look to the Lord for help. Just pitiful. These are those who pretend that they have their life in order when it is not and yet refuse to act upon the truth that they know to put their life in order, but they are too prideful to act. They know that the way they have chosen to live is not working out but they refuse to surrender to the Lord in order that He may redirect their lives. So, they continue to head in the same direction where things will never change for the better simply because they are too stubborn to humble themselves.

"and poor" [ptochos – destitute; beggarly] – one who claims to be spiritually rich but lives so poorly. These are those who claim God's promises but their lives look as if it has never cashed in on them. They claimed to have power, but they lack self-control. They claim to have victory, but they live defeated. They claim to hear the voice of God, but what they claim He is saying resembles more of the voice of the devil. They are spiritually beggarly – for all the spiritual

resources that they boast that they have – they got problems in their marriage, they are hold grudges, they are not gracious or kind and they rather fight than forgive. Just poor. The absence of the spiritual riches of Christ.

"and blind" [tuphlos] – spiritual ignorant of his or her spiritual condition. A true Christian has the spiritual discernment to see himself as God sees him: 1] he sees that he is wretched, and he is humbled at this reality, and seeks by the means of grace to strive for holiness; 2] miserable – they see their need for mercy. They don't act like they don't need mercy; 3] poor – they come as beggars before Christ. They acknowledge that apart from Him they can do nothing; 4] naked – They are aware that they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

"and naked" [yumnos] the city was famous for its garments of glossy black wool. They claimed to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ [justification] but because there is an absence of sanctification which would prove that justification has taken place, it becomes obvious that they are naked. The proof that the righteousness of Christ has been imputed in salvation by faith alone, will be seen in the impartation of the righteousness of Christ in a life of obedience. God never justifies a sinner by faith in His Son without also sanctifying the sinner by His Spirit. Beware of evaluating your spiritual condition apart from God's divine revelation. Beware of having the confidence that you are saved based on some experience rather than the testimony of Scripture. If you cannot sit down before the Bible and pray sincerely to the Lord to show you in His Word whether you are truly saved, then you are a pretender.

The 2nd symptom of a lukewarm church is: It minimizes the power of the gospel to provide what the church needs the most [v. 18]:

[18] I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

"I advise you" – "advise" [sumbouleuo – to give counsel; present indicative active; 1st person singular – I have continued to give you counsel]; "to buy from Me gold refined by fire" – "to buy" [agorazo – aorist infinitive active]; "refined by fire" – "refine" [pe-puro-menon – to burn; to set on fire; perfect participle passive voice; accus. neuter singular – having been refined" "by fire"]; "so that" [hina – purpose clause] "you may become rich" [plouteo – aorist subjunctive active 2nd person singular; to have abundance; to become rich]; Christ is appealing to the materially rich church to buy something from Him that they cannot afford – "gold refined by fire". In 1 Peter 1:7 – Peter refers to the genuineness of the believer's faith as "being more precious than gold even though tested by fire". What Jesus is offering this church is genuine saving faith as opposed to a superficial faith. A saving faith that manifests its genuineness by persevering in obedience regardless of one's circumstances. A saving faith that relies on Christ alone. This faith cannot be bought by church attendance, tithes and offerings, good deeds or water baptism but only by grace; "and white garments"; "so that" [hina - purpose clause]; "you may clothe yourself" [peri-ballo – to put on; to clothe self; present subjunctive active; 2nd person

singular]; "that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed" – lit. and not manifest the shame of your nakedness" – "revealed" [phanerothe – aorist subjunctive passive voice; 2nd person singular]; "and eye salve" [kollourion – used only here in the NT];[Kollourion [eye salve] is derived from kollyra, which is a course bread, cylindrical in shape. This elongated lump was impregnated with medicines and used as a bandage for sore or weak eyes. [Thomas] "to anoint" [egchrio –to rub in; to anoint; used only here in the NT; aorist infinitive active]; "your eyes so that you may see" – "so that" [hina – purpose clause]; "you may see" [blepo – to see; present subjunctive active 2nd person singular]; "gold refined by fire" represents the gift of salvation; "white garments" represent justification and that display of these garments in life and conduct sanctification; "eye salve" represents divine illumination by the Holy Spirit. He enables us to see others in the light of Christ's truth.

The 3rd symptom of a lukewarm church is: It misconstrues a religious experience with having a personal relationship with the Lord [vv. 19-22]:

[19] 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

"Those whom I love" – "I love" [phileo – to love; present subjunctive active; 1st person singular – "I should love"]; "I reprove" [elegcho – to admonish; to chide; present indicative active; 1st person singular]; "and discipline" [paideuo – to chastise; present indicative active; 1st person singular]; We have a tendency to interpret correction as condemnation rather than caring. Christ is essentially saying, "If I did not care, I would not have bothered." For Christ not to warn us, is to say that He wants us to go to hell; "therefore" [oun]; "be zealous" [zeleuo – present imperative active 2nd person singular]; If you don't have a zeal for the Lord, then you need to question whether you have a love for Christ. "and repent" [metanoeo – aorist imperative active 2nd person singular]; **Quote**: Martyn Lloyd Jones – "Repentance means that you realize that you are a guilty, vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, that you are hell-bound. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you, that you long to get rid of it, and that you turn your back on it in every shape and form." The good news here is that the condition of being lukewarm is not terminal. There is a cure that can keep one from being vomited out of Christ's mouth.

[20] 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

"Behold" [idou]; "I stand at the door" – "I stand" [istemi – perfect indicative active; 1st person singular – I have stood and continual to stand at the door]; "and knock" [krouo – present indicative active 1st person singular – I continue to knock; I keep knocking] Do you hear the Lord knocking this morning? And here is the shocking part about this statement that most people misinterpret. This evangelistic appeal is not made to the lost outside of the church but to the lost who think that they are the church; "if anyone hears" – "if" [eav – 3rd Class Condition of more probable future probability]; "hears" [akouo – aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "My voice" – Jesus speaks as He knocks; "and opens the door" – "opens the door" ["opens"

anoigo – aorist subjunctive active 3rd person singular]; "I will come in to him" [eis-erchomai – to enter into; future indicative middle voice; 1st person singular – "I Myself will enter into]; "and will dine with him" – "will dine" [deipneo – to sup; future indicative active; 1st person singular] "and he with Me". Jesus knocks on the outside, but the Spirit must move on the inside for the person to repent and believe, so that the door may open and Christ my enter.

[21] '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.

"He who overcomes" [ho vikon – present participle active nom. masc. singular]; "I will grant" [didomi [doso] future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "to sit down" [kathizo – to make to sit down; aorist infinitive active]; "with Me on My throne, as I also overcame" – "overcame" [vikao – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "and sat down" [kathizo – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "with My Father on His throne". **Quote**: C.S. Lewis – It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. True victory comes from following Christ not pretending that you don't need Christ.

[22] 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

Revelation 4

Introduction:

Now we come to the third part of the three-part outline of the book of Revelation. In Revelation 1:19, the apostle John receives a vision of the glorified and exalted Lord Jesus who commands him to write: **1]** "the things which you have seen" – which refers to the first vision John sees as he describes the glory of the risen and exalted Christ [1:12-18]; **2]** "and the things which are", which refers to the seven churches in Asia Minor in chaps. 2-3. The description of these seven literal and historical churches is characteristic of all churches throughout church history. Seven is the number of completion. This is a complete description of all churches.

And what Jesus says to these churches is what the Spirit is saying to all churches; **3]** "and the things which shall take place after these things" – this takes us from chaps. 4-22 of the book of Revelation, the events that will take place after the church age. This third vision is the largest section in the book. So, as we come to chapter 4, we are given a vision of heaven in two chapters. Chapter 4 focuses on God the Father as the Sovereign and Holy Creator. Chapter 5 focuses on God the Son as the Omnipotent and Omnipresent Redeemer.

Exposition:

2 mental pictures from this heavenly vision that is meant to radically change how we view the world around us: The 1st mental picture is: God is always on the throne controlling every aspect of life for His glory [vv. 1-6]

[1] After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

"After these things" [meta tauta – neuter accus. plural] the church age as described in chapters 2-3; "I looked" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "and behold" [exclamation]; "a door standing open in heaven" [open – anoigo – to open; **perfect** participle; passive voice; fem. accus. singular; "having been standing open"]; Grace is realizing that there's a door in heaven that has been standing open since the time of Christ's atoning death for all those who trust in Him. It will stay open until all the ransomed sons of God come to glory; "and the first voice which I had heard" [heard – akouo – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me" – "speaking" [laleo – present participle active; fem. genitive singular]; In Rev. 1:10, it says that John heard a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet. That trumpet speaking sound was the Lord Jesus Christ. The trumpet sounding voice in Rev. 4:1 is the Lord Jesus Christ again. "said" [legon – present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "Come up here" – "Come up" [anabaino – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular – aorist tense denotes urgency]; "and I will show you" – "show" [deiknuo – future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "what must take place after these things" – "must" [dei – present indicative active; 1st person singular; it is necessary]; "after these things" [meta tauta] – after the church age.

It's important that right after seeing the state of seven churches of Asia Minor, in which only two out of the seven were living faithfully before the Lord, which means five out of the seven were compromising with sin, tolerating false doctrine, spiritually dead and apostate. That John sees God enthroned in heaven. For there is nothing more disappointing when you are suffering than to feel like your suffering was for nothing in the end. But amid discouragement, disappointment and depression a command is issued to John to "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." In other words, it's not over yet. Don't throw in the towel as if it has all been for nothing. What we see happening in the churches today and in this world is not the final story. There is something that is about to happen after these things. "After these things":

[2] Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

"Immediately" [eutheos – adv.]; "I was in the Spirit" – "was" [ginomai – to become; aorist indicative passive 1st person singular]; **Quote**: "When a person is 'in the Spirit' and being in that state has a vision, there is a suspension of conscious contact with the physical environment" –

Hendriksen. "and behold" [exclamation], "a throne was standing in heaven" – "a throne" [13 times in 11 verses of this chapter the word "throne" or "thrones" is mentioned. This is the central focus and theme of this chapter. Thank God for the Holy Spirit. As John receives this vision, the Holy Spirit must direct his focus so that he doesn't miss what is most important. See, if it was us directing this vision we would get caught up in the streets of gold, the mansions, the pearly white gates, being reunited with our loved ones but none of those things can compare to seeing the One who reigns on the throne. That's what we need to see.

Now John doesn't describe the facial features of the One who is sitting on the throne. Does He resemble The Creation of Adam painting by Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel? Does He have a white beard? All of this is ill-relevant when your heart needs to be encouraged. Everything is to be viewed, explained and understood from the aspect of the throne. Everything in heaven is centered on the throne. The first look of heaven in the book of Revelation, the first description of heaven in the Bible is the throne: **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 66:1 – Thus says the Lord, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool"; Matt. 5:34 – But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God"; Matt. 23:22 – "And he who swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. Listen, heaven is just another way of saying the throne of God. Heaven and God's throne are synonymously in Scripture.

[2] And John saw that this throne "was standing" [keimai – to stand; **imperfect** indicative **passive** voice; 3rd person singular; progressive imperfect of duration – the process as having gone on in the past time up to the time denoted by the context]; it has been cause to stand in the past up until the present moment; "and One sitting on the throne" – "sitting" [kathemai – present participle **middle voice**; nom. masc. singular – "and One Himself sitting on the throne"]; God sitting on the throne is meant for us to understand that God is not resting on the throne, He is not lounging on the throne but He is reigning on the throne. Our hearts ought to be encouraged, our emotions ought to be stirred that despite what seems to be chaotic, disturbing, fearful, out of control, discouraging and hopeless in this world, yet when we turn our eyes towards heaven the truth of the matter is God is on the throne. Yet despite, what I am going through right now, God has not abandoned His position of authority over my circumstances. God still sits on the throne. The devil is not sitting on the throne; our president is not sitting on the throne. My problems are not sitting on the throne. But my God is sitting on the throne. Behold a throne was standing in heaven.

[3] And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

"And He who was sitting" [sitting – kathemai – to sit down; present participle middle voice; nom. masc. singular; articular participle – the One who was sitting]; "was like a jasper stone" [iaspis – jasper – the ancient stone must have been translucent rock crystal, possibly a diamond. [Thomas]; "and sardius in appearance" [sardion – "sardius stone" – this was a blood-red stone

said to be named after Sardis, and one of the most commonly used gems in the ancient world. [Linguistic and Exegetical key to the Greek NT]]; The white diamond color of jasper along with the reddish color of sardius pictures God as both holy [white] and righteous [red]. God choose to manifest His glory as precious jewels to convey to us that our God who is on the throne is expensive. He is no cheap God. He cannot be bought or bribed. He is valuable, priceless. No creature can own Him. No creature cannot afford Him. He is the most valuable being in all the universe. Nothing in all the universe is as beautiful as the glory of God; "and there was a rainbow around the throne" – "rainbow" [iris – used only twice in the NT; here and Rev. 10:1]; reminds us of God's covenant promise to creation to never flood the world again [Gen. 9:14-15]. God is faithful; "around" [kuklothen – adv. round about; all round]; "like an emerald in appearance" – "emerald" [smaragdino – used only here in the NT]; The green colored rainbow speaks of God's faithfulness to His promises. Green is the color that represents new life, renewal, freshness. This is the goal of all that is about to take place. A new heavens and a new earth. Because the God who sits on the throne is glorious, this means that everything that issues forth from this throne is glorious from heaven's perspective. Listen, accidents don't govern the universe, happenstance doesn't govern the universe, fate doesn't govern the universe, karma doesn't govern the universe, only a personal, sovereign God governs the universe, and He looks good while doing it.

[4] Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones" – lit. And all around the throne, twenty-four thrones; ["The mental image we receive of the twenty-four thrones is that of a square with God's throne in the center and six thrones on each side of that square". [Kistemaker]; "In the Bible twelve appears to be the number of divine government – twelve months in a lunar year, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, twelve gates in the New Jerusalem, twelve angels at each gate, twelve foundation stones… Multiples of twelve such as twenty-four probably have a similar significance. [Expositor's Bible Commentary]; "and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting" – "sitting" [kathemai – present participle middle/passive; accus. masc. plural]; "clothed in white garments" [clothed – peri-ballo – perfect participle passive voice; accus. masc. plural; same Greek word used in Rev. 3:5, 18]; "and golden crowns on their heads" – "crowns" [stephanous – same used in Rev. 3:11 – "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown/stephanos]

Some Bible commentators believe these twenty-four elders are angels. But angels are never called "elders" in the Bible. They are never spoken of as wearing crowns or sitting on thrones even though they have been delegated positions of authority. The near context in Revelation, particularly the previous chapters of 2-3 would clarify for us that those who are on the throne are the overcomers of the seven churches who were promised that if they overcame, they would be "clothed in white garments" [3:5] and that they would receive a crown [2:10; 3:11]. And they were promised that they would sit down on thrones [3:21]… These 24 elders are not a complete

representation of the people of God but merely representative of overcomers of both the OT saints and NT church. There are twelve tribes of Israel [Old Covenant] and the twelve apostles who are the foundation of the church [Eph. 2:20]. [The traditional interpretation of the twenty-four elders is that this number is the total of twelve times two, namely twelve OT patriarchs and twelve NT apostles, the representatives of those redeemed by Christ. [Kistemaker]. These 24 overcomers ought to remind us that whatever it is that you are going through or anticipate going through that in the end you will be victorious as you keep trusting in the Lord. He will bring you out and sit you down on a throne next to His sovereign throne.

[5] Out from the throne come flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

"Out from the throne" – lit. "And from the throne"; "come flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder" – "come" [ek-poreuomai – to break forth; to go forth; go out; present indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "lightening" [astrapai]; "sounds" [pho-nay]; "thunders" [bron-tay]; lightning flashes, sounds and thunder picture the judgment of God – the lightening, sounds, and thunder are a precursor to the wrath of God being poured out in the seal, trumpets, and bowls judgments in chapters 6-18. "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" – "burning" [kaio – to light; to set fire; present participle passive voice; nom. fem. plural]; "which are the seven Spirits of God" – "are" [eisin – present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "seven" [number of completion or fullness]; "Spirits of God" – the fullness of the Holy Spirit's presence is before the throne of God and the symbolic vision of seven torches pictures the Holy Spirit as One with the Father in bringing judgment upon the world. Rev. 1:4.

[6] and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

"And before the throne there was something like a sea of glass" – lit. "and before the throne like a glass sea" – "glass" [malin-ay – used twice in Rev. here and 15:2]; "like crystal" [krustallo]; notice it doesn't say a river of glass or a lake of glass but a sea of glass. This glass pavement that resembles a crystal-clear sea is massive area in God's throne room. The sea of glass like crystal is a contrast from the rumbling waves of the world, the restlessness of society the upheaval of governments in the world is not reflected in God's throne room. Everything is as peaceful as a sea of glass. Don't confuse what happens on earth with what it must be like in heaven. There are no worries in glory, there is no alarm in heaven, there is no panic before the throne of God.

"and in the center and around the throne" – lit. "and in the middle of the throne and around the throne"; There may be a hierarchical order here, with the central figures [closer to the throne] presented last….[Osborne] – "four living creatures" [KJV – four beasts] lit. "four living beings" [New Living Translation – "four living beings"]; *Question*: Why would these four creatures be called "four living beings"? Isn't every creature in heaven living? Here's the answer – "full of eyes in front and behind" – lit. "being full of eyes in front and behind" – "eyes" are the most

important sensory organ that has symbolic meaning – intelligence, conscience, awareness. Why do morticians close the eyes of the dead? So that the dead look asleep but not only that for the eyes of the dead to be open is unsettling to the living because "eyes are the window to the soul". Therefore, "full of eyes" entails that fact that the four living beings see everything in relation to the glory of God. This is made clear by how they respond in worship and service in heaven. These four living beings are not the same ones that Ezekiel saw in his vision in Ezek. 1:5-10. Those were cherubim, each with four faces – the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of a bull, and the face of an eagle and they each had four wings. These four living beings are different than the seraphim in Isaiah's vision that had six wings. So, we see that there are various kinds and ranks of angels in heaven. There are arch-angels, cherubim of different kinds, seraphim and here four living beings each with different faces with six wings. Like these four living creatures with eyes all over, we need to see everything on earth in relation to the glory of God in heaven.

The 2nd mental picture from this heavenly vision that is meant to radically change how we view the world around us is: God is so holy in everything that He does that all of heaven cannot stop singing about it [vv. 7-11]:

[7] The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

"and the third creature had a face like that of a man" – lit. "the third being having the face like a man"; "and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle" – "flying" [petomai – to fly; present participle middle voice; dat. masc. singular]; The lion [royalty], the ox [strength], man [intelligence], eagle [speed]. All these characteristics are reflective of God's nature – lion [kingship], ox [strength], man [intelligence] and eagle [transcendent]

[8] And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."

"and day and night they do not cease" – "cease" [avapausis – intermission; cessation]; "Holy, Holy, Holy" [hagios, hagios, hagios – worthy of veneration; His incomparable majesty]; The holiness of God never gets old in heaven. The doctrine of the thrice holiness God is not a seasonal song in glory, something you sing on the first Sunday of the month. Every day it is good to sing that God is Holy, Holy, Holy: **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 6:3 – The one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." "Holy, Holy, Holy" – the focus here is not just who God is but also how we ought to respond considering who He is. The one attribute above all else that fascinates and mesmerizes the occupants of heaven is the holiness of God. The reason why the angels in glory sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy" is because in relation to all the other attributes of God, this one attribute is a mystery to them. As the angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy," yet they are awestruck that God is gracious towards sinners. "Holy, Holy, Holy," yet God is so merciful towards sinners. "Holy, Holy, Holy," yet God so love sinners. "Holy, Holy, Holy" yet God is so patient towards sinners. "Holy, Holy, Holy," yet God

sent His only Begotten Son to save sinners. "Holy, Holy, Holy," yet God sustains the life of the devil. This one attribute that turns most professing Christians off is the holiness of God. We only want to sing about the love of God. What makes the church so unlike heaven is a lack of joy in God's holiness. We like to pit grace and holiness against each other as if they are at odds with one another. But it's the grace of God that causes me to marvel at the holiness of God. And it is the holiness of God that causes me to be amazed at the grace of God. Grace keeps me safe in God's holiness. And holiness keeps me thankful for the grace of God. Grace enables me not to be terrified at the Holiness of God but to reverence it. You cannot walk away from the book of Revelation without the sense of the holiness of God.

"the Almighty" [ho pavto-krator – He who holds sway over all things; Rev. 1:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22]; [used 9 times in the book], "referring to His sovereign power and control over His created universe" [Osborne]. God has all the might. "who was and who is and who is to come" – "who was" [eimi – imperfect indicative active 3rd person singular – the One who was being]; "who is" [ho on – present participle active nom. masc. singular – the One who is being]; "who is to come" [ho erchomai – to come; present participle middle voice; nom. masc. singular – the One who is coming]; "emphasis is on the God who sovereignly controls, past, present and future" [Osborne]; There is no genuine worship apart from a transcendent view of a sovereign, omnipotent and thrice holy God. If you tamper with this theology in your Bible, you don't have true worship in the church. When the church recaptures the joy of God's sovereignty, omnipotence and holiness is when the church will live by faith, walk in obedience and turn from sin. We ought to be a church that rejoices in the holiness of God as much as we rejoice in the grace of God, the love of God and the mercy of God. We ought to rejoice in God's purity, rejoice that we serve a God in whom there is no darkness at all, there is no deceit in this God, no misleading us in this God, no lie in this God, no unfaithfulness to His promises in this God, no trickery in this God. We can trust Him because He is holy.

[9] And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

"And when the living creatures give glory" – "give" [didomi – future indicative active 3rd person plural]; "glory" [doxan – praise, glory, recognition]; "honor" [tim-nen]; "thanksgiving" [eucharistia – thanks; giving of thanks; Rev. 7:12]; "to Him who sits on the throne" – "to Him who sits" [to kathemeno – to be seated; present participle; middle voice; dat. masc. singular – to the One who Himself is sitting]; "to Him who lives forever and ever" – "to Him who lives" [to zao – to be alive; present participle active; dat. masc. singular]; "forever and ever" – lit. "unto the eternity of eternities"; "unto the forever of the forevers".

[10] the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

"the twenty-four elders will fall down" – "fall down" [pipto – to fall; to prostrate; future indicative middle voice; 3rd person plural]; The twenty-four elders are prompted by the singing of the four living creatures to stand up from their thrones and bow down "before Him who sits" [tou kathenenou – present participle active; gen. masc. singular]; "on the throne"; "and will worship" [pros-kuneo – to prostrate; to fall down; to worship; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "Him who lives forever and ever" – lit. to the One who lives unto the forever of the forevers; "and will cast their crowns before the throne" – "cast" [ballo – to throw; present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; they cast their crowns because they realize that their victory, their ability to overcome trials and to persevere to the end is because of God's keeping power"; Crowns are not as important as bowing before the throne. Your victory is never as important as you reverencing God; When you get to heaven in your glorified state, you won't get so high and mighty that you can't bow at the glory of God. With your white garments on and your golden crown on your head, you won't think that you are all that that you can't get on the floor with your white garments and bow. That you can't take off your golden crown even if it messes up your hair and bows down to this God. Why? Because of what you are about to sing "saying" [lego – present participle active nom. masc. plural]:

[11] "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

"Worthy are You" – "Worthy" [bowing reminds me of the only One who is worthy to be praised] "are you" [eimi – to be; present indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "our Lord and our God" – lit. "the Lord and our God"; "to receive" [lambano – present infinitive active]; "glory and honor and power" – lit. "the glory and the honor and the power"; "for You created all things" – "created" [ktizo – aorist indicative active 2nd person singular]; "all things" [ta panta – the all things; neuter accus. plural]; The Father is worthy for me to bow down in white garment and cast my crown before His throne because I would have no existence if He had not created me – "and because of Your will" [to thelema – will; what one wishes or has determined shall be done]; "they existed" [esan from eimi – imperfect indicative active 3rd person plural; they were being]; "and were created" [ktizo – aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; Our existence is depended upon His power. Therefore, considering who He is, we thank Him for creating us. Because we realize He didn't have to do it. God gave us life not out of personal necessity but as a gift. And it is only right that we thank Him for bringing us into existence. You would have no life if it wasn't for God. Every breath you take is a gift, your heartbeat is a gift, your brain activity is a gift and how often do we thank Him for these things. You didn't come in here this morning with nothing. God has given you physical life today. Therefore, we ought to give Him glory. **Quote:** One commentator – "In heaven, worship and reverence are apparently not defined as silence".

Revelation 5

Exposition:

3 indisputable reasons as to why Jesus alone is worthy to reign over all things: The 1st indisputable reason is: Every created being in all the universe declined themselves as being worthy to reign over all things [vv. 1-4]:

[1] I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

"I saw in the right of Him who sat on the throne a book" – "I saw" [eidov (opao) aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "in the right hand of Him" – "in" [epi – on; an open palm]; "who sat on the throne" – "sat" [kathemai – to sit down; present participle middle voice; gen. masc. singular – substantival participle – of the One sitting down of Himself]; We saw back in chapter 4 of Revelation that there is only one piece of furniture in heaven that describes heaven and that is God's throne; "a book" [biblion – a scroll]; "written" [grapho – perfect participle **passive voice**; neuter, accus. singular; having been written]; the Father is the author of the scroll. In His heavenly throne room, the Father has a library with a couple of books of on shelf: **1]** the book of life, which has all the names of those He chose for the Son to save and the Spirit to seal; **2]** the books of the evil works of unrepentant sinners, which chronicle of all the evil thoughts, words and actions of all unbelievers down through human history; **3]** He has a scroll, that He wrote before the foundation of the world, which gives detail information on how this present world will end and how the future world will come about. There is much so information detailing how this present world will end and how the future world will come about that the Father had to write on the back of the book. In this section, the Father has pulled this book off the shelf and has it in the open palm of His right hand. "inside and on the back" – "inside" [esothen – within]; "and "back" [opisthen – back; an opisthograph would signify a scroll full of words]; God's writing of completeness… as the two tablets of stone on both sides had the writing of God [Exod. 32:15-16]; Just as God's law to Israel was complete. So is God's plans for the future of human history is complete. "sealed up with seven seals" – "sealed up" [katasphragizo – to seal up; to close with a seal; perfect participle passive voice; neuter, accus, singular – having been sealed up]; [The common way of sealing a scroll was to place its seal or seals on the outer edge so that they all had to be broken before any of the scroll's content could be read. Thomas] "seven seals" – ["seals" – were used as a stamping device in place of signatures to validate a document. The impression was normally made on clay, wax, or some other soft material… According Roman law a testament or will was sealed with seven seals by seven witnesses. The testimony of witnesses not present at a trial was also sealed, then opened by the court and read aloud… The book spoken here seems to be the book of God's decrees containing the full account of what God in His sovereign will has determined as the destiny of the world. [The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek NT]; "seven" the complete purposes of God for the final phrase of human history.

The scroll essentially is God eternal plan for the completion of world history which entails judgment upon the earth, judgment of unrepentant humanity, judgment of the devil and his angels, Christ's reign with His people on earth and the eternal state. As seen in chapters 6-22.

[2] And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

"And I saw" [eidov – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "a strong angel" [aggelon ischurov – a mighty angel]; "proclaiming with a loud voice" – "proclaiming" [kerusso – to preach; to herald; present participle active; accus. masc. singular]; "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" – "Who is worthy" [axios – worthy; "Five of the six uses of "worthy" in this book occur in these two chapters" [4-5] Osbourne – weight – someone with heavy credentials; "to open" [anoigo – aorist infinitive active]; "to break" [luo – to loose; unbind; to undo; aorist infinitive active]; Who is worthy, who has the power and authority to walk up to the God, who sits on the throne, who is Holy, Holy, Holy and take the scroll from His hand?

[3] And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

"And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able" – "was able" [eduvato (dunamai) – imperfect indicative middle voice; 3rd person singular; "no one was able of himself"]; "to open" [anoigo – aorist infinitive active]; "or to look into it" [blepo – to look; present infinitive active]; Like the screen in Black Panther – "the river tribe, the border tribe will not challenge today"

[4] Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

"Then I began to weep greatly" – "began to weep" [eklaion (klaio) imperfect indicative active 1st person singular; inceptive imperfect – beginning of the verbal action – "I began to weep continually]; "because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it"; this scroll has inscribed on it the fulfillment of what the angels and the saints long for and what demons and fallen mankind are terrified off. That's why you don't have demons coming up trying to take the scroll because it describes their doom. And the reason why you don't have angels and saints coming to take the scroll because they don't have the power to enforce what is written. No hope of God's purposes for bringing the universe to consummation would be fulfilled. Every wrong committed down through human history not being made right, every act of suffering of the redeemed not receiving reward and rest, the devil and his demons not receiving their due, the curse of disease, decay and death remaining in human existence, sorrows not made to joy, pain not made to comfort, God not being glorified in the end.

In Revelation 4:1, John was told, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." It's important that right after seeing the state of seven churches of Asia Minor, in which only two out of the seven were living faithfully before the Lord, which means five out of the seven were compromising with sin, tolerating false doctrine, spiritually dead and apostate. Seeing that as an apostle, knowing that the truth had been brought to these congregations and seeing them drift at the close of the first century can be very discouraging, especially while being imprisoned on the island of Patmos for the gospel. There is nothing as depressing as spending your life seeking to honor the Lord by doing His will and it seems to be pointless because there hadn't been any fruit from it. There is something that is about to happen after these things. "After these things." But John weeps because he sees that there is no one worthy to break the seals and open the scroll. Therefore, God's purposes for the consummation of the universe will be postponed indefinitely.

