

REVELATION - THE LATTER TIMES

Section 2

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.

Section 2 – 10 weeks

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

(this page for additional notes)

Revelation – Latter Times – 10

Read Revelation 12:7 and make notes:

A great spiritual curtain has been pulled back allowing us to see the monumental battle that has been going on that is behind all the evil and ungodliness that is upon this earth. It has shown us how that great dragon, the devil, is determined to do all that he can to hurt the very heart of God.

Satan and his evil angels struggle against Michael and the angels of heaven.

Read Luke 10:18 and make notes:

Jesus had previously testified to having seen Satan fall from heaven. Some believe Jesus was speaking prophetically about a future event and others believe Jesus was speaking of an event that had already taken place.

There will be a great battle here on earth. However, the greatest and most important battle is the one which takes place in the spiritual realm. There are a number of horrible holocaust events that are recorded in history. These will all pale in comparison to the enormous holocaust that will be unleashed in this last time. This text in Revelations shows us clearly what is behind this holocaust that is launched by the anti-christ.

Who was Michael?

Read Daniel 10:13; Daniel 10:21; Daniel 12:1; Jude 1:9 and make notes:

Michael is presented as the prince as well as the guardian of God's people. He is the one who "disputed" with the devil over the body of Moses. In the Angelic realm, it would appear that Michael is the main opposition to the devil.

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Many people have a mental concept of a continuous battle between good and evil. If this is true, would the contestants be Jesus and Satan or would they be Michael and Satan. Why do you think your answer is correct?

Read Revelation 12:8 make notes:

Some refer to this as a description of Satan's original expulsion from heaven. This is not likely to be the original incident of pride which caused Satan to be removed from his position in heaven.

Others apply this text to Christ's victory on the cross. The wording of this text does not support this interpretation. It is Michael, the arch angel, rather than Jesus who battles Satan.

Taking the text at face value indicates a time after Satan's removal from heaven when he returned to fight his way back in. This may have in fact been immediately following his removal but the description doesn't fit the original incident.

Satan and his evil angels will attempt to do in this last time what they have always been trying to do; destroy Israel, or the people of God. Satan, in recognizing that God is about to end all human history, will hold back nothing at in trying to literally destroy every believer. Satan's attitude appears to be that everyone he can kill will not be able to accept the saving Grace of God. This in turn adds to the hurt of God's heart. It doesn't appear that Satan has anything directly against human beings, it is that human beings mean so very much to God. Satan seems to have God's heart as his main object of pain.

It is important for us to see the glorious outcome of this battle. Satan and his evil angels will be **DEFEATED!**

These Scriptures are believed by many to indicate Satan has access to heaven during the time of man's history. Whether you are one of those who believes Satan has had access to heaven during man's history or not, one thing becomes clear with this text. From the time Satan and his angels lose this battle, they will never have access to heaven again. Satan will never again be able to accuse the people of God.

This will be the final battle between good and evil. This battle will be Satan's final defeat. No more chances. No rematch. No appeal. No "Do Over".

Revelation – Latter Times – 10

Satan lost and any hope of returning to heaven is forever lost, “they lost their place in heaven.” This failed attempt explains the intense hostile attitude of Satan toward God’s people.

The spiritual Israel, all believers in Jesus Christ, will be suffering the most horrible evil that has ever been unleashed upon the earth. The holocaust of the anti-christ will perhaps be as terrible as all the historical holocaust added together. Satan will be doing everything that he can do to eliminate every believer from the earth.

What insight has this brought to you regarding why the events recorded in Revelations will come to pass?

Read Revelation 12:9 and make notes:

Satan is called “the great dragon. . . that old serpent.” This could be a reference to Genesis 3:1.

Who Was Satan Originally?

Read Ezekiel 28:11-15; Isaiah 14:12 and make notes:

In the KJV this is translated “Lucifer” which means “light bearer”; while in the RSV it is “Daystar.” Satan was not always the enemy of God and man. Satan’s original state was that of a beautiful angel who shined like the morning star. He was the “model of perfection. . . perfect in beauty.” He was adorned with every precious stone. He was anointed and ordained by God to be a “guardian cherub.”

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Satan Became

Read 1 Timothy 3:6 and make notes:

Lucifer became conceited, began to act and move in an attitude of pride, and fell under judgment.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:13 and make notes:

He was originally an angel of light and he continues to pretend to be one. Those who serve him are transformed to appear as “ministers of righteousness.”

Read 2 Corinthians 4:4 and make notes:

Blinding the mind speaks of deceiving someone. That beautiful model of perfection, called Lucifer, became conceited and filled with pride. This led to his being judged and being cast out of his original place in heaven. In his fallen state, he became a “masquerader” and one who deceives others.

Can you find any reasonable logic for Satan to attack God’s people with such determination when he was once the most anointed guardian cherub? And what message does this give to us as human beings?

Revelation – Latter Times – 10

Satan is from a Hebrew word which means “adversary.”
Devil is from a Greek word which means “slanderer.”

Revelations 12:9 tells us the “great dragon” is the “ancient serpent” who is called the “devil” or “Satan.” In the book of Revelation the “dragon,” “serpent,” “devil,” and “satan” are all referring to the same entity. This is repeated in Revelations 20:2. In the Old Testament when the Hebrew word translated “satan” is used without the article “the” it is referring to “an adversary.” When it is used with the article “the” it is referring to the person of “Satan.”

A similar usage can be seen in the New Testament.

Read Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; John 6:70-71 and make notes:

Jesus referred to Peter as “adversary” because he was going against the will of God concerning the current situation. Jesus did not say that Peter had become “the Satan.” Jesus certainly recognized Judas as such and called him a “slanderer.” Jesus did not say that Judas had become “the Devil.”

Read Matthew 13:39 ; 1 Peter 5:8; Matthew 4:1 and make notes:

He also became known as “devil” because he proved himself to be a slanderer of man. A thin line exists between accusation and slander.

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Read Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 13:19; Matthew 13:38; John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 6:15; Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15 and make notes:

Revelations 12:9 great dragon
Ancient serpent
Deceiver of the whole world

Revelation 12:10 accuser of the brothers

Revelation 9:11 Abaddon
Apollyon

“Abaddon” and “Apollyon” both mean “destroyer.”

Satan began with the name “Lucifer” which means “light bearer.”

He was described as :
being the model of perfection
adorned with every precious stone
full of wisdom
perfect in beauty
anointed guardian cherub

Later he was known by such names as:
Ruler of kingdom of the air – Ephesians 2:2
Prince of this world – John 12:31
God of this age – 2 Corinthians 4:4
Beelzebub (prince of demons) – Matthew 12:24
Belial – 2 Corinthians 6:15
Abaddon or Apollyon – Revelations 9:11
Great dragon – Revelations 12:9
Ancient serpent –

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...and he was described as:

adversary – Matthew 16:23

slanderer – John 6:70-71

enemy – 1 Peter 5:8

tempter – Matthew 4:3

evil one – Matthew 13:38

murderer – John 8:44

liar –

father of lies –

deceiver of the brothers – Revelations 12:9

What is your realistic concept of Satan today?

Satan has a two major goals in making war against God:

The first goal is to be to receive power and worship for himself.

Read Isaiah 14:12-17 and make notes:

This 5 pronged “I will” purpose statement reveals the intention of the heart of Satan to gain not only power for himself but also to receive glory and recognition.

Read Ezekiel 28:15-17 and make notes:

His second goal is to hurt God and cut him to the heart. Perhaps this is an attitude of revenge. God has already judged Satan and condemned him for his rebellion. Undoubtedly, the most effective way to hurt God is to harm those whom God loves dearly.

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An important thing to note concerning this overall plan of Satan. Christ Jesus has broken the power of Satan:

Read Matthew 4:1-11 and make notes:

Jesus overcame sin by not giving into Satan's temptations.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 and make notes:

Thus Christ overcame sin. He is righteous and more than just righteous; Christ is perfect.

Read Hebrews 2:14-15 and make notes:

Christ destroyed the devil's power of death. Christ was held by physical death, nor by spiritual death. He arose from death and ascended to the right hand of the Father in Heaven.

Read 1 John 4:4; Romans 8:31 and make notes:

How are we to overcome sin? Is it realistic to expect human beings to overcome sin?

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 11

Read Revelation 12:10 and make notes:

A voice is heard declaring the victory and the salvation are won. It is like a song that describes 3 divine historic realities: 1 – God’s Salvation; 2 – God’s Power; 3 – God’s Kingdom. And now the newly established reality; The Authority of Jesus Christ.

This voice is not one of the martyrs in Rev 6:9-11. It could be one of the elders since there is a repeated emphasis on the power. Some think “our brothers” rules out one of the angels. However, in Rev 19:10 an angel declares himself a “fellow servant” with John.

The great tribulation that has come and is about to come upon the earth is a direct result of the defeat of Satan in that heavenly conflict. But we are to know and to be aware that salvation, power, and the kingdom of God are very present realities.

