

REVELATION - THE LATTER TIMES

Section 1

A Bible Study For Small Groups



This was originally an expository series of sermons given in the church where I was serving as Pastor. A few years later, they were edited to be used as a Bible Study. There are a few things I feel I should share with you before using this material:

First: I had no intent of sharing or publishing this material until encouraged to do so by some friends. While I did consult several commentaries as I was preparing the original sermon series, I did not make notes of the references used in the messages. There was not in the beginning, nor is there now, any intent to plagiarize. Should you see anything you feel is the original thought of another, I ask for your grace and mercy.

Second: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I tend to spell certain words phonetically for the purpose of emphasis. When transforming these notes from sermon notes to teaching notes, I felt inclined to leave a number of these phonetic spellings. They help me to make emphasis in the lesson at particular points.

Third: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I make little effort to conform to rules of grammar. One example is that I often use a hyphen (-) to indicate a point where I may want to pause slightly and to keep certain thoughts connected as I speak. Another example is that I will use local colloquialisms to make points in the message.

Please accept that these notes are not an academic work. But I do hope they will help the preacher or teacher to be able to more quickly prepare their own sermon or teaching.

This Study is designed to help discover a practical message, from the Book of Revelations, which can be applied to our everyday life. It is designed for use in a Small Group setting. Each person in the Small Group should read and complete the assignments for the week before coming to the Small Group meeting. The Small Group meeting will provide an opportunity for each person to share what they have learned and to ask questions regarding the week's study materials.

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Revelation – Latter Times - 01

(from) the "Ascension of Christ"

The Last Days

The Latter Times

The Beginning of Birth Pains

Seal Number One Opened
Seal Number Two Opened
Seal Number Three Opened
Seal Number Four Opened
Seal Number Five Opened
Seal Number Six Opened

The Beginning of Tribulation (The Seventh Seal Opened)

Trumpet Number One Sounds
Trumpet Number Two Sounds
Trumpet Number Three Sounds
Trumpet Number Four Sounds
Trumpet Number Five Sounds
Trumpet Number Six Sounds

The Great Tribulation (Seventh Trumpet Sounds)

Vial Number One Poured Out
Vial Number Two Poured Out
Vial Number Three Poured Out
Vial Number Four Poured Out
Vial Number Five Poured Out
Vial Number Six Poured Out

It is Done (Seventh Vial Poured Out)

Beast Defeated
Christ Reigns 1,000 Years
Satan Cast Into Hell
The Judgment
New Heaven And New Earth

(to) "The End"

Revelation – Latter Times - 01

This is the outline by which this study will look at the “Latter Times.” Write in the space below the areas where you disagree with this outline.

Where in this outline do you believe the “Rapture” will occur?

What are some specific questions concerning the “Latter Times” that you would like to have answered? (Or What do you wish to receive from this particular study?)

Revelation – Latter Times - 01

The Latter Times:

Read 1 Timothy 4:1 and make notes:

Paul was reminding Timothy of the apostasy which had been foretold and was expected to come about in the church. It was coming sometime during the Church age and before Christ second coming. Paul does not say these things would happen "just before" the end of time. He simply states these things will take place sometime during the last dispensation of time and it would happen before Christ returns.

All of the following Scriptures from the New Testament are accepted by most Bible scholars as referring to the time prior to Christ's second return:

Acts 2:17;

Joel 2:28-32 - It was the belief of Jewish Rabbis that the time referred to in this text is the time which extends from the coming of the Messiah to the end of the world;

James 5:3 - Many Bible scholars agree that this IS NOT referring to the last days of an individual's life and it isn't referring to the last days before the national judgment of the Jews in the destruction of the temple. This interpretation keeps this verse in harmony with the rest of the letter of James;

James 5:7 speaks of the "later rain";

James 5:8 speaks of the "coming of the Lord";

James 5:9 states the "Judge is standing at the door!"

2 Peter 3:3;

Hebrews 1:2 - In this text, the phrase, "These last days", is used to refer to the time when Jesus was on the earth, teaching men;

1 Peter 1:20 - Here the time when Jesus, the Messiah, was revealed is called "these last days."

Again, here is a reference to the time of Jesus on earth being called "last days";

Jude 1:18;

1 Peter 1:3-5

The Apostle Paul clearly understood the "later times" and "last days" to include all the messianic age, because he discusses things that were foretold to happen in the "last days" as taking place in his lifetime. (1 Tim 4:1, Heb 1:2)

When you consider the predictions of believers abandoning the faith, some following after deceiving spirits, gold and silver becoming worthless (corroding), scoffers coming on the scene, and people following their own evil desires; what is your general attitude toward these "Last Days"? Is it fear, apprehension, concern, anxiety? Explain.

How does the promise of Believers being shielded by God's power in the "last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5 above) affect your attitude toward these "last days"?

Revelation – Latter Times - 01

Read 2 Timothy 3:1 and make notes:

Paul says there “will be” terrible times in the last days. This speaks of a future time (will be). Since Paul has already been shown to see himself as living in the “last days,” this is referring to an experience which is still to come in the era known as the “last days.”

Read 2 Timothy 3:13 and make notes:

Read Acts 2:17-18 and make notes:

While the “last days” will be some “terrible times” for many there is also going to be a pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon God’s people. “Terrible times” is not the only thing that will be experienced during the “last days.” God’s people will experience divine inspiration by way of prophesy, visions, and dreams.

Read Matthew 24:5 and make notes:

Those who "come in my name" could refer to those claiming to be the representative of Jesus Christ. However, in this text these words are followed by the claim "I am the Christ." This is most likely referring to people who will claim to be the Messiah himself.

Jesus told us some would come in "my name" and deceive many. We have had in every generation those who have come in the name of Jesus but in no way taught the teachings of Jesus. There will come false prophets who will be proclaiming a false christ but they will not stand so severely in the judgment as those that teach error in the very name of our Lord Jesus.

Read Matthew 24:11; Matthew 24:6-7 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 01

Some key words to every Believer are found in this text; "see to it that you are not alarmed." God has not given us a spirit of fear. The wars, famines, earthquakes, and other natural as well as man made catastrophes should not alarm us. We certainly should not run around screaming "this is the end." The end is "still to come." These are simply indications that we are in fact living in the "latter times" or "last days."

Imagine another Believer begins sharing with you their fear resulting from all the reports of wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, etc. Write out a response you could share with them.

The phrase "last days", "later times", etc. usually refers to the apostolic age. In these verses it is pointing to some future time that appears to be near, if not immediately, at hand. This future time, which is at hand, is also the end of the apostolic age as we see in :

Read 1 John 2:18 and make notes:

The phrase "in the last days" is a phrase that was used by the Old Testament prophets so it was not a new or strange concept to the first century Believers.

Read Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1 and make notes:

Jewish Rabbis teach these two passages refer to "the age of the Messiah." Most religions of that day viewed their god as residing on a high hill or mountain. When more than one god was recognized, the more powerful the god, the higher their mountain upon which they resided. This prophecy is declaring in the "last days" the mountain of our Lord's temple will be undeniably higher than all others (chief among the mountains). Does this sound familiar? Does it remind you of "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord"?

Revelation – Latter Times - 01

Read Acts 2:16 and make notes:

The apostle Peter understood the "last days" to encompass the whole messianic age. When Peter quoted Joel 2:28 as recorded in Acts 2:17 he declared prophecy concerning the "last days" was being fulfilled that very day. As a gauge of the times, the Bible has given us three types of people to watch. These are:

-1. the "evil ones"

The "evil men" will grow worse and worse as time allows.

-2. "those who try to be spiritual"

"Those who try to be spiritual" will fall away gradually to "seducing doctrines".

-3. "those who are spiritual"

"Those who are spiritual" will have a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit without regard to age, sex, or status.

Read 1 John 4:1 and make notes:

With the false prophets we already have and those that are quickly coming upon us, it is increasingly important to carefully test, by the Holy Word of God, any one we would follow.

From these references, it is apparent that we have been in the 'Last Days' since Christ ascended to the Father. There have been eras in our history where the Church has gained many a convert, but as a whole we have steadily grown worse and worse.

Every generation of the Church age has heard preachers proclaim "these are the Last Days." Many have misinterpreted this proclamation to mean that Jesus was about to return any day. Since Jesus did not return, the scoffers have tried to get the next generation to reject the message of the Gospel as false.

Considering the Scriptures of this lesson, write your response to the above accusation:

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 02

Read Matthew 24:4; Matthew 24:6-8; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9 and make notes:

In addition to the wars, nations rising against nation, earthquakes, and famines; Luke records some additional predictions by Jesus:

Read Luke 21:11 and make notes:

The "Beginning of Birth Pains" is that time which follows the "Last Days"; but comes before the 'Tribulations'. The "Beginning of Birth Pains" covers all that time required to open the first six (6) seals of the 'book'.

In the natural, the "beginning of birth pains" may be reason for some apprehension, but it is a time of exciting expectation. The birth process causes physical discomfort and stress. But the reward for the distress, discomfort, and labor involved to endure the birth pains makes it all worthwhile for the great majority of people.

Read Mark 13:19 and make notes:

Most people have been taught to look at the prophecies of the last times as predictions of dreadful, horrible, and unimaginable suffering and destruction. This may be an appropriate assessment for those who have rejected Jesus as Savior. Luke records more dire predictions of this last time, but he records something important for every believer to read:

Read Luke 21:28 and make notes:

Those of us who are Believers have a very good reason to view this time quite differently. Jesus' analogy of this era is that it is a time of "birth pains." This analogy, given by Jesus, changes significantly the concept of what is going to take place and gives an entirely different picture of what the end result is expected to be.

Revelation – Latter Times - 02

What thoughts or concerns do you have regarding this time referred to as the “beginning of birth pains?”