The 2nd indisputable reason why Jesus is worthy is because: Jesus alone is the God-Man who conquered death to purchase sinners from every nation to reign with Him on the earth [vv. 5-10]:

[5] and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and it seven seals."

"Stop weeping" [Me klaie (klaio) – present imperative active 2nd person singular] this is the cry of no hope… the collective tears of burden, fatigue of life, of disappointment and personal frustration… the tears of separation of loved ones who gone on to be with the Lord… the tears at funerals… Yet it interesting, that no one else in heaven wept. Why? Because they already knew that there was only One worthy to open the scroll. Sometimes we would weep less out of hopelessness if we thought more about Jesus; "behold" [idou – see! Look!]; "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah" **Scrip. Ref**: Gen. 49:9-10]; "the Root of David" **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 11:1&10; He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah – He conquers; He is the Root of David – He controls life, He governs genealogical lines, creates family trees, empowers the sperm and the egg to produce life, determines our life span, guides genetics, determines gender and ordains all of human history. The offspring of David, in His humanity, the root of David, in His deity. "has overcome" [enikesen (nikao) – to conquer; to overcome; to come off victorious; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular; this verb is place after "behold" in the Greek text; "This is the same verb used in the seven letters for the "overcomer" or "conqueror" and probably means that Jesus' victory is the basis for ours." Osbourne]; Weeping and discouragement is not fitting simply because no one can be found among the race of fallen humanity to solve life's biggest problem. John wept because he was looking in the wrong direction. He took his eyes off the throne. No one else in heaven was weeping because they never took their eyes of the throne.

[6] And I saw between the throne [with the four living creatures] and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

"And I saw" [eidov – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "between the throne" [lit. "in the middle of the throne and the four living beings and in the middle of the elders" – the Lamb is at the center of all that takes place in heaven]; "a Lamb standing" – "arnion" [little lamb; in Revelation He appears as the Lamb 31 times] Last week, in Genesis 22:7, Isaac asks Abraham the question, "Where is the Lamb?" And Abraham's response was, "God will provide for Himself a Lamb." That Lamb is none other than Jesus Christ; "standing" [istemi – perfect participle active; neuter nom. singular; having been standing]; "as if slain" [sphazo – to slaughter; perfect participle passive voice; neuter; nom. singular; lit. "as having been slain"] Notice that though the Lamb is slain, it is yet standing. In what appears to be defeat there is victory. Jesus is so powerful that He can defeat His enemies and save sinners by His own death and then bring Himself back to life as proof of the victory. That's why no created being in the universe is worthy. If Jesus can overcome His enemies by seemingly defeat in death, then surely, He will conquer the effects of sin, Satan and death by His life. The Lamb is in the middle of the throne as the center of the Father's enjoyment, the Spirit's intentions to glorify the Lamb and heaven's praise. When you and I get to heaven we will see Christ with scars as a reminder of how you and I were able to enter God's kingdom; our victory is only because of Christ's victory through His shed blood. The effects of the blood cleansing from sin and setting us apart to holiness is why we can persevere unto glory. The blood of Jesus has produced worshipers to God. We overcome because we stay in His word and on our knees. That's what the blood produces in the redeemed. 1 Cor. 6:20. We gain victory through our worship to God. "having seven horns and seven eyes" – "having" [exo – to have; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "seven horns" – "horns" [speak of power and strength]; "seven" is the number of perfection = omnipotence; "eyes" [intelligence; awareness]; "seven" is the number of completion or perfection = omniscience; "which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth" – "sent out" [apo-stello – to send; perfect participle passive voice; nom; masc. plural]; The Lamb achieve an actual atonement, which the Holy Spirit applies to those whom the Father has chosen and for whom the Son died. These, the Spirit draws and seals. Jesus is called a Lion but in appearance He resembled a lamb. Taken together, we learn that this doesn't make Jesus safe, but it does make Him good.

[7] And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

"And He came and took the book" – "He came" [erchomai – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "and took the book" [lambano – to take; perfect indicative active 3rd person singular; "had taken"]; "out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne" – "sat on" [tou kathenenou – of the One who is sitting of Himself; present participle middle voice; gen. masc. singular; substantival participle]; all of the creatures in heaven bow with their faces to the ground before the throne, while the Lamb remains standing as He approaches the throne to take the scroll. Jesus is Worthy. Jesus took the book from the Father's right hand, and He didn't prohibit, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders did not protest nor stand in His way.

[8] When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

"When He had taken the book" – "had taken" [lambano – to take; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; **Quote:** Dr. James Hamilton – "Jesus has seized destiny – not just His destiny – all destiny. Jesus is the One who ensures that the universe will have meaning… Jesus is the One who will right the wrongs and heal the hurts and wipe away the tears."; "fell down" [pipto – to fall; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense" – "holding" [echo – to have; present participle active nom. masc. plural]; "a harp" [kitharan]; "golden bowl full of incense" [phialas chrusas – golden bowls]; "which are the prayers of the saints" – Whether you realize it or not, all of your deepest longings for peace and fulfillment in life can only be experienced in the presence of Jesus. Every single prayer, you will ever pray as a believer is interceded by the Spirit, interpreted and summarized before God's throne as, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". You want peace in this life. You want joy in this life. You want to please God perfectly in this life. You want Jesus to be glorified in this life. You want to be rescued from sin, pain, hurt, sadness and uncertainly. You want a relationship that satisfies and won't mistreat you. All these longings are perfectly answered in Jesus. Therefore, the scroll is the answer to our petitions. And Jesus is the answer of only One who can cause our deepest longings to be realized. That's why all of heaven is celebrating.

[9] And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

"And they sang a new song" – "sang" [ado – to sing; to chant; present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "a new song" ["new" – kainos – fresh; recently made; unused; unworn]; a new song of redemption. We sing songs that are cultural, personal, romantic, jamming, patriotic and represent struggle. Here we sing a song in tribute to the One who redeemed us. This is a new song – in kind, different from common songs we sing. A song that is spiritual, which immediately compels us to participate in. A song that is worshipful, that immediately draws us to bow. A song that is salvific, that immediately causes us to get happy. A song whose theme is all about Jesus, that immediately gets us shouting; "saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book" – "are You" [eimi – present indicative active 2nd person singular] "to take" [lambano – present infinitive active]; "and to break its seals" – "to break" [anoigo – to open; aorist infinitive active]; "for You were slain" [sphazo – to slay; aorist indicative passive voice; 2nd person singular]; "and purchased for God with Your blood" [KJV – "and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" – "Far more extensive evidence favors the reading "because You have purchased us to God by Your blood". The addition of the word "us," which occurs not only in Codex Sinaiticus but also a great variety of texts from both majority sources and other earlier sources, to say nothing of the appearance of the word "us" in such varied Patristic writers as Hippolytus, Cyprian, Augustine,

and others is not to be easily overlooked. Patterson] This is why we hold to the position that the twenty-four elders are not angels but redeemed human beings representative of both OT and NT saints = 12 tribes of Israel & 12 apostles of the church] "purchased" [agorazo – to buy; to purchase from the marketplace of slavery; aorist indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" – Jesus' death was an actual atonement, not a potential or possible one. "Often the number "four" in the Bible stand for the whole world – there are "four corners of the earth"… "tribe…tongue, people and nation" means that Jesus has ransomed people from everywhere." [Hamilton]

[10] "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

"You have made them" – "made" [poieo – to make; aorist indicative active 2nd person singular]; "to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth" – "they will reign" [basileuo – to reign; future indicative active 3rd person plural]; As inconceivable as it might sound, we will one day rule with Christ. Now that sounds inconceivable because we typically tie royalty rule to having royal blood, sort of a birthright. But don't forget church we are made kings and queens because of the blood of Jesus and be adoption by the Spirit into the kingdom. So, we have the right to rule by the blood of Christ and the birthright of the Spirit.

The 3rd indisputable reason why Jesus is worthy is because: Every created being in all the universe declares that Jesus alone is worthy to reign over all things [vv. 11-14]:

[11] Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

"Then I looked" [eidov – I saw; aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "and I heard" [akouo – to hear; aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was myriads of myriads" – myriads of myriads [muriades muriadon – ten thousand of ten thousands; innumerable multitude; an unlimited number] The number for ten thousand was the largest that the Greek language could express; "and thousands of thousands" [chiliades chiliadon]

[12] saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

"loud voice" [phone megale – a mighty sound]; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive" – "slain" [sphazo – to slay; perfect participle passive voice; neuter nom. singular]; "to receive" [lambano – to receive (recognition); present infinitive active – to continual to receive] "power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" – to receive seven fold recognition of praise; "riches" – "wealth" entails power, authority, unlimited control, which He is the possessor and enforcer of all things; "wisdom" – the perfection of wisdom is how Jesus enforces God's plan for the universe; "and blessing" – "blessing" – you ought to bless Christ by

speaking well of Him of how good He has been to you. Christ ought to be blessed when times are difficult because it could be worse, so you are still doing better than you deserve. Christ ought to be blessed when times are good because technically you don't deserve it. Christ ought to be blessed because He saved you from your sins and its eternal consequences. The first song is sung by 28 singers; the next by angels that cannot be number; the next by all creatures of God's creation.

[13] And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." **[14] And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped**.

Imagine all the animals in the worlds suddenly break out in spontaneous praise to the Lamb and the Father – birds, eagles, pigeons, vultures, fish, whales, sharks, catfish, snakes, dogs, cats, monkeys, ants, raccoons, goats, lions, tigers, alligators, horses, cardinals and wildcats. Singing with a loud voice. "And the four living creatures kept saying" – "kept saying" [elegon (lego) to say; imperfect indicative active; 3rd person plural; iterative/frequentative imperfect – the repetition of the action]; "Amen" [so be it; make it happen]; "And the elders fell down and worshiped" – "fell down" [pipto – to prostrate; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; "worshiped" [proskuneo – aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; In heaven we will be perfect in humility, which means we will be released from the soul disappointing lie that the greatest achievement in life is to be able to sustain happiness in yourself by making much of yourself rather than making much of Christ.

Scrip. Ref: Psalm 150:6 – "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"

Revelation 6

The Beginning of Worldwide Tribulation

There are four events soon that will cause the whole world to conclude that the world is ending. These four events are the four seals. Each of the first four seals reveal two classes of creatures, the four living beings and horses. Since the number "four" represent the world. These first four seals represent the beginning of worldwide tribulation.

Exposition:

4 descriptions of what the world will be like when Jesus begins to break the seals: The 1st description is there will be: A time of false security [vv. 1-2]:

[1] Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come."

"Then I saw" [eidon (opao) – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular; mentioned 4 times in this section. It is meant to inform us as the Lamb breaks each of the seals it leads to John being an eyewitness to a visual and symbolic representation of what the contents of the scroll contains.]; "when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals" – "the Lamb" [He is the only one worthy to break the seals and open the contents of scroll because of His redemptive achievements on the cross, in which He purchased to God, men from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. Jesus has conquered sin and death on the earth through the cross. Now He seeks to bring judgment on the inhabitant earth.]; As the Lamb prepares to break the seals. We first must identify what period in human history when these things will take place? Some theologians believe these things happened during the first century in which John the apostle lived. Others believe after the first century up until this point there are events that if added together could easily be interpreted and characterized as the seven seals. But the majority opinion is that the events in chapter 6-19 are future. Here's why we must see these events as happening in the near future. **1] Scrip. Ref:** Revelation 1:19 – "Write therefore the things which you have seen [Rev. 1:12-16 – John receives a vision of the glorified and exalted Christ]; and the things which are [Rev. 2-3 – the things which are refers to the seven churches of Asia Minor that are descriptive of all churches throughout the church age. For after each church is addressed you have the statement – "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches"], and the things which shall take place after these things" [the near context would mean that "the things which shall take place in the future will only come to pass "after these things". What is "after these things" referring too? After the church age. After the church has been raptured. Notice that after Jesus addresses the seven churches that chapter 4:1 has this statement, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." ["After these things" – I believe clearly refers to after the church age, which means the tribulation period. The One who is breaking the seals is the same One who 65 years earlier predicted that these things would happen**. 2] Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 24:3-8 – And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" [4] And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. [5] For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. [6] "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. [7] "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. [8] "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

When Jesus returns the second time it will not be for peace but judgment.

Scrip. Ref: Isa. 61:2 – To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; [We are in the year of grace right now. But soon the day of vengeance is coming. God will pay back with judgment for every sin the sinner has committed against Him. Don't wait till the year of grace is over before you seek the Lord. Seek Him now before the Day of Judgment comes. **Scrip. Ref**: 1 Thess. 5:1-3 – [right after the doctrine of the rapture concludes in 4:13-18;

chapter 5 begins like this] [1] Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. [2] For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. [3] While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. Isn't it interesting that the first consequence imposed upon man after the fall was that the woman would have pain in childbirth? This comes right after mentioning to the serpent that the seed of the woman will come and crush him. Well, the second coming of Christ is referred to as "the birth pains of the Messiah".

As the seed of the woman returns to defeat the serpent completely the contractions of judgment will become more severe. This is why the tribulation period has been compared by both Jesus and Paul as the beginning of birth pangs. As a woman is in labor her contractions become are intense as the baby goes near. Thus, "the Beginning of Worldwide Tribulation". To interpret the events in the chapter as happening in the past makes this scroll as one commentator put it, "a scroll of history rather than prophecy".

"the Lamb broke" [anoigo – to open; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "and I heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular; mentioned 4 times in this section. John not only saw what happened when Jesus broke the seals but also heard what was said]; "one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder" – "one of the four" – [Rev. 4:7 – "And the first creature was like a lion"]; "thunder" [a tone of judgment; a thunderstorm like voice], "Come" [KJV – "Come and see"; One early manuscript has "Come and see". But the majority has, "Come." And the reason why is the command, "Come" is not directed to the Lamb or to the apostle John but to the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. You will notice that after each command a horse with a rider appears. The KJV translators assumed that this command is given to the apostle John, that why they choose an early manuscript that reads, "Come and see."]; [erchomai – present imperative middle/passive voice; 2nd person singular]

[2] I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

"I looked" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "and behold, a white horse" [hippos leukos – white horse – the color of victory or triumph; After victory in war the Roman general would ride on a white horse. "The rabbis believed the appearance of a white horse was a favorable sign".] In the OT the horse is pictured as an emblem of war. So, we come to understand in this section that this is a divine war with the sinful inhabitants of the earth. A time in Scripture that is referred to as the Day of the Lord.; "and he who sat on it had a bow" – "sat on it" [kathemai – present participle middle voice; nom. masc. singular]; "had a bow" – "had" [echo – present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "a bow" [toxon – used only here in the NT]; The rider on the white horse is not Jesus. Here are a five reasons: 1] Jesus will not return at the beginning of the tribulation but at the end of the seven-year tribulation; 2] Jesus is the Lamb breaking the seals not the rider on the white horse.

Plus, I doubt God would allow a living creature to issue a command to its Creator; 3] Jesus in Revelation 19 is seen riding on a white horse with a sword coming out of His mouth. Not a bow; 4] The Greek word for crown here is stephanos [a victor's crown]; the crown on Jesus' head in Revelation 19 is diadems, a crown of royal dignity. 5] You will notice that each of the other three riders, though they appear as persons, yet symbolically they represent impersonal forces. The rider on the white horse is symbolic of false peace which comes through a false Messiah. That's why the text mentions the rider had a bow, but it doesn't mention that he had arrows. Peace will not come by weapons of war but by a change in belief systems. The false Messiah will call for the world to believe in him. Thus, he gains victory from each nation who converts to his cause. The world will come to the false belief that since peace has never been won through war that maybe it can be won through religion. One world religion.

"and a crown was given to him" – "a crown" [stephanos – a victor's crown]; "was given" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; a divine passive – it was sovereignly granted to this rider to be successful in his wicked endeavored]; **Quote:** Arthur Pink, in his classic book "The Sovereignty of God", was correct when he wrote – "God is not the author of sin, but He is the orderer and controller of it." The doctrine of theodicy or the problem of evil in a universe governed by a Sovereign and Omnipotent and Good God struggles with trying to reconcile these truths. How can there be evil in the world if God is good and all powerful? There must be one of two reasons why life is like this. Either God is all powerful but He is not good. Or God is good but not all powerful. Many opt for the second position. But the burden is not on God Himself to prove whether He is good, powerful or sovereign according to man's estimation. But when it comes to evil the issue is whether it is unjust for wicked people not to suffer evil for being evil? Why shouldn't sinners not reap what they have sown? Why shouldn't a sovereign, all powerful and good God not reward evil according to their evil? Listen, God is not on the witness stand but on the throne. And He has given all authority to His Son to bring justice upon the wicked. So, this section proves that one day all oppressors will be oppressed. And all abusers will be abused. And the ruthless will one day suffer ruthlessly.

"and he went out conquering and to conquer" – "he went out" [ex-erchomai – to go; come out; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "conquering" [nikao – to conquer; to be victorious; present participle active; nom. masc. singular; attendant circumstances participle]; "and to conquer" – "to" [hina – in order that]; "conquer" [nikao – aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular – he should conquer]; Peace in the world will always be false apart from a relationship with the true God through faith in Jesus Christ. For once that happens the Holy Spirit communicates the peace you have with God to having the peace of God. But the peace of the world is always believed it can be achieved by man solving his own problems of life. However, man was not made to the object of his own worship. And when he does it always ends violently.

The 2nd description of what the world will be like is there will be: A time of vicious savagery [vv. 3-4]:

[3] When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come."

"When He broke the second seal" – "broke" [anoigo – to open; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "I heard the second living creature saying, "Come" – "the second living creature" [Rev. 4:7 – the second creature like a calf]; "Come" [erchomai – present imperative middle/passive; 2nd person singular]

[4] And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

"And another" [allos – another of the same kind]; "a red horse" [purros – red; have the color of fire; used twice in the NT – Rev. 12:3; a picture of blood; this horse is the horse of war and bloodshed]; "went out" [ex-erchomai – to come out; to go; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "and to him who sat on it" [kathemai – to sit down; present participle middle voice; dative masc. singular]; "it was granted to take peace from the earth" – "it was granted" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; a divine passive – God in His sovereignty give this rider permission] "to take peace from the earth" – "to take" [lambano – aorist infinitive active]; "peace" [ten eirenen – the peace; a state of national tranquility; exemption from rage and havoc of war; concord; peace between individuals]; "and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him" – "slay" [sphazo – to slaughter; butcher; violent killing; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "and a great sword was given to him" – "given" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular – a divine passive; this rider was sovereignly grants two missions from the Lamb – to remove peace from the earth and to cause great war upon the earth – pictured by a great sword [machaira megale – a large sword]; God in His sovereignty will remove the restraining grace from over the depraved human heart of mankind to the point that they will act out their inner aggressions, hostilities and hatred without fear of repercussions. Governments will go to war against another governments, political unrest always leads to rioting, looting and violence among the populace. It is during this time that believers will be killed because they will not bow to the one world religion. Therefore, the world will see believers as an enemy of world peace.

The only reason why you and I have experienced a relative level of peace in our neighborhoods, in our schools, at our jobs is only because God has placed His restraining grace over the hearts of the people who are around you. And think about it, there will be a time in the future when there will be no peace on the entire planet. Can you imagine that? According to one study the safest country on the planet is Singapore, the most peaceful country in the world. There will be a time will everybody will fear for their own lives. There will be no peace, therefore there will be no trust, no kindness, no compassion, no pity, no mercy. The world will be filled with human beings

behaving like savages. You think you have seen worse with the inhumane treatment of aborted babies.

The 3rd description of what the world will be like is there will be: A time of desperate shortage [vv. 5-6]:

[5] When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

"When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature" – "third living creature" [Rev. 4:7 – "the third creature had a face like that of a man"]; "Come" [erchomai – present imperative middle/passive 2nd person singular]; "I looked, and behold" – "behold" [to see with shock]; "a black horse" [hippos melas – black – a picture of mourning; lamentation; famine] ["Famine is a logical consequence of worldwide war as food supplies are destroyed and those involved in food production are killed. MacArthur]; "and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand" – "To eat bread by weight" is a Jewish phrase indicating that food is scarce. [Wiersbe]; "Careful weighing of food shows it to be in short supply. Eating food by weight denotes conditions of famine". [Thomas]

[6] And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius [KJV – a penny; this would be considered cheat as oppose to expensive], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

"And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures" – this voice could be one of the living creatures or God Himself. I believe it is one of the living creatures; "A quart of wheat for a denarius" – "a quart" [choiniz – a dry measure; less than a quart]; "a denarius" – "the cost of wheat here is five to twelve times its normal price"; "and three quarts of barley for a denarius" – "barley" [krith – barley; used only here in the NT] "barley lacks gluten, a protein substance in wheat flour that makes dough cohesive. Hence, barley is generally used for animal fodder" [Kistemaker]. [Three dry measure quarts of barley are available for the same cost of one dry measure quart of wheat. This dry measure amounted to little more than could be successfully cradled in two human hands. More astoundingly, however, is that fact that it would take an entire day's wage to purchase either the barley or the wheat in such relatively small amounts. [Patterson]; There will be a time where all nations will be considered third world countries. Everywhere you look it will be Haiti like conditions but worse. Can you imagine one day's work is not enough to buy two loaves of bread? You work minimum wage of $7.25 an hour [KY]. You work 8 hours = $58. And that is barely enough money to feed yourself let alone your whole family?

"and do not damage the oil and the wine" – "damage" [adikeo – to harm; to hurt; aorist subjunctive; active; 2nd person singular]; [Historical Background: In AD 92 there was a grain shortage, and Domitian decreed that half the vineyards in the province be cut down in order to

increase grain production. This caused such a furor that he had to rescind the order. Cutting down vineyards would hurt production for years to come and would make a famine even more severe. This could be a reference to that type of situation, stressing the severity of the famine conditions and the extremes that people would have to go to to alleviate the suffering. [Osborne]; One of the four living creatures commands the black horse rider "Famine" not to touch the olive or grape crops.

The 4th description of what the world will be like is there will be: A time of unimaginable suffering [vv. 7-8]

[7] When He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come."

"When He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature" [Rev. 4:7 – "the fourth creature was like a flying eagle"] "saying, 'Come'

[8] I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

"I looked, and behold" – "behold" [amazement and shock]; "an ashen horse" [hippos chloros – a yellowish pale; the color of a corpse; corruption]; "and he who sat on it" [kathemai – present participle middle/passive; nom. masc. singular]; "had the name Death" [Thanatos – Death]; The first rider is symbolic of peace; The second rider is symbolic of war; the third rider is symbolic of famine; the fourth rider, which is the only one that is named is Death; "and Hades was following with him" – "Hades" [KJV – Hell; the place where the departing souls of unbelievers suffer until the end of the age when they will be cast into the lake of fire/hell]; "was following" [akoloutheo – to accompany; imperfect indicative; active; 3rd person singular]; "Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth" – "Authority was given" – "given" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; a divine passive; God sovereignly grants permission for Death and Hades to have the authority to take the lives of human beings but only up to] "a fourth of the earth" – Think about the death that will take place over the earth at this time. A fourth of 7 billion people is 1.750 billion. Listen, with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in existence in our time. It's not hard to imagine that these may come into use in causing the death of one fourth of the earth's population. 1.75 billion people. Listen, death should remind us of two things: 1] the devil is a liar. Cause he lied to the woman and said, "You surely shall not die"; 2] God is real. Every human being who has die regardless of their spiritual condition has come to experience whether in joy or pain that God is real. And what He says in His word is true. The only issue is, will you believe it or be foolish enough to keep living as if it is not true. And out of all those people none will be saved. How do I know this? Look who is following behind Death picking up the souls as the body dies, Hades. It doesn't say, Heaven followed after Death but Hades, the abode of the departed spirits of unrepentant sinners who

suffer torment until their souls are rejoined with their bodies and thrown into the lake of fire, which is hell. Listen, not everybody who dies is resting in peace. There are people outside the church and who associate within the church who will not be absent from the body present with the Lord when they die. But absent from the body and present in Hades when they die.

"to kill with sword" [violent killing]; "and with famine" [starvation]; "and with pestilence" [disease]; "and by wild beasts of the earth" – the fact that the text predicts one of four ways people will die proves that God has already ordains the means of how every human being will die one day. You don't know whether God has ordained for you to be kill, to starve to death, to die of disease or killed by an animal. Don't think big animals like lions and tigers. These animals can include rats and wild dogs.

[An estimated 30 million people died during the great influenza epidemic 1918-19… But one explanation may be that the deadliest creature of all, the rat, thrives in all populated areas. Rats have been responsible for uncounted millions of deaths throughout history, both by eating food supplies, and especially by spreading disease. The most infamous the rat-borne disease was the Black Death, a 14th century outbreak of bubonic plague wiped out one-fourth to one-third of Europe's population. MacArthur]; God in His sovereign patience has determined to not extend common grace [good food, pleasant weather] and restraining grace [holding evil in check] upon ungrateful, blasphemous, rebellion and irreverent sinners anymore. Now the year of grace has turned to the day of vengeance.

Listening to what will happen in the future gives us a proper perspective now. Amen!!! Things in your life now are not even as bad as it will be in this world in the future. And knowing that this is happening because of man's rebellion against God should motivate us to live godly lives **Scrip. Ref**: 2 Peter 3:11-12 – 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!

Just think these first four seals are only the beginning of birth pangs. In other words, the contractions, though painful are not nearly as intense and severe as it will be when the sixth and seventh seals are opened. **Scrip. Ref**: Heb. 10:31 – "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Revelation 6:9-17

Judgments From Heaven

Introduction:

There has always been a deep fascination with seeking to know how the world is going to end. In fact, Hollywood is so obsessed with it that in the last 70 years there has been close to 300 apocalyptic feature length films made. That's an average of 4 movies every year since 1950 up to this present time: films like – The End of the World; Things to Come; The Day the Earth Stood Still; Invasion of the Body Snatchers; The War of the Worlds; The Day the Earth Caught Fire; The Last Man on Earth; The Time Machine; Dawn of the Dead; Battle of the Planets of the Apes; Blade Runner; Flash Gordon; Mad Max; The Terminator; Armageddon; Deep Impact; End of Days; The Matrix; The Day After Tomorrow; Edge of Tomorrow; The Hunger Games; Legion; I Am Legend; Interstellar; Geostorm; Godzilla; The Book of Eli; Battle: Los Angeles; Avengers: Infinity War; This is the End. In these movies you have 300 alternative endings to the world. And I can assure you that the theme of 99.9 percent of them have nothing to do with sinners being judged by a Holy God. The truth of that ending is only given to us in the book of Revelation. This is the only true and reliable account of how the world is going to end.

Exposition:

2 distinct voices [that] will be heard concerning God's judgments upon the earth in the future: The 1st distinct voice is: The voice of the martyrs crying out for justice [vv. 9-11]:

[9] When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

"When the Lamb broke the fifth seal" – "broke" [anoigo – to open; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "the fifth seal" – this seal judgment includes the prayers of martyred saints who cry out for vengeance upon those who murdered them. The interpretation of the fifth seal is imprecatory prayers [to call down calamity on someone]; "I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God" – "I saw" [eidov – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "underneath the altar" [thusiasteriov – altar]; "the souls" [tas psuchas]; "those who had been slain" [sphazo – to slaughter; perfect participle **passive voice**; gen. masc. plural; substantival participle]; Some Bible scholars believe this altar is the altar of burnt offerings, while others believe this altar represents the altar of incense. This is not the altar of sacrifice, because 1] there is no need for any more blood sacrifices because Jesus shed His blood once for all; 2] the death of martyrs is not a blood offering to God; This is the altar of incense –

Scrip. Ref: Rev. 8:3 – "And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."

The scenery has not changed here in these verses from a throne room to a temple. The throne room is also a temple. For before the throne there is an altar. Don't forget that Jesus Christ is both our Great High Priest and King. And here these martyrs are placed underneath the altar of incense and Jesus is functioning as a Great High Priest by sympathizing with His people when they are hurting. These believers remembered the means of death God ordained for them to come to heaven. They remembered that they were murdered for their testimony of the gospel.

"because of the word of God" [ton logon tou Theou – the proclamation of the gospel]; and because of the testimony which they had maintained" – "they had maintained" [echo – to have; imperfect indicative active; 3rd person plural – they kept having]; they did not stop testifying concerning Christ even under the threat of death]; These martyrs came to faith in Christ probably during the first and second seals. The Holy Spirit drew their hearts to the gospel. They started to read His Word and noticed that what was happening in the world was exactly what Jesus Christ had predicted in the Gospel accounts. And they started sharing the gospel. And they warned the people that the False Messiah and nation against nation is predicted in the Scriptures to be the beginning of the Tribulation period, the birth pains. And they sought to persuade sinners to trust in Jesus before the great day of His wrath comes. But instead of being received with love, they were regarded as enemies. And they were murdered for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Scrip. Ref: Matt. 24:9-12 – the fifth seal is predicted by Christ – "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. [10] And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. [12] And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold;

Luke 21:16 – But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

These martyrs should motivate us to proclaim the gospel out of a love for our neighbor considering the judgment that is coming. These believers did not shut their mouths knowing that all the people around them were about to go to hell. They opened their mouths knowing the risk because faithfulness to God and love towards one's neighbor is more important than person ease. Why would one want ease in this life when the world is about to end anyway? How do you describe a true follower of Jesus? **1]** They obey Jesus out of a love for Him without compromise; **2]** They are willing to be a testimony of Christ's Lordship over their lives by suffering to the point of death; **3]** They persevere in both obedience to the word and hardship until glory.