History indicates “things which must shortly come to pass” have taken longer than John probably expected. The point of the message is not one of establishing a chronology. It is to reveal the cause behind all of Satan’s attacks upon God’s people.

The voice declares:

The great salvation of our God
God is ready to launch the glorious day of salvation
The day of redemption
To bring every believer into eternity
God is ready to save the whole world
Making a new heaven and new earth

Read 1 Corinthians 4:20 and make notes:

The great and awesome strength is demonstrated.
The great power of God’s Christ and Messiah is proven.

Read Revelations 12:10 from several different translations. Does this verse stir anything in your heart or spirit? If so, what?

Revelation – Latter Times – 11

Read Revelation 12:11 and make notes:

Before the Cross, the accusations that the Believers were disobedient had some merit. Since Christ consummated the supreme sacrifice and justified all believers, the accusations of Satan are no longer even tolerated. He is cast down. The Believers have overcome him by the blood of the lamb AND by their testimony.

Read Revelation 5:6-7 and make notes:

The Lamb is Jesus Christ.

Read Acts 4:20; 2 Timothy 1:8; Matthew 16:25 and make notes:

If we lose our life for Christ's sake we shall certainly save our life. We must not be ashamed to testify about our Lord. In fact, if we are truly saved, we "cannot help" but speak of what the Lord has done for us.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:4 and make notes:

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (worldly) weapons but they are mighty weapons with divine power for the pulling down of strongholds. To conquer Satan, we must use the same weapons as Christ:

- Be covered by the blood of the Lamb
- Share our testimony for Christ
- Be loyal to Christ even to the point of death

Revelation – Latter Times – 11

Since the rapture has not taken place, this song of victory is also a song of encouragement to the remainder of the Believers to also become overcomers.

How does this song encourage Believers still on earth?

Read Revelation 12:12 and make notes:

Since Satan has failed, then everyone in the heavens should rejoice and be glad.

The rise of the anti-christ is seen by some as part of God's Judgment upon the earth, or upon the people of the earth. Because the evil of this world has grown worse and worse, God allows man to have his own way and to simply run wild to the inevitable end of running wild; pain and destruction. Men will turn their attention and allegiance to a world leader who promises a type of utopia here on earth.

Read Revelation 12:13 and make notes:

The woman is the true, or spiritual, Israel. Having brought forth the true Messiah, Satan directs his hostility toward her.

When Saul was asked on the Damascus road "why do you persecute me?" it revealed to us that persecuting the church persecutes Jesus (Acts 9:4-5). Christ and the Church are inseparable.

Refer to Revelation 12:12 – Satan is full of fury and he knows his time is short

Refer to Revelation 12:13 – Satan pursues the woman

If Satan is full of fury and vigorously pursuing us, the Church, can we afford to be ignorant?
Can we afford to fail to be alert?

Revelation – Latter Times – 11

Read Revelation 12:14 and make notes:

The woman being given wings of eagles could symbolize divine deliverance and empowerment.

Read Deuteronomy 32:10-11; Exodus 19:4; Isaiah 40:31 and make notes:

The woman is enabled to make it to a place of spiritual refuge. In the time of persecution God protects those that are his. The wilderness can be symbolic of being detached from the world and being nourished by God.

The simple reading of this text doesn't indicate the "woman" was removed from earth, only that she was removed from the place of danger to a place of protection that had been "prepared" for her. If we think God must take his children from the earth to protect them, then we are underestimating the All Powerful God.

The "time, times, and a half time" have been interpreted in two basic ways: First, it is seen by some as simply a symbolic time "3 ½" representing an indefinite time period since it is half of 7, a perfect number. Secondly, it is seen by some as a literal 3 ½ specifying a determined length of time.

Those interpreting the 3 ½ as a specific number still differ as to the number it represents. For some, it is 3 ½ days. For others it is 3 ½ years. And for others, it is seen as a day representing a year, which means this is referring to 1,260 years.

If it represents 1,260 years, then it becomes important to determine when this time period begins. For some, it represents the a time beginning shortly after the ascension and ending sometime before the Destruction of Jerusalem. It is difficult to find a starting point where 1,260 years brings us to any event which would have meaning toward ending the wilderness experience.

If the time period is accepted as a literal 3 ½, and the conflict is accepted as between Satan and the Church, several potential meaningful applications can be made. It could be the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. It could be the 3 ½ years the messengers proclaim the gospel. It could be the 3 ½ days the messengers lay in the streets.

Revelation – Latter Times – 11

Some declare that if it is a symbolic reference then it has little chronological importance and has nothing more than a mystical meaning. They see this interpretation as leaving us with no prophetic meaning or purpose.

It is apparent from the text that the Holy Spirit has a purpose in sharing this information. If it is a symbolic reference to an indefinite time period, then it could easily be applied to the time from Jesus' ascension until the time of His return.

What do you believe to be the best interpretation of Revelations 12:14?

Read Revelation 12:15-17 and make notes:

The dragon is infuriated first because of his failure to destroy the woman. Secondly, he is infuriated because of his failure to destroy the Messiah (the man child). He now vents all of his frustration upon the “rest of her offspring” which would be believers in general. The Believers are the “brothers” of Christ.

Many believe this will not be just a local or national holocaust. This will be a world holocaust. What happened at the very worst time in the worst of the historical holocaust will be magnified many times over throughout the world at the same time. There will be no place on earth which is not experiencing the holocaust first hand.

Read Exodus 15:12 and make notes:

Satan will make every effort to flood God's people with tribulation after tribulation. Before any reasonable effort can be made to recover from one episode of persecution and suffering, Satan will pour another. God will use the earth to swallow up the flood of persecution (attacks of the anti-christ).

One interpretation of this could be that the natural disasters, and catastrophes will distract the anti-christ and get his attention temporarily off of the Believers. While his attention is diverted, a remnant is saved from the destruction. It is important to note this is in addition to the destruction that came as a result of the seals and also those of the trumpets.

Revelation – Latter Times – 11

There are those who believe there will be some nation or nations that don't go along with the anti-christ. These are the nations that provide refuge for the Believers that escape the destruction of the anti-christ while he is distracted by the earth's cataclysmic events.

Another interpretation of the earth swallowing up the attacks of the anti-christ is that the believers escape to the wilderness and thus avoid the destruction of the anti-christ.

If the "wilderness" is taken to mean a wild or desolate place, then it would have to be of enormous size. Considering today's helicopters, spy planes, and satellites, it is hard to imagine an area large enough or desolate enough to hide those escaping the attacks of the anti-christ.

If the "wilderness" is taken to refer to those in the divine provision of God (refer to lesson nine for this concept), then it would not require such a large area. It is simply referring to the divine presence, nurturing, and provision of God.

The attacks of Satan are always intended to be devastating. He sets out to destroy human life if possible and if not, then to at least destroy relationships. We are expected to stand fast and to overcome the attacks of the enemy and to proclaim Victory in Jesus.

Read Ephesians 6:10-11; Hebrews 2:14-15; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9 and make notes:

God has laid out the most simple outline for us to follow in being overcomers where the Devil and his schemes are concerned. First we must "submit" to God. Secondly we are to "resist" the devil by standing firm in the "faith." If we do this, then we will see Satan flee from us. This sounds better than waging war on Satan ourselves.

What do you believe to be the best interpretation of Revelations 12:15-17?

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

Revelation chapter 13 is an important key to understanding the whole book of Revelation. It is important to remember what has happened in chapter 12; because these two chapters make it possible to understand the rest of the book. This chapter exposes the anti-christ and his cohort who will help the anti-christ get so much control over the world.

To understand this chapter is to understand not only the Anti-Christ, but it opens our understanding to:

- .a. why the end times will have so much evil
- .b. why the judgments of God will fall
- .c. why God will end the world
- .d. how so many of the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in the end time

Read Revelation 13:1 and make notes:

This verse gives the image of Satan (the dragon) standing on the shore and watching as the beast, or anti-christ, comes up out of the sea. This image of the sea is explained in Revelation 17:15; the sea represents “peoples, multitudes, and nations.” The symbolism could be referring to the continuously disturbed social and political systems that roll in and out like the waves of the sea.

In the ancient world, the sea was often associated with evil. In light of this context, it would very appropriate to see the final enemy of God’s people coming up out of the world’s chaos and evil.

Read Isaiah 17:12-14; Isaiah 57:20-21 and make notes:

The anti-christ will arise from among the people! This is where it helps to remember what has been revealed in chapter 12. The world is experiencing increased violence, wars, terrorist activities, natural disasters, and disease. The people of the world are almost frantic in an effort to find and identify a leader. The anti-christ will present himself as just the person everyone has been looking for.

There are those who believe the description of the anti-christ is to be taken literal. This gives a very extraordinary image. It doesn’t seem likely that real people would willingly follow something that literally looks like the description given in this text. It is much more likely that everything concerning the anti-christ in this text is symbolic.