Read Revelation 6:1-2 and make notes:

It is worth noting that it is The Lamb who opens the first seal. Only the Lamb is worthy of setting into motion the events that will bring human history to its conclusion. The first seal broken, a rider on a white horse is revealed, with a bow and a crown.

symbol	represents
Riding a horse	Triumphant victory
Color white	Purity or justice
Bow	Power and authority
Crown	Honor and respect

In every generation of Church History, there have been those who have interpreted this rider of the horse as Christ Jesus. Many Bible commentators explain the rider of the white horse as Christ riding forth to conquer the earth as the Lord of Lords. There are at least as many who give practical arguments against this view but we will only mention the following.

The Lamb in this text is clearly and unquestionably Jesus. The Lamb is the one opening the seals. Christ is the one giving the divine permission to the riders to "go forth."

This is a leader who is not as he appears. The bow would give the impression that this is a person of authority, but upon close examination we notice they have no arrows for this bow. If this rider does not actually have authority, then the white color is probably not a true representation either. This is hypocritical, corrupt, and evil leadership. Evil never presents itself and says, “I am evil.” And evil never openly confesses that if you follow me I will destroy you. Evil always tries to appear as good.

According to the numerology of the first century church era, “1” represented “unity, alone, independent.”

In your opinion, is this rider of the first horse a corrupt civil leader, or a corrupt religious leader? Why?

Revelation – Latter Times - 02

Do you have another interpretation for the rider of the first horse? What is the basis for this interpretation?

Read Revelation 6:3-4 and make notes:

The second seal broken, a rider on a red horse is revealed, having a great sword.

symbol	represents
Riding a horse	Triumphant victory
Color red	War & Bloodshed
Sword	Destruction

This rider is bringing about a great slaughter by way of a “large sword.” Peace being removed from the earth, people turn their destructive instincts toward each other. We have war. Corrupt leadership as with the rider of the first horse, will naturally lead to war. War triumphs over corrupt leadership!

According to numerology of the first century Church era, “2” represented “companionship, increased strength, added power.” In your opinion, is this a representation that God will use those who are evil to bring about war and use war as a divine judgment?

Do believe another interpretation of this horse and rider to be the correct interpretation? If so, what is it and what is the basis for this interpretation?

Read Revelation 6:5-6 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 02

The opening of the third seal reveals a black horse, the rider carrying a balance, and a voice being heard.

symbol	represents
Riding a horse	Triumphant victory
Color black	Disease - Sickness
Balance and Cry of extreme Cost of food	Famine

After a war with much destruction, food supplies have been destroyed and the world is left with less than sanitary conditions. Disease and Famine triumph over war!

Even though this rider is given orders to go forth and bring about sickness, disease, and famine, there are limits set. They are not permitted to harm the “oil” or the “wine.”

According to the numerology of the first century Church era, “3” represented “deity” and was considered a divine number.

Does this bring to your mind any verses concerning “new wine?”

Do you think there might be a connection between this limitation of not harming the wine and that of Christ’s Blood being represented as “wine” in the communion?

Is this referring to the spiritual “oil and wine” or the literal “oil and wine?”

Is this referring to the basics of everyday life being affected (wheat and barley = bread) and yet the luxuries of life not being affected (wine)?

If you believe another interpretation of this horse and rider to be correct, what is it? What is the basis for this interpretation?

Revelation – Latter Times - 02

Read Revelation 6:7-8 and make notes:

The fourth seal reveals Death riding a pale horse with Hell following after. He is given power over a fourth of the earth.

symbol	represents
Riding a horse	Triumphant victory
Color pale	Death
Fourth part	Small percentage

Hell following Death is the/readiness of the grave to quickly take away those who die. Death and The Grave triumph over disease and famine!

Once again, we see that limits are set. The “fourth part” is a small number as compared to the total world population rather than a literal counting. Only a small part of the earth can be affected by Death and the Grave.

There is no indication from the scriptures that the events of these first four seals will happen to the entire world. Most evidence indicates these events occur in a small part of the world. This is the beginning of the anti-christ's efforts to take over the world. He will begin with a small part and attempt to spread from there.

We have had several areas and countries in recent years to suffer from corrupt leadership. These same countries have all had war with tremendous destruction. This is not so new from past generations in itself but there is more. These countries have been and are now experiencing food shortages. There are a couple of countries at this present time who are experiencing severe famines and plagued with deadly diseases.

Many people have died in these countries from fighting, from famine, and from disease. However, the number compared to the total world population is only a small part.

These events have all occurred predominantly in non-christian countries. This easily coincides with the first, third, and fourth seal. the opening of the second seal gives it's rider power to take peace from the earth. This sounds more universal than the opening of the other three seals.

Today, even the countries that are not in physical combat are not at peace within themselves. Practically every country in the world is at present in a state of unrest. There are many factors people can blame for this; such as inflation or some other difficulty; but never the less, peace is going from the earth as a whole.

Revelation – Latter Times - 02

When we see all these things coming, or at hand, we are told by our Lord not to worry or to become upset. We have not been forgotten as many will think the world is coming to it's end. It is coming to it's end but these events are not the end. Jesus said such things are not the end but only the "beginning of birth pains".

According to the numerology of the first century church era, "4" represented "the universe." It was considered the cosmic number. "4" was used to speak of the created world or the universe.

The earth, and everything on the earth, is a part of all that is "created." The "4", being a number of the "created world" would certainly apply to the earth. But, this interpretation isn't needed since the vision states this rider was given power over a fourth of "the earth." The "fourth part" is better understood to refer to the "small portion", one fourth part, as compared to the whole earth.

Do you believe another interpretation of this horse and rider to be correct. If so, what is it and what is your reason for believing it?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

Read Revelation 6:9-11

When the fifth seal is opened, it reveals the souls of those who have been killed - for the Word of God -being consoled with white robes and told to rest but a little while.

The robes represent a position of honor and respect. The little while suggest that it will not be long until God begins to avenge the deaths of the Saints. We see in the following scriptures that truly it isn't long.

One of the oldest interpretations of the souls of the martyrs being under the altar:
Their untimely death due to their obedience to God is seen by God as a sacrifice on the altar of Heaven.

This isn't out of line with some New Testament views:

Read 2 Timothy 4:6; Philippians 2:17 and make notes:

Paul viewed his coming death as an offering to be “poured out.”

The cry “how long until you judge the inhabitants of the earth” is not the begging for vengeance to be carried out for their death. It is the cry of concern, because it appears that good is losing and evil is winning. “Aren't you going to do something Lord?” - “How long will evil be allowed to ravage your people Lord?”

Do you believe another interpretation of the “souls under the altar” to be correct? If so, what is it and why do you believe it to be correct?

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

What are some of the other interpretations you have heard concerning these “souls under the altar?”

Read Revelation 6:12-14

Read Haggai 2:6; Acts 2:20 and make notes:

This is not a new prophetic word about the coming of the “great day” of the Lord’s wrath. Peter quoted the prophecy found in Joel 2:31.

The sixth seal opened, reveals a complete loss of the cosmic order. The earth shakes, the sun fails to give light, the moon dims to a bloody glow, stars fall out of the sky to the earth. It is highly unlikely that the first century readers took this passage literally. All of the events described here are parts of a well established prophetic language.

Earthquakes represented divine visitation. Read Exodus 19:18 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

Stars falling represented the end has come. Read Isaiah 34:4 and make notes:

Isaiah used this same expression when speaking of the coming of the end.

The picture of the heavens receding like a scroll probably doesn't bring the same mental picture for us today as it did the first century readers. Try to imagine a stiff papyrus scroll that had been rolled up for some time. These scrolls were not rolled completely out. After enough of the scroll is unrolled to allow reading, as more scroll is unrolled from one side, the portion that has been read is rolled onto the other side of the scroll. Imagine as the scroll is being unrolled that it should break in the middle. How quickly the two parts of the scroll would roll up on either side is the picture that came to the mind of the first century readers.

For some people, the idea of such drastic events disturbs their view and concept of a loving God. In other places in the book of Revelations mankind is shown to have come to such a defiant attitude that neither demonic plague (9:20) or scorching heat is sufficient to bring them to repentance. This helps to understand why things will become so cataclysmic.

Read Revelations 6:15-17 and make notes:

Read Isaiah 2:19 and make notes:

It isn't the intent of this text to cover every possible station in society. It is pointing out those who would normally feel most secure and strong will at this time feel very much afraid. "Kings" represent those in the highest places of civil authority. "Princes" represent those in lower places of civil authority. "Generals" represent those in places of military authority. It is not a matter of financial or social position. People of every level of society and station in life will be seeking a place to hide.

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

Adam and Eve desired and attempted to hide from God when they realized they were guilty of sin (Gen 3:8). Those running to hide in this end time are probably running more from the presence of God than they physical calamities. A guilty conscience makes men a fugitive from God. This indicates there is clearly no place to hide from God. It is an interesting insight into the heart of man. It seems better to be crushed by a mountainous avalanche than to face the Lamb of God.

Jesus, the Lamb of Revelation, is no longer the sacrificial Lamb. His righteous wrath is the divine response of holiness to persistent unrepentant wickedness.

Read Zephaniah 1:14-18 and make notes:

Read Nahum 1:6; Malachi 3:2 and make notes:

Indeed, who can possibly stand before the Lord's wrath? Who can possibly endure such an outpouring of the Lord as a "refiner's fire" or a "launderer's soap?"

Write in this space - the person you believe can withstand such a time.

Is this "cosmic disorder" referring to a literal displacing or failing of the sun, earth, and stars - or is this a spiritual reference to the complete confusion that will befall those who are enemies to God and His church?

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

What are some of the interpretations you have heard concerning the opening of the “sixth seal?”

Read Revelation 7:1-3 and make notes:

Read Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 49:36 and make notes:

At this point in the vision we see a tremendous act of Love on God's part. The holding of the winds represents the withholding of destruction. The errors of mankind are bringing on the greatest troubles of the ages. Before God allows this to happen, He seals and secures His living children. When God seals the living saved, he gives them immunity to all that is to befall the earth in the coming next days.