[10] and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

"and they cried out with a loud voice" – "cried" [krazo – to cry aloud; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "loud voice" [phone megale]; "saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" – "saying" [lego – to say; present participle active; nom. masc. plural]; "How long" – **Scrip. Ref**: Psalm 6:3

– And my soul is greatly dismayed; But Thou, O Lord – how long? Psa. 13:1 – How long, O Lord? Will Thou forget me forever? [4 times in the first two verses the question How long? Is asked]; Psa. 35:17 – Lord, how long wilt Thou look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, My only life from the lions. "How long" – Until when – the question is not whether their enemies will be judged but when.

"O Lord" [despotes – master; one who has absolute authority; we get the word "despot" from this Greek word – "one who enforces His will on others"]; "Lord" refers to God's absolute and sovereign authority over all things. The martyrs cry to the Lord because there is none other who has the right and authority to render justice on behalf of His people. When you address God by calling Him "Lord" don't forget what His name means. You are praying to the only Sovereign God in the universe. As the late R.C. Sproul said, "If God is not sovereign, then He is not God." Faith is resting in the sovereignty of God. Spurgeon said it best, "God's sovereignty is the pillow upon which we rest our heads."; "holy" [hagios]; "and true" [alethinos – real; genuine]; The Lord is holy – He is separate apart and set against sin. And He is true, genuine, real, which means He is not a God that He should lie. The Bible warns of future judgment and now the Lord who is true, is simply following through with His promise to judgment sinners.

"will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood" – "judging" [krino – to judge; present indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "avenging" [ek-dikeo – to vindicate one's right; to avenge; to do one justice; present indicative active 2nd person singular]; These saints remembered how they lived and how they died; "on those who dwell on the earth?" – There are two things you need to notice here for interpretive purposes: 1] There are some commentators that believe that these martyrs represent all who have died for Christ since the first century till present, for last 2,000 years. But notice that the cry of the martyrs is for vengeance to take place upon their oppressors who are still alive on the earth; 2] "those who dwell upon the earth" – this phrase is only used in the book of Revelation and each time it refers to unbelievers [6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8]; The Disciples Prayer there is a petition for forgiveness; the martyr's prayer there is a petition for judgment towards their enemies. This prayer at this period in human history accords with the will of God.];

Scrip. Ref: Isa. 61:1-2 – The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim the liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners; [2] To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; What does the favorable year of the Lord entail? Luke 23:34 – But Jesus was saying [imperfect tense – kept saying], "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." [That prayer extended the common grace of a long life.]; Acts 7:60 – as Stephen was being stoned to death because of his testimony of the gospel it says, "And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" But there is a day coming when the favorable year of the Lord is replaced by the day of vengeance and God will find it acceptable for the saints to pray prayers for vengeance upon their enemies who killed them because of the gospel.

The Lord answers this prayer in a number of stages in this book – in the breaking of the sixth seal, in the pouring out of the third bowl of wrath upon the rivers and springs [the clean water] thus making it blood in 16:5-6 – And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; [6] for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it." And in 18:20, after the Lord destroys Babylon. The command is given, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." The martyred saints, join in God's judgment upon the world through their prayers for vindication.

[11] And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

"And there was given to each of them a white robe" – "was given" [didomi – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; divine passive]; "a white robe" [stole leuke – a loose outer garment which extended to the feet; Rev. 7:9, 13]; "and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer" – "they were told" [eipov – to say; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "they should rest" [ana-pauo – to give rest; refresh; to take rest; future indicative passive/middle voice; 3rd person plural – "they shall rest themselves"]; Notice in this section there is no rebuke, there is no ignoring of their pleas but simply comfort and promise.

"until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also" – "to be killed" [apo-kteino – present infinitive passive voice]; "would be completed" [pleroo – to make full; to fill up; aorist subjunctive passive voice; 3rd person plural]; Our times are in His hand. Death for the believer should be an act of worship [John 21:18-19 – [18] "when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. Death as one person put it, is not an accident but an appointment. Based on the testimony of these future martyrs, we should live faithfully before the Lord all the way till death. This is the martyr's marathon. Jesus told the martyrs, now that you have finished your race, don't look back, get your rest. And He clothed them in white robes.

The 2nd distinct voice that will be heard concerning God's judgments upon the earth is: The voice of mankind crying out for fear of judgment [vv. 12-17]:

[12] I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

"I looked when He broke the sixth seal" – "I looked" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "He broke the sixth seal" – Jesus is not opening these seals in grace and love but in justice and wrath; "and there was a great earthquake" – lit. "a great earthquake happened" [ginomai – to become; to happen; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; [seismos

megas – Eng word. seismic – a great shaking; commotion]; "and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair" – "became" [ginomai – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; The sun did not become black on its own. It was made that way; "as sackcloth" –"as" [like – simile – figure of speech using some point of resemblance; comparison] "sackcloth" [sakkos – a coarse and dark cloth or garment used as a symbol of mourning]; "made of hair" [tri-chinos – used only here in the NT; the hair of a black goat]; "and the whole moon became like blood" – "became" [ginomai – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "like" [as – simile; comparison]; "blood" – the whole moon did not become literal blood but the appearance of it looked like blood, because it was a dark red]

[13] and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts it unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

"and the stars of the sky fell to the earth" – "stars" [asteres [aster – a star]; English word "asteroid" means "star-shaped" – these were no literal stars but star-shaped in appearance – a meteor; a comet or asteroid]; "fell" [pipto – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "as a fig tree casts it unripe figs when shaken by a great wind" – "as" [like – simile]; "casts" [ballo – to throw; to cast; present indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "shaken" [seio – to shake; to cause to tremble; present participle passive voice; nom. fem. singular]; Like shaking a small tree full of small berries in it and seeing tens if not hundreds falling down upon the ground. The late Dr. Henry Morris – "The earth's crust, highly unstable ever since the Flood, will be so disturbed by the impacting asteroids, the volcanic explosions and the worldwide earthquakes, that great segments of it will actually begin to slip and slide over the earth's deep plastic mantle… "the earth's shifting crust".

[14] The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

"The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up" – "the sky" [ho ouranos – the heaven]; "was split apart" [apo-chorizo – to part asunder; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "it is rolled up" [helisso – to roll up; fold together; present participle active; accus. neuter singular]; "and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" – "were moved" [kineo – to be moved; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural]; [The most prominent and stable land feature is a mountain; the most prominent and stable ocean feature is an island. [Holman]; Many mountains will be moved or shift out of its place, while others will disappear. But this is not a complete removed of all mountains – Rev. 16:20 lets us know that when the seventh bowl of wrath is poured out then "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

[15] Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

"Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man" – there are seven classes within the social structure of the human race that is listed here; the number seven is the number of completion; "hid themselves" [krupto – to hide; to conceal; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; The nation's leaders, officials, commanders, war heroes and rich will not seek to go on television for an important announcement, to make an address to the citizens of the country, to issue any words of comfort or instruction, nor will they Facetime their personal insights but all of them will be trying to find a place to hide. When the natural order of the world begins to unravel, fear will overtake everyone. Mountains, which picture permanence will be moved. The sun and moon that we depend on so much but take for granted will not give forth its normal light. A massive earthquake will put fear in everyone. **Scrip. Ref**: Luke 21:26 – "men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world" – "fainting" is from 'apopsucho,' which literally means "to stop breathing" or "to expire".

[16] and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

"and they said to the mountains and to the rocks" – "said" [lego – present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "Fall on us" [pipto – aorist imperative active 2nd person plural; a tense of urgency]; "and hide us" [krupto – to conceal; aorist imperative active; 2nd person plural; a tense of urgency]; They hid in the mountains because they realized that their houses are not safe, their yachts are not safe, their storm room was not safe. The only place that they could think of that might withstand another earthquake was to hide in the mountains. But technically speaking they are not trying to escape from the meteor shower but from the God on the throne.

"from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" – "the presence" [prosopou –to face; from the sight of]; "who sits" [kathemai – to sit down; present participle middle voice; gen. masc. singular – the One who Himself is sitting]; "the wrath of the Lamb" – used only here in the NT; "wrath" [orge – a violent temper; anger; retribution; provocation] This is not a lamb you can intimidate, oppose, reject or simply ignore; "the wrath of the Lamb" – [used only here in the NT] the paradox of a lamb that has anger issues. But not sinful, uncontrollable anger, but just, righteous and holy anger of Jesus against those who refuse to give Him glory by bowing to His Lordship and who killed His servants who proclaimed His gospel. This anger is just because this Lamb died to save sinners and these sinners treat with contempt that sacrifice by refusing to believe. The Hebrew writer put it like this, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? [Heb. 10:29] The gospel is the grace of gospel for those who believe but for those who reject the gospel, they must face the wrath of the Lamb. The meek and lowly Jesus is only meek and lowly towards the repentant sinners. But there is another side to this Lamb, He is angry with the sinner who rejects His salvific grace. This is not a Lamb to play with. We must reverence the Lamb. This is the same Lamb that died on the cross but with a different

attitude. God's love can only shield the sinner from His wrath if he takes refuge not in earthly shelters but in Christ. If your sin has not been punished on Christ, it will be punished on you. Notice church, that mankind during this time will not be ultimately afraid of the terror in the sky such as the sun becoming dark, the moon becoming like blood or the meteor shower, the earthquake or the mountains and islands being moved out of its place. But more than anything they will be afraid to be in the presence of God and Christ. [Terror is a great equalizer, and all social distinctions drop away in light of the shaking of the heavens and the arrival of the terrible judgment of God… Lot and his daughters lived in a cave in fear after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah… David hid in a cave from the wrath of Saul [1 Sam. 22:1] [Osborne]

[17] for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

"for the great day" – the day of the Lord; "their wrath" [KJV and NKJV – has the better rendering of the possessive pronoun – His wrath as opposed to "Their wrath" – NASB; NIV; Living Translation]; "has come" [erchomai – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular – in the Greek text this verb appears first for emphasis – lit. "because came the great day of the wrath of Him"]; There is no more delay the great day of the Lord has come; "and who is able to stand?" – "is able" [dunatai – present indicative passive/middle voice 3rd person singular – who is able of himself]; "to stand" [istemi – aorist infinitive passive; to stand or withstand His judge; to survive it]; How in the world are you going to make through when God ceases to dispense grace and mercy for each day? Even lost sinners, whether they realize it or not, depend on common grace and mercy each day. The only thing your sin does is alert God to where you are hiding. Our sin gives us away to be judge by a holy God. This Lamb was sacrificed in order that God's judgment may Passover the sinner. But this same Lamb will pour out His wrath upon those who did not apply His blood to themselves. **Quote**: "If men and women will not yield to the love of God, and be changed by the grace of God, then there is no way for them to escape the wrath of God".

Revelation 7:1-8

Signed, Sealed, and Delivered

2 assurances for the people of God amid tribulation: The 1st assurance for the people of God amid tribulation is: God never punishes His people in tribulation but purifies them in it [vv. 1-3]:

[1] After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

"After this I saw" – meta touto [neuter nom. singular] – after the judgment of the sixth seal [Rev. 6:12-17]; "I saw" [eidon – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; This phrase "After this I saw" – is the apostle John's way of transitioning us to another vision [4:1; 7:9]; This new vision comprises all of chapter 7 of Revelation. It is an interlude between the 6th and 7th seal.

We have come to the mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation period. The first 3 ½ years, referred to as the beginning of birth pangs covered the first five seals. The 6th seal transitions us to the second 3 ½ years of the Tribulation referred to as the Great Tribulation. But before it begins there is an interlude or a parentheses if you will, in which God will seal a particular group of believers in order that they may stand firm throughout the judgments of the 7th seal in order that they may proclaim the gospel during this time: **Scrip. Ref:** Matt. 24:14 – And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

"four angels standing at the four corners of the earth" – "standing" [istemi – to stand; perfect participle active; accus. masc. plural; temporal participle – "I saw four angels [while/since/after] having stood at the four corners of the earth" – These four angels who have been given power over the forces of nature had already been standing ready to unleash those forces right after the sixth seal had been broken]; "four corners of the earth" – the four points of the world – north, south, east and west; "holding back the four winds of the earth" – "holding back" [kpateo – to hold in check; to restrain; "the strength of the verb's meaning implies that the winds are struggling to get loose, but are being restrained" [Thomas]; present participle active; accus. masc. plural]; "so that" [hina – purpose clause]; "no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree" – "no wind" – in Jewish apocalyptic literature "wind" is often a metaphor associated with judgment. No wind, no breeze on the earth, no movement of the clouds, no waves breaking on the seashore. Nothing but stillness.

[2] And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

"And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun" – "I saw another angel" – "I saw" [eidon – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "another angel" [allos – another of the same kind – different angel from the four but of the same nature as the four]; "ascending from the rising of the sun" – "ascending" [anabaino – to go up; to ascend; to rise up; present participle active accus. masc. singular]; "rising of the sun" – referring to the direction of the east, which is the land of Israel; [it is recalled that Paradise was set up in the east… the glory of God comes to the Temple from the east [Ezek. 43:2]… this direction also was the area whence the magi came at Jesus' birth [Matt. 2:1]… Jesus is called "dayspring" [Lk. 1:78] and "morning star" [Rev. 22:16], which signals the arrival of daylight through the rising of the sun in the east… The east is the direction of Palestine and is appropriate because in this section the twelve tribes of Israel are the ones sealed. [Thomas]

"having the seal of the living God" – "having" [echo – present participle active; accus. masc. singular]; "the seal" [sphragida – a signet ring; in the ancient world a signet ring was "used by kings, officials, and those in authority to authenticate documents. In the ancient world the seal meant ownership, protection, and privilege". Osborne]; "Three functions of the seal. For one, it prevents tampering; next, it ensures ownership; and last, on a document it certifies genuineness"

Kistemaker]; **Scrip. Ref**: Eph. 1:13 – "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise". When you have been sealed by God, He owns you, He protects you, which means none can tamper with you apart from His will, and the privilege and genuineness of you belonging to God is by the Holy Spirit indwelling you as proof of sonship and daughter-ship.

Now though the devil hates God, he wants to be like God. In the book of Revelation, the devil pretends to be like God by conjuring up a false trinity in chapter 13, in which as the dragon he pretends to function as the Father, you have the beast that pretends to be like the Messiah and the prophet who pretends to be like the Holy Spirit. But also, in that same chapter the beast will cause all unbelievers to receive the mark of the beast on their right hand or forehead. In 17:5, the great prostitute, Babylon will have writing on her forehead. And the point is this, neither God nor the devil will allow anyone to take a position of neutrality. You are either for God or for the devil. If you are not sealed by the Holy Spirit, then you are controlled by the devil. There is no in-between.

"of the living God" – "living" [zontos – not merely existing – bios but active, ever present and full of the bliss of life]; "and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels" – "cried out" [krazo – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "with a loud voice to the four angels" – "loud" [megale – great; loud] since these angels are at the four corners of the earth this angel had to cry out in a loud voice in order for them to hear him; "to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea" – "it was granted" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; the passive voice is referred to as the divine passive because the living God has given to these four angels the authority, the right to harm the earth and the sea which will take place when the seventh seal is broken]; "to harm" [adikeo – to hurt; aorist infinitive active]; "the earth and the sea".

[3] saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

"saying" [lego – to say; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees" – "harm" [adikeo – to hurt; aorist subjunctive active; 2nd person plural]; "until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads" – "we have sealed" [sphragizo – to seal; aorist subjunctive active; 1st person plural]; "the bond-servants" [doulos – slaves]; "of our God on their foreheads" – "our God" – the God that we serve is the same God that the angels in heaven serve; "on their foreheads" – what purpose is the seal on the forehead? **Scrip. Ref**: Revelation 9:4 – And they [locust-like demons] were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. What type of seal will be placed on their heads in the future? **Scrip. Ref**: Revelation 14:1 – 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. These believers will be sealed with the name of the Lamb and the

name of the Father on their foreheads. We, the church is sealed with the person of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

Now you need to understand what God does for His people amid tribulation that He does not do for those who are not His own – **1]** He first distinguishes between the intent of our tribulation and the intent of unbeliever's tribulation. His intent for us is to apply His strengthening grace on our behalf so that we may be able to stand or endure the trial. He convinces us that we have no power in ourselves to endure so that we may lean on Him for strength to endure. The Lord does not grant such grace to unbelievers in their time of tribulation. He does not enable them to stand but to fall; **2]** He does not allow the trial to go beyond our ability to persevere through it. Here's one thing you can bank on when the Lord sends trials into the lives of His people, no matter how difficult, He will make you make it through. And what I mean by making it through, He will cause you to make it through by enabling your faith in Him to remain intact. No believer loses faith in God permanently in his most intense trials. God will not allow it by His Holy Spirit who indwells us [1 Pet. 1:5]. But the Lord purposes the trial of unbelievers to go beyond their ability to persevere; **3]** The Lord will not allow the devil to take possession of you or to overpower you amid your tribulation. Keep in mind, trials are not only times when the Lord tests our faith, but they are also times when the devil comes to tempt our flesh. Trials are hard in and of themselves, but it would be totally unbearable if the devil was allowed to take control of our souls with his tormenting power. But the Lord permits the devil to torment unbelievers amid their tribulation: **4]** The Lord has a work for you to do, even in your season of tribulation. He wants you to be an example of what it means to follow the Lord when times are good and bad. And He wants you to be witness to the lost that God is good all the time. He is worthy to be trusted no matter how difficult life gets. Therefore, the Lord will support you in your trial because He wants to put Himself on display in it. But when it comes to the unbeliever the Lord is not looking to glorify Himself by them being an example and witness for Him. But He is looking to glorify His justice and wrath in their punishment. **Quote**: Anonymous – Plagues and deaths around me fly/Till He pleases, I cannot die.

Now keep in mind, these believers who are referred to as servants of God had already made it through the seals of war, violence, famine, world-wide disease and persecution. And being sealed in-between the 6th and 7th seal guarantees that they will make it through the worse judgment this world has ever experienced. While the world is collapsing all around them, God will enable them to keep standing no matter what. Listen, if that be true of the God of the future, it must be true of the God of the present. God is a keeping God. So, I don't need advance notice of what difficulties lay ahead, I don't need to know how it will work out, I just need to know that our God will get me through. Listen, God is the living God, the ever active and present God, which means that He is with us. So much so, that it is never in our ability to be prepared for what's around the corner that guarantees we will be able to handle it. But it is God's ever active presence that guarantees we will be able to handle it. Have you ever experienced being blindsided by a trial? God is like those air bags in the steering wheel of your car.

It's only upon impact that He is deployed to sustain you. And God will oftentimes blind side us with pain but in the impact, He will immediately rescues, strengthens and sustains us. I don't need to know how I am going to make it through, I just need to know the One who will get me through.

The 2nd assurance for the people of God amid tribulation is: God knows where His people are and has not forgotten His promises to them [vv. 4-8]:

[4] And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

"And I heard the number of those who were sealed" – "I heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "those who were sealed" [sphragizo – to seal; perfect participle passive voice; genitive masc. plural – lit. "of the ones who had been sealed" – sometime between verse 3 and 4 the angels placed a seal on the foreheads of the servants of God]; "one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel" – one hundred and forty-four thousand" – Interpretative problem: There are 3 different interpretations for the number of 144,000 – **1]** Jehovah Witnesses teach that salvation can only be found through their organization and when this cult began it was prophesied that only 144,000 of Jehovah Witnesses [Gentiles] will live in heaven after they die. All other Jehovah's Witnesses are barred from heaven and live instead on Paradise Earth. The 144,000 are referred to as the little flock; **2]** Some Protestant Theologians interpret the 144,000 as representing the church. They hold that since 12 is the number of completeness, then 12 x 12 equals – 144 times 1,000 equals 144,000. Thus the 144,000 is the completeness of the whole church; **3]** Other sound, well-studied, exegetically precise theologians [I consider myself a part of this group] hold that the 144,000 refer to, now get this deep thought – what the text says it is "from every tribe of the sons of Israel". This is referring to every tribe who comes from the physical line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is ethnic Israel. Nowhere in the Old or New Testament is Israel ever referred to as the church. Now don't get me wrong there are certain titles that were used of Israel in the OT that are used of the church in the NT, but this does not mean that the church has replaced Israel but that the church has been engrafted into the promises with Israel. The apostle Paul is clear in chapters 9-11 of Romans that God has not abandoned His promises to Israel: **Scrip. Ref**: Romans 11:1 – I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. [2] God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. [26] and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." [27] And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." [Isa. 59] [29] for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. **Quote**: Charles Spurgeon – "God never gives His children a promise which He does not intend to use."

Now the reason why some theologians reject that the literal interpretation of this list is because: **1]** In 2 Kings 17, the northern kingdom of Israel, that comprised the 10 tribes were taken into Assyrian captivity and thus lost their identity. They are referred to as the 10 lost tribes of Israel; **2]** Because in 70 A.D., the Romans entered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple with the genealogical records, meaning no Jew knows which tribe he belongs to today. But 2 Chron. 30:1-11; 34:1-9 states that a remnant of the 10 tribes was in the southern kingdom. So, the so-called 10 lost tribes are not lost. Also, it doesn't matter if a Jew doesn't know which tribe he belongs too because God knows where he is and what tribe he belongs too. **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 49:14 [the statement is made by the people of Zion] – "The Lord has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me." [the divine response] [15] "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. [16] Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands – "inscribed" or engraved. In other words, the Lord has Israel tattooed on His hand. A couples' tattoo – Israel will have His name on their forehead, and He has their names on His right hand.

Listen, you may not know your family history, you may not know what's going on in your life, you may not know where your life is headed but never impose your ignorance upon God. God knows where you came from, He knows what's going on, and He knows where your life is headed. What is hidden from us is clear and known by Him. He not only knows your past, your present and your future, but He knows what's going happening on the outside of your life and what's going on, on the inside of your life. You may feel lost, but God has never lost sight of you. He knows where His people are; "sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel" – "sealed" [sphragizo – perfect participle passive voice; nom. masc. plural]; Now the list that is given in verses 5-8 is different than the list of tribes given in the OT. In fact, there are close to 20 different lists of the sons of Israel in the OT. Certain tribes are omitted in some lists, while others are added but it always adds up to 12 tribes.

[5] from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

"from" – is repeated 12 times from vv. 5-8; it comes from the Greek preposition [ek – out of]. So, it is from out of these 12 tribes 12,000 people are sealed. It is not every person within each tribe but only 12,000 from out of these tribes. Revelation 14 describes the 12,000 selected out of each tribe: **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 14:4-5 – 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; "These are the ones who have not been defiled with women" – which means these are 12,000 men from each tribe"; "from the tribe of Judah" – Judah is the 4th son born of Jacob but his tribe is mentioned first because Jesus is from the tribe of Judah – Rev. 5:5 refers to Him as "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David"; "from the tribe of Reuben" – Reuben is the firstborn of Jacob.

But because Reuben slept with his father's concubine his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph [Gen. 35:22; 1 Chron. 5:1]; "from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand" – Gad is 7th son of Jacob.

[6] from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

"from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand" – Asher is the 8th son of Jacob; "from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand" – Naphtali is the 6th son of Jacob; "from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand" – Manasseh is not the son of Jacob but the grandson of Jacob. Manasseh is the firstborn son of Joseph. Jacob's 11th son. But here Manasseh replaces Dan who is the 5th son of Jacob. No one from the tribe of Dan will be used as an evangelistic witness because of the sin of idolatry that had so plague this tribe throughout its history. Going back to Judges 18. [They were also the first to perpetrate the sin of apostasy, for they accepted a golden calf that Jeroboam placed in the northern part of Israel as a center of worship [1 Kings 12:29]. Kistemaker]; Thus, the tribe of Dan and Ephraim because of their idolatrous past had forfeited the privilege of proclaiming the gospel to the world. Though they are included among the elect of God in salvation but not included among the 144,000 evangelists to proclaim salvation. Though every sin the believer commits is forgiven by the blood of Christ, yet there are temporal blessings that can be forfeited in this life. Always remember your sin can lead God to cancel out certain blessings in your life. That's why we must fight against our sin by the Spirit in confession, by the Word in obedience and in fellowship by accountability to remain in the sphere of God's blessings upon our lives. Moses struck the rock and was barred from entering the Promise Land. Abraham committed adultery with Hagar with the approval of Sarah and to this day there has been war between the children of Hagar (Ishmaelites) and the sons of Israel; David committed murder and adultery and suffered the ruin of his home and his kingdom. **Quote:** Someone said it best, "Sin will take you further than you want to go; keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay".

[7] from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

"from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand" – Simeon is the 2nd son of Jacob; "from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand" – Levi is the 3rd son of Jacob. This is the tribe from which the priests were given the responsibility to serve God. Typically, Levi was not named among the 12 tribes if the numbering involved military accounting or material possession of territory. But since Jesus is our Great High Priest and every believer in the New Covenant is a priest to God, the Levites will function exclusively in this office. Therefore, 12,000 from this tribe will be used to witness to the world during the Tribulation period; "from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand," – Issachar is the 9th son of Jacob.

[8] from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

"from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand" – Zebulun is the 10th son of Jacob; "from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand," – Joseph is the 11th son of Jacob; "from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed" – Benjamin is the 12th and last son of Jacob; "sealed" [sphragizo – to seal; perfect participle passive voice; nom. masc. plural]; **Quote:** "Though Israel failed in its mission to be a witness nation in the OT, that will not be the case in the future," MacArthur.

Revelation 7:9-17

When This Life is Over

3 incentives to remain faithful to the Lord till this life is over: The **1st incentive** to remain faithful to the Lord till this life is over is: There will be a great celebration of victory [vv. 9-10]:

[9] After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;

"After these things I looked" – "After these things" [Meta tauta [nom. neuter plural] – this phrase typically alerts us that a transition has taken place to a new vision]; "I looked" [eidon – aorist indicative active 1st person singular], "and behold, a great multitude which no one could count" – "behold" [idou – see!! A demonstrative particle of amazement]; As John looked, he saw in amazement people saved from every nation, tribe and tongue. In other words, though he saw everyone dress in the same white garments, he was able to notice differences among them. Not only did he see male and female distinctions, but he also saw ethnic distinctions, tribal distinctions and recognized that among these peoples there were linguistic distinctions or distinctions in dialect. **Quote**: Warren Wiersbe – "You cannot read the Book of Revelation without developing a global outlook." "which no one could count" – "could" [dunamai – to be able; imperfect indicative middle voice; 3rd person singular]; "count" [arithmeo – to number; it is from the noun form of this verb we get the English word "arithmetic"]; lit. "which to count it no one was able of himself"; This is said in contrast to the previous vision where the 144,000 sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel could be counted [vv. 5-8]; But this distinct group could not be counted "from every nation, and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" – "standing" [istemi – to stand; perfect participle active; nom. masc. plural – having been standing]; "before the throne" is a symbol used in the book of Revelation to represent of the sovereignty of the One who sits on the throne namely, God the Father; "before the Lamb" – John continues to see a Lamb not the human figure of Jesus before the throne of God, this Lamb which represents the redemptive achievements of sacrificial atonement is none other than Jesus Christ]; "clothed in white robes" – "clothed" [peri-ballo – to put around; to clothe one; perfect participle passive voice; accus. masc. plural – having been clothed from the time they entered heaven]; "white robes" – "robes" [stole – a loose outer garment which extended to the feet]

This is the same type of robe given to the martyrs after the fifth seal was broken in Rev. 6:9-11, when Jesus broke the fifth seal John saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and how they cried out saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth? And the text says in verse 11 – "And there was given to each of them a white robe, and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also". **This is that group**; "and palm branches were in their hands" – "palm branches" – the only other time "palm branches" are mentioned in the NT is in John 12:13 – as a great multitude in Jerusalem were waving palm branches saying, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel". Palm branches became a general symbol of victory and celebration. [MacArthur]; In this context the victory that this great multitude is celebrating is the victory of their salvation. The victory of God's grace saving them from their sin, the victory of God's grace in keeping them throughout the sinful temptations during the tribulation and the victory of God's grace bringing out of the great tribulation. Every born-again believer will get the victory as they continue to trust in the Lord no matter what the outcome is in life: **Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 5:4 – "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith." It's not about feeling victorious that makes you victorious, it is about faith in God that makes you victorious regardless of how you feel. These believers endured the most intense time of tribulation this world has ever known and the only thing that brought them through was their faith in God. It wasn't their feelings but their focus.

And when they died and came to heaven, they were immediately clothed in white garments and palm branches were given to them to symbolize their victory. Here's another point you need to understand, it's not whether you feel like a winner that makes you a winner, but what the Judge of the contest thinks. God the Father and the Lamb saw these suffering believers as victorious and so once they crossed the finish line of death into glory, they were clothed in white robes of celebration and given palm branches as symbols of victory.