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

The “seven heads” is most likely symbolic of the complete knowledge and wisdom the anti-christ appears to have. (Seven is the number of completeness.) This could refer to one who is able to think quickly, make sure plans, respond rapidly to suddenly changing situations. Try to imagine the person you believe to have been the greatest leader of people in all of man’s history. The anti-christ will likely be many times greater in his ability to get people to do what he wants them to do. He will most likely be the most effective in getting others to give him unswerving loyalty. A seven headed beast is the appropriate symbol of the ultimate enemy to God’s people.

The “ten horns” is the same number of horns the dragon has. This is likely intended to symbolize the anti-christ being not only the representative of the devil by the embodiment of the devil.

The horns represent power and are most likely symbolizing nations. This probably means the anti-christ will be the head over ten nations. Horns pierce and tear in a cruel and vicious manner. This is probably symbolic of the fierce way this federation of ten nations will react to other nations.

The “crowns” represent authority. While each of these nations will likely have someone designated as it’s leader, this tells us the anti-christ is the real authority of these ten nations.

Read Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and make notes:

The anti-christ will be the abomination of desolation who will stand in the Holy Place. He will blaspheme God. He will be the man of sin who opposes all that is God.

Read Daniel 7:25 and make notes:

He will speak great and terrible things against God. Each of the heads has a blasphemous name written upon it. This symbolizes the completeness of the anti-christ’s blasphemy against God.

After a long time of severe disasters and tremendous suffering throughout the world, try to imagine how hard it might be to refuse to follow someone who appears to have so much charisma, great ideas; and everyone else is deciding to follow him.

How important will it be for Christians to be thoroughly familiar with God’s Word when the anti-christ comes on the scene?

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

How does Bible Study and Discussion with other Believers in a setting like a Home Group help prepare Christians for the arrival of the anti-christ?

Read Revelation 13:2 and make notes:

The anti-christ will have the swiftness to action like that of a leopard. He will be sure footed and not easily overthrown, like the bear. He will have great power in his mouth; the things he says; and will easily destroy those whom he comes against, like the lion.

There are those who believe the description of the anti-christ in this text is speaking of the same “beasts” Daniel saw in his vision; lion, bear, and leopard. There is much of the description of these beasts in Daniel’s vision that is not given in Revelation. Also, the beasts in Daniel’s vision most likely referred to empires which have already come and gone at this time. Babylon, the lion; Medo-Persia, the bear; Greece, the leopard.

Others see this beast in Revelation as the fourth beast in Daniel’s vision. This is more likely than the above mentioned interpretation.

Another view sees the beasts in Daniel’s vision as a foreshadow of what takes place in the last times. The beast mentioned here in Revelation is probably meant to represent the strength, power, and apparent stability of the anti-christ instead of pointing towards nations. This beast is the final manifestation of the deification of secular authority.

Some read verse two as saying Satan gives up his throne and power to the anti-christ. This isn’t at all true. Satan remains the master of evil. The anti-christ is subject to Satan. The power the anti-christ has is given to him by Satan. It is also Satan, who gives the anti-christ the throne and the authority he has.

Understanding that the supernatural spiritual forces of Satan are behind the anti-christ, helps to explain his extraordinary rise to power. Satan will give the anti-christ power:

- Of energy and spirit
- Of personality
- Of persuasion and influence
- Of worldly might

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

Read Revelation 13:3 and make notes:

The behind the scenes influence and manipulation is further revealed in this verse. The anti-christ receives what “seemed” to be a fatal wound. It doesn’t say that the wound was in fact “fatal” but that it seemed to be fatal. Satan makes it appear that the anti-christ has been killed and miraculously healed. This faked healing is important. It is referred to twice and both times it is used as if it gives credibility to the anti-christ (Rev 13:12, 13:14).

Man’s dream of a one world government will become a reality. The anti-christ will be the last ruler of the final government on earth.

Do you believe God still performs miraculous healing today? If He does, shouldn’t He receive praise, honor, and glory for doing so?

Does the fact that someone appears to have been miraculously healed qualify them to be a spiritual leader for others? Why or Why Not?

Read Revelation 13:4 and make notes:

This is an astonishing verse. People will not only worship Satan, but they will do so “because” he gave authority to the anti-christ. The anti-christ will be worshipped and exalted as well. To us today, it would seem almost absurd that someone who worship the anti-christ, especially if they knew the anti-christ was being prompted and empowered by Satan. In the very last days, people will know that Satan is empowering this one world leader and they will think this is acceptable.

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

Read Luke 4:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:13 and make notes:

In the last days, people will be lovers of themselves; having a form of godliness but denying it's power. Evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse. Very clearly stated, we are to "have nothing to do with them."

The anti-christ is apparently going to have great military might; "who can make war against him?" This would be in line with someone who is the head of ten heads of nations.

Read Revelation 13:5 and make notes:

The anti-christ will be able to say great and proud words. Unfortunately in the midst of his great and moving speeches as to how he can help the world during the painful times, he will be speaking blasphemy.

We are told here that the anti-christ will exercise his authority for 42 months, or 3 ½ years. It is important for us to remember that the anti-christ received his authority from Satan.

Read Revelation 13:6 and make notes:

Read Jude 1:9 and make notes:

It is interesting to note that Michael, and probably the rest of the heavenly host, will not slander Satan. But the anti-christ, empowered by Satan, openly blasphemes God and all those who live in heaven.

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

What is the message for the Believers today in the fact that the Heavenly beings will not slander Satan or his demons even though Satan and his followers openly slander God, and all who live with him?

Read Revelation 13:7 and make notes:

Just a side note at this point. Since the anti-christ is given power to make war against the saints, the rapture has not occurred at this point in time. The saints are still upon earth or else the anti-christ would not be able to make war against them and certainly would not be able to conquer them.

This text tells us plainly that the anti-christ will resort to religious persecution. He will increase his power by conquering “every” tribe, people, and nation. The word “every” speaks of just how powerful the anti-christ is going to become.

Read Revelation 13:8 and make notes:

The first statement declares “all inhabitants” of the earth will worship the beast, but then it is clarified as not literally “all” but “all whose names have not been written in the book of life” will worship the beast.

Read Exodus 32:32-33; Philippians 4:3 and make notes:

The concept of there being a divine register listing those who belong to God goes back at least to the time of Moses. The letter to the Philippians shows us that it was still a common belief in the first century Church. Reference to a register of names belonging to God is mentioned about 6 times in Revelation and the reference in 13:8 tells us this register of names belongs to the Lamb.

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

Some have tried to interpret verse 8 to say that the names of those in the book of life have been written there since the foundation of the world. This is then used to teach a version of predestination that declares those who are to be saved was determined in advance and our evangelistic efforts do not matter.

The straightforward reading of the Greek text will not support this interpretation. The text states simply and clearly that the Lamb has been predestined to be slain from the foundation of the world. It is the provision of the Believer's salvation that has been from the foundation of the world and not the selection.

Read Matthew 24:24 and make notes:

Everyone except the true Christians will worship the anti-christ. The true believers in Jesus Christ will not worship the anti-christ! Christians can support their government but not worship their government. The real Christians will be easy to identify in these last days. They will be the ones who remain steadfast and loyal in their faith in Christ Jesus.

How hard would it be for you to worship God if everyone in your county was openly worshipping Satan? What would you do?

Read Revelation 13:9-10 and make notes:

The contemporary interpretation of verse 9 might something like this: "Now hear this," or "Everybody listen up," or "Let me have everyone's attention."

There are those who believe verse 10 is to be interpreted to correspond to Jesus' words in Matthew 26:52; "all who draw the sword will die by the sword." A couple of Bible translations follow this view. While it is admitted that the interpretation of this text is not easy, this isn't the most simple reading of the original text and it is difficult to explain how this would require "patient endurance" and "faithfulness" on the part of the saints.

Revelation – Latter Times – 12

It is our human nature to want things to “just be over.” This is especially true when it comes to things which are not pleasant. The simple reading of the text is to say that there are some things that just have to come to pass before the end can be declared.

Read James 1:12 and make notes:

Some things simply must come to pass. The living through these things that must come to pass is what is going to require the saints to have “patient endurance and faithfulness.” Patience with steadfast endurance while persecution is occurring all around us. Faithfulness with a steady trust even though there is great turmoil and unrest on all sides.

Would it be easier for you to “patiently endure” what must come to pass if you understood what God’s Word says about the end times? Explain Why.

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 13

Read Revelation 13:11 and make notes:

The origin of the beast; he comes out of the earth. Many believe this symbolic of him coming from the common people. This would mean this “beast” wasn’t born into a royal family, or that he was from a wealthy family, or that he was selected from those serving in the high offices of some nation. If this is true, it would be easy to see how this “beast” would be able to have so many of the world’s people identify with him.