Chapter 7 reveals a distinct contrast between the security and blessed state of the faithful and the panic and distress of the unbeliever. There are two visions in chapter 7; the 144,000 who are sealed and the blessedness of the multitude before the throne.

Also in this text is the answer to the question just presented, “Who can Stand?”. Those who are faithful can endure and withstand the Lord’s wrath!

Read Revelation 7:4-8 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

In numerology of the first century church era, “12” is the number of organized religion. Since this “12” is identified with the names of God’s people (the tribes of Israel) this is referring to God’s Called Out People. In biblical numerology there are two ways to indicate or represent absolute completeness. One is to multiply the number times itself, or square the number. The second is to multiply the number times a thousand. Both of the methods of indicating absolute completeness are employed in this vision. This is like making all of the letters upper case (capitalized), using bold print, and underlining the message at the same time. The absolute completeness of this number is getting extra emphasis.

The twelve tribes of Israel listed are not the original twelve tribes. The tribe of Dan is omitted and Manasseh, a son of Joseph, is added. Jewish tradition has it that the anti-christ will come from the tribe of Dan.

In reality it is very unlikely that the exact same number would be saved from each literal tribe. Look at the meaning of each of the names listed :

name	meaning	name	meaning
Judah	Praised	Simeon	Hearing
Reuben	Behold a son	Levi	To adhere
Gad	Fortune	Issachar	There is reward
Asher	Happy	Zebulon	A habitation
Nephtalim	Wrestling	Joseph	May he add
Manasseh	Making to forget	Benjamin	Son of the right hand

The collective meaning of these names is a very good description of God's children of every nation.

The twelve thousand from each tribe goes to emphasize that all nations shall be included. Each tribe is representative of a portion of the world’s people. When we accept Jesus as our personal savior, God becomes our heavenly Father, and we become spiritually a child of Israel.

One hundred forty four thousand says that an absolute completeness of all the spiritual children of Israel have been sealed. God has not overlooked anyone, not even the least heard of person. Every living saved person is sealed.

It isn’t a select group of believers who are sealed. The full number of all who are saved will be sealed.

With the living saved - given immunity to the coming perils, - God can now send judgment for the souls of those killed for the Word's sake.

Do you believe another interpretation of the “144,000” to be the correct interpretation? If so, what is it and why do you believe it to be correct?”

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

What are some of the other interpretations you have heard concerning the “144,000” and why do you believe they are not the correct interpretation?

Read Revelation 7:9-17 and make notes:

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Acts 14:22 and make notes:

A Time of heavenly bliss for all the saved. This great multitude which has come out of great tribulation is not on earth, but in heaven. After seeing the Saints sealed, the next sign is a great multitude standing before the throne of God. They are clothed in white with palm branches in their hands. They are of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue. They are Jew and Gentile, but they are all God’s people. They are “the Church.”

The palm branches had significant meaning to the first century Jewish believers. Palm branches were used in the Feast of Tabernacles as part of the victory celebration commemorating the release from Egyptian bondage. These Believers are in a state of release and are celebrating victoriously.

What are some of the interpretations you have heard concerning this “great multitude” before the throne?

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

Many believe this multitude, which is too large to be counted, is the same group previously referred to as the 144,000. In the first part of this vision, the emphasis and the message was the completeness of the sealing and the preserving. In the second part of this vision, the message is on the future state of the saints. This assurance of the outcome will be a help to those believers seeing signs of the end destruction coming. Also look at the exciting promise found in verses 15-16. They will not suffer from excessive heat, they will be provided springs of “living water”, and God will take away their tears. They will no longer have any reason to cry.

In numerology of the first century Church era, “7” represented “completeness.” In verses 11-12, we see the angels praising God in a 7 fold doxology. This is speaking of complete praise (number 7). Luke 15:10 tells us of the joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Can you imagine the level of rejoicing the angels shall have when all of the saints stand in glorified bodies around the throne of God?

Verse 13-14 asks the question, “Who are these?” And then the answer is given; “They are those who came out of the great tribulation.” The word “the” is believed by some to indicate this is not referring to just a time of tribulation, but to the tribulation in the series of events at the end of time. Since “the” great tribulation has not yet been revealed in this vision, the better interpretation is this is probably the tribulation that Christ said every Believer would have to endure from the world because of their faith.

Read Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Zechariah 3:3-5 and make notes:

One of the Elders explains that they are those who came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. This is not "the Great Tribulation" as this has not occurred at this point in the vision. The aorist tense of the Greek verbs are used in the “washed their robes” and “made them white.” This speaks of a “once for all” action.

An impressive paradox – wash a robe in red blood and it becomes “white.” The work of receiving a robe of righteousness is not one of merit but one of submitting to the sacrifice of the Lamb. The white (pure) robe is what makes it possible to stand among the multitude around the throne. A life of faith makes it possible to have a white robe.

This is the collection of all the Saints who have died to this point in time. Now that God has sealed and immunized the living Saved, he can begin to avenge for the blood of the Saints. God calls all the sleeping Saved to rise and witness the last effort to get men saved and the avenging of their death.

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

Everyone who enters Heaven from earth will do so through many or great tribulations. Those who are asleep will rise first. Now that they have risen we can watch for the Rapture at any literal moment.

If you believe another interpretation of this “great multitude” to be the correct interpretation, give the reason you believe this to be true.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 03

(this page for additional notes)

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

Read Revelation 8:1-2 and make notes:

As soon as the seventh seal is opened, a deafening silence blankets all of creation. God says nothing. The Lamb says nothing. None of the heavenly creatures say anything. One can envision nothing moves during this time of silent suspense. This is a moment of silence in reverence to the solemn events about to occur.

This concept of reverent suspenseful silence when God arises, or his judgment appears, is one with a long history and was well established in the hearts and minds of the early church.

Read Habakkuk 2:20 and make notes:

The mere presence of God or the presence of God's judgment calls for utter silence of all others.

Read Zechariah 2:13 and make notes:

“All mankind”; everyone in every place is exhorted to be still before the Lord. It would appear as a threatening gesture for God to rouse himself up from his holy dwelling place.

Read Amos 5:13 and make notes:

Amos was a prophet that would not have condemned protest. When the prophet Amos made this statement it was following a lists of judgments brought on by the people's many sins. The prudent man realizes at such a time as this anything he might say would only make things worse.

These angels are not the archangels. They are not the seven spirits of God. And they are not selected from among the great number of angels in heaven. These were seven specific angels as pointed out by the phrase “the” seven angels.

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

God has always been long-suffering and here He still is the same. In the span of time in which it takes for the first six trumpets to sound, God sends men just a taste of the tribulation and allows them time to repent and be saved.

This era of time in which the first six trumpets sound is referred to as the "Beginning of Tribulation". People can be saved during this time as evidenced by the statement that men repented not. It does not say that they "could not", but that they "would not."

During the time that will follow this on we will call the "Great Tribulation" no one can be saved.

The sounding of the first six trumpets, is the last effort of God to bring men to accept Jesus and worship the true God.

Share any other interpretations you have heard concerning this passage.

When the seventh seal is opened and everything falls silent, what is your thought or concept of why the silence?

Read Revelation 8:3-5 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

Some believe this angel is Christ, others believe it to be the Holy Spirit, and some believe it to be an angel representative of Christ. The simple wording of this text indicates it is none of these. This is an angel with the assigned duty of mixing incense with the prayers of the saints. The incense is “given” to this angel.

This is not one of the seven angels who stand before God. This is “another” angel. This angel adds incense to the prayers of “all” the Saints thus perfecting these prayers before they are offered upon the altar of burnt offerings. “All” the saints speaks of all the saints on earth as well as all the saints in heaven.

Does this mean “every believer” or only certain believers prayers make it to God?

Read Luke 11:9; John 15:7; 1 John 3:22 and make notes:

We receive because we “obey” his commands and “do” what pleases him. These texts state clearly that the prayers that are answered are the ones from people who “obey” and “please” God. Does God still hear the other prayers and just not answer them?

This angel cast down fire from the altar symbolizing the fire of God's revenge about to descend upon the earth. The thunder, lightning, and earthquake are all symbols indicating divine visitation if not divine judgment. These all herald the coming judgment .

Read Jude 1:14-15 and make notes:

Enoch was a man who “walked with God.” Jude is quoting from a writing attributed to Enoch but not considered part of the Holy Word of God. Many people want to discard this text since it is a quotation from a book outside the Scripture. If we accept Jude as being inspired by the Holy Spirit in writing the book of Jude, then we must accept this statement as true. Notice the stressing of “all the ungodly.” This appears to be a good summary statement of God’s universal divine judgment.

Read Acts 17:31 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

It is clearly established in the Scriptures that God does not want anyone to perish; but would rather have every person to be saved. He even allows ample time for repentance to be made. But this text is pointing to the climax of the continuously unfolding plan of redemption. Jesus will cease to be the sacrificial lamb and will become the judge of the whole world.

Can you remember any Scriptures that support the idea that God doesn't want anyone to perish? Write them here and be prepared to share them with the Home Group. If you can't remember chapter and verse, at least write enough of the Scripture that others will recognize it.

Read Revelation 8:6-7 and make notes:

The first trumpet sounds, then follows hail and fire mingled with blood. Hail and fire mingled with blood speaks clearly of the destruction of life.

symbol	represents
Hail	Judgment
Blood	Loss of life

This picture is consistent with God previous visitations in judgment and predictions of God's judgment.

Read Isaiah 28:2; Ezekiel 13:11; Exodus 9:23-24 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

At the time of God's judgment upon Egypt, God made a spectacular display of it's arrival. Plants, animals, and people were all damaged by the hail of the judgment.