[10] and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

"and they cry out with a loud voice" – "they cry out" [krazo – to cry aloud; present indicative active 3rd person plural; trans. "they continued to cry out with a loud voice"]; These saints go from pain to immediate celebration, from death to immediate praise – John saw what was the largest and greatest multi-ethnic choir ever assembled. And when they came together, they couldn't stop shouting. "they keep, continually crying out with a loud voice to God in gratitude for their salvation – **[1]** a redemptive shout – they didn't die and wake up in hell; **[2]** a glorified shout – they have been removed from the presence of sin – they won't sin no more; "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb" – "Salvation to our God" – "Salvation" [soteria – deliverance; safety; preservation]; "to our God" dative of possession – translate – "Salvation belongs to our God" – though this great multitude had been clothe in white robes and given palm

branches that symbolized their victory, yet they realized that the credit did not belong to them for their salvation from sin and judgment but the credit belonged to the Lord; to the One "who sits on the throne" – "sits" [kathemai – to be seated; present participle middle voice; dat. masc. singular – to the One who presently and continually sits on the throne all by Himself as Sovereign Ruler over all things] – to the One who sits on the throne today, who sits on the throne on Monday, who sits on the throne Tuesday, who sits on the throne on Wednesday, who sits on the throne on Thursday, who still sits on the throne on Friday and who will remain seated on that throne on Saturday. He is the same God who was seated on the throne last year, who was still seated on the throne when you were born, who was still seated on the throne when your loved one died, who was still seated on the throne when the doctor told you, you had cancer and who still seats on the throne in control of everything that happens in your life and my life today. This is a truth we would do well to shout out to God every day – "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne"; "and to the Lamb" – it was the sovereignty of God that choose to save me and it was the substitutionary atonement of the Lamb that paid to save me. Salvation doesn't belong to us, we didn't save ourselves, but it belongs to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The **2nd incentive** to remain faithful to the Lord is: There will be a great company of heavenly voices giving glory to God [vv. 11-12]:

[11] And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

"And all the angels were standing around the throne" – "were standing" [istemi – to stand; plur-perfect indicative active; 3rd person plural – lit. "And all the angels had been standing around the throne" since Rev. 5:11 up until this present moment]; "and around the elders and the four living creatures" – Remember – we have interpreted the 24 elders not as angels because as we noticed when they first appeared back in Revelation 4:4, these twenty-four elders were sitting on thrones, clothed in white garments and were wearing golden crowns on their head. In Scripture angels are never pictured as sitting on thrones in heaven or wearing golden crowns. But the Scripture does promise that believers will sit on thrones and receive crowns. Therefore the 24 elders represent both the OT saints and the NT church [12 representative of the 12 tribes of Israel plus 12 apostolic representatives of the NT church equals 24; "and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God" – "they fell" [pipto – to fall; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; "on their faces before the throne" – in deep reverence; "and worshiped" [proskuneo – to worship; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; Worship involves both body and spirit. Not just spirit [mind, will and emotions] but body also [reverential energy]. That's why you need to get to bed early on Saturday so that you have the physical energy to worship on Sunday. Some of you are so ill-prepared for worship on Sunday because you expend all your energy on Saturday.

[12] saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

"saying" [lego – present participle active; nom. masc. plural]; 'Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might' – 'Amen' [so be it; this is true]; Never do we see in Scripture a hymn beginning and ending with Amen. But there is a reason, the first "Amen" is in response to the praise of the great multitude who cried out, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb". And the angels, the elders and four living creatures respond with "Amen". And then, they have something to shout about. They list seven qualities they want to attribute to God in order to let us know that there is no other being in the universe outside of God that ought to receive such an acknowledgement; "blessing" [eulogia – laudation; speak well of; English word "eulogy"; lit. "the blessing"]; No matter what we go through in life, when we like it or don't like it, we should always bless God, always speak well of God. In other words, there is never a time when we are justified in cursing God when He gives or takes from us something painful. Listen, we don't make the pain go away by cursing God, we make it worse. But it doesn't mean the pain goes away when we bless God, but He will give you grace in your pain. **Scrip. Ref**: Job 2:9-10 – Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" [10] But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. When times are good – bless God – "God, I bless You are being gracious and kind to give me another undeserved day. Thank You, Lord,". When times are difficult – bless God. "Lord, I bless You that though today was a bad day, I thank You for Your strength and mercy because it could have been worse". Bless God; "glory" [doxa; "the glory"]; Glory which comes from the Greek word "doxa" initially meant "what one thinks" or "an opinion". Ladies, you might find this interesting that in the ancient world ships and women were given this name. Because they knew back then, like we know now that a woman has no problem letting you know what she thinks. But the meaning of this word in this context is borrowed from the Hebrew of the OT "kabod" which means "honor," or "weighty". To give God glory means that you recognize that God by nature is weighty, He's heavy. God is no lightweight. The summation of His attributes communicates that God is an infinitely heavy God. Not someone you can push around – He is Almighty, He is all knowing, He is everywhere present, He is Supreme, He is the Most High God.

"wisdom" [sophia – the knowledge and ability to devise the best means to lead to the best ends for the greatest glory; lit. "the wisdom"]; "thanksgiving" [eucharistia – gratitude for being treated better than we deserve; lit. "the thanksgiving"]; "and honor" [time – the value; it's never about us but it is always about Him; lit. "the honor"]; "and power" [duamis – power being exerted; nothing is too difficult for the Lord; lit. "the power"]; Power" "dynamis is God's omnipotence, His ability to act effectively against all opposition. He has delivered this multitude from the most formidable forces earth has to offer" [Thomas]. God always asserts His power into our lives to help us when we are weak. And when we get to heaven, in our perfect state of humility, we will acknowledge that we did not make through all of life's challenges in our own strength, but God's power was consistently made manifest in times of weakness. We ought to acknowledge that if it

had not been for the Lord on our side where would we be? "and might" [ischus – lit. "the might"]; "be to our God forever and ever. Amen"

The **3rd incentive** to remain faithful to the Lord till this life is over is: There will be great comfort for the saints who were victims of suffering in this life [vv. 13-17]:

[13] Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?"

"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me" – "answered" [apo-kpino – to give an answer; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "saying" [lego – to say; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "These who are clothed in white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" – "these who are clothed" [peri-ballo – to clothe one; to put around; perfect participle passive voice; nom. masc. plural]; "are they" [eisin – present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "they come from" [erchomai – aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]

[14] I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"I said to him" – "said" [eipon – to speak; perfect indicative active 1st person singular]; "My lord, you know" – "My lord" [kurie mou – My lord – not addressed as deity with respect as a superior]; "you know" [oida – perfect (with a present tense meaning) indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "And he said to me" – "said" [aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation" – "the one who come out of" [oi ercho-menoi – present participle passive/middle voice nom. masc. plural – the ones who are coming out is a substantival participle in the present tense, which means that this group continues to grow as saints continue to die during the Tribulation period and transition into the last half of the seven year tribulation as predicted in Dan. 9:27, which is 3 ½ years, or 42 months [Rev. 11:2] or 1,260 days [Rev. 11:3; 12:6]; "the great tribulation" – lit. "the tribulation, the great one" – when we compare what we have learned from the events of the six seals which were broken in chapter 6 to the events which Jesus describes in Matt. 24:3-24, we can conclude that the great tribulation mentioned here is the same one Jesus referred to in Matt. 24:21, when He said, "for then there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall." John, did not know the identity of this great and innumerable multitude, which means he did not associate them with the 144,000 of verses 5-8. And the elder who answers the question doesn't associate the great multitude with the 144,000. And if the great multitude is the church, the elder could have simply said this is the church that came out of the great tribulation. So, we must conclude that this great multitude is not the 144,000 nor the church but Jews and Gentiles from every nation, tribe, tongue and people who were saved during the first half of the seven-year tribulation and who will die during the great tribulation; "and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." – "they have washed their robes" – "washed" [pluno – to wash; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural];

Scrip. Ref: Isa. 64:6 – For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; "made them white" [leukaino – to make white; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural; used only twice in the NT – Mark 9:3 – and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them]; "white robes" are a visible symbol of the spiritual reality that took place on earth when you received Christ. If you are saved today, you have a white garment waiting for you in heaven that represents your salvation here on earth. Your dress today does not represent who you are or what God has done for you. In other words, you don't look like who you are in Christ– some of you look defeated but that's not how you really look in Christ; some of you look like you have given up but that's not who you really are in Christ, and some of you look as if life is over for you, but that's not who you really are in Christ. The "white garments" in glory reveals the spiritual reality of your life right now on earth – salvation and victory; "in the blood of the Lamb" – they didn't make their robes white in their own blood [martyrdom] but only "in the blood of the Lamb". It is nearly impossible to remove the stain of blood from light-colored clothing. But the blood of Jesus is different, when applied by faith it has the power to remove the filth of your sin and make your garments white as snow. Jesus' blood is **stronger than Arm and Hammer**, **more versatile than Oxi-clean**, it's **greater than Tide** and **smells better than Gain Liquid** Laundry Detergent. The hymn writer asked the question, "What can wash away me sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me white as snow; No other found I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; "the blood of the Lamb" speaks of His substitutionary atonement. And here the blood is spoken of figuratively and paradoxically as cleansing our garments leaving them not red but white as snow. Now listen, it is the knowledge of the purpose of the blood and God's application of that blood on your life that enables one to make it through the tribulations of this life. See, if you know that **the blood of Jesus reconciled you** to God, then when times get tough you won't run from God like He's your enemy, but you will turn to Him in prayer because He's your Friend. If you know that **the blood is your propitiation**, then when you sin you will not think that God is punishing you because you know that He was satisfied in punishing His Son for all your sins [past, present and future]. See if you know that **the blood has forgiven** you of all your trespasses, then you are convinced that if sin cannot separate me from God, then nothing can separate me from God – not the devil, not the world, not adversity, not my enemies, not poverty, not even myself. See, if you know that **the blood is applied everyday of your life to cleanse you** from sin as you walk in this dirty world, then that means that I am kept by His power. Sin by nature is enslaving. But since the blood cleanses me every day, I walk I can never get permanently stuck in it, I can't be held back from God, I can't be removed from His fellowship. I am kept.

[15] "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

"For this reason" [dia touto – Therefore; Wherefore] – since they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; "they are before the throne of God" – "they are" [eisin – present indicative active; 3rd person plural; "they are continually"] "before the throne of God" [close and intimate communion]; "and they serve Him day and night in His temple" – "they serve" [latreuo – to serve; to worship; present indicative active 3rd person plural; they continually participate in worshipful activity before the throne] We won't be sitting around doing nothing in heaven. We will have so much joy and supernatural energy pent up in us that we don't want to do nothing but serve "him day and night in His temple" – unceasingly in His heavenly temple. While it is day and night down here, it will be all day up there and still we will be worshiping and serving God in His temple - bowing, praising, thanking and learning; "and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them" – "He who sits on the throne" – "He who sits" [kathemai – to sit; present participle middle voice; nom. masc. singular]; "will spread His tabernacle over them" – "will spread His tabernacle" [skenoo – to abide; to dwell; future indicative active; 3rd person singular] The Lord will communion with His people in a special and intimate way. To tabernacle with the Lord is to experience what it is like to be up close and personal with the Lord in His presence. In the Lord's presence is peace, you will be overshadowed by His peace, in the Lord's presence is joy, you will be concealed in the tabernacle of His joy, in the Lord's presence is comfort, you will be surrounded in the tabernacle of His comfort, in the Lord's presence is holiness, you will sense how special it is to be surrounded in holiness. In this tabernacle there will be no fear but peace, no sadness but joy, no pain but comfort, no evil but holiness.

[16] "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;

"They will hunger no longer" – "hunger" [peinao – to be hungry; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "nor thirst anymore" [dipsao – to thirst; future indicative active 3rd person plural]; **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 13:17 – and he provides [the beast] that no one should be able to buy or sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name; "nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat" – "beat down" [pipto – to fall down; aorist subjunctive active 3rd person singular]; "nor any heat," **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 16:9 [when the 7th seal is broken the wrath of God will be poured out in seven trumpet judgments followed by seven bowl judgments – and when the fourth bowl judgment is poured out it says in Rev. 16:8-9 – And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with fierce heat; **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 49:10 – "They will not hunger or thirst, Neither will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them, And will guide them to springs of water.

[17] for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

"for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd" – "for" [hoti – because]; "the Lamb in the center of the throne" – "will be their shepherd" [poimaino – to feed; nourish; lead; care; and shepherd; present indicative active; 3rd person singular – the Lamb will always care for them; In other words, they will never ever suffer again]; "and will guide them to springs of the water of life" – "will guide" [hodegeo – to guide; future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to springs of the water of life" – they will never go without anymore; they will have all that will satisfy their spiritual and physical needs forever – lit. "to living spring of waters" which is a picture of eternal life. We will still need Jesus to guide us even after death, while in glory. We will not get to heaven and not need God anymore. We will not get to heaven and satisfy ourselves. We will need Jesus to guide us in the way of our satisfaction; "and God will wipe every tear from their eyes" – "God will wipe" [exaleipho – to wipe away; to wipe off; to erase; future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "every tear" – Where does the tears come from – you remember what God brought you out of – your life of suffering, your life of pain, your life of hardship and how you died. Every tear of sorrow, every tear of painful memories, every tear of hurt, every tear of suffering, every tear of personal offenses against you, every tear of abuse the Father will wipe them all from their eyes forever. God won't send an angel or saint to wipe your tears. He will do it Himself. Why? If He sends angel or saint, then we might conclude that the angel or the saint cares more about how that pain has affected us, than God. Listen, because His people know that God had purposed their pain. Thus, they need to know that it wasn't because He didn't love them. The Lord must wipe away every tear from our eyes because He wants to assure us that though He ordained the pain, He also purposed to personally bring about the healing, though He permitted the hurt, He also purposed to personally provide the comfort, though He allowed you to be broken, He also purposed to personally provide the fixing. In glory, God will dispel any questions or doubts that He didn't love you when He gave you the pain by personally removing the pain and granting unceasing joy forever. To put it simply, there is no pain that God has purposed in this life that He cannot replace with joy in the next life. The good news is our hurts are not permanent scars that we have to bear for eternity. They are removable by the grace of God.

Every miracle of healing that Jesus performed on a person never removed the memory of the former pain [the once **blind man** remembered what it was like when he was blind, the once **paralytic man** remembered what it was like when he couldn't walk, the person who used to have **leprosy** remembered what it was like when his skinned was falling off], but what the healing did was cause the once blind man, the once paralytic man and the once leprous man to live in the joy of the present healing not in the past of the painful experience. In heaven, the memories of your former pain will not go away, but you will not live in the past of your former painful experience but in the joy of the present healing.

The Day When Heaven Went Silent

Revelation 8

Introduction:

Theologian J.I. Packer, in his book "Knowing God" asked the question, "Why do men shy of the thought of God as a Judge? Why do they feel the thought to be unworthy of Him? The truth is that part of God's moral perfection is His perfection in judgment. Would a God who did not care about the difference between right and wrong be a good and admirable Being? Would a God who put no distinction between the beasts of history, the Hitlers and Stalins [if we dare use names], and His own saints, be morally praiseworthy and perfect? Moral indifference would be an imperfection of God, not a perfection. But not to judge the world would be to show moral indifference. The final proof that God is a perfect moral being, not indifferent to questions of right and wrong, is the fact that He has committed Himself to judge the world."

One of the reasons why we should be in awe of God as we come to this last seal of judgment is because God is not morally indifferent to evil. God is a just God, meaning that God will right every wrong that has ever been committed against Himself and His people. This should encourage us, that God has not turned a blind eye to the evil that has been committed against His people, He has not glossed over the offenses that has been committed against His people, He does not excuse the wickedness this world has committed against His people.

The book of Revelation should only frighten the unsaved, but it should give comfort to the saved.

Exposition:

As we come to this section this morning, we will notice: 5 profound results took place when Jesus broke the seventh seal, to encourage the saints to keep praying and sinners to repent: The **1st profound** result that takes place when Jesus breaks the seventh seal is: All of heaven went silent as the prayers of the saints were about to be answered [vv. 1-5]:

[1] When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

"When the Lamb broke the seventh seal" – "broke" [anoigo – to open; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "the seventh seal" – Rev. 5:1 – "And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book/scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals" – this is the last seal to be opened. Seven is the number of completion, which means that this seal completes the wrath of God upon the world. We saw in the first six seals in Revelation 6 – 1st seal – False Messiah bringing false peace on the earth; 2nd seal – Worldwide War; 3rd seal – Worldwide Famine; 4th seal – Worldwide Pestilence; 5th seal – prayers for vengeance from the saints who were killed during the tribulation period; 6th seal – terror from heaven – the sun goes black, the moon becomes blood red; earthquakes; meteor showers and all the people of the earth

crying out in fear of the wrath of the Lord. Then, in chapter 7, there is an interlude as the 144,000 of the people of Israel are sealed and a great multitude from every nation, tribe and tongue in heaven who came out of the great tribulation.

After these events, Jesus now breaks open the seventh seal. In other words, the seventh will be greater intensity than the first six seals. Contained within this seventh seal are seven trumpet judgments [chaps 8-9 contain trumpets 1-6 with the seventh trumpet being blown in 11:15] and seven bowls of wrath [16:1-21]. These trumpet judgments and bowls of wrath will be poured out during the last 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation.

"And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour" – "was" [ginomai – it became; aorist indicative passive/middle voice 3rd person singular – lit. "it became silent]; "silence" [sige – used twice in the NT; Acts 21:40]; Since chapter 4, John has described the sounds of heaven from sounds and peals of thunder coming from the throne, to the four living creatures singing to the Father day and night, "Holy, Holy, Holy" to the 24 elders bowing down and casting their crowns before the throne singing, "Worthy art Thou" to them playing harps and singing to the Lamb in chapter 5, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; For Thou wast slain" to the innumerable angels around the throne singing in loud voices, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain". To the sound of the martyrs underneath the altar crying out in a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood". To the great multitude of tribulation saints from every nation, tribe, people and tongue singing in a loud voice, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb" [7:10]. And what we learn from studying Revelation thus far is that the folk in heaven can do nothing but shout day and night in praise to the greatness of God and the salvation of the Lamb. Heaven is filled with loud praises.

Therefore, when it says that heaven became silent for a half an hour means that something profound has happened to cause all the heavenly hosts and the saints of God to be quiet. This silence is a corporate reverence from every occupant in heaven because the glory of God is about to bring judgment upon the world from dishonoring His name. This silence is climatic as all of heaven observes God putting a complete end to evil in the world. Since the time of the fall in the Garden till this point in the future mankind has committed abominable atrocities against God which has never received its just punishment. Now all those who are outside of Christ will receive what they have always deserved, the holy wrath of God.

[2] And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

"And I saw the seven angels who stand before God" – "I saw" [eidov – to see, to look; aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "the seven angels" [tous hepta angelous – the seven angels – a particular group of angels set apart for this particular service; often referred to by theologians as "the presence angels"] In 1 Enoch 20:2-8, reference is made to seven angels who stand before God and are named Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel and Remiel; "who stand

before God" – "stand" [istemi – perfect indicative active; 3rd person plural – "they have been standing" from a particular time in the pass up till this present moment]; "and seven trumpets were given to them" – "seven trumpets" – "seven" [the number of completion]; "trumpets" [**Historical Significance**: "Trumpets played a major part in the national life of Israel, finding use in ceremonial processions, in assembling people for war, journeys, and specials feasts, in warning of the coming day of the Lord, and in announcing the New Year. Thomas]

It is not the inhabitants on earth that hear these trumpet sounds, but the inhabitants in heaven who hear the sound of these trumpets. Therefore, the sound of the trumpets are alerting the inhabitants of heaven that the coming day of the Lord has arrived, while the effects of the trumpets sounds produces catastrophic results on earth; "given to them" – "given" [didomi – aorist indicative **passive voice**; 3rd person plural; - **divine passive**]; The sovereign God who sits upon the throne gave these seven trumpets to these angels. The judgments that will befall upon the earth comes directly from a holy God through His angelic messengers.

[3] Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

"Another angel came and stood at the altar" – "Another" [allos – of the same kind]; This is not Jesus Christ as some have interpreted this angel to be. But another angel of the same nature as the other seven angels previously mentioned; "and stood at the altar" – "stood" [istemi – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "at the altar" [tou Thusiastepiou – the altar of incense]; the same altar referred to in chap. 6:9 – "And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God." Incense has a prominent place in OT worship and serves as a reminder that intercessory prayer is like sweet perfume before the Lord. In the temple ritual, the priest poured the saucer of incense over the burning coals on the altar of incense. At the same time, the Israelites bowed in prayer as the fragrant cloud of smoke ascended heavenward. A similar connection between incense and the prayers of the saints occurs in Rev. 5:8. [Thomas]

This altar of incense is emblematic of the location where the prayers of the saints ascend before God. In the OT the altar of incense stood at the entrance into the Holy of Holies. In fact, when the fifth seal is broken the martyrs underneath the altar are heard praying to God. In Rev. 5:8 – the twenty-four elders having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

"holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne." – "holding a golden censer" – "holding" [echo – to have; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "and much incense was given to him" – "given" [didomi – aorist indicative **passive voice**; 3rd person singular; **divine passive**]; God gave to this angel much incense which I believe is symbolic of the desire of all of the saints down through human history who prayed for divine justice upon the

earth]; "so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne" – lit. "so that he shall give to the prayers of all the saints at the altar of incense, the golden one, the one before the throne" – "the prayers of all the saints" – refer to the specific prayers of all the saints who were persecuted during the Tribulation period – the martyrs of the fifth seal [6:9-11] and the great multitude praising God who came out of the great tribulation [7:9-14]. Though their prayers were not answered immediately their prayers were accepted as pleasing in God's sight. When God delays in answering a prayer, it doesn't necessarily mean He has rejected the prayer. God's delays are often a part of God's design to bring about the answer at the right time. God has heard your prayers of "How long" and He will answer them in such a way that it will be worth the wait.

[4] And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

"And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand" – you can translate this verse – "And the smoke of the incense, which is the prayers of the saints went up before God out of the angel's hand" – "went up" [ana-baino – to go up; to ascend; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]

Two things I want you to remember to motivate you to pray without ceasing and to pray without reservations: **1]** Sin will keep you from prayer or prayer will keep you from sin. Much of the worry, discouragement and seasons of dryness we face is because we are listening more to the lies of our flesh than praying to the God of truth; **2]** Do not forget when you pray that the proximity of your prayers is always in the presence of God. Notice twice in vv. 3-4, "the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne"; [4] the prayers of the saints, went up before God". Listen, don't ever doubt whether God hears your prayers. He has placed the altar of incense which is the prayers of the saints next to His throne. God has arranged the furniture in His temple in such a way that He has placed the altar of incense next to His throne so that He can smell your prayers when you offer them up. Listen, nobody likes to sit next to something or someone that stinks. God has placed your ascending prayers next to His throne to remind you that your prayers are a sweet smelling aroma not a stench to His nostrils. Every prayer that we pray goes through a sanctified filter, which is the Son before it is presented as a smelling aroma to the Father. Jesus is like Frebreeze, He clears away the odors in our prayers.

[5] Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

"Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar" – "took" [lambano – to take; perfect indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "filled it" [genizo – to fill; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake" – "threw" [ballo – to throw; to cast; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; Back in verse 3, the angel took his censer and placed

much incense in it, which is symbolic of the prayers of the saints and then here in verse 5, he took fire from the altar, fire is oftentimes a symbol of judgment in Scripture and placed it in the censer along with the incense that represented the prayers of the saints and then throw it to the earth. This lets us know that God's judgment upon the earth is the answer to the prayers of the saints. And the result – "there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake" – "there followed" [ginomai – to become; aorist indicative passive/middle 3rd person plural – lit. "it became peals of thunder…]; Heaven's silence was broken by the sound of the prayers of the saints being answered in judgment. **Scrip. Ref**: Luke 18:1- Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not lose heart. [The remedy for discouragement is prayer] And Jesus gives the parable of the unrighteous judge and the widow. And from this story Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater. If the unrighteous judge answered the needs of the widow because she kept asking to the point it wore him out. How much more will God bring about justice to His elect who cry to Him day and night? In other words, if an unrighteous judge will answer the needs of a widow because she kept asking, how much more will God who loves you answer the needs of His people who keep asking? [8] I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" [Prayer is a means of grace to help me to keep trusting] Listen, we never stop praying because there are no immediate results, but we keep praying because it is pleasing to God. We also see here in Revelation 8:1-5, the far-reaching implications of praying the Disciple's Prayer – "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". The judgments that will come forth from the seventh seal is the divine means of causing His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. The will of God in heaven as we have seen is for all of creation to worship Him. And now, with the breaking of the seventh seal, the events will lead to the final goal of human history of every shall bow and every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. **Quote**: The purpose of prayer, it has often been said, "Is not to get man's will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth." Your prayers matter to God because in His eternal decree He purposed that certain aspects of His will were to be done by means of your prayers. **Quote**: Alfred Tennyson said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

The **2nd profound** result when Jesus breaks the seventh seal is: A third of the earth was burned up [vv. 6-7]:

[6] And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

"And the seven angels who had he seven trumpets" – "who had" [oi echontes – who having; present participle active; nom. masc. plural]; "prepared themselves to sound them" – "prepared" [hetoimazo – to make ready; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; "to sound them" – "to" [hina – so that; in order that; purpose clause]; "sound" [salpizo – to sound a trumpet; aorist subjunctive active 3rd person plural] The seven angels arranged themselves in order placed the trumpets up to their mouths and stood ready to blew when the signal from the throne was given.

[7] The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

"The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth" – "sounded" [salpizo – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "there came hail [ice] and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth" – "mixed" [mignumi – to mix, mingle; perfect participle passive voice; nom. neuter singular – having been mixed]; Here, the first of the seven angels sounded and there came hail [ice] and fire, having been mixed previously with blood thrown to the earth. The blood is a supernatural mixture of blood within the hail and fire; "they were thrown to the earth" – "thrown" [ballo – aorist indicative passive voice 3rd person singular]; "and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up" – "a third of the earth was burned up" – "burned up" [kata-kaio – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "a third of the trees were burned up" – "burned up" [kata-kaio – aorist indicative passive voice 3rd person singular]; "and all the green grass was burned up" – "burned up" [kata-kaio – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; A third of the land [crops and fields] was burned up, a third of the trees including fruit trees was burned up and all the green grass was burned up. The key word which is mentioned twice in this verse is "a third". There is still mercy mingled in His judgment at this point. If undeserved blessings don't bring you to your knees in repentance, then God will bring devastating judgment upon you in this life to bring you to your knees. But in both cases, it is the mercy of God at work not the hatred of God. Listen, God knows the value of your soul more than you do. We are willing to believe the lie that living for the things of this world is a worthy goal to achieve before you die, while God knows that it doesn't profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul. So, God would rather harm your body to reach your soul, than to harm your soul after He has killed your body.

The **3rd profound** result when Jesus breaks the seventh seal is: A third of the sea became blood [vv. 8-9]:

[8] The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood,

"The second angel sounded" – "sounded" [salpizo – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea" – "burning" [kaio – to burn; present participle passive voice; nom. neuter singular]; "was thrown into the sea" – "thrown" [ballo – aorist indicative **passive voice**; 3rd person singular]; "and a third of the sea became blood" – "became" [yinomai – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "blood" – not like blood but literal blood; the first plague of Egypt in the book of Exodus was when Moses turned the Nile River into blood]; Here the Lord turned a third of the oceans into blood when this gigantic volcanic mountain was thrown into the sea.

[9] and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

"and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died" – "had life" – "had" [echo – present participle active; nom. neuter plural]; "and a third of the ships were destroyed" – "destroyed" [diaph-theiro – aorist indicative passive voice 3rd person plural] This volcanic mountain killed a third of the marine life in the ocean which made the waters foul, bloody and diseased. As a result of the sea caused a tsunami that overturned and destroyed the ships of the sea. Thus, polluting the waters further. Billions of sea creatures will die, crew members on ships will perish and the food and merchandise on those seas will be lost at sea. You don't want to be on a cruise when this huge mountain full of fire is thrown into the ocean.

The **4th profound** result when Jesus breaks the seventh seal is: A third of the bodies of fresh water became poisonous [vv. 10-11]:

[10] The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on the third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.

"The third angel sounded" – "sounded" [salpizo – to sound the trumpet; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on the third of the rivers and on the springs of waters" – "a great star" [aster – a star; asteroid]; "fell" [pipto – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "burning like a torch" – "burning" [kaio – present participle passive voice; nom. masc. singular]; "a torch [KJV "a lamp"]; "and it fell on the third of the rivers and on the springs of waters." – "it fell" [pipto – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "the third of the rivers and on the springs of waters". The National Geographic Society lists about 100 principal rivers in the world, ranging in length…. Survey reports 30 large rivers in the United States, beginning with the mighty Mississippi River [3,710 miles long]. Rivers, lakes, springs and wells will be affected.

[11] The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

"The name of the star is called Wormwood" – "called" [lego – present indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "Wormwood" [Apsinthos – used only here in the NT; wormwood; bitter]; Wormwood was grown in Israel and because of the camphor smell was used to deter moths from eating garments. This herb with its roots is very bitter. Wormwood is a shrub whose leaves are used in the manufacture of absinthe, a liqueur so toxic that its manufacture is banned in many countries; "**the taste is so potent that one ounce of it can still be detected in 524 gallons of water!**" [Osborne]; "and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter." – "became" [ginomai – to be made; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "many men died" – "died" [apo-thvesko – to die; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "because they were made bitter" – "they were made bitter" [pik-raino – to make bitter; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural]; We take for

granted that we can go into our refrigerators or turn on our faucet and get clean water. One day the Lord in His just wrath will remove such blessings. Which should let us know as one commentator put it, "every drink of clean water is mercy".