There are a number of people who try to make some significance out of the number of horns. Some think the two horns indicates he is trying to look like Christ. Others think the two horns indicates he has less power than the previous beast with ten horns. There probably isn’t any great significance in the number two of this description.

The description begins to explain why this person is referred to as a “beast.” He has two horns just like a little lamb. Hardly anyone would be afraid of a lamb. This may be symbolic that nothing about his appearance causes alarm. If this is the true interpretation then consider the following:

- .A. The beast will appear innocent, harmless, attractive, and maybe even lovable.
People may find themselves drawn to his appearance.
- .B. The beast will appear to be a follower of Jesus, The Lamb of God.
He may be a religious leader appearing clean and free of evil.

Read Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:18; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 and make notes:

Why would someone who appears so harmless be called a beast? Because at some point his voice is going to betray him. There will come a time when he speaks, it will be like that of a dragon. This means several things:

- .A. He will be telling lies instead of the truth.
- .B. He will be teaching the word of the anti-christ instead of God’s word.
- .C. He will be a spokesman for the anti-christ and not for God.
- .D. He will be promoting the policies of the anti-christ instead of Jesus.
- .E. He will be asking people to support the evil government instead of God.

Revelation – Latter Times – 13

Jesus warned us to be on the look out for wolves would come who will be dressed in sheep's clothing. This second beast will become a great motivator of the people. He will be able to unify the masses of people into a loyalty to the anti-christ and his government. He will probably hold the second highest position of authority in the whole world. He will sound and look like Christ for a season, but will eventually act like Satan.

What do you believe to be the best interpretation of Rev 3:11 ?

Read Revelation 13:12 and make notes:

The second beast exercised “all the authority” of the anti-christ. He “made” the people of the earth “worship” the anti-christ. This indicates the second beast will probably be a religious leader.

Reference is made to the apparent miraculous healing the anti-christ had received. This makes it appear that the second beast will be used by the anti-christ to entice and perhaps manipulate, if necessary, people into an allegiance to the anti-christ.

Read Revelation 13:13 and make notes:

This is a remarkable statement, especially in light of the great interest in miracles in our present generation. This should cause every Believer to consider carefully whether we are following more earnestly after God or following after signs and wonders.

Some believe this is an attempt to mimic the fire that fell at Pentecost. Since there is an absence of any similar result this probably isn't what is intended. It is more likely intended to mimic the fire that fell in Elijah's ministry. The anti-christ knows that the Spirit of Elijah is expected to precede the second coming of Christ. This fraudulent display is probably intended to lead the believers into a fatal trap by making them think this is what they have been watching for.

Revelation – Latter Times – 13

Read Revelation 13:14 and make notes:

This second beast will no doubt convince many of his approval as a divine spiritual leader since he is able to perform such great and wonderful signs. The signs and wonders will convince many that the worship and allegiance to the anti-christ is approved by God.

Read Deuteronomy 13:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:9 and make notes:

From the earliest of times when God's people were a "called out" people, we have been warned not to follow any false prophet that tries to get us to worship any other than the Lord God Most High. Paul also warned New Testament believers that the "lawless one" will come and perform the works of Satan in counterfeit miracles.

If someone came upon the scene today who performed great miracles, how many of the church people of our community would follow them? Why do you think so?

Read Revelation 13:15 and make notes:

Who will be able to resist following a world leader that can cause an inanimate object like a image to come to life?

Obviously some people will be able to refuse to follow such illegitimate miracles. This second beast causes everyone to be killed who refuses to worship the image of the anti-christ. Persecution is the order of the day for those who fail to show loyalty to the anti-christ and his government.

Revelation – Latter Times – 13

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 and make notes:

This universal worship will be centered around supernatural power. The end times will be filled with deception and saturated with counterfeit Christian practices. Our True God is a god of miracles. For those who have come to seek the awesome miracles more so than the intimate fellowship with God, they will find these actions of the second beast to compelling and will be led into destruction.

Do you find any encouragement in Rev 13:15? If so, what is it?

Read Revelation 13:16-17 and make notes:

The listing of opposites (such as small-great, rich-poor, free-slave) probably are intended to indicate the totality or the thoroughness of the beasts control. The mark being placed on the forehead may be a contrast or challenge to the seal the Believers received.

The enforcement of receiving a mark in order to buy or sell indicates a one world currency or economic system. This may also indicate the anti-christ, and or the second beast, is able to bring some economic stability to the chaotic financial world. If so, then this alone would cause many to pledge their allegiance to him.

There was a time in ancient Rome when the citizens were required to show their first allegiance was to the state. Once each year, they had to bow in worship to the state in the presence of some local government authority. When they had done this and proved their first allegiance to the state, then they were given a certificate that was good for one year. Even if this were the only time in man's history when such a thing was required, it is enough to let us know that Satan is not trying something new in the end times.

Revelation – Latter Times – 13

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

There are many theories as to what the “mark” will be. The more important issue is that economic controls will be used to cause people to give their loyalty to the anti-christ. The Scripture says only that the mark “is the name of the beast or the number of his name.”

How difficult this may be for the Christians who allow themselves to become motivated by finances. The Scriptures are clear about God intending for His children to have all their needs met. He is Jehovah Jirah, our Everlasting God who is our provision and he is El Shaddai, God who is more than enough. The danger is in allowing the obtaining of finances to be a higher priority than being obedient to God.

What are some of the explanations you have heard about the “mark” being placed on the “right hand” and the “forehead” ? Which one do you believe to be correct?

Read Revelation 13:18 and make notes:

The number “666” is perhaps the best known number of all literature. Some believe no one can know what this number means. This verse says we should calculate the number of the beast if we have insight. We wouldn’t be told to calculate the number if it cannot be known or understood.

There are a great number of interpretations as to what the number “666” actually refers. Scripture doesn’t say very much about the number itself, so we should be careful as to what we say about this number. It is “man’s” number. The number of man according to biblical numerology is the number “6”, one number short of perfection. Man’s number is incomplete and short of God’s glory. The beast’s number is the same as man’s number; short of perfection and short of the glory of God.

False religion is the height of man’s imperfection. “666” can be representing imperfection perfecting imperfection.

Revelation – Latter Times – 13

Regardless of how much power a person may demonstrate, how much wisdom they display, or how lovable they appear; they are never worthy of worship. This belongs to God and to him alone. It is imperative that every Believer be prepared to respect their leaders and support their governments, but to reserve worship for no one but God. This will become a matter of life and death in the end times; eternal life or eternal death.

What are some of the interpretations regarding to whom the number “666” is referring? Which one do you believe to be correct?

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

Right at the time when it appears to be the height of the reign of the beast; Christ returns with all the resurrected saved.

Read Revelation 14:1 and make notes:

The Lamb is Jesus Christ. He is the Lamb who was slain for our sins.

Mount Zion was another name for Jerusalem. This is most likely referring to the Heavenly City of God. This 144,000 have been sealed with the name of the Lamb and the name of the Father written upon their foreheads.

Is this a literal 144,000 or is it a symbolic number?

Do the 144,000 have two names on each forehead; one being the name of the Lamb and the second being the name of the Father?

Do the 144,000 have one name on their forehead, the Lamb and the Father having the same name?

Do the 144,000 have one name on their forehead, the ones from the Old Testament era having the name of the Father, and the ones from the New Testament era having the name of the Lamb?

There is at least a marked contrast between the followers of the Beast and the followers of Christ. The beast marked his followers with his name, or 666, while the Believers are marked with the name of the Lamb and the Father.

Read Revelation 14:2 and make notes:

The sound of “rushing waters” – forceful, mighty, and drowning out every other sound.
The sound of a “loud peal of thunder” – rumbling, stirring, demanding attention.
The sound of “harpists playing their harps” – restful, calming, fulfilling.

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

Read Revelation 14:3 and make notes:

A “new song” known only by the 144,000. Only the redeemed will have the privilege of singing this “new song” to the Heavenly Father. Not even the angels will be allowed to learn the song.

Read John 17:15 and make notes:

That they have been “redeemed” from the earth does not necessarily mean they have been physically removed from the earth.

What do you believe to be the best interpretation of the 144,000 mentioned in this text?

Read Revelation 14:4-5 and make notes:

Some believe this refers to a literal 144,000 who have never married and faithfully remained pure and virgin. If this is true, then it implies that sexual relationships within marriage are defiling. This is contrary to the Word of God. God made male and female for one another.

Read Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:31-32 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

The apostle Paul used the marriage relationship as an illustration of the intimate relationship God desires to have with Believers. Others interpret this to mean, while they may have married, they never defiled themselves with adultery or fornication. Some believe the reference to “first fruits” means these are Jews who were saved.

This 144,000 are “blameless” and they have “kept themselves pure.” Does this mean they have never sinned or does it mean that they have been forgiven and cleansed?

Read 2 Kings 19:21; Jeremiah 18:13; Amos 5:2; Jeremiah 3:6; Hosea 2:5; 2 Corinthians 11:2 and make notes:

Throughout the Old Testament, the people of God were referred to as “virgin” and when they sinned they were said to be guilty of adultery. Paul used this similar analogy in the New Testament of the church being promised to one husband, Christ.