Read Joshua 10:11 and make notes:

What Israel's army had accomplished was small in comparison to what God did with hail. Nothing of man can withstand or compare to God's judgment.

We have an almost unimaginable storm of God's judgment, which will cause approximately one third of all vegetation to be destroyed. There are many who teach the judgments of the trumpets will not be literal events but symbolic. If we accept the ten plagues of Egypt as historical and literal, then there is no justifiable reason not to accept these events as literal also. Admittedly, it is extremely difficult to identify at this time the exact form these literal events will take, but they will come to pass.

What do you think God is trying to do with this first trumpet judgment? Why destroy one third of the earth, one third of the trees, and all of the grass?

Read Revelation 8:8-9 and make notes:

The second trumpet brings about something like a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea.

There are those who teach the "sea" symbolizes all the people of earth. For them, the mountain symbolizes one large nation ablaze with perhaps a revolution. Their interpretation is this revolution spills over into the rest of the world causing great destruction; much like a world war. The problem with this interpretation is the reference to the "ships" destroyed.

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

This is possibly a violent volcanic eruption which cast so much burning lava and ash into the ocean that severe heat pollution results. Approximately one third of all sea life is killed. Many ships of the sea are destroyed, probably by several severe tidal waves (don't overlook spiritual application)

Read Exodus 7:20-21; Psalms 105:29 and make notes:

Whether the river became literal blood or the color of blood is hardly worth arguing. In another passage in Revelation, the moon is said to turn to blood. The point is simply that this is not a new type of event in the judgment of God. To the Egyptians, the Nile was sacred. Their judgment fell upon that which was held in highest esteem.

Read Hosea 4:1-3 and make notes:

Verse 1, in this text from Hosea, lists three general things missing from the community of God's people that caused God's judgment to fall; (1) no faithfulness, (2) no love, (3) no acknowledgment of God. When God's people can not be counted upon (unfaithful), fail to show kindness toward one another (no love), and do not acknowledge God; it will result in God's judgment falling upon the people.

Verse 2 lists specific sins committed that fall into the three general areas listed in verse 1. Verse 3 clearly states it is the sins of man that cause the fields, birds, animals, and sea life to waste away. The sins of man bring death not only upon man, but upon the earth over which man was given to govern and care for.

What is the purpose God is trying to accomplish with the judgment of this second trumpet?

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

Does the passage from Hosea help bring any insight into the trumpet judgments of Revelation?
If so, what?

Read Revelation 8:10-11 and make notes:

The third trumpet sends a star to earth which falls upon a third of the rivers and fountains. This could be a meteor. Its substance is such that it pollutes or poisons the rivers and wells. It could be one of several elements we know and is now polluting our water supplies or it may be some new poisonous element.

Read Jeremiah 9:13-15; Jeremiah 23:15 and make notes

“Because” God’s people have forsaken His law the water is made to become a poisoned water. “Because” of the prophets ungodliness has spread throughout the land. Because of the spread of ungodliness, the poisoned water is sent. Jeremiah points out a “cause and effect.” The judgment is not the result of a “mean god” or even the result of an upset and angry god. The judgment is the result of a disobedient and unfaithful people.

Read Deuteronomy 29:18 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 04

Worship of other gods produces bitter poison. The instruction was to “make sure” no individual or no group of persons turns their heart from God. The result of people turning their hearts from God is the release (or production) of bitter poison.

What is the purpose of this third trumpet judgment? Is there a message in it?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Read Revelation 8:12 and make notes:

The fourth trumpet sounds with universal results. There is a cosmic disorientation with the sun showing approximately one third less light upon earth. The moon and stars likewise according to their relationship with the sun. We now have days with about one third less daylight time.

The absence of any instrument by which this judgment came about is worth noting. In many of the previous judgments, it is our natural tendency to make a great deal of the instrument of the judgment. This judgment coming to pass without an instrument is enlightening. We can spend so much of our attention and resources on the instrument that we miss the more important message of the judgment. We should focus on the judgment and its message rather than on the instrument of judgment.

One of the most popular interpretations of this text sees the sun as representing the highest authority, the moon representing an authority derived from the higher, and the stars as more subordinate authorities. Some who hold this interpretation believe this applies to the earthly authorities that were in John's day. Others apply it to other earthly authorities who would come later. Still others apply it to some earthly authorities yet to come.

The last sentence of this verse stands as a very strong argument against this interpretation. The clear reference to "day" and "night" insists that we look at a more literal interpretation.

Read Joel 2:10; Amos 8:9; Exodus 10:21-23; Luke 21:25-28

What man could even hope to harness or control the sun? And yet, God is able to darken the sun or cause it to go down before its appointed time. We may be awestruck by the immense power of the sun, but it is important to remember God controls the awesome power of the sun.

Do you believe this refers to a literal changing of the sun's brightness or the length of day time hours? If so, which one?

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

What do you think God may use to accomplish this?

If the length of daylight or the brightness of the sun changes, so you think you could use this to explain to people why they need to establish a personal relationship with God?

Read Revelation 8:13 and make notes:

In verse 13, The KJV bible and some other translations have the word “angel.” The oldest and most reliable manuscripts do not have the Greek word for “angel” but instead have the word for “eagle.” The eagle is a symbol of that which is swift and unerring in regard to sweeping up its intended prey. The eagle is the image and meaning opposite of the dove.

The eagle represents the swiftness and certainty of the woes that are about to come to pass. This eagle is in midair where it would be visible to the greatest number of people. It’s proclamation of “woe” is specifically for the people on the “earth.” He cries Woe, Woe, Woe; one woe for each trumpet yet to sound.

Look at what has happened to this point in time:

- .one third of vegetation has been destroyed
- .one third of sea has been destroyed
- .one third of sea life has been destroyed
- .one third of fresh water supplies has been polluted
- .one third of day and night has been affected

Things can look severe enough at this point. The cry of an eagle regarding the trumpets yet to come, and the fact that the time is taken to pronounce “woe, woe, woe” indicates it will be significantly more severe. The previous judgments have fallen upon the earth proper. Now the judgments are about to begin falling upon the people of the earth.

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

What are some of the things you have been taught concerning this text?

Do you think this will be a literal “eagle” that speaks or is this representing someone or something?

Read Revelation 9:1-6 and make notes:

When the fifth trumpet sounds we see the tribulation becoming more intense.

An angel comes to earth, not an evil angel, and not Satan, but an angel with a mission. This angel was “given” the key to the “shaft of the Abyss.” The “Abyss” is not the abode of the Devil and his angels. That place is “Gehenna,” a lake of fire and brimstone.

Read Luke 8:31 and make notes:

When Jesus confronted the legion of demons in the possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes, the demons begged not to be sent to the Abyss. They knew it existed and they knew those in the Abyss were locked up and were not free to move about.

The “Abyss” is symbolized as being beneath the earth. It has a cover over it which is locked. Those in the Abyss have been restrained.

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Read Jeremiah 8:3; Job 3:21; Job 7:14-15 and make notes:

Jeremiah predicted a day when men would wish to die rather than live and endure the pain. Job knew what it was like to desire to die and even searched for death as much as someone would search for hidden treasure.

These locusts that come up out of the “shaft of the Abyss”: Do you think these are literal locust or demons? Why?

Read Revelation 9:7-12 and make notes:

The angel of the Abyss is not Satan. He is more likely to be one of the chief evil angels who serve under Satan and has been given charge of the Abyss and its demons. His name in Hebrew is “Abaddon” which means “destruction.” His name in Greek is “Apollyon” which means “to destroy.”

These locust will be abnormally large and will have tails that cause physical pain. They will be so large that they will resemble horses in shape and their heads will appear as having crowns. Their large size will make their faces resemble those of human faces. They will have hair and sharp teeth to look terrifying more than to bite. The neck and chest of these locust will be extra thick as though shielded. They will be so big and so many in number that they will create a loud noise in flight.

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Some observations concerning these locust:

- .1 – like horses prepared for battle – positioned and ready
- .2 – like heads crowned with gold – have authority to inflict
- .3 – like the faces of men – determination and intelligent look to men
- .4 – like the hair of women – can be attractive to men
- .5 – like the teeth of lions – can appear fierce and cruel
- .6 – like iron breast plates – people appear helpless against them
- .7 – like chariots rushing into battle – overwhelming
- .8 – like scorpion tails – torture

For those who feel this is a literal locust, the interpretation is something like the following: God could easily create a special locust for this plague. He probably will use the earlier events to result in abnormal insects such as these. Maybe excessive radiation of several types cause a mutation in the insect world, or maybe God will create them at this moment. Whichever the case it may be, they come now.

Another interpretation of this passage is to understand this is still imagery. These locust are symbols of destruction. The fact that they arise from the center of the earth through a hole represents the rising of demonic forces. Real locust would attack vegetation. These locust are seen attacking human beings.

This could be imagery of a savage army attack. The question to this interpretation would center around this army not harming those would are sealed by God in the various parts of the world.

There are those who interpret these locust and their torment to historical groups that have existed. There is significant parallels between the early reign of Mohammedism and this text. Similar parallels have been made with other historical groups. The problem with this interpretation lies in the timing of this event. This text clearly says this occurs after the sealing of the saints. Unless you put all, or most, of these texts from Revelation in the past, then this interpretation cannot be correct.

Since the locust comes from the “Abyss” and this is the place where demons, or fallen angels, are kept locked up; these locust are best interpreted as demons.

Their sting will last five months and will be so torturous that men will try to kill themselves but will fail in all their attempts to commit suicide. If their sting killed, it would seem a merciful thing.

The moral consequences of evil bring people to despair, they have no means of bearing the pain, and sincerely seek to see their painful life come to an end. Evil is a terrible task master, and eventually destroys a person’s desire and will to live.

The smoke is only to serve as a camouflage for the locust until they are suddenly upon the people of the earth.