Notice that what God harms in His creation is not directed at man but at the things for which man lives on and lives for – God destroys a third of the land, vegetation, crops, fruit trees, the things man lives on. Then God turns a third of the ocean water to blood and marine life is destroyed and ships are destroyed. These are things that man lives on and for – seafood and ships bring certain luxuries from other countries. God causes a third of the fresh water supply to be poisoned, because man lives on clean water to survive. In other words, the Lord will destroy the things of the earth in order that sinners may set their minds on the things above.

The 5th and last profound result when Jesus broke the seventh seal is: A third of the heavenly bodies became dark [vv. 12-13]:

[12] The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

"The fourth angel sounded" – "sounded" [salpizo – to sound the trumpet; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck" – "were struck" [plesso – to strike; to smite; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; Plesso is the verb from which the noun "plague" derives; "so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way." – "so that" [hina – purpose clause – the divine purpose]; "would be darkened" [skotizo – to be darkened; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "would not shine" – "shine" [paino – aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; The sun, moon and stars will be completely dark for 8 hours for every 24-hour period. As one commentator wrote, "The first shows that the material world is no answer, the second and third address the sea trade, including food supplies, and the fourth focuses on life itself in the heat and light of the celestial bodies. Earthly things turn on us, and we dare not depend on them."

11 times from verses 7-13, the word "third" is repeated in reference to the damaged that took place because of the first four trumpets being sounded. A "third" represents incompleteness. Just a third of the land, sea, rivers and sky were affected. Amid wrath, God still shows mercy. Not all the land, sea, rivers and skies were affected, just a third of them. All these judgment like plagues are supernatural in nature. It cannot and it will not be explained scientifically. You don't have four angels blowing a trumpet in heaven and it causes these types of effects on earth unless it was supernatural in nature. **Quote**: As someone said, "Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve.

[13] Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

"Then I looked, and I heard" – "looked" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice – "an eagle" [KJV – "an angel]; lit. "one eagle" [aetos]; ["angel" was the choice of the KJV translators…. One can safely conclude that the conflation probably is a classic case of an attempt on the part of a copyist to make sense of the word he saw in the text translated in the NIV "eagle". … the word "eagle" is supported by Codex Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus and most of the minuscules. The Textus Receptus, however, follows a number of later manuscripts. [Patterson]; "flying in mid-heaven" – "flying" [petomai – present participle middle voice; genitive; masc. singular – flying of himself]; "mid-heaven" [mesoupanematos – sky]; "saying" [lego – present participle active; gen. masc. singular]; "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" – "Woe" [ouai – an interjection of denunciation]; A better understanding of the word "woe" is doom, cursed or punishment. Three woes representative of the three trumpets that are about to sound]; "those who dwell on the earth" – this phrase is only used in the book of Revelation and each time it refers to unbelievers [6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8]; "about to sound" – "about" [mello – present participle active; neut. gen. plural]; "to sound" [salpizo – present infinitive active]

Conclusion:

God's wrath is replacing His grace and mercy upon man with His vengeance and power.

The Fifth Trumpet: Demonic Betrayal

Revelation 9:1-12

Introduction:

In the epistle of 1 John 2:15-16, believers are commanded: **Scrip. Ref**: "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." And in 1 John 5:19, we are told that – "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one". In both passages the word "world" is defined differently. The first passage defines "world" as a system that governs one's purpose for living. The second passage defines "world" as the people who live under this system. So, when the command is given to not love the love nor the things in the world – it is a command to not love the value system of the world. What the world defines as one's purpose or one's identity for living whether that be living for the lust of the flesh [sinful bodily pleasures], the lust of the eyes

[materialism], or the "boastful pride of life" [self-praise]. Because the essence of how one would define his identity or purpose outside of a relationship with God is called idolatry. You will hear people of the world say, "Music is my life; sports is my life; You hear people today define themselves based on their sexual orientation, their financial status, their academic achievements, their various worldly associations, their career or even their ethnic identity. These are the pleasures of the world that make people happy. Yet the passage is clear that to define your identity or purpose for living outside of a relationship with God is not to love God. In fact, it expresses something that many would deny or find offensive for 1 John 5:19 says that those who define their identity or purpose for living outside of a relationship with God is under the power or influence of the evil one. In other words, to love the world is to be in an intimate relationship with the devil himself. You cannot love the world without being in a relationship with the devil. Because the value system of the world is authored and controlled by the devil. The world system is a religion, a religion of devotion to the evil one. This is why James 4:4 says, "do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God". The devil is an enemy of God and those who submit to the value system of this world is an enemy of God.

So, considering this truth, we must remind ourselves that though we are in the world we are not to be of the world. We are not to live for the world, and we are not to define our purpose for living according to the value of system of society. And this truth should not cause us to grumble or become discourage as if the Christian life is boring but it should cause us to be happy not to be of this world because in our passage God pulls back the curtain of this world system in order to give us a behind the scenes look at the type of creatures the people of this world are unaware of that they are in a relationship with. And this is to prove to us that those who are in a relationship with the devil will be betrayed by the devil. Revelation 9:1-12, gives us the Fifth Trumpet: Demonic Betrayal.

Exposition:

And if you notice the outline in your bulletin there are: 2 blessings that come from being saved from the evils of this world: The **1st blessing** that come from being saved from the evils of this world is: You won't have to experience the torment of being given over to the power of demons [vv. 1-6]:

[1] Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

"Then the fifth angel sounded" – "sounded" [salpizo – to sound a trumpet; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; when the first angel sounded "there came hail and fire, mixed with blood" thrown to the earth [8:7]; when the second angel sounded "a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea" [8:8]; when the third angel sounded "a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch" [8:10]; when the fourth angel sounded "a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten" [8:12];

So, the first four trumpets in chapter 8 gave us a brief description of God's judgments upon the land, sea, rivers and sky. These judgments were caused indirect harm upon mankind. In chapter 9, more space is given to the fifth and sixth trumpets than the first four trumpets, for these judgments cause direct harm upon the unbelieving inhabitants of the earth. So when the fifth angel sounded, the apostle John writes "I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him" – "I saw" [eidon – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "a star from heaven" – this star is not a planetary star, a comet, or meteor but an angelic being because it says at the end of the verse that a key was given to him; **Scrip. Ref**: Job 38:7 – angels are referred to as "the morning stars"; "which had fallen to the earth" this statement helps to identify who this angel was – "which had fallen" [pipto – perfect participle active accus. masc. singular; temporal participle "as having been falling unto the earth"] The tense here speaks of an act that took place in the past with an ongoing present result. In other words, this angel fell from heaven as being cast to earth in the past and the present result is that he can never return as a permanent resident to that realm. This "star" is none other than the devil himself; **Scrip. Ref**: Luke 10:17-18 – And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." [18] And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning"; "and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him." – "the key of the bottomless pit" – "bottomless" [abussos – abyss; lit. "without depth"; Lk. 8:31 – this is the place where demons who currently roam the earth fear being casted into; Rev. 20:1-3 & 7, the abyss is referred to as a prison]; We are not the only ones who have prisons. In the spiritual realm, God has built a prison and placed certain demons in it who were too wicked to be allowed to be around humanity. But in the future, He will allow them to be released for a time to inflict pain upon the world. **Quote: John Phillips** "Picture what the world would be like if we were to open the doors of all the penitentiaries of earth and set free the world's most vicious and violent criminals, giving them full reign to practice their infamies upon mankind. Something worse than that lies in store for the world." Thus, the abyss is the holding cell of certain demons that God did not want involved in the affairs of man because they are too evil. That's grace!!! [Matt. 12:45 says that there are demons more wicked than other demons]; "pit" [phreatos – translated "well" (Lk. 14:5; Jn. 4:11)]; "was given to him" – "given" [didomi – aorist indicative passive voice 3rd person singular – The God who sits on His sovereign throne gave the devil the key. The key, which speaks of access is only given to the devil for this one time. In other words, he will give the key back to God and as it says in Rev. 20:1-3, an unfallen angel will take that very key and place the devil in the abyss as the second coming of Jesus.]

[2] He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

"He opened the bottomless pit" – "opened" [anoigo – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace" – "went up" [ana-baino – to ascend; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "and the sun and the air

were darkened by the smoke of the pit" – "darkened" [skotizo – aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]

[3] Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

"Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth" – "came" [ex-erchomai – to come out of; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "locusts" [akpis – a locust]; these are demons who take on physical form in the appearance of grasshoppers; "symbolizes their uncountable numbers and massive destructive capabilities" [MacArthur]; In Rev. 16:13 – three demons are seen as manifesting themselves as frogs; "and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power" – "was given" [didomi – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular] God sovereignly gave these locusts the authority to use their power to harm mankind with a pain comparable to scorpions.

[4] They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

"They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree" – "were told" [errethe from eipon – to speak; to say; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; God sovereignly restrains the destructive passions of these demons by telling them what not to destroy – "not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree" – "hurt" [adikeo – to harm; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]. Locusts typically seek to destroy vegetation, but these demon locusts are told to not harm any green plant life. From this we learn that there is a sovereign restraint to all evil that takes place in this world. Listen, though these demons are extremely wicked, yet there are limits to who they can be wicked towards. In other words, though they don't like it, they must obey what God tells them. The devil and his demons are the unwilling servants of a sovereign God; "but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" – "but only" [lit. "except"]; "do not have" – "have" [echo – present participle active nom. dat. plural; "not having"]; "the seal of God on their foreheads" – In Rev. 7:3-8, as you remember God sealed upon the foreheads of the 144,000 of the sons of Israel, His name and the name of the Lamb in order to protect them from the judgments upon the earth including demonic oppression. Those who hate and mistreat believers prove that they are on the devil's side. And those on the devil's side will be given over to be tormented by his demons. You mistreat God's people; God will send demons to mistreat you.

Thank God there are some terrible things God keeps us from in life. I may have to deal with grief at times, but I don't have to deal with insanity. I may have to deal with pain, but I don't have to deal with demonic possession. I may have to deal with trials, but I don't have to deal with demonic torment. Yes, we must face spiritual warfare but praise God we will not be overtaken by it. Because God has sealed us in the Holy Spirit we are kept from these things.

So unlike demons who turn against those who worship them. God shows that He will never forsake nor turn against those who belong to Him. Practicing the importance of walking by faith and not by sight every day and what I am learning is what I see in my bank account is not all that I have; what I see in the refrigerator is not all that I have; what little friends that I have is not all that I have; the infinite and eternal God, who fills the heavens and the earth is all that I have and all that I need.

[5] And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

"And they were not permitted to kill anyone" – "were not permitted" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice 3rd person singular; lit. "And it was given to them that they should not kill anyone"] Again, we see God's sovereign restraint amid evil. These demons can't harm the plant life nor the sealed saints, but what they can do is attack every single unsaved person except they are not given permission to kill them. God's hand is still in control even when allowing the most wicked demons to roam free on the earth; "to kill" [apokteino – aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person plural]; "but to torment for five months" – "torment" [basanizo – future indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural]; It is said that locusts or grasshoppers are born in the spring and die in late summer [from May to September] exactly five months. So, the torment of these demon locusts is for five months. The Lord grants these demon locusts permission to torment unbelievers but not to put them to death. Two things to consider from this: 1] demons are evil and rebellious in their attitude against God, but they submit under the authority of God. They must do what He says whether they like it or not. God is sovereign over the evilest beings in the universe; 2] demons have the power to take human life. But God only commands them to torment these unbelievers to prove to mankind that the suppose liberty of living like you want to in the devil's kingdom comes with a price. If you love living like the devil and for the devil, the Lord will give you over to the devil. In other words, the devil doesn't tempt you to pursue sinful pleasure because he wants the best for you but in order that he might destroy you. There is a reason why the devil's control over the media only shows us what appears to be the happy life of those living in immorality, homosexuality, materialism and body worship, because behind the scenes these people are living in torment. **Quote:** Someone said it best, "Evil always has a way of turning and devouring itself"; "and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man" – "it stings" [paio – to sting; aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "The symptoms of a sting from one of the deadly species, including severe convulsions and paralysis, resemble those of demon-possessed individuals" [MacArthur]

[6] And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

"And in those days men will seek death and will not find it" – "will seek" [zeteo – future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "will not" [ou me – double negative in the original; by no means; not at all; definitely shall not]; "find it" [eurisko – future indicative active; 3rd person

plural]; "they will long to die, and death flees from them" – "long" [epi-thumeo – to desire; to wish; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "to die" [apo-thnesko – aorist infinitive active]; "flees" [pheugo – to flee; present indicative active; 3rd person singular]; Self-preservation is a part of our natural make-up as human beings. We don't want to die. This is why we avoid going to dangerous places, avoid putting ourselves in life and death situations, because we are afraid to die. Yet in the future, these demons will inflict such excruciating pain both of body and mind that people will seek ways to die but it will be impossible. They will want the pain to leave their body and the voices to be removed from their head. And God in His sovereignty will not allow them to die. We don't even have authority over the time of our death, only God does. People think that death is easy. Just overdose on some pills, jump off a bridge, hang yourself, shoot yourself but God in His providence will prevent people from successfully killing themselves. Death being personified as a fugitive that will keep running from them. The only reason why some people who want to die and can die is because God permitted it. But one day, there will be people who will try to die, and the Lord will not enable them to die. And God's unwillingness for these unbelievers to die to escape this temporal pain is an act of grace. Listen, sinners do not escape pain when they die, they just move from temporal pain but eternal pain. **Quote:** Someone said, "That people commit suicide not because they want to die but because they don't want to hurt no more." The Lord keeps these sinners from dying because they will never stop hurting if they die without Christ. The pain gets worse. God causes pain to drive sinners to Christ. The only relief from the mental, physical and emotional pain inflicted by demons is Jesus Christ.

The **2nd blessing** that comes from being saved from the evils of this world is: You won't have to experience the terror of being in the presence of demons [vv. 7-12]:

[7] The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

"The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle" – "appearance" [homoioma – likeness; image; figure]; This is the only place in all of Scripture where you will find a description of what demons look like. Their appearance is not meant to intrigue us but to frighten us. It is not meant to be viewed as cool but hideous. And here is something you need to consider when you visualize the appearance of these demons, God had made these angels beautiful in the beginning and yet in their hatred against their Creator they turned themselves into something hideous. And what they chose to turn themselves into was degrading to their own angelic nature, insects. Even demons have identity issues, and you wonder why those who follow them struggle with identity issues. It's demonic. Who you associate yourself with is who you will become. And listen, the fact that these demon locusts are attacking those who worship them proves that the ultimate desire of the devil and his demons is not for man to worship them but for man to be destroyed by them. The devil doesn't care about sinners, only Jesus does; "was like horses prepared for battle" – "prepared" [hetoimazo – perfect participle passive voice; dat. masc. plural]; - these demons likes horses prepared for war are fierce and unintimidated; "and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men" – "on their

heads appeared to be crowns like gold" – the golden crown [stephanos – victor's crown] represents the demon locusts success in the mission to torment those God has given them authority over; "faces of men" – a picture of intelligence

Why do demons delight in attacking man? Because man unlike angels is the apex of God's creation. Man is the only creature in the universe that is made in the image of God. And the devil and demons are jealous of this. Here it is, that the devil and demons are jealous of us and yet sinful man and we sometimes want to live like the devil. Free to do whatever you want to do. This is why their facial appearance is that of a man.

[8] They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.

"They had hair like the hair of women" – "had" [echo – to have; imperfect indicative active; 3rd person plural; "they were having"]; "and their teeth were like the teeth of lions" – "were" [eimi – to be; imperfect indicative active 3rd person plural]; teeth speaks of being fierce and ferocious; With hair like a woman, these demons looked attractive until they opened their mouths - teeth like a lion

[9] They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.

"They had breastplates like breastplates of iron" – "had" [echo – imperfect indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle" – "rushing" [trecho – to run; present participle active; gen. masc. plural; temporal participle "as rushing to battle"]; nothing that sinful mankind does will be able to stop these demons from harming them. Not guns, knives, bombs, missiles or biological weapons. In 2 Kings 7:6 – God used the loud sound of chariots to frighten the Arameans from their camp. In the future, these demons will make such loud sounds, like an army of chariots that unbeliever will try to flee in terror from the invading plague. Their sound being like a chariot lets you know that sinners will hear them before they see them. These creatures will be so inescapable that they will alert you will loud sounds before they come. In other words, they will capture you by sneaking up on you. They will let you know that they are coming loud and clear and there will be nowhere the sinner can hide to escape. The worst nightmare is to be pursued by evil with no hope of escape. This is a waking nightmare here.

[10] They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

"They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months" – "they have" [echo – present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "to hurt" [adikeo – to harm; aorist infinitive active]

[11] They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

"They have as king over them" – "they have" [echo – present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "king" [basileus – commander; leader]; "the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is "Abaddon" [Destruction]; "and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon" – "Apollyon" [Destroyer]; This commanding angel over these demon locust is called in Hebrew Abaddon, which means destruction or ruin. And in the Greek, his name is Apollyon, which means destroyer. Yet, we have One who is over us, who's name in the Hebrew is Yeshua [God who is salvation] and in the Greek He has a title [Soter] which means Savior]; If you don't have the Lord on your side in your time of affliction you will be destroyed or ruined. The opposite of destruction and ruin is salvation. The opposite of being under Destruction and Destroyer is to be under a Savior – the Lord Jesus Christ, so much so that even if we had to go through the Tribulation like Habakkuk, we could say: **Scrip. Ref**: Hab. 1:16-18 – I heard and my inward parts trembled, At the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, And in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, [17] Though the fig tree should not blossom, And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail, And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold, And there be no cattle in the stalls, [18] Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. [19] The Lord God is my strength [when I trust Him, He strengthens me], And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places.

[12] The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

"The first woe is past" – "past" [ap-erchomai – to go away; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "behold, two woes are still coming after these things" – "coming" [echomai – present indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]

The Sixth Trumpet: Demonic Plagues Come Upon Depraved People

Revelation 9:13-21

2 biblical truths about total depravity that should cause those who are saved to be thankful for God's grace: The 1st biblical truth about total depravity that should cause those who are saved to be thankful for God's grace is: Total depravity entails sinners being given over to God's judgment. Be thankful that God reconciled you to Himself [vv. 13-19]:

[13] Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

"Then the sixth angel sounded" – "sounded" [salpizo – to sound a trumpet; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; when the first angel sounded "there came hail and fire, mixed with blood" thrown to the earth [8:7]; when the second angel sounded "a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea" [8:8]; when the third angel sounded "a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch" [8:10]; when the fourth angel sounded "a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten" [8:12].

When the fifth angel sounded, the apostle John writes "I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him" and this star which is the devil himself opened up the bottomless pit and released demons that looked like locusts upon the earth. When the sixth angel sounded, the apostle John states that he "heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" – "heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "a voice" – lit. "one voice"; "from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" – According to Rev. 8:3 – "And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" – the one voice that John heard was the voice of this angel who stood at the golden altar which has four horns. Now this golden altar is the altar of incense. And according to Exodus 30:1-10, the altar of incense was placed in front of the veil that led into the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant resided. And the duty of the priests was to burn fragrant incense on it every morning. The fragrant incense was a symbol of the prayers of God's people. The four horns of the altar represented power. Now no sacrifice was to be offered on this altar of incense except on the Day of Atonement, when Aaron would make atonement on its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering.

This golden altar with four horns from where the prayers of the saints are offered up is a reminder that it was only through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ that was offered up as a sin offering that communion with God, that worship to God and that prayers to God could be accepted. So, when John hears the voice of the angel from around the four horns of the golden altar, it means that God has sovereignly purposed to unleash His power to judge as an answer to the prayers of the saints. God would not command us to pray, if He had no intentions of answering our prayers. But keep in mind, the answer may not come as quickly as you want it or in the exact way as you prayed, but it will always be answered in the right way and in the right time that is always for your good.

[14] one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

"one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet" – "one saying" [lego – present participle active; accus. masc. singular]; "who had" – lit. "the one holding the trumpet"; "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates" – "Release" [luo – to loose; aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular; ingressive aorist with a note of urgency]; "the four angels who are bound" – "bound" [deo – to bind; to fasten; perfect participle passive voice; accus. masc. plural]; "at the great river Euphrates" – There are three important observations you need to consider from this verse before I move forward: 1] This is the first time when an angel blows the trumpet to signal judgment, that the angel participates in the judgment. Once the sixth angel blew the trumpet to signal the second woe, another angel by the golden altar commands the sixth angel to release the four angels; 2] The four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates are not good angels but fallen angels, demons. The word "bound" is in the perfect tense in the original meaning an act that took place in the past with ongoing present results.

Good angels are not bound or tied down but roam free as they serve God's will. Only certain demons must be tied down; 3] "at the great river Euphrates" – is the long river winding steadily across the face of the Middle East and touching Turkey, Syria, and Iraq until uniting with the Tigris and together reaching the Persian Gulf. [Patterson]; [It is the longest and more important river in the Middle East… It was near the Euphrates that sin began, the first lie was told, the first murder was committed, and the tower of Babel… The region near the Euphrates was the central location of three world powers that oppressed Israel: Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia. MacArthur]; Thus, the river Euphrates is symbolic of foreign invasion. This was the historical site of much demonic activity.

[15] And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind.

"And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year" – "who had been prepared" [hetoimazo – to make ready; to prepare; aorist participle passive voice; nom. masc. plural – "who were made ready"]; In others words, it was their wicked behavior in the past, that prepared them for the wicked behavior at this moment. These four demons were involved in demonically influencing the nations beyond the river Euphrates in the OT to come against the people of Israel – the nations of Assyria, Babylon and Persian. Therefore, these four demons have experience in mustering up armies; "for the hour and day and month and year"; We are reminded in Ecclesiastes 3:1 – "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven". The "everything" in that verse means "everything," even the appointed time for wicked demons to be unleased at the appointed hour, on the appointed day, of the appointed month, within the appointed year. There are three things you need to understand about evil: 1] Evil never happens on its own; 2] Evil is never allowed to happen without restrictions; and 3] Evil never happens until the appointed time. God has evil on a leash. "were released" [luo – to loose; aorist indicative; passive voice; 3rd person plural]; "so that" [hina – purpose clause; here we are given the reason why these four demons were released]; "so that they would kill a third of mankind" – "they would kill" [apo-kteino – to kill; present subjunctive active; 3rd person plural]; "a third of mankind" – Back in Rev. 6:8, when the fourth seal was broken pestilence came upon mankind and killed a fourth of those on the earth. A fourth of 7 billion people is 1 billion.750 million. A third of 7 billion people would equal around three billion dead. All together this would come to over 4 billion 750 million people dead during the Tribulation period. **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 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."

God is sovereign over the forces of evil. And in His holy purposes He has ordained for these wicked demons to attack those who worship them. In other words, God can ordain for evil to come upon those who do evil. Not only does God bring just punishment upon all those who do evil, whether demons or sinners. But He also purposes for those who do evil to get a taste of what it is like for evil to be committed against them. This is all a part of what it means to be given over by God. **Scrip. Ref**: Psalm 34:21 – Evil shall slay the wicked;

Ps. 94:23 – And He has brought back their wickedness upon them, And will destroy them in their evil; The Lord our God will destroy them

Ps. 140:11b – May evil hunt the violent man speedily.

Here is the irony of man's depraved state, they want to do evil against God but want God to be good towards them. This account reminds us that God is not obligated to give sinners grace but only what they do deserve, judgment.

[16] The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

"The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million" – "number of the armies" – observation – not one army but armies, possibly 4 armies led by the four demons; "two hundred million" – lit. "twice ten thousand of ten thousand" – basically 20 thousand times 10 thousand; the late General William K. Harrison [an expert in military logistics] committed on this verse by saying– the actual raising and transporting of an army of the size spoken of in v. 16 completely transcends human capability. "I heard the number of them" – "I heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]

[17] And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.

"And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them" – "I saw" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "in the vision the horses" – there are horses in the spiritual realm – God has them and so does demons – 2 Kings 2:11; 6:17; Rev. 19:11& 14; "and those who sat" [kathemai – to sit; present participle middle voice; accus. masc. plural]; "the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone" – "had" [echo – to have; present participle active; accus. masc. plural]; "the color of fire and of hyacinth [high- ah-cinth – used only here in NT; a red color bordering on black] and of brimstone." "And the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone" – "the heads of lions" – which pictures terror, ferociousness and destruction; "proceed" [ek-poreuomai – to go forth; to go out; present indicative middle/passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "fire and smoke and brimstone" [they incinerated them with fire, and asphyxiated them with smoke and brimstone; MacArthur];

[18] A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.

"A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues" – "killed" [apo-kteino – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural]; "by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths" – fire, smoke and brimstone is associated with hell in the Bible; "proceeded" [ek-poreuomai – to go out of; present participle middle/passive voice; gen. masc. singular]

[19] For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

"For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm" – "do harm" [adikeo – to hurt; present indicative; active; 3rd person plural]; lit. "for the tails of them like serpents, having heads also in them they do harm."

The 2nd biblical truth about total depravity that should cause those who are saved to be thankful for God's grace is: Total depravity means that there is no spiritual good in man to turn from his dead idols. Be thankful you were made to turn to the Living God [vv. 20-21]:

[20] The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

"The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues" – "killed" [apo-kteino – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons" – "repent" [meta-noeo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural; this is the first mention of repentance since the Lord confronted the church in Laodicea 3:19]; Repentance literally means a change of mind. To change one's mind is to change one's thoughts, reasons, perspectives, convictions or beliefs about something. When it comes to the gospel repentance entails changing your conviction from a love for sin to a hatred of it, changing your beliefs from false opinions about yourself, the world and God to faith in the truth of who God is, who Jesus is and salvation. Repentance means turning from sin, error and worldliness towards holiness, truth and faith in Christ. [Considering the judgment brought against them for their sins they still refused to repent: The first seal [Rev. 6:1-2 – the false messiah]; the second seal [Rev. 6:3-4 – worldwide war]; third seal [Rev. 6:5-6 – worldwide famine]; fourth seal [Rev. 6:7-8 – worldwide pestilence]; sixth seal [Rev. 6:12-17 – worldwide terror – a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth; the whole moon became like blood; the sky was split; every mountain and island moved out of its place; and everyone flees to the mountains wanting to hide from the wrath of God]; Rev. 8 – the seventh seal was broken, within the seventh seal was seven trumpet judgments: first trumpet sound – hail and fire, mixed with blood was thrown to the earth; second trumpet – something like a great mountain was thrown into the sea; third trumpet – a third of the clean water was poisoned by a meteor; fourth trumpet – a third of the sun, moon and stars was struck with darkness; Rev. 9:1-12 – locust like demons were released from the bottomless pit and given authority to torment sinners for five months with their scorpion like stings in their tails; the

sixth trumpet sounds [Rev. 9:13-21] – four demons lead an army of demonic host to kill a third of mankind. And despite all these signs of torment and death, people still refuse to repent because they love their sin so much. This is what you call total depravity.

Quote: Kendell Easley: As in the case of Pharaoh in Egypt, pain only reveals a person's true character. Those who love God will be made more godly by suffering; those who hate Him will become more rebellious. So, we must not be too quick to judge in our amazement that these sinners were still hardened in their sin after witnessing two billion people being killed by three plagues of the wrath of God. Because apart from the grace of God, we would have remained just as obstinate in our sins too. Don't forget, your salvation and my salvation is my grace from first to last. It's by irresistible grace that God turned me from my sins to Himself. It's by grace that He enabled me to repent and believe in the gospel. It's by grace that He keeps me wanting to turn from sin and walk in obedience. Listen, our common sense didn't bring us to Christ, our fear of going to hell did not lead us to Christ, our being tired of our sins did not bring us to Christ. It was Christ who brought us to Himself. Never confuse the means of salvation with the source of salvation; "the works of their hands" – a phrase that always refers to idols [**Scrip. Ref**: Deut. 4:28; 27:15; 2 Kings 19:18; 22:17; Ps. 115:4; 135:15; Acts 7:41]; any product that comes from man's hands is weak, limited and feeble; all idols are handmade; It is an insult that is deserving of eternal punishment to give more honor to a produce made of man's hand, than to give honor to the God who fashioned man by His own hands; "so as not to worship demons" – "worship" [pros-kuneo – future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; **Scrip. Ref**: 1 Cor. 10:20 – the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; This is demonic deception, to have you believe that life can be gained from worshiping lifeless objects; "and the idols of gold and silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk" – the material from which these idols are made descend from the most valuable to the cheapest material; "which can neither see" – "can" [dunamai – to be able; present indicative middle voice; 3rd person plural; trans. "which can neither of themselves" or "is not able of themselves] "to see" [blepo – **present** infinitive active]; "to hear" [akouo – **present** infinitive active]; "to walk" [peri-pateo – **present** infinitive active] – to see, hear and walk are in the present tense in the original meaning that these idols are always in the present state of lifelessness. They currently can't see, hear or walk. Dead sinners love to worship dead things. **Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 5:21 – "Little children, guard yourselves from idols".

Idolatry is when you take what God requires from you in worship to Him and transfer that over to something that the world says you ought to value like money, possessions, power, pleasure, success, sex, fame and drugs. Idolatry is when you desire something so much that you are willing to go against God's greatest commandments to achieve it. Guard your heart from the natural tendency in your flesh to seek happiness in things that have no life. Money has no life, your possessions have no life, your status has no life. Seek happiness in the One who has life. In the One who promised that He will never leave you nor forsake you. Your money cannot promise you – I will never leave you nor forsake you; Your job can never promise you – I will never

leave you nor forsake you; Your health can never promise you – I will never leave you nor forsake you; You looks can never promise you – I will never leave you nor forsake you; Your possessions can never promise you – I will never leave you nor forsake you. But there is a God, who is the living and true God, who has promised His people – I will never leave you nor forsake you. We serve the living God – He sees, He hears, He speaks and He moves – He may be silent sometimes but He isn't dead; He may not do what you want Him to do, when you want Him to do it but He will always do what you need Him to do.