The statement that these were virgins and pure is probably better interpreted symbolically to mean they are not guilty of sin at this time. To say they have “kept” themselves pure could mean that these are the ones who readily repented when they did sin. Having practiced a continual confession they “kept” themselves pure.

That they “follow” the Lamb probably does not mean they follow Christ as he wanders around heaven. The text of verse 4 can easily be interpreted in the past tense to say they “followed” him. This could mean these 144,000 followed the way of Christ while on earth.

Read Mark 8:34; Matthew 19:21 and make notes:

The first point is their fidelity.

The second point is their discipleship.

The third point is their sacrificial offering of themselves to God.

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

The phrase “first fruits” could mean a token offering from the very first harvested. But it can also mean they gave God first place in their lives over everything else. God was always given first place.

Read Revelation 14:6 and make notes:

An angel has the “eternal gospel” to proclaim in all languages, to all people. Does this mean the angel will himself proclaim the gospel message or will he instill this message into human beings who will proclaim it?

There are those who believe that evil will be so prevalent and powerful in these last days that mere human beings will not be up to the task of preaching the gospel message, so God will send angels to preach to man.

The intent of God was that all the world hear the gospel message:

Read Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8 and make notes:

Whether the proclaimer of the gospel is a heavenly angel or a human preacher, the real point being made here is that the gospel will be proclaimed right up the last moment. The gospel will be proclaimed to the whole earth and not a single person will be left out.

The First Angel Proclaims the Gospel!

Read Revelation 14:7 and make notes:

- #1 – fear God – reverence God
- #2 – give God glory
- #3 – the hour of judgment has come
- #4 – worship God the creator of all that is

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

We are now living in the day of grace. God tolerates to a certain degree the denial of Him and our rebellion; giving us a chance to repent. At this last day, it will no longer be a day of grace but a day of judgment.

The requirement to reverence (fear) God is from man's earliest relationship with God.

Read Deuteronomy 10:12; Matthew 10:28; Luke 1:50; Ecclesiastes 12:13 and make notes:

Reflect upon Deuteronomy 10:12, God speaking to the chosen people of old.
Then consider Ecclesiastes 12:13 as spoken through the world's wisest man, Solomon.
Then consider Revelations 14:7, as will be proclaimed in the last days.

What message does this convey to you?

Read Revelation 14:8 and make notes:

Throughout the Old Testament era, Babylon was the enemy of God's people. The name Babylon came to stand for:

- . corrupt political system
- . corrupt economic system
- . corrupt religious system

In the same way that "Jerusalem" stands for the city of God's people, "Babylon" stands for the city of the anti-christ.

The last days will be corrupt, evil, and murderous days. It will be a godless secular society of the anti-christ. This "Babylon" is just engaging in sin, she is "enticing" all nations to engage in her sinful ways and practices.

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

But the proclamation is made; Babylon has fallen!

The Second Angel Proclaims the Fall of Babylon!

Read Revelation 14:9-10 and make notes:

This is a terrifying passage for those to whom it applies. Those who do not repent and turn their lives to God will have the wrath of God poured out upon them. This is much worse than what the Beast declared would happen to those who did not worship the anti-christ. Those who refused to worship the anti-christ would be punished with physical death. This is declaring that those who do worship the anti-christ will be punished in an everlasting torment.

It is important to refer back to the message that the gospel WILL BE proclaimed to everyone before this day arrives. Man has received every opportunity to repent and those who have chosen to worship the beast and to receive his mark will have God's wrath poured out full strength upon them.

For these unbelievers to be cast into a burning pit in the presence of the Lamb also means these unbelievers can see Christ. How painfully horrible this must be; to see the one you denied and refused to believe in as you are placed into an eternal place of torment. They will know with certainty that Jesus was in fact the Son of God and the Savior of the world, but it will be too late to accept him at this point.

In Jesus' teaching about the rich man who died and went hell while the beggar, Lazarus, died and went to heaven:

Read Luke 16:23 and make notes:

There are those who believe this verse like the one in Revelation indicates those being tormented in hell will have their torment increased by being able to see the place of pleasure the saved are experiencing.

The Third Angel Proclaims the Doom of All Who Worship The Beast!

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

What do you think it means that these will have to drink the cup of God’s wrath “full strength?”

Read Revelation 14:11 and make notes:

Their torment will last “for ever and ever.” There will be no peace, no rest, no relief, and no end to the torment in hell.

If the Scriptures are true and if Christ Jesus is truly the Son of God, then we will be doomed to eternal torment if we reject Jesus. There is coming a day of separation. Those who do not believe in Jesus as Savior will be separated, not only from their families, but from God, from peace, from rest, from relief, from pleasure, and from provision.

Read Matthew 25:41; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:47-48; Matthew 3:12; Matthew 13:41-42 and make notes:

Read Revelation 14:12 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

The saints must remain faithful during these judgments and not give up. The people who escape the torment of hell are:

.1 – a saint who endures

The word “saint” means who is set apart or separated unto God. It means a person who has made every effort to separate themselves from attachment to things of this world. A true saint is one who endures in his commitment to God.

Read Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; James 1:12 and make notes:

.2 – keeps the commandments of God

Read Matthew 7:21; John 14:23; John 15:10; John 15:14 and make notes:

.3 - keeps the faith in Jesus

Read John 5:24; John 20:31 and make notes:

What do you believe to be the best description of the eternal place of torment?

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

Read Revelation 14:13 and make notes:

Read Romans 14:8; Philippians 1:21; Psalm 116:15 and make notes:

Read Revelation 14:14-15 and make notes:

There are those who believe the one sitting on the cloud “like a son of man” is Jesus. There is an argument against this view. The next verse tells of “another angel” coming out of the temple and in a loud voice instructing the one on the cloud. It would seem most inappropriate for an angel to instruct Jesus, especially with a loud voice.

Read Revelation 14:16 and make notes:

THIS IS WHERE THE RAPTURE OCCURS!

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

Read Matthew 13:30; Matthew 25:32 and make notes:

This symbolism in Revelation shows the earth being harvested and the believers being brought to heaven. The point being made is the distinction that God can make between those who are his and those who are pretending to be his and those who are definitely not his. He will be able to collect His saints from all the weeds of the earth. The actual event is described by the apostle Paul as a two step process.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and make notes:

When Christ returns to Rapture his living Saints, he will bring the resurrected saved with him. He did this, gave one last call for salvation, and now the 'rapture'. The glorious command is given for the Harvest of the earth to reaped. Christ reaps all the living saved from among the evil and wicked world.

Now that the rapture of God's people has occurred, the wrath of God will be poured out full strength upon all remaining inhabitants of the earth.

Read Revelation 14:17-20 and make notes:

Another angel swings a sickle and gathers from the earth all that remains. These are thrown into the "winepress" of God's wrath. The angel that gives the command to harvest the remainder of the people is the one who had charge of the fire "from the altar."

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

The seven bowls that are about to be poured out will describe the “winepress” of God’s wrath in detail. Each bowl that is poured out will be like one more turn of the winepress, putting increasing pressure on the contents.

What is the most enlightening thing you received from this lesson?

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 14

(this page for additional notes)

Revelation – Latter Times – 15

Read Leviticus 26:21 and make notes:

The Book of Revelation tells us there is coming a terrible time upon the earth. It uses some interesting, and sometimes frightening, descriptions regarding the events and times of this period.

During the time described by Trumpets sounding, a type of judgment was revealed with each trumpet except the seventh and last trumpet. When the seventh trumpet sounded, instead of another judgment a series of pictures were shown. First there was a picture of God's chosen people through whom the Savior of all mankind would come. Secondly, there was a picture of Satan trying to hurt God's heart by turning men's hearts to evil. Thirdly, there was a picture of the anti-christ gaining power and control over the people of the earth and unleashing the worst holocaust the earth has seen. Fourthly, there was a picture of Jesus triumphing over all the ungodly and evil; including a picture of the rapture of all the Believers.

Now that the Believers have been removed from the earth, the remaining judgments come in a fast and furious manner.

The seven seals affected only one fourth of the earth. This is a very small part and three fourths of the earth was spared. The seven trumpets affected one third of the earth. This is a larger part than one fourth but one third is still a small part and two thirds of the earth was spared. With the seven bowls, all of the earth is affected and no part of the earth is spared.

What is your opinion as to why this last series of judgments are so severe and affect everyone?

Read Revelation 15:1 and make notes:

Not only is it worth noting this declared to be a "great and marvelous sign" but it declares these seven plagues to be the "last plagues."

Just as in chapter 12 the woman and the great red dragon were called signs so is this scene of the seven angels. A sign is something that points to something beyond itself and in the bible is something that reveals a theological truth.