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Read Exodus 10:13; Joel 1:4 and make notes:

Locust has long been established as representing judgment from God. Remembering this is a judgment from God; even though these creatures may be a mutant form of some previously existing creature; even if the demons are using something made by man; it is important not to overlook this is a judgment on man being directed by God.

God loves us deeply and does not want us to suffer. This is why he warns us of the coming judgments. He desires for us to escape the pain and destruction.

Read Jeremiah 11:11; Hebrews 2:3 and make notes:

The way of escape is to make sure that we DO NOT ignore the “great salvation” that has been provided to us.

One of the glorious mysteries is these locust will not inflict anyone who has been sealed of God! The rottenness of the world which has come from an inner decay is a clear picture in this part of the vision. While the persecuting world is being showered with these painful judgments, no harm is befalling those who have the seal of God upon them. The fact that these locust cannot harm those who are sealed of God helps us to understand this is “after” the sealing of the saints. These events are still being seen and recorded in a sequential manner (one after the other).

What are some of the things you have been taught concerning these locust that sting people and cause pain?

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Why are these “locusts” released to inflict pain on man? (punish, revenge, attention getter, etc.)

Read Revelation 9:13-21 and make notes:

When the sixth trumpet is sounded, four angels are loosed to kill a third part of men. The voice, coming from the altar, giving the command to loose these four angels is most likely the answer to the prayers of the saints who earlier cried out to God, “how long.” His response was to “wait a little longer.” The waiting is over.

This sixth angel sounded his trumpet as a herald of the coming woe. Then, as commanded, he loosed the four evil angels that had been kept for this time and purpose. The fact that these were bound indicates they are evil angels. The time description indicates God will establish the time they will be loosed and will decide the duration.

The horsemen indicate they raised an army of many men. This army is not against one particular country but sets out to fight everyone. The colors of their breastplate interpret into Red, Blue, and Yellow as the colors of their standard. The description of the horse heads; and the issue from their mouths indicates large deadly weapons. They have tails like serpents and their tails have heads. This indicates these weapons are deadly from the rear as well as from the front. Those who interpret this literally feel we should watch for this army of: the colors Red, Blue, and Yellow for they will kill about one third of men on the earth.

There are those who teach the seven trumpets and the associated events are just another description of the seven seals. They also believe the seven vials, to be discussed later, to be the same as the seven seals. They believe these to be simply the same events, or judgments, repeated twice, or recorded three times, for emphasis and clarity. One of the strongest arguments against this interpretation is in this text. The mission and purpose of these four angels in this sixth trumpet are distinctly different from the four angels in the sixth seal.

Many interpret the river Euphrates and the army literally. For those who hold to a literal interpretation, we have weapons today that move across country and fire in both directions. The literal place of the “forces” is the area and region of the Euphrates. The army is that of a human army.

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Others interpret the river Euphrates as symbolic of the chastisement of God's people. Most of Israel's chastisements came from the Euphrates region. Many of the ancients were of the opinion that the anti-christ would come from the Euphrates area. These interpreters usually see the army as demonic forces rather than a literal human army.

Another way to interpret this text is both literal and figurative. The river Euphrates can be the literal location and the army can be figurative. The army can be made up of literal human forces and demonic forces if this is the army of the anti-christ.

Read Psalms 80:8-11 and make notes:

In this Scripture, Egypt is taken as literal, while the vine, boughs, and shoots are all taken to be figurative by almost all Bible scholars. It would not be out of character for good Bible interpretation to do so for this text in Revelation as well. Just a note, the river mentioned in this text from the Psalms is the river Euphrates.

“I heard their number.” Two hundred million horse soldiers represents a very large army. Horses, in the prophetic, indicate strength. This enemy is a very large and formidable collection of those drawn up to bring about destruction. It is interesting that more attention is given to the horses in this part of the vision than to the riders on the horses.

The number of the army is interpreted by some as a literal count and by others as a figuratively large, maybe even uncountable, army. Since this number is only of the “mounted troops,” we have no indication of the size of the army as a whole. In those days, there were normally many more foot soldiers than mounted troops.

The number is two times the number “ten thousand” multiplied by itself. According to numerology of the first century church era, one way to indicate absolute completeness was to multiply a number times itself. Another way to indicate absolute completeness was to multiply a number times one thousand.

Also, according to the numerology of that era, “ten” is the number of human beings. The number of human beings (10), multiplied by one thousand, and then multiplied by itself would emphasize the absolute completeness of human beings; times two. It is strongly emphasized. This may lead us toward seeing this army as human beings. But the intended victims of this army is the people of the earth. The absolute completeness of human beings cannot refer to the army consisting of all the people of the earth. If this is absolute completeness of human beings as it relates to this army, then it is that no one on earth will be overlooked.

Notice in these plagues of destruction that God always spared more than he allowed to be destroyed. In every case he spared approximately two thirds while only allowing one third to be destroyed. God does not delight in the destruction of the wicked.

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Verse 20 is very important to understanding all that is taking place in this vision and the message weaved within this vision. Those that were not killed by the plague of this trumpet, “did not repent.” It does not say these people “could not” repent, but that they did not repent. The obvious meaning is that these people could have repented but they chose not to repent.

All of God’s judgments are remedial in purpose. The judgments that come into the life of a person or people as the consequences of their sin is a way of saying, “don’t do this; turn back to God’s way.”

Do you think this army consists of human soldiers or demons? Why?

The number of 200 million mounted troops: - Is it a literal count or is this a figurative count? If literal, how many other soldiers (not mounted) do you think is likely to be part of this army?

At this point in the visions of Revelation: What is your overall opinion or attitude toward the seals, and the trumpets and their associated events?

In what way, if any, has your beliefs changed?

Revelation – Latter Times - 05

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 06

A messenger with a great announcement:

Read Revelation 10:1-4 and make notes:

“Seal up what the seven thunders have said.” These thunders are representative of the wrath of God. God’s judgments are so powerful and frightening that they can only be revealed in symbol form. Some of them cannot be explained or understood. But, if these particular judgments were not understandable it would not be necessary to “seal them up.” John must have been able to understand them and it must be that others could understand them should they hear them or read them. They are understandable, and because God did not wish us to hear them or read them, he commanded that they be “sealed.”

All during the judgments represented by the first 6 trumpets men refused to repent. There is no recourse for God at this point but to bring retribution to the unrepentant people. We cannot separate God’s mercy from God’s judgment. Neither can we separate God’s love from God’s wrath. These are simply two responses on our part to the One God. God is making an effort to share His divine life with His created beings. When we respond positively to God’s offer, the result is salvation, deliverance, protection, and blessing. When we respond negatively to God’s offer, the result is judgment and wrath.

People sometimes create a dilemma for themselves. They try to create a changing God who is at one time happy with them and blessing them; and at another time angry with them and punishing them. They try to create a God who loves them one moment and then later hates them.

Read Malachi 3:6 and make notes:

God never changes. He is always the same. God does not love us at one time and hate us at another. God always love us. God always responds out of divine love for us. This divine love dictates that we receive judgment for our actions. When we are obedient, the judgment is blessing; and when we are disobedient, the judgment is wrath. We change! God does not change. God’s response is always the same!

Revelation – Latter Times - 06

Read Ezekiel 1:28 and make notes:

A messenger came “from” heaven:

- .clothed with a cloud – symbol of majestic, heavenly appearance
- .rainbow in hand – symbol of glory and mercy of God
- .face shines like sun – symbol that message is of enormous splendor
- .feet like pillars of fire – symbol of holiness, purity, & righteousness
- .one foot on sea, one foot on land –
massive size and power of messenger – laying claim to all the earth – land and sea.

Read Joel 3:16; Hosea 11:10 and make notes:

Voice thundered – symbol of voice of God

There are some who believe this messenger is Christ. They usually refer to the phrase “my witnesses” in Rev 11:3 as a basis for this belief. Throughout the Bible angels spoke for God and so this would not be unusual language for an angel who is on an assignment from God. The language of the oath that is spoken next, stands as an equal evidence against this being Christ. Verse 1 says clearly this was “another mighty angel.” There is no justifiable reason to change this from an angel to anyone or anything else.

What are some of the reasons you have heard people give for God’s instruction to “seal up” this portion of the vision?

Why do you believe God did not want it written down or shared with others?

Revelation – Latter Times - 06

An oath of the great announcement

Read Revelation 10:5-7 and make notes:

The messenger swears by:

- .him who lives forever
- .who created heavens and the things of heaven
- .who created the earth and the things of earth
- .who created the seas and the things of the sea

The great announcement is proclaimed: “there will be no more delay.” This is the climax of man’s history and is a mystery of God. The ungodly should have accepted the message of the prophets. The ungodly should have accepted the warning of the first six trumpets.

Read Romans 8:18-22; Hebrews 11:13-16; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22 and make notes:

Amidst the destruction and desolation which will cause the whole world to fall into despair, will be the hope and exciting expectation by those who are God’s Children. We have the promise of a “new” heaven and a “new” earth that will endure before the Lord. While the physical things around us are being methodically destroyed, we know that even this is not the end. We will be given a new and better place to live. Wow!

Why do you think God had it written in Rev 10:7; “just as he announced to his servants the prophets?”

Revelation – Latter Times - 06

Bitter and sweet sides of the great announcement

Read Revelations 10:8-11 and make notes:

“Take the scroll” is representative of the deliberate acceptance of God’s Word. “Eating” the scroll is a common prophetic phrase which represents the person taking into his being the message of the scroll. The message becomes a part of his being and his lifestyle. The message and the messenger can no longer be separated. No one who accepts Truth can remain the same afterward. But the reverse is also true, no one who refuses the Truth can remain the same afterward.

Note three things in this text:

#1

John is told to take the book. The Word of God is never forced upon us. If we are to receive the Word of God, then we must act upon the invitation.

Read Acts 17:11; Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:16 and make notes:

Since God never forces his word upon us: Where does this leave us?