[21] and they did not repent of their murders nor their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

"and they did not repent of their murders nor their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts" – "repent" [meta-noeo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "murders" [phonos – slaughter]; "sorceries" [pharmakon – drugs]; "immorality" [porneia – entails adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, rape, [sex between two unmarried heterosexuals], any sexual arousal of the mind, any sexual involvement with someone that may not lead to physical intercourse]; Even between consenting adults sexual immorality is an act of hatred towards one's neighbor; These things are may bring pleasure but before the all-seeing eyes of God it is wickedness that is worthy of punishment.]; "thefts" [klemmatos – things stolen]; We are so depraved outside of Christ that we will not be convenience to turn from sin out of shame of violating God's Law nor can we be convenience to turn from sin out of fear of His judgments. Every sin we commit against each other has its beginning point of first sinning against God in idol worship. In other words, social sins happen because man exchange his object of worship from the true and living God to false and lifeless gods. You always follow what you believe. Murder, thefts, fornication and sorcery – these are sins that we commit against each other. These are sins that family commits against family, friends commit against friends, neighbors commit against neighbors. As one commentator wrote, "They cannot depend on the things of this world, which will turn on them". In our fallen-ness we are so crazy in our depravity that we will not only turn against the God who wants to save us, but we will defend the things that wish to destroy us. I'm so thankful that I was made to turn to the living God. And the truest sign that you have received the gift of salvation is a life lived in repentance of sin. A Christian is not only known by what he runs to [God] but also by what he runs from [sin]. Forgiveness by God is a great pain reliever. It is not only the holiness of God that governs what He commands us to do and not do but also the love of God that governs what He commands us to do and not do. Murder, fornications, sorcerers and thefts are expressions of being under demonic influence and the Lord does not want His people to be led astray by demons. Idol worship is demon worship – 1 John 5:21 – demons will lie to you that doing evil is for your good.

No More Delay

Revelation 10

Before the seventh trumpet is sounded there is an interlude from chapter 10:1-11:14. We have seen a similar interlude before, in chapter 7 of Revelation right after the sixth seal was broken [chapter 6] and just before the seventh seal is broken [chapter 8]. And in [chapter 16:15] there is a brief interlude of blessing bestowed upon the righteous right after the sixth bowl judgment is unleashed and right before the seventh bowl judgment is unleashed. And so, what we can conclude regarding the purpose of these interludes is that God wants to encourage His people in the midst of this tribulation by reminding them that He is still in control of these events and that soon He will deliver them out of them all. 2 ways to maintain spiritual stability in the midst of tribulation as you wait on the Lord: The 1st way to maintain spiritual stability in the midst of tribulation is to: Hold on to God's promises [vv. 1-7]:

[1] I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;

"I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven" – "I saw" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; This eyewitness statement by the apostle John alerts us that this is a new vision; "another strong angel" – "another" [allos – meaning of the same kind]; the first strong angel John saw was back in 5:2, when a strong angel proclaimed with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals? This "strong angel" is distinct from that one; "strong" means mighty, which means this angel was big in size. Apparently, there are a number of large-size angels in heaven [Rev. 18:21] describes another one demonstrated his might by lifting a large stone and throwing it into the sea. But this strong angel is unique from those strong angels by his appearance as John sees this angel "coming down out of heaven" – "coming down" [katabaino – to come down; to descend; present participle active; accus. masc. singular]; "clothed with a cloud" – "clothed" [peri-ballo – to throw/place around; perfect participle middle voice; accus. masc. singular – the perfect tense alerts us that this covering has been his constant dress from some point in the past up until this present moment]; "a cloud" – the Lord is often associates Himself with clouds in the Bible. Whether it be a visible manifestation of His presence of the Shekinah glory cloud of the OT as a guide to Israel in the wilderness or as a visible picture of His approval in the temple. But also "clouds" are mentioned in relation to the coming of Jesus Christ; **Scrip. Ref**: Dan. 7:13 – "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming; Matt. 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; Acts 1:9 – And after He [Christ] has said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight".

Now this angel is not Jesus Christ, but his appearance is a reflection of His glory for the very purpose of encouraging John and us of the future hope of Christ's appearance. That's why John records the next description of the angel as having – "the rainbow was upon his head" – "rainbow" [iris – used only twice in the NT; Rev. 4:3]. According to Gen. 9:8-17, God set His rainbow in the sky as a sign of His covenant with every living thing on the earth that He will never destroy the earth again by water. This rainbow crown upon the head of this strong angel is to remind us that God is a God who keeps His promises; "and his face was like the sun" – Rev. 1:16 says that the face of Christ in His glorified and exalted state "was like the sun shining in its strength". This strong angel's face was shining like the sun. So, if you can imagine this rainbow crown on his head and his face was like the appearance of the sun, which means that his bright shining face illumined the various colors of this rainbow on his head, and he was clothed in a cloud. Cloud, rainbow and sun are features that we see in the sky. But then John describes the lower portion of his body, "and his feet like pillars of fire"- Rev. 1:15 describes the exalted and glorified Christ as, "His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace". The legs and feet of this strong were like pillars of fire, which speak of judgment. Therefore, the appearance of this strong angel reflects the glory of Christ and the type of message that he is about to bring, a message of hope and judgment. For verse 2 tells us that he had something in his hand:

[2] and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;

"and he had in his hand a little book which was open" – "had" [echo – to have; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "a little book" [biblapidion – a little scroll]; "which was open" [anoigo – to open; perfect participle passive voice; neut. accus. singular; the tense speaks of a point in the past when this book was opened and it has remained open to this present time]. Some theologians believe this "little scroll" is the scroll that was previously sealed with seven seals back in chapter 5:1. There are two basic reasons why I believe this "little scroll" is not the same scroll that Jesus took from the right hand of the Father. First, John doesn't write "the scroll" [definite article] which would be referring specifically to the scroll that Jesus had in His hand and broke the seals from. But John writes "a little scroll," which is distinct from the one Jesus has. Second, John sees that this scroll is little, probably in comparison to the one Jesus held. This scroll is little, not only in the hands of this huge angel but John can discern that it was little even to him. The fact that this little scroll was opened lets us know that the contents of this book are meant to be known to all of mankind. This is why when the strong angel descended upon the earth, he placed himself in a position to communicate this truth: "He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land" – "He placed" [tithemi – to set; to place; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]

[3] and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices

"and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars" – "he cried out" [krazo – to cry; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "as when a lion roars" – "roars" [mukaomai – to roar; present indicative **middle voice**; 3rd person singular; is an onomatopoeic word for the bellowing of an ox]; "and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices" – "he had cried out" [krazo –to cry out; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "the seven peals of thunder" – "seven" a number of completion or perfection; either the voice of God or of angels; "uttered their voices" – "uttered" [laleo – to speak; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; *antiphonally*

[4] When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."

"When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write" – "I was about" [mello – to be about; imperfect indicative active; 1st person singular]; "to write" [grapho – present infinitive active]; "and I heard a voice from heaven saying" – "I heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "a voice from heaven saying" – "saying" [lego – present participle active; fem. accus. singular]; "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them." – "Seal up" [sphragizo – to keep secret; aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular; a note of urgency]; John was the only human allowed to hear the words the seven peals of thunder had spoken. It was not for us to know; "and do not write them" – "write" [grapho – present subjunctive active; 2nd person singular]

[5] Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven,

"Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven" – "whom I saw" – "saw" [eidon – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; The same strong angel John saw back in verses 1-2 of this chapter; "standing on the sea and on the land" – "standing" [istemi – to stand; perfect participle; active; accus. masc. singular; "while having been standing"]; This strong angel is so large that his feet can be placed on both bodies of the sea and land. This is meant to represent that what he is about to say is for the whole world to know; "lifted up his right hand to heaven" – "lifted up" [airo – to raise; to elevate; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "right hand to heaven" [Raising one's right hand at the taking of an oath is customary today in courts of law and it inaugurations. [Kistemaker]; this indicates that what he is about to affirm before God is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help him God. If this angel lifted his right hand. This means that the little scroll was in his left hand.

[6] and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer,

"and swore by Him who lives forever and ever" – "swore" [homvuo – to swear; promise with an oath; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "who lives" lit. "in the One who lives" [present participle active; dative masc. singular – the One who continues to live in uninterrupted, indestructible and unceasing existence]; "forever and ever": There are only two obstacles that keeps one from bringing to pass a promise made; 1] The first is death, if the one who makes the promise dies then the promise cannot come to pass; 2] The second is weakness, if the one who makes the promise does not have the ability to fulfill the promise then the promise cannot come to pass. But the One to whom the angel swears acknowledges that there are no obstacles that stand in the way of this God bringing to pass His promises because: 1] He is the One who lives forever and ever, death cannot stop Him; 2] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth, which means our God has not weaknesses. What He has promises He is able to bring to pass. God is not in a hurry to fulfill His promises because He is not subject to time, time is subject to Him; "WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT" – "created" [ktizo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular – sometime in the past God created]; God is not in His creation, God is not of His creation but God is the creator of His creation, which makes Him over His creation. He is distinct from it, not of it; Now here is the promise that the strong angel is swearing before the living God: "that there will be delay no longer" – KJV "that there should be time no longer"; this is not meant to be interpreted that time will cease in the future. For in the eternal state there will be time [Rev. 22:2]; The Greek word "chronos" from where we get the word "chronology" means in this context that there will be "delay no longer". This delay is in reference to judgment; "there shall be no more delay" speaks of finality. In other words, once the seventh trumpet sounds, the wrath of God will come to its completion. There will be no more suffering for the people of God. There will be no more evil in the world. This promise completes the other promises in Scripture – promises like "And we know that God works all things together for your good, to those who love God and are called according to His purpose [Rom. 8:28]; Psalm 23:4 – "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." Psalm 34:19 – "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the Lord delivers him out of them all".

This promise completes them all because in the future the good of Romans 8:28, will be completed. There are no "all things working together for good" because everything is now good. There is no valley of Psalm 23, to walk through anymore. In the future it just Thou art with me. There are no more many afflictions of the righteous of Psalm 34 anymore, for the Lord has delivered us out of them all permanently. There is no more count it all joy when you encounter various trials, because soon there will be no more various trials, and it will be at that time I will count it all joy. And you know why I will count it all joy because the purpose of trials to sanctify me will not be necessary because I will be in His presence. No more processions down the aisle while reading to grieving families, "Let not your heart be troubled". Because soon and very soon our hearts will never ever be troubled again.

Scrip. Ref: 2 Cor. 4:16-18 – Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. [17] For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, [18] while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. What makes our afflictions light is not based on comparing other afflictions we have gone through or what afflictions others have gone through, but compared to the eternal weight of glory that you and I will soon experience in which we will never to go through anymore afflictions forever and ever.

[7] but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

"but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound" – "about to" [mello – present subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "to sound" [salpizo – to sound the trumpet; present infinitive active]; "then the mystery of God is finished" – "the mystery of God" – ["Mysterion" in the NT denotes a secret revealed by God [Eph. 3:1-10; Rom. 16:25-26] it refers to God's redemptive plan, at first hidden, but now revealed and made public to all… In other uses, "mystery" refers to the church, the revelation of the Antichrist, the kingdom, and that all shall not die [Matt. 13:10-35; Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; Eph. 1:9; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Thess. 2:6-8][Thomas]; But the mystery of God here, I believe refers to the remaining time of judgment before the second coming of the Lord. In the OT, Daniel prophesied the remaining time of judgment, but it was a mystery as to when this remaining time would begin: **Scrip. Ref**: Daniel 12:5-9 – [5] Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river. [6] And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" [7] And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. [8] As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" [9] And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. [11] "And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. [12] How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!]

Scrip. Ref: Rev. 11:2-3 – and they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months. [3] And I will grant authority to my two witnesses and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth; 12:6 – she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. [14] she was nourished for a time and times and half a time; 13:5 – and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 42 months – 3 ½ years; 1,260 days – 3 ½ years – the mystery of God is when will these days kick in, when will it begin. And the strong angel is saying is about to begin now.

[The various designations for the three and a half year tribulation period have not appeared before chapter 10, but in ensuing chapters they appear often. God has instigated the final events of world history, and nothing can delay them. [Osborne]; **Scrip. Ref**: 1 Pet. 1:10-11 – As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, [11] seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow"' **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 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."; "finished" [teleo – aorist indicative **passive voice**; 3rd person singular]; **Quote**: As one commentator put it, "In the dialect of the American South – "he fixin to sound his trumpet"; "as He preached to His servants the prophets" – "He preached" [eu-angelizo – to bring good tidings; gospel; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular; lit. "He gospelized"]

The 2nd way to maintain spiritual stability in the midst of tribulation is to: Hunger after the truth of God's word no matter what [vv. 8-11]:

[8] Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land."

"Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land" – "Go" [hupago – to depart; to go away; present imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "take" [lambano – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "which is open" [anoigo – perfect participle passive voice; neut. accus. singular]; "who stands" [istemi – perfect participle active; accus. masc. singular]

[9] So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

"So I went to the angel" – "went" [ap-erchomai – to go; aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "telling him to give me the little book" – "telling him" [lego – present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "to give" [didomi – aorist infinitive active] John was too intimidated to just go up to this strong angel and take the little scroll from his hand. So, he walks over to the angel asking him to give him the book. John's thinking, I'm not going to take it, I'm going to ask him politely. "And he said to me, Take it and eat it" – "take it" [lambano – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "eat it" [kata-esthio –to eat up; to devour; present imperative active; 2nd person singular]; ["Eat" is a Hebrew idiom for receiving knowledge, similar to the English use of "digest" for considering and meditating on what has been learned. The "kata" prefix on the verb has a perfective force to emphasize the completeness of the eating. John's devouring of the scroll is literal to illustrate his thorough assimilation of the scroll's contents]; do swallow it; chew it all it; "it will make your stomach bitter" – "it will make bitter" [pikraino – to make bitter; future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey" –

"but" [alla – strong adversative]; "it will" [estai – future indicative active]; "sweet" [gluku – Jas 3:11-12]; "as honey"

[10] I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

"I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it" – "I took" [lambano – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "ate it" [kata-esthio – aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter" – "I had eaten it" [esthio – to eat; aorist indicative active; 1st person singular]; "was made bitter" [pikraino – to make bitter; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]' The sweetness of the future blessing that is in store for you. The bitterness of the future judgment that is in store for those whom you know are not saved. It's bitter-sweet. To eat the scroll is symbolic of assimilation of its truth to one's person. It is not enough just to possess a Bible, it must become a part of you. Its truth is to be your conviction, its authority your compliance, its author your delight, its promises your comfort and its warning your burden. If the Bible is not a part of you, it will not transform you. If you are still the same type of carnal person after listening to the word, then you have not tasted the Word. If there is no commitment in your heart to be a doer of the Word, then you will have an identity crisis [not know what type of person you are. So, we come to church not just to hear the Word but to feed upon the Word. How do you eat the Word? By believing what you read or hear of it and living it out. **Scrip. Ref**: Psa. 19:10 – They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb; Psalm 119:103 – How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Jer. 15:16 – Thy words were found and I ate them, And Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; 1 Pet. 2:1-2 – Therefore putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, [2] like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

[11] And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

"And they said to me" – "they said" [lego – to say; present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; The "they" may be referring to the voice in heaven and the strong angel on earth; "You must prophesy again" – "prophesy" [propheteuo – to prophecy; aorist infinitive active]; "concerning" [epi – at; against]; "many peoples and nations and tongues and kings"

What the World Really Thinks of Preachers

Revelation 11:1-13

Introduction:

C.S. Lewis went to visit one of his young preacher friends and listen to him preach. Everything was fine until the man reached the climax of his message. And he said, in so many words, "If you will not believe in Jesus Christ, if you refuse to take Him as your Lord, you will suffer grave eschatological ramifications." And then he went on and ended his message. Lewis frowned. When he had occasion to talk with the young man about the conclusion of his message, he said, "Did you mean that those who refuse to receive the gospel message would go to hell?" "Well, yes, said the young man. "Yes, that's what I meant." Lewis' response was beautiful, "Then say that!"

The work of preaching can be an intimidating endeavor if the preacher is overly concerned with what the congregation thinks of him. This can lead to the preacher shying away from difficult texts of Scripture that confront or warns the people concerning sin and judgment. If a preacher fears man, he will never be used of God. In this passage we see two men who did not fear man and were used of God greatly because they preached the truth in a time when it was unpopular.

Now we come to the halfway point in the book of Revelation. And if you notice in your bulletin there are: 2 reactions of the unbelieving world that proves what they really think of preachers: The 1st reaction of the unbelieving world that proves what they really think of preachers is: The world hates the truth that they preach [vv. 1-6]:

[1] Then there was given to me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.

"Then there as given to me a measuring rod like a staff and someone said" – "given" [didomi – aorist indicative passive voice 3rd person singular]; "to me" [John the apostle once again participates in the vision]; "a measuring rod" [kalamos – a measuring reed; … Certainly a measurement could be for the purpose of determining the size, but more often in Scripture measurement served as a device for indicating divine action. [Patterson]; refers to a reedlike plant that grew in the Jordan Valley to a height of fifteen to twenty feet… The stalks, because they were long and lightweight, were ideal for us as measuring rods… But John's measuring is better understood as signifying ownership, defining the parameters of God's possessions [MacArthur] "and someone said" – [KJV] "and the angel stood, saying" – the reading shows no sign of being original. Some late manuscripts try to solve this dilemma by inserting these words since the text does not specify from whom John received the reed. [Thomas]; It could be the strong angel of [10:1] or the voice from heaven speaking [10:4; 8]; we don't know. All that it says in the best manuscripts is "saying" [lego – present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. – "Get up" [egeiro – to rise up; present imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "and measure" [metreo –to

measure; aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular; aorist tense of urgency]; There was a command to measure three things: "the temple of God; and the altar, and those who worship in it" [In Ezek. 40-42 the measuring of the temple signifies God's ownership and protection of His people. God is present with His people. [Osborne]; The measuring of the temple, the altar and the people is to mark off the boundary of God's protection. The areas that will not be measured speaks of those outside of the boundary of His protection. This measurement is recorded for us first in this account to let us know that the plagues that come forth from the two witnesses will not affect those who are worshiping in the temple. The beast that will rise and kill the two witnesses, will only kill them at that time not those who are worshiping in the temple. The earthquake that happens in Jerusalem, which kills seven thousand people will not touch those who are worshiping in the temple. Guess what church? It's always good to be in the place of worship. As the Lord gives you opportunity to come to corporate worship each week you should respond like the psalmist who said, "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."; The protection of God proves the presence of God; And the presence of God with us should remind us of the providence of God for us. That God is not only in my presence, but He is also guiding my path. That the visible proof of His invisible presence is how He keeps me, provides for me, and leads me; "temple" [naos]; When the apostle John wrote this book it was around 95 or 96 AD. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. So, it was 25 or 26 years ago when the temple was destroyed. Yet, in this vision John sees another temple. Some commentators wish to spiritualize this temple as referring to the church since the church is spoken of metaphorically as a temple in a couple of places in the NT. However, the church is never referred to as a temple in the book of Revelation. The church is referred to simply as the church. My problem with this interpretation is that the church hasn't been mentioned since chapter 3. And you can't have the church represented as the temple and as the two witnesses. Both the temple and the two witnesses are distinct. Now in the book of Ezekiel, chaps. 40-48 speak of a temple in the future where Christ Himself, when He return will enter during His thousand-year millennial reign. Thus, we can say that the Bible speaks of five temples build in the city of Jerusalem. The first one built by King Solomon [1 Kings 8] but destroyed by the Babylonians. The second one built under the leadership of Zerubbabel after the Babylonian captivity. The third built or added to the second temple under the reign of Herod but destroyed in 70 AD. The fourth we see here in this chapter. And then fifth that is mentioned in the book of Ezekiel chaps. 40-48. There are two texts of Scripture that gives us insight in being able to identify that the temple mentioned here in Revelation 11:2 is the temple that will be built in Jerusalem during the tribulation period under the leadership of the false messiah or Antichrist: **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 24:15 – "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [let the reader understand]; The abomination of desolation is described for us in 2 Thess. 2:4: **Scrip. Ref**: 2 Thess. 2:3-4 – 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.

Many orthodox Jews today dream of rebuilding their temple, but its site is now occupied [and in the minds of many Jews desecrated] by the Islamic shrine known as the Dome of the Rock. Because Muslims believe it to be the place from which Muhammad ascended to heaven, it is among the most sacred shrines in the Islamic world…[MacArthur]

Therefore, when Jesus broke the first seal "a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering and to conquer" [Rev. 6:2]. That was the Antichrist, the false Messiah who went out to conquer but he accomplished it not by war but by peace for he had a bow but there were no arrows. This false Messiah will assist Israel in rebuilding the temple at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation period. But in the middle of the seven-year tribulation, he will attack believing Israel and set himself up as God in the temple, the abomination of desolation. This is where we are right here. The Antichrist has broken his covenant with Israel and now he is going to attack the believing remnant of Israel: **Scrip. Ref**: Dan. 9:27 – "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week [7 days in a week; week representative of 7 years], but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction." This is where we are right now; "and the altar" – These Jewish believers were unsaved when they participated in re-establishing animal sacrifices. But now that they are saved, they realize that Christ is the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of His people. So, the altar remains in the temple as a memorial symbol of the work of redemption having been accomplished in Christ, the Lamb of God.; "and those who worship in it" [proskuneo – to worship; prostrate; present participle active; accus. masc. plural; substantival participle]

[2] Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it" – "Leave out" [ekballo – present imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "the court which is outside the temple"; "do not measure it" – "measure" [metreo – aorist subjunctive active; 2nd person singular]; For the outer court to not be measured meant that those who occupied the outer court, the Gentiles, were outside the measure of God's protection; "for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" – "for" [hoti – because]; "it has been given" [didomi – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular – a divine given over]; "to the nations" [tois ethnesin – the Gentiles in contrast to the Jews who are worshiping in the temple]; "and they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months" – "tread underfoot" [pateo – to trample upon; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; to trample in the sense to profane "the holy city" [Jerusalem]; "for-two months" [equals out to 3 ½ years – this speaks of the second half of the seven year tribulation period; 42 months is the fulfillment time of the Gentiles]

John was only to measure that which was regarded as sacred – the temple, the altar and the worshipers. But the outer court was not to be measured because it was profane/unclean/unholy.

[3] "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses" – "I will grant" [didomi – to give; future indicative active; 1st person singular]; "authority" [power]; "to my two witnesses" – "two" [dusin – two witnesses for legal purposes to confirm every fact as true]; Some think these two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah; [Perhaps they are better seen as two remarkable Jewish witnesses who arise during the tribulation with ministries similar to those of Elijah and Moses. [Patterson]; These two witnesses have similar powers to Moses and Elijah [the Law and the Prophets], but they are not Moses and Elijah. For Moses and Elijah to come back they would not be in their natural, perishable bodies but in the case of Moses, a resurrected body and in the case of Elijah a glorified body – 1 Cor. 15:50 – "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable". Which means when Elijah was translated into heaven, his body was changed from a perishable body to an imperishable body. Moses who died naturally, would have to be resurrected. And in a resurrected body there is no death anymore since death is swallowed up in victory – 1 Cor. 15:42 – So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; "and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days" – "they will prophesy" [propheteuo – to declare; future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "twelve hundred and sixty days" [1,260 days divided by 30 [30 days in a month] equals to 42 months.]; [the 144,000 Jewish sealed and these two Jewish witnesses are the fulfillment of this statement. For during the Tribulation period, they will have the open door opportunity to preach to the whole world as a witness to the nations.]; **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come."

"clothed in sackcloth" – "clothed" [peri-ballo – to be clothed with; to put on; perfect participle passive voice; nom. masc. plural]; "sackcloth" [dark coarse cloth]; The two witnesses will preach judgment first and salvation second. Bad news first, good news second. **Quote** Tim Keller – "If you have a small view of your sin, God's grace will be small to you." The preachers' posture should reflect the mood of the message that he is preaching. The bitter-sweet of preaching God's Word is that there are some who will reject it [bitter] and there are some who will receive it [sweet]. Yet, these preachers already know the type of reception the unbelieving world will have to their preaching that's why they showed up dressed in sackcloth. Their sermons will call for brokenness and repentance. It's interesting that these two preachers did not leave it up to the world to decide what type of message the world wanted them to preach. They didn't spend their time reviewing the latest television show or secular song to connect to the worldly interest of the people. They showed up knowing that in a world that prides itself on the need to be affirmed, esteemed and entertained that their sermon would be counter-cultural to that. Listen, the world doesn't need entertainers in the pulpit. The world doesn't need comedians or life coaches in the

pulpit; the world doesn't need sermon series based on what's popular in the world. Listen, the world needs preachers who will proclaim the truth. The church needs preachers who will preach the truth. To do otherwise is a clear sign that the Lord has not called that person to preach; **Scrip. Ref**: Jer. 23:16-18 – Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the Lord. [17] "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You will have peace"'; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, "Calamity will not come upon you.' [18] "But who has stood in the council of the Lord, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His Word and listened? [21] "I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them. But they prophesied. [22] But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds.

As the time nears for the coming of Christ, it's not the time for silly sermons, felt need sermons, feel-good sermons or sermonettes for Christianettes, but sermons that will comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

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

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" – "two olive trees"; "the two lampstands" [As olive trees they are filled with the Spirit [oil]. As lampstands they bear testimony to the truth of God in a day of darkness. [Believer's Bible Commentary]; "that stand" [istemi – to stand; perfect participle active; nom. masc. plural]; "before the Lord of the earth".

[5] And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devour their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

"And if anyone wants to harm them" – "if" [ei – 1st class condition statement of reality] "wants" [thelo – to desire; to purpose; present indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to harm" [adikeo – to hurt; aorist infinitive active]; "fire flows out of their mouth and devour their enemies" – "fire flows out of" [ek-poreuomai – to go forth; to proceed out of; present indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "and devour" [katesthio – to utterly consume; present indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "their enemies" – "enemies" [echthrous – haters]; "he must be killed in this way" – "he must" [dei – it is necessary; it is a must]; "be killed" [apo-kteino – to kill; aorist infinitive passive voice]

[6] These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

"These have the power to shut up the sky" – "have" [echo – present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "to shut up" [kleio – aorist infinitive active]; "the sky" [ouranos – heaven]; "so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying" – "so that" [hina – purpose clause]; "rain will not fall" – "fall" [brecho – to pour down rain; present subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "during the days of their prophesying [**Scrip. Ref**: 1 Kgs. 17:1; Lk. 4:25; Jas. 5:17 – like the days of Elijah when he shut up the heavens for 3 ½ years; drought/famine]; "and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood" – "to turn" [strepho – present infinitive active]; "into blood" [**Scrip. Ref**: Exodus 7:20-21 – the first plague Moses sent upon the Egyptians; water is a symbol of life; to turn it to blood is a sign of death]; "and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire" – "to strike" [patasso – to afflict; aorist infinitive active]; "every plague" [plege – plague; public calamity]; "they desire" [thelo – aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person plural]; The type of preacher that God loves and the world hates is a preacher who preaches the truth with authority, who preaches with conviction, who preaches with no respecter persons, who preaches to hearts not emotions alone, who preaches for change not emotional responses, who preaches the truth not his opinion nor the world's philosophy. **Quote**: Charles Spurgeon – "Long ago I ceased to count heads. Truth is usually in the minority in this evil world".

The 2nd reaction of the unbelieving world that proves what they really think of preachers is: The world loves the harsh treatment they receive [vv. 7-13]:

[7] When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

"When they have finished their testimony" – "finished" [teleo – to accomplish; to fulfill; aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person plural; [Not even the Antichrist could harm these witnesses until their ministry was completed.]; **Quote**: Warren Wiersbe - God's obedient servants are immortal until their work is done.

"the beast that comes up out of the abyss" – "the beast" [to therion; "is a word for a beast of prey, one with a ravenous appetite, a carnivore like a lion or panther. It connotes a cunning of unreasoning violence that acts according to its own cruel nature. [Thomas]; "comes up" [anabaino – to ascend; to go up; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "out of the abyss" [Rev. 9:1-2 – the bottomless pit where the locust like demons arose; and the king of the abyss – Abaddon and Apollyon (v.11)];[this is the first of 36 references in Revelation to the beast and anticipates the more detailed information about him to come in chapters 13 and 17… the beast is a world ruler [often called Antichrist] who imitates the true Christ, rules over the people of the world, and demands their worship… Though he is a man, the beast is energized by the demonic presence and power coming from the abyss. MacArthur] "will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them" – "will make war" [poieo – to make; future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "overcome them" [nikao – to conquer; future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "kill them" [apokteino – present indicative active; 3rd person singular];

The beast attacks the two witnesses because he hates the message that they preach. So in order to silence the message he decides to kill the messengers.

[8] 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.