Revelation – Latter Times – 15

The fact that there are seven angels with seven plagues probably is intended to symbolize the divine completeness of this judgment against wickedness and unrighteousness.

This is a great place to stop and remember that God is not only a gracious and loving God but He is also a “just God.” These next scenes will be of God acting as a Just God instead of the Loving and Gracious God we see recorded in most of our Scriptures. But we must acknowledge that this is a legitimate view of our same Loving God. We need to recognize the grace He has demonstrated through the seven seals and first six trumpets. All of which appears to have been to prevent any from perishing and all to come to Salvation. Everyone had every opportunity to turn to Christ and so very many refused.

Read Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 3:2; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:22 and make notes:

The messages of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament have a constant common thread of calling people to repent and turn to God for forgiveness.

Since this is true, why do you think people have such a hard time accepting the judgments of God as being right and fair and just?

Read Revelation 15:2-4 and make notes:

Perhaps just as awe inspiring and somber as the vision of the seven angels coming from the temple of God, to the same degree is this scene glorious of victory and praise. Those who have emerged victorious over the beast are seen standing beside the crystal sea with harps of God and joining together to sing a song of praise to the holiness of God.

There are those who argue whether there are two songs being sung or just one. This argument takes us away from the important aspect and message of this passage. This song does not celebrate the judgment of God upon the wicked. It celebrates his righteousness and his redemptive acts toward man.

Revelation – Latter Times – 15

The Seven Letters made promises to those who would be overcomers. They will eat from the tree of life, be protected from the second death, receive hidden manna, have authority over nations, wear white garments, be honored by becoming a pillar in the temple of God, and will have the privilege of sitting with Christ. It is no wonder they break out into jubilant song!

There are a number of people who make something of the “sea of glass mixed with fire.” The fire does not necessarily have a specific interpretation such as judgment. It could symbolize the end of the “day” as is the view for a person standing on the shore as the sun sets upon the sea turns it red. The vision of fire in the crystal sea may serve no other purpose than to signify the level of splendor in this scene.

Also, it is helpful to take note that this is a vision and it speaks of something that looked “like” a sea and does not say that it is a sea.

What message do you receive from Revelation 15:2-4 ?

Read Revelation 15:5 and make notes:

Many believe the “tabernacle of the Testimony” refers to the inner sanctuary, or the Most Holy Place, or the Holy of Holies. If this is true, then this tells us these last judgments come from the Most Holy Place; the very presence of the heart of God. This is not a place of bitterness and revenge; but a place of grace mercy and love and yet at the same time a place of divine justice.

Read Revelation 15:6 and make notes:

Their robes being described as “clean” and “shining” speaks of the noble and sacred nature of their office. The “golden sashes” typically indicated a royal or priestly function. These are not simply servant angels, messenger angels, or even warrior angels; these are royal priestly angels that serve in the temple of God around about his throne. The fact that God selected these angels to carry out the next judgments speaks of the high place of reverence and importance he places upon these events. This is not simply a judgment being handed down by a judge.

Revelation – Latter Times – 15

What significance do you see, if any, in these last plagues being delivered by angels that come from the Most Holy Place in heaven?

Read Revelation 15:7 and make notes:

Some believe the symbol of bowls indicates there is to be no lid or covering on these judgments. There is nothing to stop them from being poured out. These judgments are a sure thing.

These seven bowls may very well be the third woe pronounced Revelations 11:14

Read Revelation 15:8 and make notes:

The glory and power of God were so manifested that no one could enter into the temple “until the seven plagues” were completed. No one will even be able to go before God to intercede on behalf of the world at this time.

Read John 3:36; Romans 1:18; Romans 2:8; Ephesians 5:6 and make notes:

There are a number of Scriptures that warn of God’s coming and sure judgment for sin and wickedness. Is it wrong of us to ignore these Scriptures and only teach the Scriptures which tell of God’s love, mercy, and grace? If it is wrong, what harm does it do?

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

Chapter 16 consist of the final series of plagues; the seven bowls. We need to be reminded not to get bogged down in the descriptions of these bowls. We should asks ourselves if these events are intended to be literal or symbolic. It could be that the Holy Spirit is giving John the vocabulary of natural disasters to describe the prophetic visions. If this is true then more energy should be expended in attempting to interpret the symbolism than trying to figure out how the natural disasters can or will come to pass. And if these events are intended to be literal, it is more important that we receive the message intended from these natural disasters than it is to understand how they will come about.

It is also worth comparing the “bowls” with the “seals” and the “trumpets.” With the seals only about one fourth of the earth and it’s inhabitants were affected, while three fourths were spared. The trumpets affected only about one third of the earth and it’s inhabitants, while two thirds were spared. The bowls affect the entire earth and every living thing was affected, with no one on earth being spared.

Read Revelation 16:1 and make notes:

In Rev. 15:8 we read that no one was allowed to enter the temple until the seven angels had completed their assignments. This has to be the voice of the Lord.

Read Isaiah 66:6 and make notes:

As far back as the prophet Isaiah, God’s people had an image of the Lord’s voice coming out from his holy temple against his enemies. The Word of God stands against those who are unholy and wicked.

Read Revelation 16:2 and make notes:

What an awesome task to pour out the wrath of God upon the followers of the beast! Some suggest these will be open ulcers. Others have suggested cancerous sores. Are these to be interpreted as literal sores or is this to be interpreted as symbolic of some kind of pain?

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

The important thing to note is that this pain fell upon everyone “who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.” Is there anyone on earth at this time who does not have the mark of the beast?

Read Revelation 16:3 and make notes:

Try to imagine the impact on the whole world when “every living thing in the sea” dies. How serious of an impact would that be upon the inhabitants of the earth?

In some of the texts of Revelation the word “sea” is used to symbolize the mass of people upon the earth or mankind in general. Is this bowl of wrath to be poured out upon the literal salt water sea or is it symbolizing mankind?

Read Revelation 16:4 and make notes:

There are those who believe “springs” would include lakes and ponds as well. It doesn’t say explicitly that every living thing in the rivers and springs died. But it is a reasonable analogy that if the sea becoming like blood causes the death of all the living things in the sea, then if the rivers and springs should become as blood so would all the living things in them die as well.

Try to imagine the impact upon the people of the earth if every living thing in all the fresh water should die in addition to all those in the seas. What would it be like for the people of this earth if there were no living things in the salt waters nor in the fresh waters?

Is this intended to be taken literally that all the fresh water supplies on earth will become contaminated? Will there literally be no fresh water left to drink? If this is true, then everyone and every creature will die.

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

Perhaps it is better to take this passage as symbolic as well. If the “sea” represented mankind, what would the “rivers and springs” represent?

What is the source of the water for the oceans? The rivers! What is the source of the water for the rivers? The springs! The rivers and springs are probably intended to refer to the source of the general population. The anti-christ and the beast will have thoroughly convinced the people of the world that they must look to the kingdom of the beast as their source and supply.

The message may be as simple as the fact that all those things the people of the earth are looking to and depending upon to provide for them is going to fail completely. The kingdom of the beast will be as unable to provide for anyone as if the river had become as blood and every living thing in it had died. No food and no drink! No refreshment!

Read Revelation 16:5 and make notes:

Since one angel poured his bowl upon the salt waters and another angel poured his bowl upon the fresh waters, it is not likely that either of these angels is the one mentioned in verse 5. This is “the angel who is in charge of the waters” in general. In the study of Angels, we find Scripture indicates that there are angels in charge of many different aspects of nature.

The angel who is “in charge of the waters” declares God’s justness in pouring his wrath upon the waters of the earth. This is not a vengeful act on God’s part. This is a “just act” on God’s part. It is the love of God that made it possible for unrighteous man to be redeemed. It is the justice of God that requires that those who refuse his love must receive punishment as surely as those who accept his love receive blessings.

Read Revelation 16:6 and make notes:

This verse sounds much like the punishment has been made to fit the crime. Since they shed the blood of the saints and prophets, then they are now given blood to drink.

Read Revelation 16:7 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

Some believe the speaking altar represents the combined testimony of the martyrs. Others believe it represents the combined prayers of the saints. What do you think is meant by the symbolism of the altar of God speaking and saying “Yes, . . . true and just are your judgments”?

Are these first three bowls best interpreted as literal events or as symbolic events? Why?

Read Revelation 16:8 and make notes:

The fourth trumpet caused the sun to become darkened and there was a third less day. This bowl “gives power” to the sun and allows it to “scorch people with fire.”

Read Deuteronomy 28:22; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 2 Peter 3:7 and make notes:

In both the Old and New Testaments, we can see that fire has commonly been connected with judgment.

Read Revelation 16:9 and make notes:

The heat intensifies. These people must have had some concept that God was in control of these things because they cursed him. It is rather interesting to note in this Scripture that it says these people in their agony “refused to repent.” It does not say that they “could not repent” only that they refused to do so.