Are we to wait for God to “tackle” us and give us his word?

Are we to take the attitude that “if God wants me to have his word, then he will make sure I get it?”

Are we to put forth some personal effort (“take”) to obtain God’s Word?

Revelation – Latter Times - 06

#2

John is told to consume (eat, take in) the book. The book is both bitter and sweet. We all need to hear the message of both:

- .death and life
- .heaviness and joy
- .bondage and freedom
- .destruction and reconciliation
- .damnation and deliverance
- .corruption and perfection
- .judgment and salvation
- .hell and heaven

Read Ezekiel 2:9-3:4; Isaiah 30:8-11; Proverbs 16:24-25 and make notes:

If we are hearing the “real word” of God; how can we tell?

#3

John is told to proclaim the whole message. Nothing is to be left out, the whole truth must be proclaimed.

Read Acts 5:20; Jeremiah 1:7; Ezekiel 2:7; Ezekiel 3:17 and make notes:

In what way does these verses from outside the book of Revelations help to understand this text from Revelation?

Revelation – Latter Times - 06

If we are sharing God's Word with others, what must we be sure to do?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

Read Revelation 11:1-2 and make notes:

Read Zechariah 2:1-5 and make notes:

The vision of having someone measure the temple is not a new or strange concept.

If this is speaking literally of the temple in Jerusalem, then it is imperative that this temple be rebuilt, or built. But there are basically five temples mentioned in the Scriptures. Which one is it that is to be rebuilt (or built) to fulfill this prophecy?

- .1 Kings - Solomon's temple – destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 587 B.C.
- .Ezra - Zerubbabel's temple – desecrated and dedicated to god of Jupiter
by Antiochus Epiphanes 170 - 168 B.C.
- .John - Herod's temple – destroyed by Titus 70 A.D.
- .Revelation - temple of Tribulation
- .Acts (and Ezekiel chapters 40-43) – temple of the millennium

Read 2 Samuel 8:2; 2 Kings 21:13; Lamentations 2:8 and make notes:

As revealed by the above Scriptures, measuring has been used a number of times for the purpose of bringing about judgment.

There are those who believe the purpose for measuring the temple is for judgment. Why would the Gentile court not be measured for judgment and only the Jewish court?

Some believe the measuring of the temple means the Jews and the temple will be marked and spared from the attacks of the anti-christ. This interpretation is difficult to reconcile with 2 Thessalonians 2:4 where the anti-christ is predicted to enter the temple.

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

Some believe the temple is symbolism referring to the temple made of living stones, consisting of all believers. This interpretation is difficult to reconcile the measuring of the Jew but not the Gentile portion of the temple.

Some believe the measuring indicated the number of the Jews who will be saved can be measured but too many Gentiles will be saved to count. This appears to be a tremendous stretching of the Scripture to come to this interpretation. Since nothing more is said regarding the measuring of the temple, we simply do not have enough evidence to come to a satisfactory conclusion regarding the measuring of the temple and the things within it.

What is the best interpretation of “measuring the temple?”

We find metaphors mixed throughout the book of Revelations. For example, the Lamb standing up, and yet the Lamb is dead or slain. The holy city and the temple are used interchangeably, both referring to the church. If the “temple” being measured is the whole church, then it is those who are unbelievers who are not counted.

It is not uncommon for Bible prophets to use symbolic actions to dramatize predicted events. Isaiah walked naked and bare foot to symbolize the coming Egyptian captivity by the Assyrians (Isaiah 20). Ezekiel dug through the wall and carried his luggage through the hole to symbolize the coming exile (Ezekiel 12). Agabus bound his hands and feet to indicate what was going to happen to Paul (Acts 21).

Read Matthew 24:15; Daniel 7:25; Daniel 9:27 and make notes:

In the middle of the week could easily match the 3 ½ spoken of in Revelation since this is the middle of seven. It at least matches the “time, times, and half a time” recorded in Daniel 7:25 above. Daniel was referring to the last week of his seventy weeks. Christ, in Matthew 24, says he is referring to Daniel’s weeks. Daniel says the beginning of his second half of that last week is the abomination of desolation – “abominable idols.” Christ elaborated on Daniel’s seventieth week. Christ called this time the “beginning of birth pains.”

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and make notes:

There will come a time - when the anti-christ will stand in the holy place. The anti-christ apparently will sit/stand in the “holy place”, or the temple of God, and declare that he is able and willing to meet the needs of the world’s people.

According to numerology of the first century church era, three and one half would represent an indefinite number. To declare something as lasting three and one half years would be saying it would last an undetermined, or indefinite, time. No one knows how long it will be. If the message is hidden within the meaning of the numerology of that day, then the time of the two witnesses would be an indefinite time period. The time of the temple being trampled would be an indefinite time period.

There is a large number of people who take this time period to be a literal count of time. For some this time period is not a literal time but simply a symbolic length of time – “the time of the Gentiles.” Others believe it refers to a time when each day represents one year, thus giving 1,260 years. The problem with this interpretation is in finding a majority of those who hold this position to agree on when this 1,260 years begins.

Is the 3 ½ years a literal time span or a figurative time span?

Two Great Witnesses

Read Revelation 11:3-4 and make notes:

In Judaism two witnesses are required to establish a testimony and to obtain a verdict.

Many believe the 42 months the Gentiles will trample the Holy City is the same period of time as the 1,260 days the two witnesses will prophesy. If the 3 ½ years mentioned earlier are to be taken as symbolic then it would be consistent interpretation to take the 1,260 days as symbolic as well. If, however, the 3 ½ years are taken as literal then the same should be done with the 1,260 days.

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

God is sending two prophets who will preach and prophesy 1,260 days. During this three and one half years, if anyone should harm them, he will be put to death. This reveals the importance God puts on their mission. These two will have great power and authority for their allotted time. Their clothing (sackcloth) is the clothing of one who is in mourning.

This is a real effort to get people to turn to God before He must destroy this wickedness. God does not desire that any should perish and how merciful He is to allow time for another effort to get men saved before He has to do what must be done.

The power they have is given to them by God. They have been raised up for a specific time and a specific set amount of time. They are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands. Some believe this could be the two great witnesses; Joshua and Zerrubbabel mentioned in Zechariah chapters 4 and 5.

Read John 15:16; Acts 9:15 ; Acts 26:16 and make notes:

This is an important note:

- .(1) it is God who sends, commissions, and empowers us to bear witness
- .(2) it is God who establishes the specific time and the duration of ministry
- .(3) it is God who makes the ministry fruitful like the olive tree and to shine like the lamp stand

Some believe the lamp stands are the Old and New Testaments. This would typify the Jewish and Christian communities, or all of God's children.

Olive trees were the major source of oil in the area at the time this was written. Oil symbolized the presence of God's Spirit. The two olive trees may symbolize a truth concerning the church: The power and authority for effective witness lies in the Spirit of the Lord.

What is the significance, if any, of the prophets being given 3 ½ years to prophesy?

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

What do you think is the significance of the “two olive trees” and the “two lamp stands” ?

The Two Witnesses Have Great Power.

Read Revelation 11:5-6 and make notes:

Read Acts 1:8; Acts 4:33 and make notes:

Some people believe the language of V5 and V6 lean more toward angels than human ministers. Some believe the two ministers are the Old and New Testaments. Some believe the two ministers are Enoch and Elijah. Some believe they are Elijah and Moses. While they probably are not Elijah and Moses, at least we must agree that these messengers have power that reminds us of Elijah and Moses. The power to perform miracles and to control the rain in a manner like that of Elijah. Releasing plagues on earth much like those released by Moses.

Some believe the two witnesses are the Law and the prophets. Some think they are the Law and the Gospel. Some believe they are actual people whom some identify as Enoch and Elijah and others say Elijah and Moses. Some people even believe one of the two witnesses is Christ. Verse eight says “their lord” and this is enough to say that neither of these witnesses is Christ.

The language of the overall text has to be twisted and manipulated considerably to make these two witnesses anything other than two human ministers. These two witnesses were not only handled, heard, and hated, but they are killed and the passage speaks of their dead “bodies.” This is inappropriate language applied to angels.

During the allotted time of their ministry, anyone who tries to harm these two witnesses is “devoured” by the fire that comes out of their mouths. Does this mean literal “fire” or is this referring to the “words” spoken by these witnesses?

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

The Two Witnesses Are Persecuted And Killed By The Beast.

Read Revelation 11:7-10 and make notes:

At the end of their ministry, the beast will overcome and kill them. Their bodies will be allowed to lie in the street for three and one half days. The world will not only refuse to bury them but will rejoice in their death and make it a time of celebration.

Read John 16:20 and make notes:

The beast comes out of the bottomless pit and kills the two witnesses. It is worth noting that this beast was unable to kill the witnesses until they had completed their assignment given to them by God. The anti-Christ will attack and work hard to discredit them but will be unsuccessful to stop them until their work is completed.

Men's minds will be so seared by the hot irons of sin that they will not see that they have killed those whom the Lord sent to deliver them from death. They will unknowingly be rejoicing and celebrating their eternal commitment to Hell.

Their ministry message is apparently very effective. Leaders from all over the world will hate them. Some type of international media coverage appears to be indicated by this passage. The world will witness their dead bodies lying in the streets.

To the ancient mind, to be denied burial was one of the greatest acts of indignity!

This reveals the enormous power and control the anti-christ will have. Can you imagine the world allowing the leader from any nation today getting away with killing one of the now known international spiritual leaders and leaving their dead body in the street for days? No doubt many national leaders would speak out against such an atrocity and some type of international action would be taken against the nation that did such a thing. And yet this passage tells us the anti-christ will have support from all over the world for this hideous act.

The great city where these two witnesses are killed and allowed to lie in the streets is called spiritual Sodom and Egypt. A place embracing and promoting immorality like Sodom and a place that abused and killed God's chosen people like Egypt. "Great" city seems to be emphasizing the level of wickedness of this city.