"And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt" – "their dead bodies" [to ptoma – corpse]; "mystically is called" – "mystically" [pneumatikos – spiritually; used twice in NT [1 Cor. 2:14]; hidden or mystical sense]; "called" [kaleo – present indicative passive voice 3rd person singular]; The Lord sees everything from a spiritual perspective; He "does not see as man sees for man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart" [1 Sam. 16:7]; If you want to know how God sees you don't focus on what you do on the outside but evaluate the attitude of your heart on the inside according to His word. And you might discover that the Lord doesn't think of you the same way you think of you; "Sodom and Egypt" [Egypt is a symbol of oppression and slavery. The thing that Sodom and Egypt had in common was their unmitigated enmity toward the true God and His people. [Thomas] – the people in Jerusalem did not see themselves as Sodom or Egypt; "where also their Lord was crucified" – "crucified" [stauroo – to crucify; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "the single explicit reference to the manner of Jesus' death in the entire book of Revelation" [Holman Commentary]

[9] 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.

"Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days" – "will look" [blepo – to see; present indicative active; 3rd person plural; this verb is placed at the beginning of the sentence in the original for emphasis – "And they saw from the peoples…..] There will be continual coverage of the dead bodies of the two witnesses for 3 ½ days. The two witnesses preached for 3 ½ years. Their corpses will lie in the street for 3 ½ days; "and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb" – "will not permit" [aphiemi – to permit; present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "to be laid" [tithemi – to place; aorist infinitive passive voice]; "in a tomb" [These two witnesses will be treated like road-kill. Just left out in the open for all to watch their bodies as they decompose.]

[10] And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

"And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate" – "those who dwell on the earth" [katoikeo – to dwell; to settle; present participle active; nom. masc. plural; a technical phrase in the book of Revelation for the unbelieving world [Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 13:8, 14; 17:8]; "will rejoice" [chairo – to be glad; present indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "celebrate" [euphraino – to be merry; present indicative middle voice; 3rd person plural]; "and

they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth" – "they will send gifts" – "send" [pempo – future indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "because" [hoti]; "tormented" [basanizo – to torment; aorist indicative active 3rd person plural]; these two witnesses tormented them both physically and spiritually; [This is an interesting reversal of the picture when the Jews rejoiced over the death of Haman at the first Feast of Purim. [Thomas]; when they gave gifts to one another [Esther 9:18-22]; "those who dwell on the earth" – The people cheer in support of what the beast did, which means that the whole world at this time are under the authority and influence of the Antichrist.

[11] But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

"But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them" – "But" [kai meta – And after]; "came into them" – "came" [eis-erchomai – to enter into; aorist indicative; active; 3rd person singular]; Notice that the word "came" is past tense not future tense. John prophecies so assuredly that this event will come to pass that he writes it in the past tense; "and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them" – "and they stood on their foot" – "stood" [istemi – to stand; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "great fear" [megas phobos]; "fell upon" [pipto – to fall; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; Folk watching this event live on television drop their coffee in utter shock; "those who were watching them" – "watching" [theoreo – to look at; to behold; present participle active; accus. masc. plural]

[12] And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

"And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them" – "heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "a loud voice" [megales phones – a voice loud enough for those to heard who was watching this event]; "saying" [lego – present participle active; fem. genitive singular]; "Come up here" – "Come up" [anabaino – to go up; aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular]; "here" [ode - to this place]; "Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them" – "they went up" [anabaino – to ascend; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "in the cloud" [Unlike the ascension of our Lord in a cloud which took place in the presence of His friends. This was for the purpose of giving hope to the believers concerning His promised return. But for the two witnesses to ascend in the present of their enemies was for the purpose of affirming the truth of their preaching concerning the judgment that would soon come.]; "and their enemies watched them" – "watched" [theoreo – to look at; to behold; aorist indicative; active; 3rd person plural]

[13] And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

"And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell" – "there was a great earthquake" – lit. "a great earthquake happened" – "happened" [ginomai – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular];[A great earthquake occurs in conjunction with the ascent of the two witnesses - Thomas] "fell" [pipto – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake" – lit. "those killed in the earthquake names of men seven thousand" – "names of men" means that all seven thousand of those killed in Jerusalem were prominent people, probably a part of the Antichrist's administration. There was no believer listed among the seven thousand that died; "and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" – "were terrified" – lit. "became terrified" – "became" [ginomai – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural]; "terrified" [emphobos – thrown into fear]; "gave" [didomi – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural] "glory to the God of heaven" – in Revelation this is a roundabout way of saying that the rest of those in Jerusalem repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior [Rev. 14:7; 16:9; 19:7];

Thy Kingdom Come!

Revelation 11:14-19

As we return to the book of Revelation we transition from the interlude of 10:1-11:13 back to the seven trumpet judgments. The purpose of the interlude is that God wants to encourage His people in the midst of this tribulation by reminding them that He is still in control of these events and that soon He will deliver them out of them all.

Now [Although the seventh trumpet sounds in 11:15, the judgments associated with it are not described until chapter 15. Chapters 12-14 are a digression, taking readers back through the Tribulation to the point of the seventh trumpet by a different path. They describe the Tribulation not from God's perspective, but from Satan's… Chapters 12-14 focus on the ultimate human usurper, the final Antichrist, whose career spans the same time period as the seal and trumpet judgment. [MacArthur]

Exposition:

2 reasons why believers will rejoice when the seventh trumpet sounds: The 1st reason why believers will rejoice when the seventh trumpet sounds is because: The kingdom of the devil will be overpowered by the kingdom of Christ [vv. 14-18]:

[14] The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

"The second woe is past" – "The second woe" [the sixth trumpet – 9:13-21]; "is past" [aperchomai – to go away; to depart; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; This dramatic pronouncement after the interlude of 10:1-11:13, draws us back to the seven trumpet judgments, particularly the last three of the seven that have been referred to as three woes.

[Review]

Scrip. Ref: Rev. 8:1 – And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. [2] And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them; [vv. 7-12] four of the seven angels blew their trumpets and a third of the land, sea, fresh water and sky was stricken with judgment; [13] And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Three woes mean that the last remaining blast of the trumpets will be more devastating than the first four.

[9:1] And the fifth angel sounded – [vv. 2-11] locust like demons came up out of the abyss/bottomless pit and tormented those who were not saved for five months and the pain will be so excruciating that the people will try to find ways to kill themselves and will not be able to do so

[9:12] The first woe is past [fifth trumpet]; behold, two woes are still coming after these things

[9:13] And the sixth angel sounded – [vv. 14-21] four demons were released from the river Euphrates, the historical direction from which Israel's enemies would come against them. And these four demons will gather a demonic army of two hundred million in order to kill a third of mankind with the plague of fire, smoke and brimstone. Three billion unsaved people will be killed in this way.

10:1-11:13 – interlude. This interlude is placed before the seventh trumpet sounds as a display of God's grace in saving sinners before the final trumpet is sounded.

[14] "The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly: "behold" [aorist imperative active; to see or look with urgency]; "the third woe is coming quickly" – "coming" [erchomai – present indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "quickly" [without delay]; no interlude

[15] Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever."

"Then the seventh angel sounded" – "sounded" [salpizo – to sound a trumpet; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; [It should be noted that although the seventh trumpet is the last in the sequence of the seven trumpet judgments, it is not to be equated with "the last trumpet" which Paul refers to in 1 Cor. 15:52. [MacArthur]; **Scrip. Ref**: 1 Cor. 15:52 – 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; 1 Thess. 4:16 – 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.

In Leviticus 23:15-22, you have instructions on the celebration of the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost [Gr. for fifty]. According to Jewish tradition, Moses received the Law on this day of the year. We know this Feast as typical of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the church was brought into existence. But it is interesting, that if the Jewish tradition is true that Moses received the Law on this day of the year. Then you will remember that on that day there was a very loud trumpet sound. Though no trumpet sound is mentioned in Acts 2, yet maybe on the Day of Pentecost in Acts, the birth of the church was a signal of the first trumpet and when the church is complete you will hear a last trumpet, referring to the end of the church age.

"and there were loud voices in heaven saying" – "loud voices" [phonai mega-lai – **a mega-choir**] when the seventh seal was broken in 8:1, there was silence for a half an hour as the final seal that represented the last phase of God's judgment was broken. This caused all of heaven to be silent in awe. Now that the seventh trumpet has sounded the last blast of God's trumpet judgments has been completed and now all of heaven realizes the significance of what this means. For all the heavenly creatures begins to shout in unison. In other words, once the seventh trumpet sounds, you would expect a detail describe of the judgment that follows but since this trumpet is the climax of the wrath of God but we get the response of the heavenly host before seeing the judgment on the earth. It is the response in heaven that gives us the right perspective before we see the reaction on earth. In other words, the wrath of God is to be view as a just and righteous response to the wickedness of mankind. A desire for justice and vengeance is not an ungodly desire but a righteous one. All the evil committed against God and His people in the world is indicative of the fact that this world, which God created has been managed by a wicked being who must be removed from office. – "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." – "the kingdom of the world" – KJV/NKJV – "the kingdoms of this world" – late manuscript; the majority of the manuscripts have "kingdom" in the singular not plural. And the reason why this is so important is because by the time the seventh trumpet sounds all the nations, tribes, tongues, governments and social structures would have formed one united kingdom under the Antichrist or beast [11:7; Rev.12-13]; "has become" [ginomai – to become; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; this verb is placed at the beginning of this statement for emphasis. This verb is in the passive voice meaning that the kingdom of the world did not voluntarily become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ but that the kingdom of the world was made to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Also, if you notice the verb is in the past tense not future tense, not "will become" but "the kingdom of the world has become" [proleptic aorist] meaning that this future event is so sure that John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes as if it has already happened. **Scrip. Ref:** Rom. 8:29 – your glorification is so sure from God's perspective that it spoken as if it has already happened. Church this is what hope is, a confident sure expectation based on the promise of God. The Bible is not guessing or wishing or saying that it is a statistical probability these things will take place but a reality that we have not experienced yet.

Mark. 3:20-30 – The Sin that will Never be Forgiven; [27] "But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

A glimpse of the kingdom is scene in that Jesus can walk into the strong man's house, the devil, bind him up and then take his possessions [elect sinners] from under his control. And what Jesus did was first enter into the house of the devil and bind him, which means remove his power from over us and then took his possessions, which was us, and transfer us from out of his house into the kingdom of the Son. But in the future, Jesus will come and bind the strong man, but He won't plunder his property but will kick him out of his house so that now the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. Just like in an election season – you vote for the candidate you believe will represent your views and serve your city, state or country in a way that will benefit all people. Well, there is a time coming where the ruler of this world will not be allowed to run for re-election for the Lord Jesus Himself will return not to run against him but to kick him out of office; **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 4:8-10 – "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; [9] and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." [10] Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord Your God, and serve Him only.'" At the first recorded encounter Jesus had with the devil in His incarnation the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would just bow down and worship him. Our Lord rejected the proposition for three reasons: 1] Jesus did not come to receive the kingdoms from the devil but to take them from him; and 2] Jesus would rather be at war with the devil than to worship the devil; but 3] Jesus in His state of humiliation regarded the command to worship the Lord God alone not only as that which glorifies God but satisfies man's purpose for existence. We were not made to exist in the devil's kingdom. As hard as it may be to believe this because we have become so condition by this world's system, but this world was not meant to be our normal way of existence. Death, disease, destruction and the deceit of depravity is all that you have in the devil's kingdom. Yet sinners who have been given over will fight to the point of death to maintain the lie of the devil. But in God's kingdom there is life, healing, peace and righteousness. And those of us who have been saved by His grace long for this type of existence.

"the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." – "our Lord" [referring to God the Father; He is given the title Lord frequently in the book of Revelation]; "and of His Christ" [referring to Jesus Christ]; "and He will reign forever and ever" – "will reign" [basileuo – future indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "forever and ever" – Jesus reigns now in that He has authority to enter the devil's kingdom anything and rescue a sinner from up under his authority. Jesus' reigns now over the natural elements of the world. He reigns now in the sense of restraining depravity by not allowing it to have its full expression, but only in certain circumstances. He reigns now over life and death, since He has the keys of death and Hades [Matt. 28:18]. But in the future, He will reign visibly on earth and the devil will be removed from his authority over sinners. The reign of Christ will never end. He will not share His

kingdom with the devil, He will not share His kingdom with sin, He will not share His kingdom with death. But Christ alone will reign uninterrupted forever and ever. Thy kingdom come; **Scrip. Ref**: Psalm 2:2 – "The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the Lord and against His Anointed [Messiah]

Before the foundation of the world, the Father, the Son and the Spirit have an intra-trinitrian conversation. The Father initiates the conversation in which He turns to His Son and make an everlasting covenant. This covenant entails creating a universe, a heaven, outer space and a planet called Earth. And for His glory He will populate heaven with angels, populate the universe with planets and stars and populate Earth with planets, animals and a creature called man who would be made in God's image. God the Father states to the Son that He will allow one of His own angels to rebel against Him which will lead to that angel leading other angels to rebellion against Him, which will lead to that rebellious angel leading human beings into rebellion against Him, which will lead to the universe being placed under the curse of death. And then the Father says to the Son, I will build You a kingdom from out of those human beings whom the rebellious angel led into sin by sending You down to Earth to redeem those whom I have chosen to be your worshipers forever and ever. Once You have died for their sins, raise from the grave and ascend back into heaven I will begin to set in motion the time for You to return to Earth to remove the curse of death from over the entire universe. This will entail removing the kingdom of rebellious angel from over the world and establishing Your kingdom on the earth. Then the Son responds in agreement with this covenant that He will redeem the elect and set up His earthly kingdom and then place the elect and His kingdom under the Father that He may be all in all. And the Spirit agrees to this covenant to seal those whom the Father has elected and the Son has saved unto the glorification in the Father's kingdom.

[16] And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,

"And the twenty-four elders" [were introduced in 4:4 – Some Bible commentators believe these twenty-four elders are angels. But angels are never called "elders" in the Bible. They are never spoken of as wearing crowns or sitting on thrones even though they have been delegated positions of authority. The near context in Revelation, particularly the previous chapters of 2-3 would clarify for us that those who are on the throne are the overcomers of the seven churches who were promised that if they overcame, they would be "clothed in white garments" [3:5] and that they would receive a crown [2:10; 3:11]. And they were promised that they would sit down on thrones [3:21]… These 24 elders are not a complete representation of the people of God but merely representative of overcomers of both the OT saints and NT church. There are twelve tribes of Israel [Old Covenant] and the twelve apostles who are the foundation of the church [Eph. 2:20]; "who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God" – "who sit on their thrones before God" – "sit" [kathemai – to sit down; present participle **passive voice**; nom. mas. plural]; "fell on their faces and worshiped God" – "worshiped" [pros-kuneo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; [4:10 – "the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him

who sits on the throne"; 5:8 – "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb; 7:11 – "And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God; and worshiped God"] The twenty four elders bow in worship in honor of God creating them, in honor of the Lamb saving them and in honor of God glorifying sinners. But why do the twenty-four elders fall down and worship God instead up stand up? Because God is worthy and they are not worthy. No matter how glorified you get in heaven you will never forget that you are just a creature and God is your Creator, no matter how glorified you get you will never forget that you were a sinner saved by grace and God is your Savior. But in this instance, we will bow down and worship out of a heart of gratitude. We don't deserve to share in God's victory over the world, we deserve to be a part of the world with God's defeat over us.

[17] saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.

"We give You thanks" [eucharisteo – to be grateful; to be thankful; present indicative active; 1st person plural]; "O Lord God, the Almighty" – "Almighty" [ho pavto-kratop – He who holds sway over all things; sovereignty authority – God not only has the right to do what He wants to do, but He has the power to do what He wants to do]; God is so sovereign over evil, that evil is merely serving the purposes of God towards its own end. In other words, the fact that the Bible predicts that evil will be defeated in the future, helps us to understand that the evil we see in the present is not ultimately governing the world nor our circumstances but is allowed by God so that He may get the glory when it is defeated by God. Evil happens so that God's people may long for His kingdom to come.

"who are and who were" – KJV/NKJV – "which art, and wast, and art to come"; **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 1:4 – Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come; [8] I am the Alpha and the Omega, "says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty"; 4:8 – "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." But here the majority of the Greek manuscripts have "who are and who were" and not "who is to come"] – "who are" [eimi – present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; "who were" [eimi – imperfect indicative active 3rd person singular]; the reason why "who is to come" is not added is because when the seventh trumpet sounds He came. The future tense gives way to the present tense. "who is" – God is presently and continually active in governing the world and the lives of His people according to His wise and sovereign purposes; "who was" – just as we can look back and see the hand of God orchestrating the circumstances in the past for the good of His people. He is that same God today. This all speaks of the immutability of God.

"because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign" – "You have taken" [lambano – to lay hold of; **perfect** indicative active; 2nd person singular]; "Your great power and begun to reign" - "begun to reign" [basileuo – aorist indicative active; 2nd person singular; ingressive aorist]; God has permanently taken the world back to never be placed under an

adversary again. There will be no going from paradise to prison again, from life to death, from pleasure to pain, from satisfaction to sorrow. **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 6:10 – "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven". [In Revelation 11:18, we have a "table of contents" for the remainder of the Book of Revelation. These events did not take place the instant the angel blew his trumpet; he simple signaled the beginning of the process. [Wiersbe]

[18] "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

"And the nations were enraged" – "enraged" [orgizo – to provoke to anger; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; **Scrip. Ref**: Psa. 2:1 – "Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing?" Why are the nations upset with God? Is it because He has never provided for them? Is it because He has never blessed them with good things? Is it because He has never granted them a reasonable portion of health and strength? But because they want to live the way they want without God telling them what to do.

Illustration:

There are many parents who have ungrateful children. It is very frustrating. Parents spend so much time working to provide for their children and to give to them so much at no cost to those children. Free food, free housing, free clothes, free spending money, free tennis shoes, and free gas. Thinking about it will make a mom or dad mad! Parents do all this because they love them. However, most kids don't recognize or appreciate the free gifts, they only see the restrictions and want to complain. "How come I can't go? "How come I can't stay out later?" How come I can't have it?" Anyone who understands the peril of living with an ungrateful teenager understands how God feels about His own ungrateful creation. God gives good things day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and His creation and oftentimes His children complain. [Tony Evans]; Every sin committed against God is a rebellious act of ingratitude, in light of His grace and mercy towards you.

"and Your wrath came" – "came" [erchomai – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; in the person of Jesus Christ; the wrath of the nations compared to the wrath of God is like the wrath of a kitten compared to the roar of a lion. The anger of the nations does not phase God and it should not phase us; **Scrip. Ref**: Psalm 2:4 – He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them; "and the time came for the dead to be judged" – "the time" [Kairos – season; era; occasion; event]; "to be judged" [krino – aorist infinitive passive voice]; "and the time to reward Your bondservants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and great" – "to reward" – lit. "to give the reward" – "to give" [didomi – aorist infinitive active]

"Your bondservants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and great" – "bondservants" [doulos – slaves]; "the prophets" – from Noah a preacher of

righteousness to the two witnesses [11:2-13]; "the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great" – this is not two groups but one – "the saints, even those who fear Your name, the small and the great" – "saints" [holy ones]; "those who fear" [phobeo – present participle middle voice; dat. masc. plural]; those who are truly born again will reverence the Lord; they fear to offend Him and they love to honor Him; "small and great" – no matter who you are or what type of ministry you do. God will reward you if you remain faithful: **Scrip. Ref**: Heb. 6:10 – For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

How to live in light of eternal realities: 1) Accept your trial as God's sovereign purpose not as a personal offense. The person may have done you wrong, but God allowed it for your good; 2) Believe what God will do for those who walk humbly before Him. He will reward you and you will not be disappointed; 3) Victorious living is not problem free living but remaining godly in your problems; 4) Suffering is not meant to be liked, it's meant to cause us to long for glory (Thy Kingdom Come) (Rom. 8:18); 5) Don't live for immediate results live for the glory of God – Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him. God's rewards are more than adequate to compensate for the problems you had to endure in this life.

[18d] "and to destroy those who destroy the earth." – "to destroy" [dia-phtheiro – aorist infinitive active]; "those who destroy" [dia-phtheiro – to corrupt; to change for the worse; present participle active; accus. masc. plural]; "the earth"; **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 18:7-9 – Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! [8] "And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. [9] 'And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell. If you openly live or support that which God calls sin, God classifies you as being a part of the world and therefore a pronouncement of curse has been placed over you. And the only way to be removed from that curse of judgment is to repent of the sin you are living in or supporting.

The 2nd reason why believers will rejoice when the seventh trumpet sounds is because: The temple of God will be open to reveal the promise of God's presence with His people [v. 19]:

[19] And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

"And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened" – "opened" [anoigo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular; placed at the beginning of the verse for emphasis]; "the temple of God which is in heaven" – "and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple" – "appeared" [opao – to see; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; "the ark of His covenant" – [At some point during the OT times the earthly ark disappeared, perhaps perishing when Nebechadnezzar

burned the temple [2 Kings 25:9; Jer. 3:!6] or being removed by Shishak [1 Kings 14:26], or Manasseh [2 Chron. 33:7]. A tradition has it that Jeremiah hid the ark in a cave on Mount Sinai [Mt. Nebo] until the final restoration of Israel [2 Macc. 2:4-8];[Thomas]; The ark had to be removal/disappear before the first coming of Jesus because He is the tabernacle of God among men [Jn. 1:14]. Jesus is our mercy seat – He is both our High Priest and sacrifice – He offered up Himself and shed His blood in order that we may have access to God in the Holy of Holies, God's temple in heaven. No eye has seen the earthly ark of the covenants since the time of Solomon and only then the high priest could only see it, and only then it could see it once a year. But all the saints both small and great will see it. The ark of the covenant being made visible in heaven communicates: 1] access into the presence of God for all His people – prophets, saints, both small and great; 2] the accomplishment of the propitiatory sacrifice on earth that enables saved sinners to enter into the Holy of Holies in heaven; 3] the fulfillment of the promises of God to dwell with His people on earth [v. 15]. The ark of the covenant, which was also called "the tabernacle of testimony" was a symbol of God's abiding presence with His people on earth. But more specifically these promises were given to Israel. Thus, we will see in the next chapter how God fulfills His covenant promise to Israel.

"and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm – "and there were" [ginomai – to begin; to happen; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural; "flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm" are all pictures of God's presence in judgment.

The Devil is Defeated

Revelation 12:1-12

Slander against one's character is a vicious crime. And there is no better slanderer against the saints of God than the devil himself. The devil has many ways to seek to discredit God's people to ruin their testimony, ruin their relationships or even ruin their own lives. But the Lord always stands with His people when the devil slanders them publicly. This truth helps us to realize that the believer is never fighting the devil for victory but fighting the devil from victory.

The Bible likens the devil to five different animals: He is a serpent trying to deceive God's people [Gen. 3:1-2]; He is a bird trying keep sinners from being saved [Matt. 13:5, 19]; He is a wolf trying to defeat God's flock [Jn. 10:12]; He is a lion trying to devour God's children [1 Pet. 5:8]; and He is a dragon trying to destroy God's Son [Rev. 12:1-9]

Review:

As we return to the book of Revelation, we have noticed as we have covered the first eleven chapters of this book: The seven seals, which issues forth into seven trumpet judgments, which issues forth into seven bowl judgments has as its central theme the destruction of the kingdom of the devil. The removal of his reign over the fallen world of mankind. Both the devil, his angels and fallen humanity have been united in their rebellion against God since the fall in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, seven seals, seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments [seven is the number of perfection and completion] are the perfect and complete way of overthrowing the devil's kingdom from over the earth. Now the question is why is the devil the target of this type of judgment? Well, you must know your history. Chapters 12:1-5, gives you the brief history, while Chapters 12:6- chap. 13 gives us the future results of the devil's activities in the last days so that we may rejoice in the vindication of God's wrath upon the devil, his angels and sinful humanity as recorded in chapters 14-18.

Now [Although the seventh trumpet sounds in 11:15, the judgments associated with it are not described until chapter 15. Chapters 12-14 are a digression, taking readers back through the Tribulation to the point of the seventh trumpet by a different path. They describe the Tribulation not from God's perspective, but from Satan's… Chapters 12-14 focus on the ultimate human usurper, the final Antichrist, whose career spans the same time period as the seal and trumpet judgment. [MacArthur]

Exposition:

2 reasons to rejoice in the defeat of the devil, so that you may not be discouraged in spiritual warfare: The 1st reason to rejoice in the defeat of the devil is: Though the devil appears as a dragon to devour God's Son, yet he is nothing but an instrument to be used to exalt the Son [vv. 1-6]:

[1] A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

"A great sign appeared in heaven" – "great" [mega]; "sign" [semeion]; "appeared" [orao – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars" – "woman" – the great sign is the woman and how she is clothed. Therefore, the woman is not a literal woman, like some have interpreted this to be Mary, but is symbolic of something; "clothed" [peri-ballo – to clothe one; perfect participle passive voice; nom. fem. sing; having been clothed]; "with the sun, and the moon under her feet and on her heard a crown of twelve stars – **Scrip. Ref**: Gen. 37:9 – Now he [Joseph] had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." [the sun in this dream represented Jacob/Israel; the moon Rachel; and the eleven stars Joseph's brothers, the twelve patriarchs that are representative of the twelve tribes of Israel. Therefore, the woman represents the nation of Israel.] There is unique Jewish emphasis that will be taking place during the Tribulation period, after the church has been raptured. In [7:4-8], there is a sealing of

the 144,000 men from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, who are sealed so that they will be unharmed by persecution during the Tribulation as they preach the gospel. In [11:15-19] the heaven opened and John noticed in the temple of God the ark of the covenant. And now in this vision, John sees a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon underneath her feet, and twelve stars as a crown on her head. This is none other than the nation of Israel [Gen. 37:9-11]. The Lord will fulfill His covenant promises to Israel; she will be victorious in the end. That's the reason for the woman's crown [stephanos – victor's crown] being twelve stars.

[2] and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

"and she was with child" – lit. "and in the womb with child having" – "having" [echo – present participle; active. nom. fem. singular]; "and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth" – "cried out" [krazo – to cry out loud; present indicative active; 3rd person sing.]; "being in labor" [odino – to travail; to feel the pains of childbirth; pres. participle active. nom. fem. sing; **causal participle** – trans. "and she cries out because of being in labor"]; "and in pain to give birth" – "pain" [basanizo – to torment; to be in pain; present participle passive voice; nom. fem. sing.]; "to give birth" [tikto – to bear; to produce; to give birth; present infinitive active]

[3] Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

"Then another sign appeared in heaven" – "another" [allos] – same type as the first in the sense that it is not to be taken literally but represent something; "sign" [semeion] – this sign is not as great as the first; "appeared" [opao – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person sing.]; "and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems" – "behold" [idou – aorist imperative active; 2nd person singular; the aorist is a sense of urgency]; "a great red dragon" – "great" [megas – large; gigantic; huge; massive]; "red" [purros – having the color of fire; color of blood; blood-thirsty; The dragon being red is symbolic of the violence or murderous nature of the beast. In Jn. 8:44, Jesus referred to the devil as "a murderer from the beginning"]; "dragon" [drakon]; "having" [echo – present participle active; nom. masc. sing.]; "seven heads and ten horns" – this description of seven heads and ten horns is repeated – Rev. 13:1; 17:3 & 7; but its meaning is given to us: **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 17:9-12 – "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.

Dan. 7:7, 24-25 – "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed,

and trampled down the remainder with its feet, and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. [24] 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. [25] 'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

The dragon with the seven heads and ten horns represents the dragon's power of the world kingdoms. The dragon can only attack the woman through human instruments. The dragon camouflages himself behind the personalities of sinful humanity, particularly those in political positions of authority. Every attack against the nation of Israel down through history has been by human rulers – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the kingdom of the Antichrist. "and on his heads were seven diadems" – [represent seven consecutive world empires running their course under Satan's dominion: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist's future empire [17:9-10]. The final kingdom, ruled by Anti-Christ, will be a ten-nation confederacy; the ten horns represent the kings who will rule under Antichrist [17:12];[MacArthur]

[4] And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

"And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth" – [Historical Background of this dragon is given] – "And his tail swept" – "swept" [suro – to drag; to draw; present indicative active; 3rd person sing.]; "a third of the stars of heaven" – "stars" – when this word is used symbolically in the book of Revelation it always refers to angels [Rev. 1:20; 9:1]; "stars of heaven" [genitive of apposition/description – stars belonging in heaven]; "and threw them to the earth" – "threw" [ballo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular] "them to the earth" meaning that the devil is responsible for having the third of the angels, which are demons thrown out of heaven by God onto earth. This doesn't mean that the devil and his angels don't have access into heaven. It means that they do not have a permanent residence in heaven. Their address has been moved from heaven to earth. This event took placed in between chapters 2-3 in Genesis; After the Lord declared everything good the devil tempted a third of the angels to rebel against God: **Scrip. Ref**: Ezek. 28:14-16 records the fall of Satan – "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. [15] "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you. [16] "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God.