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

Read 2 Chronicles 36:13 and make notes:

The “He” in this text is referring to Zekeekiah. Sin and wickedness can harden a heart so that it is unable to respond the way it should. When given an opportunity to repent and make a change for the better, the heathen will frequently curse the very God who is loving them enough to give them an opportunity to choose life.

Read 2 Chronicles 24:19; Jeremiah 32:33; Acts 7:51 and make notes:

Have you ever seen someone go through a painful experience that you believed was something like a “wake up call” from God but they simply would not give their life or heart to the Lord?

Read Revelation 16:10 and make notes:

A literal darkness where no one could see anything would certainly cause fear in most people. This event is as likely to be symbolic as all the others of this text. Darkness can be symbolic of confusion or ignorance. If this is the appropriate interpretation, then the kingdom of the beast is going to be cast into confusion. Remember that the earth was in a lot of confusion when the beast came along and promised to bring order to the chaos. Now the chaos is worse than before. One can easily see how people would begin to gnaw their tongues because of the intense emotional and spiritual anguish.

Read Revelation 16:11 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

The painful sores of the previous plague is still in existence. The physical pain was not enough to bring them to repentance. Now we see that the apparent structure and order of the beast's kingdom being cast into disarray isn't enough to cause people to repent. Note the phrase "but they refused to repent."

What do you believe is the message from the verses for the people alive today?

Read Revelation 16:12 and make notes:

In the Old Testament the Euphrates river marked the eastern boundary of the land given to the descendants of Abraham. In the New Testament it was what separated the Roman empire from the dreaded Parthians. Their expert cavalry bowmen had conquered the world from Euphrates to the Indus.

In the Old Testament God used the drying up of water to provide deliverance and provision for his people; Red Sea to escape the Egyptians and the Jordan to allow entrance into Canaan. Now the drying up of water is to allow the enemy to have easy access.

There are at least 50 different interpretations as to which armies, or king, this text is referring. This simply adds to the confusion and apparent inability to interpret a message from Revelations. When this text is viewed from the standpoint of symbolism we can easily see that the message is probably no more complicated than the fact that all those things the people of the earth look to for security (the river Euphrates) will be taken away.

Read Revelation 16:13 and make notes:

To the Jews of the New Testament times, frogs were unclean and represented evil. The evil spirits seen coming from the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet most likely refer to the persuasive and deceptive propaganda these three will pour out upon mankind. The vision John is experiencing is revealing clearly what is behind their words, evil spirits. Beyond all the physical and earthly powers and secular strength is the real problem, evil spirits or demons.

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

Read 1 Timothy 4:1 and make notes:

People who have been duped by the subtle and destructive propaganda of these things taught by demons have actually cut themselves off from the source of truth and life.

Read Revelation 16:14 and make notes:

These demons don't just spew their propaganda upon the common people; they go to the leaders of earth and incite them to gather together to wage war against God.

Read Joel 3:2 and make notes:

The prophet Joel prophesied such a day when the world would be brought to one location and face war with God. What is further revealed to us in Revelation is that this is caused by the destructive teachings and lies of demons.

Read Revelation 16:15 and make notes:

Some interpret this to indicate the “blessedness” of the faithful few who still remain on earth. In consideration of the earlier text where the saved are taken up in the “harvest” along with the statements that people “refused” to repent it seems unlikely that any saved are on earth at this time. The text does not say that “most” refused to repent but instead indicates no one repented.

This verse is probably referring to how blessed the saved were. They remained alert to the Lord's coming, they kept their clothes (robes of Christ's righteousness) with them, they were taken to be with Christ in the “harvest.” All those who remained on earth were put into the winepress of God's wrath. They are not robed in the righteousness of Christ and are spiritually naked and they are being shamefully exposed in the events of these seven bowls.

Verse 15 is like a divine parenthetical statement.

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

If you found a New Believer in Christ who was studying Revelations, what would you tell them is the message of Revelations 16:12-15?

Read Revelation 16:16 and make notes:

The word “Magedon” is normally connected with Megiddo. This city was located on the north side of the Carmel ridge and held a strategic pass between the coastal plain and the valley of Esdraelon. Many battles were fought in this valley and a number of them are recorded in the Old Testament. This geographical location has recorded many battles and a number of outright slaughters. It was a place where whole armies were wiped out.

There are those who interpret the Hebrew name as “Har-Magedon.” The prefix “har” would mean the “Mountain of Megiddo.” This has led to quite a variety of interpretations since there is no mountain of Megiddo. When the prefix “Ar” is used it makes it refer to the “City of Megiddo.”

The specific geographical location may or may not be that of Megiddo. The greater message is probably that where the armies of this world gather together to do battle against God will be a place of slaughter and complete annihilation. No other place on the earth had a greater history of destruction of life and armies than Megiddo. It was the best symbol of the battle between the armies of this world and God.

When we use the phrase “someone met their Waterloo” - we don’t mean they literally went to Belgium and fought Napoleon there. We use this phrase to mean a person met their defeat; he met his Waterloo. This is probably the same type of usage concerning Megiddo.

Read Revelation 16:17 and make notes:

This final bowl is poured out into the air. This must represent the atmosphere that surrounds the earth. Then the voice of God, as no one was allowed to enter the temple until this was complete, with the simple but profound declaration; “It is done.”

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

Read Ephesians 2:2 and make notes:

Satan was understood to be the ruler of the kingdom of the air. The Greek word “pneuma” was translated three ways; spirit, wind, and breath. All three of these are unseen forces of which we can see the results or evidence of their existence but cannot see them in actuality. This is an appropriate way to refer to Satan and his kingdom. Satan remains unseen for the vast majority of people, but we can see the results of his existence.

Satan has gloated for centuries at the inability of man to see him. Satan has been able to get many people to refuse to believe he exist simply because they haven’t seen him. Let it be known that this final bowl will be poured out upon his kingdom. While it may be invisible to man, God has Satan and his kingdom clearly in view.

Read Revelation 16:18 and make notes:

It is believed by most historians that the people of John’s day had experienced many severe earthquakes. For them to hear things like “No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth” and “so tremendous was the quake” had to strike some vivid pictures in their minds.

Read Revelation 16:19 and make notes:

Whether it is the literal city of Babylon or the symbolic Babylon isn’t as important as the message. This center of man’s strength and authority will not be overlooked by God. It will have the cup of God’s fury poured upon it full strength. As this great city among men breaks into three parts, cities all over the world will collapse. Again, whether this is referring to literal structural collapse of cities or the financial and fiscal collapse of cities is not main point. The message is the total and complete failure of all that man looks to for security, strength, resources, and support.

Read Revelation 16:20 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 16

There are those who offer a variety of interpretations in regard to the literal destruction of all the islands and the mountains of the earth. That surely would be an awesome experience. But the best interpretation is probably found in the symbolic use of this phrase. Islands had been used as both places of refuge and places of imprisonment, such as John was experiencing. Mountains had been used as “high places” for spiritual worship as well as strongholds from which enemies were defeated.

If the image is that of all the islands and mountains disappearing, then the message is that there will be no place of refuge and no place from which to worship. Why would the message of no place to hide have significance? The next verse explains this.

Read Revelation 16:21 and make notes:

The word used in this verse to describe the weight can be no less than 60 pounds but is most often understood to be approximately 100 pounds. It is difficult for the human mind to conceive of the damage a hailstone would inflict even if it were the lower size of 60 pounds. But the same impact would have been to the people of John’s day. Who could withstand the falling of hailstones of that size? What could withstand them? Every structure of man would surely be destroyed by these massive hailstones.

Read Joshua 10:11 and make notes:

The people had a Scriptural record of God destroying an army with large hailstones. Here the description is that of incredibly large hailstones. Rather than arguing over the actual size of 60, 70, 80, 90, or 100 pound hailstones, let us make sure we understand the message. There is nothing that can protect people from this judgment. There will be no place to hide.

What is the message you received from this lesson? Was it more of insight that brought relief, relieved anxiety, or caused more concern? Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

Chapters 17 & 18 gives us an overview of the judgment that God will issue against the great harlot. Chapter 17 gives us some interpretation of some of the symbols.

Read Revelation 17:1 and make notes:

No ordinary angel is used at this point in the vision. It doesn't tell us which angel specifically, but one of the royal priestly angels that serves in the temple of God is used to show John the judgment that will befall the great harlot. There are those who believe that it is significant that the harlot with her seductive ways is exposed and destroyed before the Bride of Christ is revealed in all her beauty and true worth.

Read Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 13:27 and make notes:

The Holy Spirit speaking through both Isaiah and Jeremiah called the city of Jerusalem a harlot because of the lifestyles of the people. (Jeremiah 2:20-31 is another reference of God seeing his people as harlots)

Read Ezekiel 16:15; Hosea 2:5 and make notes:

The harlot was commonly used throughout the Old Testament to indicate religious apostasy or false religion.