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

When we think back over human history at those who have massacred millions of people, it is sickening. The likes of Nero, Hitler, Stalin, and come contemporary dictators who have killed people simply because of their genealogy is just a glimpse of the nature of the anti-christ (beast). Picture, if you can, someone like these who does in fact have control over the whole earth. The millions killed would certainly become tens of millions slaughtered.

Consider their dead bodies being allowed to lie in the streets for 3 ½ days. If the days represented years, this would indeed be remarkable regarding their dead bodies. Would not these bodies decay in 3 ½ years? It is probably best to interpret this text as speaking of a literal 3 ½ days as the span of time. This remains most consistent with the interpreting of the rest of the book of Revelations.

Who is the Anti-Christ – The Beast?

The Two Witnesses Are Resurrected.

Read Revelation 11:11-12 and make notes:

When the three and one half days are ended, the two prophets will miraculously return to life. The world will witness this miracle. Then the two will ascend up into Heaven before the eyes of the world. They will go before the throne of God to bear witness.

Taking a human life is the action of last resort, or the maximum punishment man can extend toward another man. How helpless we would feel against those who are resurrected! What could we do to those who will not remain dead? Are we to keep killing them over and over? We realize we are destined to be defeated by those we cannot permanently kill!

The resurrection of God's witnesses is a solid statement that God holds the ultimate authority over life AND death!

The two witnesses are resurrected and taken to heaven. Can the whole world witness their return to life? By means such as television and satellites, yes they can! Actually, the Scripture doesn't tell us how many witness their resurrection or their being taken to heaven. If they have been televised for three days lying in the street, the whole world could see it happen. But it's just as likely for it to have become "old news" after 3 days and few would be watching even if it was still being televised.

Revelation – Latter Times - 07

However many or few did observe this great miracle, and however many only heard about it, there was an immediate effect. Can you imagine the great fear that would begin to swell up when the witnesses come back to life? Especially for those who had rejoiced at their death and had celebrated their dead bodies being allowed to lie out in the open street instead of being buried?

The Two Witnesses Are Vindicated.

Read Revelation 11:13-14 and make notes:

The earthquake, that signaled their resurrection, killed 7,000 people. An interesting statement is found in this text; “the survivors gave glory to God!” Does this mean they were saved?

Is the 7,000 people a tenth of the population of that city?

The three years of their ministry is but a shadow of the ministry of Jesus. The remaining one half year will be that of the beast making war against and overcoming them. Their three and one half days of death in open public will be their testimony before the throne of God to bring righteous judgment upon their murderers.

The world had in a very real sense deified evil in the killing and in the rejoicing over the death of God’s witnesses. This is very close to the unpardonable sin. The death of God’s servants, or martyrs, did not cause the people of the world to turn to God. But the resurrection of God’s servants did cause some of the people of the world to give God glory.

God has now released two of the final three Woes of which the angel earlier had announced - and now it is time for the final Woe.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

Read Revelation 11:15 and make notes:

The seventh trumpet sounds and there are voices proclaiming the end of the world and the everlasting reign of Jesus. These things are not at this very moment but will come about through the events of the seventh trumpet. This seventh trumpet consist of seven stages or vials of wrath.

The sounding of the seventh trumpet announces a truly decisive time has been reached. This is the time of judgment. In a very real sense, the remainder of chapter eleven is a summary of what is to come. It is only natural to expect to hear the third “woe” be declared at the sounding of this seventh trumpet. Instead of the third “woe” we here a declaration being made.

What a monumental declaration it is in verse 15: “The kingdoms of this world HAS BECOME the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.” In the original Greek of this text is all past tense. It is stated as something that has already occurred. The literal Greek wording is “The rule over the world became our Lord’s and his Christ’s and he shall reign forever and ever.”

This text either looks ahead to a time when all the earthly kingdoms are handed over to the Lord, or it declares all earthly kingdoms as already belonging to the Lord even though others appear to be in control. Basically this verse appears to be affirming the great eternal reign of God.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:6 and make notes:

In our time, we tend to see human governments having rule and authority over the earth, making laws, giving some work and denying work to others. While many earthly governments down through history have specifically tried to further the personal gain of a particular person or family, there have been a few that actually thought they could make this a perfect world in which to live. All earthly governments are weak and imperfect. None are able to bring utopia into a reality.

Read Daniel 2:44; Luke 1:32-33; and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

For those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior, utopia will one day become a reality.

What do you think it means in verse 15, where it declares “all the kingdoms of this earth has become the kingdom of our Lord? What kingdoms of this earth? Will heaven come down to earth?

Read Revelation 11:16-17 and make notes:

Many people believe these are the same elders mentioned in chapter 7 of Revelation. They are undoubtedly the same 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4:4. Some believe these elders are an angelic order; much like the counterpart of God’s people here on earth throughout all the ages.

The elders around the throne of God respond to this declaration as though they accept it to be true and real. They fall on their faces before God and worship him. They declare praises to God specifically for being the “Almighty” God and for being the One “who is and who was.” Many translations of the Bible have “who is, who was, and who is to come.” The original Greek does not have “is to come”; only “who is and who was.” This seems the appropriate statement since God’s coming back is the present situation in this text. It is an established fact, “he is.”

It is important for us to note that God has never ceased to reign. At different times, it may appear that God is no longer reigning, but some person or group of persons is reigning. It may also appear at times that Satan and his angels are reigning. Even though for a season, God reigned through Jesus Christ, God has never ceased to reign. His reign is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting.

Read Luke 1:37 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

As the Almighty, he deserved to be the Lord, the Master, and the Ruler of all lives everywhere. He deserved praise because he was the Creator and Maker of all. He deserved to be praised because he was omnipotent which means he is all powerful; there isn't anything good and decent that he cannot do or every will be unable to do.

Read Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16 and make notes:

Read Revelation 4:11 and make notes:

Read Hebrews 7:3 and make notes:

As the One “who is and who was”, he deserved to be praised because he is the only one who is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. All else has been created by him and while we may exist with him forever, we all have a beginning point. He is to be praised because he not only exist at this time, but has always existed, and always will exist.

He is also worthy to be praised because he has taken control of the earth from those who are of the world and again taken reign over that which is rightfully his. Even though man, in his ignorance, handed the earth over to Satan, neither is able to keep it from God, the Almighty. No wonder the elders did not hesitate to worship God and to praise at the good news that has just been declared!

What is your attitude regarding God's reign and this earth?

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

Read Revelation 11:18 and make notes:

The declaration in this verse is of no small consequence. The time has come for “judging the dead,” and for “rewarding your servants,” and for “destroying those who destroy the earth.” The time has come for “judging,” “rewarding,” and “destroying.”

Verse 18 clarifies the decisive nature of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. It is interesting that a time of rewarding “your servants the prophets” is declared but it also says “and your saints.” Surely, if the text stated “reward your saints” this would be all inclusive of every believer. While every believer is not a prophet, every prophet (of God) is a saint. There must be a reason why God specified a time of reward for “the prophets” and a time of reward for “saints.”

Could it be that the “prophets” will be judged by a higher standard of obedience than the “saints” at large?

Could it be that while the prophets may have accomplished greater works than the average saint, their level of obedience would be the same?

Is the reward of the prophet going to be greater than the reward of the saint?

Is it that the reward of the prophet will not be greater than the reward of the average saint, since they only did what they were asked to do?

Read Matthew 10:41 and make notes:

What do you think is the “prophet’s reward” as compared to the “righteous man’s reward?”

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

Read John 3:36 ; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 5:6 ; Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:31-32;
2 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 3:7 and make notes:

Is all this talk about judgment referring to a literal judgment or is it symbolism for something?

Read John 5:27; 1 Peter 4:5; Acts 10:42; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 4:5; John 12:48 and make notes:

There is an appointed day for this appointed Judge to make his judgments. As far as fleshly man is concerned, it will be the “last” day. The appointed Judge, Jesus, will hand out rewards for the righteous and punishments for the wicked.

Read Matthew 16:27; Jude 1:14-15; Ephesians 6:8 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

The godly people, regardless of the amount of persecution they might receive on earth, will be rewarded by God.

The ungodly people, regardless of the amount of success and freedom they might receive on this earth, will be punished, and everyone will be reward or punished according to what they have done, whether it be good or wicked. All deeds, all lifestyles will be judged. No one will be exempt and no one will be omitted. Great or small, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, everyone will be judged by Jesus Christ.

Some important notes:

- .1 – don't join a person who rebels against God
- .2 – God's wrath is going to fall on those who rebel
- .3 – Everyone, including those who have died, will face God
- .4 – everyone will be rewarded according to their obedience or rebellion

How should this knowledge of the coming judgment affect our attitude and lifestyle?
(fear, reverence, etc.)

Read Revelation 11:19 and make notes:

When God's temple is opened, it reveals the ark of the covenant is located inside. The ark of the covenant was located inside the Holy of Holies. This was the inside of the inside of the tabernacle. No ordinary person was ever allowed to enter into this Holy of Holies. The ark of the covenant was kept out of the sight of ordinary people. Even the High Priest was allowed only one day each year to enter into it's presence. That was on the Day of Atonement.

This text reveals there will come a time when God's Glory will be revealed to all of God's people. His temple will be "opened" and all of His people can come into the presence of the ark of the covenant. Another way of saying this is that the full glory of God will come upon man.

The ark of the covenant was originally a sign and a symbol of God's covenant with His people, the Israelites. God's covenant today is in Jesus Christ and with all who accept Jesus as their Savior. This includes every nation, every tribe, every person, who believes. This symbolism helps to remind us that God has not forgotten, and does not forget, His original covenant and promises. Regardless of the destruction, the terror, and whatever else may come, God will not break His covenant with His people. The symbol of His original covenant is still with Him and He will make it visible and available to all His people.