"And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child" – "And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to

give birth" – "stood" [istemi – to stand; **perfect** indicative; active; 3rd person singular – the perfect tense is an act that took place in the past with on-going present results] The dragon has stood before the woman, which represents Israel for centuries trying to keep the woman from giving birth to the Messiah and when he did not succeed there he sought to kill the Messiah was born – **Scrip. Ref**: Gen. 3:15 "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; [God gave the serpent over to hatred against the seed of the woman]; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel"; Rom. 16:20 – And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

[The dragon's evil intentions toward the woman's unborn child evidenced themselves throughout OT history. Instances of his hostility surfaced in Cain's murder of Abel [Gen. 4:8], the corrupting of the line of Seth [Gen. 6:1-12], attempted rapes of Sarah [Gen. 12:10-20]; and Rebekah [Gen. 26:1-18], the consequent enmity of Esau against Jacob [Gen. 27], the murder of the male children in Egypt [Ex. 1:15-22], attempted murders of David [1 Sam. 18:10-11], Queen Athaliah's attempt to destroy the royal seed [2 Chron. 22:10], Haman's attempt to slaughter the Jews [Esther 3-9], and consistent attempts of the Israelites to murder their own children for sacrificial purposes [2 Kings 16:3]… The attack of Herod against the children of Bethlehem [Matt. 2:16]… other incidents during Jesus' earthly life, including His temptation, typify the ongoing attempt of the dragon to "devour". The most direct attempt was, of course, in the crucifixion of Christ. [Thomas]

"who was about to give birth" – "about to" [mello – present participle active; nom. fem. sing.]; "to give birth" [tikto – present infinitive active]; "so that" [hina - purpose clause; why has the dragon stood before the woman? Not with the purpose to destroy the woman, but so that]; "when she gave birth he might devour her child" – "she gave birth" [tikto – to bear; aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "he might devour" [katesthio – to consume by eating; to devour; to eat up; aorist subjunctive; active; 3rd person singular]. Visualize this picture, you have a great fiery red dragon, frightening, hideous, gigantic, violent, powerful, menacing creature standing before a tiny woman who is pregnant with a child. Can you think of a better scenario where you have someone at such a disadvantage? You have power and hate coming against that which is weak and defenseless? The vision itself is enough to cause us to think that there is no hope, there is no way possible for this woman to be able to protect this child from being devoured by this great dragon once he is born. And you are right. The woman can't protect her child from this evil, menacing dragon. And you know what, she wasn't meant too, because this baby boy isn't no ordinary defenseless boy. This baby boy ain't afraid of no dragon, no matter how big he is – **Scrip. Ref**: Isa. 9:6 – For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful [6382 – peh-leh – marvelous; extraordinary; ain't nobody voting for some infant to be in the White House but if I had to vote I would vote this Child because His name is Marvelous] Counselor [meaning to advise, to consult, to determine – this baby has more wisdom in His being than a 80 year old person has in his experience], Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. This child, even in

his state of infancy is mightier than the dragon. So mighty that God the Father has placed the government of the world on His tiny shoulders. The point is, don't get caught up in the fact that this is a child but think about his name. Not names but name, it's one long name, because who this child is, is all rolled up in this one name. He called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace".

[5] And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

"And she gave birth to a son, a male child" – "gave birth" [tikto – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "a male child" [Jesus Christ]; "who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" – lit. "who is about to rule" – "about to" [mello – present indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to rule" [poimaino – to govern; to destroy; present infinitive active; the ultimate purpose of Jesus birth was not to die but to rule over the nations; the cross was the indispensable means towards that rule]; **Scrip. Ref**: Luke 1:31-33 [the angel Gabriel visited Mary] "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. [32] "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; [33] and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."; "with a rod of iron" – **Scrip. Ref**: Psalm 2:8-9 – "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. [9] Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; "and her child was caught up to God and to His throne" – "caught up" [harpazo – to snatch; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; Christ's ascension]; "to His throne" – to sit at His right hand; Jesus is not sitting on David's throne [earthly reign] but on His Father's throne [heavenly reign – Rev. 3:21]; The ultimate attempt to devour the male child of Israel was seen in the crucifixion. Yet as verse 5 shows, "the child was snatch up to God and His throne". Meaning that the cross was not the devil's defeat of the child but the child's defeat of the devil. For in and through the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the male child, it set in motion the future reign of the child over the nations that once belonged to the devil. That's why the dragon is upset with the woman in verse 6.

[6] Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

"Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God" – "fled" [pheugo – to flee; aorist infinitive active; 3rd person singular]; "into the wilderness"; "a place prepared by God" – "prepared" [hetoimazo – perfect participle passive voice; accus. masc. singular]; "so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" – "so that" [hina – purpose clause]; "she would be nourished" [trepho – to support; to feed; present subjunctive; active; 3rd person plural]; "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" – 3 ½ years [Rev. 11:2 – 42 months; 11:3 – 1,260 days – the two witnesses]

This means that during the last half of the seven year Tribulation, while the two witnesses are preaching in Jerusalem for 1,260 days, the nation of Israel will flee from Jerusalem to the

wilderness to be protected from the dragon]; The events of verse 6 are not meant to be interpreted as happening in the past, immediately after the ascension of Jesus Christ. For there is nothing in the history of Israel after the time of our Lord that correspond to them fleeing into the wilderness. This event is future. Right after the events recorded in vv. 7-12: **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 24:15-16 – "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [let the reader understand], [16] then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;

The 2nd reason to rejoice in the defeat of the devil is: Though the devil accuses the saints before God's throne, yet the saints will overcome him by the blood of the Lamb [vv. 7-12]: Chapters 12:7- chap.14, takes us back to the events that took place in chapters 6-11 but from another perspective. Not from the perspective of the Lamb breaking the seals and the judgments that follow. But from the perspective of the archenemy who has sought to stand against the purposes of God from the beginning of history all the way up to the last days.

[7] And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

"And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon" – "And there was war in heaven" – lit. "And it came to pass a war in heaven" – "it came to pass" [ginomai – to happen; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; at God's appointed time a war took place in heaven]; "Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon" – "Michael" [his name means "Who is like God?" he is mentioned 4 times in Scripture [Dan. 10:13, 21; 12;1; Jude 9] he is the prince or guardian angel over the nation of Israel]; "waging war" [polemeo – to fight; to war; aorist infinitive active]; "The dragon and his angels waged war" – "waged war" [polemeo; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]

[8] and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

"and they were not strong enough" – "strong enough" [ischuo – to have strength; to have power; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural; a past tense verb used to speak of a future event; the devil is defeated before the war takes place]; "and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven" – "found" [eurisko – to find; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "for them in heaven" – when this event takes place in the future the devil and his angels will not have access into heaven ever again.

[9] And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

"And the great dragon was thrown down" – "thrown down" [ballo – to cast; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "the serpent of old" [archaios Gr. word is where we get our English word "archaic" – ancient]; "who is called the devil and Satan" – "who is called" [kaleo –

to call; present participle passive voice; nom. masc. sing.]; "the devil" [diabolos – the Gr. term comes from the preposition dia [through] and the verb [ballein] [to throw] and means "to throw over or across, to divide, set at variance, accuse, bring charges, slander, inform, reject, misrepresent, deceive." [Kistemaker]; "Satan" [Santanas – adversary]; "who deceives the whole world" – "deceives" [planao – to go astray; to wander; present participle active; nom. masc. singular]; The Greek word "deceives" is where we get our English word "planet". A planet is a wandering or revolving body. The devil deceives the world by causing them to wander about living for things that have no eternal significance. People will say that they believe they have been placed on this earth to make people happy, to make people laugh, to make this world a better place than when they found it. This is not man's purpose for being placed on this earth – **Scrip. Ref**: Acts 17:26-27a – and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation. [27] that [purpose clause] they should seek God, perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; Sinners are powerless to resist the devil's lies because their hearts hate God and His truth."he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him" – "he was thrown down to the earth" – "thrown down" [ballo – aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "and his angels were thrown down with him" – "thrown down" [ballo – to cast; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural]; Did you notice that "thrown down" or KJV "cast out" is repeated 3 times in this one verse? In v. 10 "thrown down"; v. 12 "come down" lit. "to be cast down"; v. 13 – "thrown down" – the devil is a 6-time loser]

[10] Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven" – "I heard" [akouo – aorist indicative active 1st person singular]; "loud voice" [phonen megalen]; "saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come" – "saying" [lego – present participle active; accus. fem. singular]; "Now the salvation" [soteria – deliverance from the presence of sin; victory]; "the power" [dunamis]; "the kingdom of our God"; "and the authority of His Christ have come" – "have come" [ginomai – to become; to come; to appear; aorist indicative passive/middle voice; 3rd person singular]; "for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night" – "the accuser" [kategor – used only here in the NT; this is the only place where the devil is called "the accuser"]; "of our brethren" [the loud voices are not angels but the saints; angels are not considered our brethren]; "has been thrown down" [ballo – to cast down; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person sing.]; "he who accuses them before our God day and night" – "he who accuses" [kategoreo – present participle active; nom. masc. sing.]; "before our God day and night"; **Scrip. Ref**: Job 1:7-9 – And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." [8] And the Lord said to Satan,

"Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." [9] Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" [10] "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. [11] "But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face." [12] Then the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord; Luke 22:31-32 – "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; The devil, like a roaring lion seeks to tempt us to sin so that we may accuse us before God. **Scrip. Ref**: 1 Pet. 5:8 – Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, [not God's adversary but your adversary because you are on God's side], the devil, prowl's about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The devil wants to accuse you so that God may judge you and he wants to devour you so that you may feel as if God has condemned you. The results? Depression, discouragement, spiritual dryness, loss of hope, loss of joy, suicidal thoughts and spiritual fatigue can take place in these seasons. But the devil doesn't always seek to devour us due to some sin we have committed but also because of some unfulfilled desire, some disappointment, which the devil twists to make you feel guilty for something that really wasn't your fault. You start struggling with false guilt. There are 3 ways in which the devil will tempt you towards false guilt: 1] The devil will tempt you towards false guilt for someone else's actions that you could not control [a divorce; a wayward child; an abusive relationship; abandonment by a parent]; 2] The devil will tempt you towards false guilt for something that God purposed to happen that was not in your power to prevent [a failed pregnancy; the death of a loved one you were taking care of; being laid off from a job; wanting to be married] 3] The devil will tempt you toward false guilt for the unfavorable outcome of a decision you made with good intentions [bad financial decision; someone responding negatively when you are seeking to reconcile. But the worse thing about the devil's accusations is not that he slanders us before God but that he insinuates the worse about us on what he has observed about us and God gives him permission at times to tempt us to see whether these things are true. That's the bad news. The good news is that even when the devil may be right in what he has insinuated about us; he still has it wrong in what God should do about it. The devil wants us to be condemned for our sin, but God declares that His Son has already received the condemnation for our sins. And not only that, though our sins have been removed in Christ, yet the memory of those sins can discourage us. So, what our Advocate does is, He intercedes for us before the Father in order that our faith may not fail even when the memory of our guilt overwhelms us. In other words, God's infuses His strength into my faith so that I can keep believing in my forgiveness in Christ and the love of God for me even when the memory of my guilt says I deserve hell.

[32] but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Here is where the strength of God in my faith in Him helps me to still be used of God despite my failures against Him. Faith can only be exercised in humility; I trust God because I don't trust myself. Jesus gave the devil permission to go after Peter because he was prideful, but the devil did not know that God would use Peter's humiliation of denying the Lord three times as a means of teaching Peter the importance of never trusting in himself. Pride sees no need of faith in God. So, in Peter's humiliation he learned that he could not trust himself even on his best days and that he can only trust in the Lord to help him to be the man he wanted to be in honoring God by his life. Therefore, convinced of that, after he turned, he would strengthen his brethren to trust in the Lord in the midst of their trials and temptations. God uses the devil in your life to convince you that apart from Him you are nothing and you can do nothing. Now why would Satan accuse us before God's throne? Two reasons: 1] to prove that God is not worthy to be worshiped, based on the sinful behavior and actions of His people; 2] Christ is not fit to rule, by virtue of the fact His own redeemed race are not consistent in following Him as Lord. But here is some good news to rejoice in concerning this matter: **Scrip. Ref**: 1 John 2:1 – My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Rom. 8:34 – who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous [1 Jn. 2:1. How can the devil's accusations be successful if the case has already been thrown out of court by the blood of the Lamb? How do we know the case has been thrown out church? Because we never have received a summons to appear in court to see whether these accusations are true. Because we have an Advocate with the Father we don't have to show up to court every time our accuser shows up to give legal reasons why we should be judged; We don't get a summons to appear in court. "In civil lawsuits, a summons is issued to one of the parties in the lawsuit, usually the person against whom a complaint has been filed. Most often, a summons is given to a defendant, requiring his or her presence to defend a case." The devil accuses us with the intent that God would separate Himself from us. Though the sins we commit are real and true, yet the punishment the devil says we should receive because of them is misplaced and untrue because Jesus paid it all. The devil keeps pointing out our sin, the Father keeps pointing to Jesus. The devil hates you not because of you but because Christ is for you.

[11] "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" – "they overcame" [nikao – to conquer; to gain victory; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; "because of the blood of the Lamb" – Listen, they overcame not by means of the blood of the Lamb but because of the blood of the Lamb. By means, we would say that the brethren utilized the theology of the substitution death of the Lamb as a mental weapon against the attacks of the devil. But it is not what they did that necessarily was the factor in their victory. It is what Christ did that was the factor in their victory; it was because of the blood of the Lamb

shed for them that they overcame. They didn't not overcome because they pleaded the blood, who would they be pleading too? The blood has already been applied for you so that you don't have to plead for it. Let me simplify it this way, two-thousand years ago, Christ made provision for your future victory over the devil when He shed His blood on the cross on your behalf. In other words, there is no accusation that the devil can ever bring before God that will cause Him to want to condemn you because Jesus was condemned in your place. **Scrip. Ref**: Rom. 8:33-34 – who will bring a charge against God's elect [successfully]? God is the one who justifies; [the blood justified you by removing the wrath of God from over you and pronouncing you righteous in God's sight] [34] who is the one who condemns [successfully]? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Not one of the devil's accusations that he offers day and night can get you condemned because Christ Jesus died, was raised and who is at the right hand of God and for every accusation the devil brings against you the Son sits at the Father's right-hand interceding for us. As the devil accuses, the Son keeps interrupting with intercessions on my behalf – the devil – You know Victor is a sinner. Jesus interrupts with an intercession, "But Father, I shed My blood for Victor; the devil, "You know Victor is inconsistent in his devotion to you and oftentimes serves you out of self-interest. But Jesus interrupts with an intercession, "But Father, I shed My blood for Victor's sins of ministry out of self-interests." Church this goes on day and night. For every accusation from the devil against you there is intercession from the Son to the Father for you. They overcame because of the blood of the Lamb. The blood of the Lamb keeps us from falling away. The blood of Jesus keeps our faith intact as the devil tries to eat it; "and because of the word of their testimony" The blood of the Lamb is your flag and the word of God is your sword; "and they did not love their life even when faced with death" – "love" [agapao – to love to the point of being willingness to sacrifice; aorist indicative active; 3rd person plural]; Their witness for Christ was more important than their life on earth. If you love your life, you will not be willing to die for Christ. To not love your life means: 1] Besides living for Christ, there is nothing in this world to live for; 2] You can care less about trying to impress others or be concerned about how the world perceives you. You are not trying to be accepted or like by the world; 3] You rather die than to deny your Lord and Savior; They are ready to die because they are ready to meet Jesus. To be willing to suffer to the point of death is to overcome the temptation by the devil to deny Christ. There are 3 ways in which believers can overcome the devil in spiritual warfare – 1] the blood of the Lamb; 2] the word of their testimony [standing on the Word]; 3] don't love your life;

[12] "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

"For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them" – "rejoice" [euphraino – to be glad; present imperative middle voice; 2nd person plural; keep rejoicing]; "you who dwell" [skenoo –to dwell; present participle active; nom. masc. plural]; "Woe to the earth and the sea,

because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." – "Woe" [ouai – not a divine pronouncement of judgment but a pronouncement of bad circumstances]; "to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you" – "come down" [katabaino – to be cast down; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; Woe because you not only have the locust like demons who tormented mankind roaming around in the earth [9:1-12], the four demons who are leading an army of 200 million demons that killed a third of mankind roaming the earth [9:13-21]; but now you have the devil who have been casted down to the earth; "having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" – "having great wrath" – "having" [echo – present participle active; nom. masc. sing.]; "great wrath" [mega – great]; [thumos – violent rage]; the devil's wrath – The devil is really angry because his final defeat is imminent and he has not accomplished what he has wanted from the first day he led Eve to eat the fruit and that is defeat the purposes of God. The devil's wrath is filled with frustration and animosity against God; "knowing" [eido – to know; perfect participle active nom. masc. sing; causal participle – "because having known that he has only a short time"]; "he has" [echo – present indicative; active; 3rd person sing.]; "short time" – "time" [Kairos - season] The devil being refused access into heaven is the first step of three banishments; 1] banished from heaven; 2] banished from the earth into the abyss; 3] banished into hell for eternity. The devil's removal from heaven spells the final days of his life before being casted into hell. The devil's banishment is not so much a signal to us that he cannot accuse us before God but a signal to him that his days are numbered. **Quote**: Vance Havner – "The Adversary is not in the first two chapters of the Bible, nor is he in the last two."

The Devil is a Sore Loser

Revelation 12:13-17

2 losses the devil will suffer every time he attacks the people of God: The 1st loss is: The devil's efforts to destroy the people of God will always be defeated [vv. 13-16]:

[13] And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

"And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth" – "And when the dragon saw" – "the dragon" [symbolic of the devil – v. 9 "the great dragon, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan"] – "saw" [orao – to see; aorist indicative active; 3rd singular]; "he was thrown down" [ballo – to cast; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; 6 times it says in this chapter that the dragon was thrown down [3 times in v. 9; 1 time in v. 10; 1 time in verse 12; and here in v. 13];

The dragon was body slammed down to earth with no longer any access into heaven in order to accuse the brethren. And when he saw that he had been body slammed, when he woke up from his daze he understood that his time is short before his judgment comes so "he persecuted the

woman who gave birth to the male child" – "he persecuted" [dioko – to pursue; to be hostile towards; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "the woman" [symbolic of Israel]; "who gave birth" [tikto – to bring forth; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to the male child" [referring to Jesus Christ]; If the devil was seeking to destroy the Christ child, then why would he seek to destroy the woman after Christ has already escape from his grasp? The devil comes after the people of God because he can no longer come after Christ. Why? **Angelic theology**: **Scrip. Ref**: Luke 1:30-33 – And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. [31] "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. [32] "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; [33] and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end." The throne of David, an earthly kingdom, over the house of Jacob, redeemed Israel. The devil thinks if he can destroy the redeemed remnant of Israel Jesus will not have a people to reign over. The devil knows that he can't hurt Christ directly, so he aims to hurt Him indirectly by persecuting those whom He loves. **Scrip. Ref**: Acts 9:4 – and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Zech. 2:8 – for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye. – "touches" [5060] naw-gah – to strike; to punish; to destroy

Christ is never indifferent when His people are being attacked. He takes it personal. And the devil knows this. That's why the Bible says that Jesus always lives to make intercession for us. He intercedes because He is cares for us. Now listen, Jesus sees us from two perspectives: 1] our present predicament and 2] its future results – our present predicament maybe hardships and in that moment, Jesus is sympathizing with you and interceding for you. But you might ask, why do all of that when He can simply take me out of the situation? But see, that's where the second perspective comes in – He also sees the future results of your present predicament. He sees that if He immediately takes you, then you will never experience His power strengthening your faith to persevere till the end. Thus, in the future you will learn to run from problems instead of facing them by faith. Also, your perseverance in your present predicament demonstrates your love for Him, which proves that you don't love Jesus because of favorable circumstances, you love Jesus because He first loved you. And how did He first love you, by suffering for your sins on the cross. Your willingness to suffer demonstrates your faith and love in Him and in your suffering, Jesus demonstrates His power and love towards you. So, Jesus cares for you because you are His and second Jesus cares for you because you have a purpose. Jesus wants to use you for His glory. This is why He woke us up this morning because Jesus desires to use you for His glory, that's your purpose for remaining in this world. And it is not until your purpose is fulfilled that your work on earth is done.

Therefore, though the devil is given permission to attack you, the Lord always gives the devil boundaries and restrictions on how much and how far he can attack because the Lord is using the attack to fulfill His purpose in your life. **Scrip. Ref**: Job 1:12 – Then the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth you hand on him." [And the devil

obeyed]; Job 2:6 – So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life". [And the devil obeyed because God had a purpose in Job's life]; In this passage, God's purpose is to strengthen the faith of the remnant of Israel by displaying His power in protecting them from harm.

[14] But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

"But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place" – "the two wings of the great eagle" – this is not literal but figurative in order to be consistent with the symbolism of the dragon as the devil and the woman as Israel. The two wings of the great eagle is a picture of God's deliverance and protection of the redeemed remnant of Israel during the last half of the Great Tribulation. **Scrip. Ref**: Matt. 24:15-16 – "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [let the reader understand], [16] then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains". How will they get to the mountains? The Lord will get them there.**Scrip. Ref**: Exodus 19:4 – "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings, and brought you to Myself." Psalm 91:1-4 – He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. [2] I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" [3] For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, And from the deadly pestilence. [4] He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge.

You don't know whether a chair can support you until you sit in it. You don't know whether food can sustain you until you eat it. You don't know whether the medicine can heal you unless you take it. You don't know how sturdy your house is until a storm comes. You don't know how reliable your car is until it starts up in the winter. And you don't know how God can protect you and provide for you until He puts you in a place where there is no else to turn to but Him.

"were given to the woman" – "given" [didomi – to give; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person plural; divine passive] The Lord will give His people what they need at the moment they needed. Not before or after. "so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place" – "so that" [hina – purpose clause] What's the reason for the Lord given her wings which is symbolic of protection? So that "she could fly into the wilderness to her place" – "could fly" [petntai – present subjunctive passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "into the wilderness to her place": wilderness in the Bible – 1] it is a place of testing [Israel and Jesus]; 2] it is a place where you are cut off from any human means of providing for yourself; 3] it is a place where you learn to trust in the Lord; 4] it is a lonely place where only you know how it really feels, but where others know how to make it through. Don't look to people who may be able to relate to how you feel in your wilderness experience because they had a similar experience. Look to people who know how to make through the wilderness experience. There are some people who wallow in their

wilderness for a long time who never learn how to make it through their wilderness. Only God can provide for you in your wilderness experience: "where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent." – "nourished" [trepho – to feed; to support; present indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; [cut off from the world system, and unable in any case to buy and sell [Rev. 13:17], the Jews will need outside help to survive. God will supernaturally supply them with food, just as He did by providing their ancestors with manna and quail in the wilderness. [MacArthur] The Lord will give them just enough to make it through the last 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation. **Quote**: the late Hudson Taylor [missionary to China] – "We have 25 cents and all the promises of God".

"for a time and times and half a time" – 3 ½ years; a time represents a year; times represents 2 years and half a time – 6 months. This is the second half of the 7 year tribulation period. So far we have seen this 3 ½ years conveyed two other ways – Rev. 11:2 – forty-two months; **Scrip. Ref**: Rev. 12:6 – "And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." This is not symbolic language but literal by the fact it is repeated three different ways. Forty-two months, 1,260 days and "a time and times and half a time". But John borrows the phrase "a time and times and half a time" from the book of Daniel 7:25; 12:7.

"from the presence of the serpent" – the change to "serpent" from dragon" pictures the devil still up to his ancient ways. He simply wants to murder the people of God: **Scrip. Ref**: John 8:44 – Jesus said it best, "He was a murderer from the beginning". And yet the Lord will provide protection for His people in such a way that the devil himself will not be able to get to her. The Lord does not love the evil He allows, but He always loves the results He purposes from it. The evil against His people draws His people to Himself so that He may display His glory by protecting and providing for them.

[15] And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

"And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman" – "poured" [ballo – to cast; to throw; to spew; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "water like a river out of his mouth after the woman" – this is symbolic language here, the serpent represents the devil, the woman represents Israel, so the water, which is pictured like a river or flood is not referring to literal water but represents a satanic army of human beings sent after Israel in order to destroy her.

Scrip. Ref: Psa. 69:1-2 – "Save me, O God, For the waters have threatened my life. [2] I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into the deep waters, and a flood [lit. a flowing stream] overflows me. [4] Those who hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies. [14] Deliver

me from the mire, and do not let me sink; May I be delivered from my foes [lit. those who hate me], and from the deep waters." The flood of water is symbolic of Israel's enemies seeking to drown them in their own blood. "so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood." – "so that" [hina – purpose clause] why would the serpent send such an army so that "he might cause her to be swept away with the flood" – "might cause" [poieo – to make; aorist subjunctive active; 3rd person singular]; "to be swept away with the flood" [potamo-phoretos – carried away by a stream; used only here in the NT]

[16] But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

"But the earth helped the woman" – "helped" [boetheo – to bring aid; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular]; "and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth" – "opened" [anoigo – aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "its mouth" ; **Scrip. Ref**: Num. 16:29-30 & 32 – Moses said about Korah's rebellion – "If these men die the death of all men, or if they suffer the fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. [30] "But if the Lord brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the Lord. [32] and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah, with their possessions." Why did the Lord appoint an earthquake to swallow up the flood of armies after His people? So that you will understand that those who fight against God's people fight against the Lord Himself. Korah died because he had a big mouth. The Lord showed that He's got an even bigger mouth. The devil tries to intimidate the people of God by showing that he has a big mouth but God's comforts His people by showing He has an even bigger mouth: "and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth" – "drank up" [kata-pino – to swallow down; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth" – "poured" [ballo – to cast; aorist indicative active 3rd person singular]; The devil cannot follow the woman, he cannot stop the woman. The Lord restricts the devil's ability. Listen, because the Lord allows evil to be, doesn't mean allows evil to reign. He only allows evil to be so that He might get the praise when evil is defeated: **Scrip. Ref**: Psalm 124:2-5 – "Had it not been the Lord who was on our side, When men rose up against us; [3] Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their anger was kindled against us; [4] Then the waters would have engulfed us, The stream would have swept over our soul; [5] Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul."

In the original verse 2 can be translated "If not," as you have it in the KJV; NKJ and NIV. This conditional statement is meant for us to imagine for a moment what would have been the outcome to our life if the Lord was not on our side to fight our battles. **Quote**: Someone once stated that we exhibit a degree of thanksgiving in life in reverse proportion to the amount of blessings we have received. A hungry man is more thankful for his morsel than a rich man for his heavily-laden table. A lonely woman in a nursing home will appreciate a visit more than a

popular woman with a party thrown in her honor. A Russian who finally get his own copy of the Holy Scriptures after 75 years of state-imposed atheism is more thankful for his little book than we are for all the Christian books and magazines and translations that overflow our shelves. And the same can be said about trials. We tend to be more thankful when God brings us out of trouble, then when He keeps us from trouble. But not only that we will discover we will be just as thankful when we imagine what could have happened if the Lord had not been on our side. Listen, we are never told to fear the devil in Scripture. We are simply told to stand against him and resist him. You don't fear someone who is defeated.

The 2nd loss is: The devil's efforts to fight the people of God will always end in their victory [v. 17]:

[17] So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

"So the dragon was enraged with the woman" – "enraged" [orgizo – to provoke; to be angry; aorist indicative passive voice; 3rd person singular; ingressive aorist; "the dragon became moved by anger"]; At this point the dragon is frustrated – he tried to destroy Jesus when He was born through the nation Israel and failed; he tried to defeat Michael and his angel but ended up being kicked out of heaven; now that he is on the earth he tries to destroy the redeemed remnant of Israel but failed; so now he's left with the saved children of the redeemed remnant of Israel. And at this point he is angry because all of his efforts have failed. The devil has loss 3 times; "and went off to make war with the rest of her children" – "went off" [ap-erchomai – to depart; aorist indicative active; 3rd person singular]; "to make" [poieo – to make; aorist infinitive active; purpose infinitive]; "war with the rest of her children" – "children" [sperma – seed; family; offspring]; Her children is just another way of saying her disciples. These are the ones who were birthed into the kingdom by their gospel witness. John the apostle uses metaphorical language in 2 John 1 – "the elder to the chosen lady and her children" – "chose lady" – the church and "her children" [membership/disciples]; "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" – "who keep" [tereo – to guard; observe; present participle active; gen. masc. plural – continuous habit]; "the commandments of God"; "and hold" [echo – present participle active gen. masc. plural; continuous habit]; "to the testimony of Jesus". **Quote**: Someone wrote, "Everybody's a Christian until it gets biblical". The devil will not be angry at you for attending church. The devil will not be angry at you for singing in the choir. The devil will not be angry at you for giving your tithes and offering in the church. The devil is only angry when the people of God are committed to keeping the commandments of God and hold fast to the testimony of Jesus. The devil has no problem with religion; he just hates those who are committed in their relationship with Christ.

"the testimony of Jesus" are the promises Jesus taught concerning faith in Him: **Scrip. Ref**: Jn. 8:51 – Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death. [the devil can kill your body but he cannot kill your soul/take your soul to hell] Jn. 10:25-26 – Jesus said to her,

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies; [26] and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this. [if you die, you will have life; but you already have life so technically you will die. Do you believe this?] Jn. 6:37 – "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." [I casted the devil out of heaven; I cast the devil down to the earth; but I will never cast my people from Me] Jn. 10:28 – and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand [the devil may be allowed to attack you but he cannot never snatch you out of Jesus' saving hands. Jn. 15:10 – If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love [what is His love like? Peace, joy and a clear conscience] Jn. 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." [If Christ has overcome the world and I am in Christ, then I overcome the world; 1 Jn. 5:4-5 – For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith [5] And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? **Scrip. Ref**: Prov. 18:10 – The name of the Lord is a strong tower, The righteous runs into it and is safe

The Lord's name [Jehovah] means that God is the redeeming God, the delivering God. What's the name of the Lord? His name is Jesus – God who is salvation, God who is a Rescuer, a Deliverer. His name simply describes who He is and what He is able to do. <u>Listen, the point here is that believers are not given strength to outrun the devil but simply to outlast the devil. Perseverance is the believer's victory over the devil</u>.