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

What can you identify as something worthwhile you received from this week's study?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times - 08

(this page for additional notes)

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

Chapter twelve is a major turning point in the Revelation. Up to this point the vision has been a series of sequential events for the most part. Before the seven last plagues are unleashed upon mankind, time and attention is turned toward giving an understanding of the underlying cause for what is about to happen.

Read John 15:20 and make notes:

Jesus warned during his earthly ministry that his followers would be persecuted in much the same manner as he was persecuted.

The stage is presented for the final conflict between good and evil. Some have pointed to the pagan religions of the world which have a very similar parallel account to the vision of the woman and dragon. They usually claim this is evidence John simply borrowed current cultural legends to write this portion of Revelation. Similar legends can be found in Greek mythology of the goddess Leto and the dragon Python; Egyptian mythology of Horus and the red dragon Set-Typhon; Babylonian mythology of Marduk and the monster Tiamat.

These similar and seemingly parallel accounts in pagan religions do not give evidence that John copied from them. It could be that the God who does not desire for any to perish could have given this same message to many peoples. Since this part of the vision is for the purpose of helping mankind to understand the reason behind these coming events, it is entirely reasonable that our merciful and gracious God communicated this message to many people, each in their own way. The message is what is important, not the specific images.

The conflict portrayed in this part of the vision is between the powers of heaven and hell rather than a specific individual and evil oppressors.

Read Revelation 12:1-2 and make notes:

The great drama begins to unfold with a great marvel being displayed in the sky. There appears a woman arrayed with the sun, crowned with twelve stars, and standing upon the moon.

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

Read Luke 21:11; Luke 21:25; Acts 2:19 and make notes:

The word “sign” is used in this text from Revelation in much the same way as it is used in these other N.T. passages. It is referring to a great spectacle. In other places in Revelation this word is used of the deceptive miracles of Satan. Also the fact that this is called “a sign” tells us we must interpret this as symbolic and not literally. This is called a “great” sign because of its importance or significance.

Read Galatians 4:26 and make notes:

There are those who suggest this woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus. There are too many supernatural things about this woman for it to be Mary. Others believe the woman is the Church. The problem with this interpretation is the Church did not give birth to Christ but Christ gave birth to the Church. Still others see this woman as the people of Israel, or the Old Testament covenant community. The problem with this interpretation is following the appearance of Christ the emphasis moves to the Church.

The woman in this verse is not Mary, the mother of Jesus. This woman is the covenant community of God’s people, or we might say the ideal Israel. In a number of Scriptures, the concept of Zion as the mother of the people of God is a common theme. It was always the concept that the Messiah would come out of faithful Israel. In the same chapter of this vision, the woman represents the covenant community of Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church. The people of God have remained one throughout all parts of redemptive history.

Read Psalms 104:2 and make notes:

God covers himself with a garment of light. It is in like manner that the woman is arrayed with the sun. Some people interpret the 12 stars as the 12 tribes of Israel. Others see them as the 12 apostles. The objections to these interpretations are the same as those applied to the woman. The moon beneath her feet indicates her dominion and the crown of stars indicates her position of royalty. This fits beautifully with the called out people of God. In the Old Testament this was the faithful Israelites. In the New Testament this is the faithful Believers from all nations.

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

Read Jeremiah 2:2 and make notes:

The world has and will on many occasions despise the true Israel, but God holds her as His radiant bride. Such an obvious contrast to the scarlet whore to be discussed later.

The crying out in pain depicts the eagerness of the expecting devout believers before the coming of the Messiah. The anguish of the mother who is ready to give birth is a good picture of the anguish of the pre-Christ believers.

What do you believe is the best interpretation of the woman in this vision and why?

Read Revelation 12:3 and make notes:

This radiant woman is about to give birth to a child.

Read Isaiah 26:17; Isaiah 66:7; Micah 4:10 and make notes:

Many times in Scripture Israel has been pictured as a woman in travail. In the Old Testament this was consistently referring to the nation of Israel. In John's writing this is referring to the true Israel in her pre-messianic state. The cries of travail are the agony of expectation in waiting for the arrival of the Messiah.

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

This wondrous vision is interrupted by the appearance of a great red dragon with seven heads. There have been many suggestions as to the identity of the dragon. For some it is seen as Imperial Rome. Others have suggested a variety of great enemies of mankind. We are not made to guess who this dragon is. He is identified in verse 9 and 20:2 as the Devil and Satan.

The popular contemporary picture of Satan is that of having two horns, a long pointed tail, and holding a pitch fork. This passage gives a very different picture; he is called a dragon. Calling Satan a dragon may be more descriptive of his actions and evil works than of how he looks.

Read John 8:44 and make notes:

The red color of the dragon indicates blood shed and speaks of the murderous nature of Satan. This nature is revealed clearly here as he lies in wait for the child to be born.

Read Psalms 74:14 and make notes:

The seven heads have been interpreted by some as the “seven deadly sins.” Others interpret them as the seven evil spirits. Still others have tried to make it indicate the lack of unity in Satan’s power (multiple heads).

The seven heads could be a symbol of completeness rather than a literal number of heads. This speaks of the universal power the dragon has over the earth. It could be a symbol of the completeness of his cunning and evil wisdom.

What message do you believe God is trying to communicate to us in this text of the dragon?

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

Read Revelation 12:4 and make notes:

The next scene in this drama reveals the dragon gathering a third of the stars and throwing them down to earth. There are a number of different interpretations of this scene. But one thing that would apply across the board is this cataclysmic event shows the tremendous power the dragon possesses. The casting down of a third of the stars probably signifies a great number rather than a literal count.

Read Jeremiah 51:34 and make notes:

Then we see the dragon standing ready to devour the child as soon as the woman gives birth. What a clear picture of the violent antagonism Satan has toward God's covenant community!

There are those who believe Satan has not yet been cast down to earth. They use this passage to support the idea that his casting down is in the future. Another passage frequently used to support this position is found in chapter one of the book of Job where it says Satan came before God to give an account of himself. This text doesn't say specifically that Satan was still in heaven. It only says he, along with all the angels, came to present themselves before God. This may or may not have been in heaven. Even if it was "in heaven," this might only mean that he had access into heavenly places as God permitted. The rest of the book of Job clearly indicates God's limiting Satan as to what he can and cannot do. If he is not yet cast down to earth, it is very difficult to explain his evil influence in the Garden of Eden.

The Bible is filled with episode after episode of Satan trying to destroy the offspring of the woman such as:

- .Cain led to kill Abel Genesis 4
- .Esau led to kill Jacob Genesis 27
- .Pharoah led to kill Israelite children Exodus 1
- .David's children led to kill each other and him 2 Samuel 13
- .Jehoram led to kill his brothers 2 Chronicles 21
- .attempt to kill all of Ahaziah's sons 2 Kings 8
- .attempt to kill all Jews Esther
- .Herod led to kill all Jewish male babies Matthew 2
- .Satan tempts Jesus Matthew 4
- .many people led to kill Jesus - gospels

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

What is the best interpretation of Revelation 12:4 ?

Read Revelation 12:5 and make notes:

Read Psalms 2:6-9 and make notes:

The radiant woman gives birth to a male child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. The Psalmist saw the messianic Son as one who was to receive the nations as an inheritance and break them with a rod of iron.

The vision moves directly from the birth to the crucifixion. The point is not about any of the events in between birth and crucifixion. The significant point is the successful completion of the messianic ministry totally foils the evil plans of Satan. This culminates in the male child being exalted and ascending to heaven with God.

Among Christians, we readily acknowledge Jesus' coming into the world for the purpose of saving us from death. This text reveals he had another purpose for coming. He came to rule. When we refuse to allow Jesus to be the Lord of our life (to rule us), we are literally going against the will of God and are violating the purpose of Christ. The knowledge that a child will rule the nations with a rod of iron is enough to cause Believers to experience great anticipation of this coming series of events.

Read Luke 22:69; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Peter 3:22 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

What, if anything, does this say to us about allowing Jesus to be the Lord or our life?

Read Revelation 12:6 and make notes:

Read Deuteronomy 8:2; 1 Kings 17:4 ; 1 Kings 17:6; Matthew 2:13 and make notes:

The woman flees into the wilderness to be nourished by God for 1,260 days. God's people have often experienced the life of flight from evil. Many teachers have tried to identify this flight into the wilderness with a specific time of persecution and retreat by the church. The point of this verse is more to do with the sustenance and provision of God for His people than the flight of his people.

The dragon, having failed to destroy the child, turns his destructive efforts upon the woman, the church but the church is protected in the wilderness.

Read Exodus 14:4; Hosea 2:14; 1 Kings 17:2-3; 1 Kings 19:3-4 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times - 09

To the Jewish line of thought of that day, the wilderness spoke more of a time of divine provision and intimacy with God. They saw the wilderness as a place somewhere short of the intended goal. Being in the wilderness is being on your way but not yet arrived at the destination. The wilderness was where God divinely provided for their needs until they arrived at the promised land.

This verse is not emphasizing wilderness as a time and place of hardship. It is reassuring God's people as they face what appears to be extreme hardship, or even martyrdom, that God has prepared a place of spiritual refuge for them.

The time of 1,260 days speaks of a long but undetermined amount of time rather than a literal counting of days. This is 3 ½ years - and 3 ½ is incomplete number being only ½ of seven. This time, times, and ½ time is that time span between the first and second coming of Christ.

What is your interpretation of Revelation 12:6 ?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation

Other section of the “The Latter Times:

Section 2 – 10 weeks - The Latter Times

10 – 12:7-8
11 – 12:10-17 5:6-7
12 – 13:1-10
13 – 13:11-18
14 – 14:1-20
15 – 15:1-8
16 – 16:1-21
17 – 17:1-18
18 – 18:1-24
19 – 19:1-16

Revelation