Read Nahum 3:4; Isaiah 23:16 and make notes:

Old Testament Nineveh was referred to as a harlot and Tyre was referred to as a forgotten harlot. This is in the same sense that the harlot in Revelations is a city.

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

The harlot in chapter 17 may very well be referring to more than just religious apostasy. It may be referring to the prostitution of everything that is right and honorable for the obtaining of power and luxury.

There are a number of specific cities that have been named as being the modern city that is being portrayed in this vision. But these images are truly timeless. They portray the basic conflicts of man from the beginning to the time of the end. At the very close of man's history, the great harlot stands as the final intensified expression of worldly power.

The great harlot is seen sitting on many waters. During this study series, there have been several references to water. Each time the question was asked if this was literal water or symbolic. In verse 15 of this chapter the interpretation of water is given; "peoples, multitudes, nations and languages."

Read Jeremiah 51:13 and make notes:

The ancient city of Babylon had a series of canals that distributed the water of the Euphrates river throughout the city. This makes an illuminating symbol of the harlot referred to in Revelation. This is a symbol of the influence that has gone out from the great harlot and been distributed to every tribe, nation, and people.

Read Revelation 17:2 and make notes:

Read Jeremiah 51:7 and make notes:

Jeremiah spoke of Babylon as a cup from which the nations drank and went mad.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; 1 John 2:15-16 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

Verse 2 in Revelations 17 is most likely referring to the leaders of people that have sold themselves to whatever cause they deemed necessary in order to gain the power they desired. Those leaders who became intoxicated with the adulterous ideas and concepts of betraying anything and anyone to further their personal gain.

Read Revelation 17:3 and make notes:

John admits to being carried away in the spirit at this point. This statement gives us reason to use caution in making a literal interpretation. A symbolic interpretation is more likely intended.

The woman is now seen sitting on a scarlet beast instead of upon many waters. Earlier when referring to the people of God as being in the desert, it was pointed out that this was referring to a place of divine protection and provision.

The harlot is seen sitting on a scarlet beast in the desert. The woman and the scarlet beast are believing they are in a place of protection. This should be understood as the same beast that rose up out of the sea in chapter 13.

The blasphemous names are believed by some to refer to titles many world emperors have claimed for themselves such as “divine,” “savior,” or “lord.” This is simply too mild to merit the kind of response that is received in this vision. These blasphemous names are much more than just man’s claim to some divine title. These names have to do with the beast claiming to be god and horrible things being said against the True God.

Read James 4:4; Colossians 3:2; Titus 2:12 and make notes:

Read Revelation 17:4 and make notes:

This woman is clothed in expensive, luxurious garments and adorned with beautiful jewels. In the ancient world purple and scarlet were very expensive dyes. Remember, this is symbolism. Purple was the usual color of royalty. Scarlet was the usual color of magnificence. Is either of these true concerning this woman or the beast?

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

The image of a “golden cup” naturally causes one to envision the best drink is being offered. Surely, if the drink being offered is in a gold cup, it must be the best! But the deceiving nature of the woman and beast are revealed. In this cup are “abominable things” and “filth.” Regardless of how it may first appear, what she is really offering is moral corruption and all manner of uncleanness.

Read Titus 1:16 and make notes:

Read Revelation 17:5 and make notes:

For those who worship the beast, the name of the beast was written on their forehead. For those who worship God, the name of God was written on their forehead. This woman has a descriptive title written upon her forehead.

This harlot is the system of godlessness that leads men away from worshiping God and to their own destruction. This “system” is the source from which every evil vice comes forth. She is not only the mother of “all whores” but of “every obscenity on earth.” Does this say anything to us when we hear obscenities becoming popular in the songs, movies, books, and public signs?

Read Mark 3:29 and make notes:

Read Revelation 17:6 and make notes:

The woman is seen “drunk with the blood of the saints.”

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

Read Isaiah 49:26; John 16:2-3 and make notes:

Verse 6 speaks of the intoxicating affect that is experienced by the wanton slaughter of believers. This would have happened earlier, before the Harvest, or rapture, of the Believers.

This vision causes John to be “greatly astonished.” He was expecting to see the harlot receive judgment from God. What he has seen so far is the harlot adorned as if experiencing great wealth and being drunk on the blood of believers.

Read Revelation 17:7 and make notes:

The angel tells John not to be astonished. The true nature of the evil empire is to be fully revealed. The mystery of the woman and the beast with the seven heads and ten horns must be explained together. The mystery involves both and cannot be clearly understood separately.

Read Revelation 17:8 and make notes:

Satan so much wants to imitate God that he tried to convince the world that he had a beast that “was, is not, and will be again.” He made the beast appear to receive a fatal wound and then come back to life.

Throughout man’s history, there has been a repeated “coming up out of the abyss” to harass and attempt to destroy the people of God. There are a number of Scripture texts in the Old Testament where Satan tried to destroy the savior of mankind by having many people killed. The New Testament records Herod’s attempt to kill all the boy babies. Nero tried to kill all the Christians. Hitler tried to kill all the Jews. There may well be others if the Lord delays His return.

The only people who are left on earth at this point are those whose names were not written in the Book of Life. All the people on earth will stand in awe when they see the beast.

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

Read Revelation 17:9 and make notes:

The statement “this calls for a mind with wisdom” should tell us to use great caution and care when interpreting this portion of Scripture. Another way of saying this might be something like, “The meaning of the seven head and ten horns is not obvious but it can be understood.”

The seven heads are interpreted to be “seven hills.” There is an abundant number of people who interpret this as referring to the city of Rome since it is basically built upon seven hills. If verse 8 is really telling us that the beast has repeatedly come out of the abyss and influenced mankind, to interpret this as the specific city of Rome may be falling short of the full meaning.

If the reference to the seven heads being seven hills is symbolic then we need to give our attention to the words “seven” and “hills.” The word “seven” is referring to completeness. The word “hills” is referring to strongholds or security. “Completely powerful” or perhaps “fully strong.” This may be referring to the air of confidence and security which the harlot portrays to others as she draws them into her adulterous ways.

Read Revelation 17:10 and make notes:

Not only are the “seven heads” to understood as “seven hills” but they are also “seven kings.” This verse makes it difficult to accept the interpretation of the seven hills as referring to a literal city.

Five kings have fallen, the sixth one is now, and the seventh one has not yet come. Many see this verse as referring to literal kings of literal nations. Those who interpret this verse as referring to the literal kings of John’s day see the sixth king as ruling at that time and the seventh to come later. There are a number of suggestions as to which literal kings are being referred to in this passage. Every interpretation that applies this to literal kings has significant difficulty when attempting to make the kings and their reigns fit into the formula and time.

Others have interpreted this to refer to Empires instead of kings. An empire might last a long time and have a number of kings during the lifetime of the empire. Most who use this interpretation accept the Roman Empire as the one who “is now.” Some even suggests the empire “to come” is referring to the empire of the anti-christ. This sounds good but the major problem with this is the Greek word used in this text (“basileus”) is the word for “king” and not “kingdom.” The interpretation as seven empires is not being true to the Scriptures.

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

Again, if we are to interpret this text as symbolism then we need to focus on the words “seven” and “kings.” Symbolically the word “seven” as the word means completeness rather than a specific numerical order. The word “kings” refers to “leaders” whether they hold the title of “king” or some other designation of leadership. If this is the case, the message may be that the evil leadership is almost complete. Saying that the evil leadership is at six on a scale of zero to seven. This is another way of saying the time is short.

Read Revelation 17:11 and make notes:

For those who interpret the kings as literal kings have some difficulty at this point. Which of the seven kings, who have all died and been buried at this literal time, is going to be resurrected? There is a great variety of interpretations as to which king is going to be resurrected.

Verse 11 explains that the beast “belongs to the seven” but it does not say the beast is one of the seven. If we use the symbolic approach to interpreting this text, we can see that the beast was a part of the complete evil leadership of the world’s history. He is “going to his destruction.”

Read Revelation 17:12 and make notes:

The “ten horns” are “ten kings.” Since these kings “have not yet received a kingdom” they are some future kings. If we are interpreting this text as literal, then there is very little we can say about his text.

If we are staying with the symbolic approach then we will focus our attention on the words “ten” and “kings.” In numerology the number “ten” was often used to represent man since man has ten fingers and ten toes. Accepting “kings” as referring to leaders, this text is speaking of men who will have a position of leadership and authority on earth. Since the number “ten” refers to man, it doesn’t tell us how many leaders, only that these will be physical men and not spirits or demons.

The phrase that they will receive authority “for one hour” is symbolic of a very short time. Again, not a literal one hour period, but stressing the shortness of time.

Read Revelation 17:13 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

These world leaders in the last days will have “one purpose” and they will give full support to the beast, be military, financial, moral, or otherwise. They share a hostility toward Christ still, even though there are no Christians left on earth. Could this be a human anger and an attitude of revenge about being left behind?

Read Revelation 17:14 and make notes:

They will “make war against the Lamb” BUT “the Lamb will overcome.” This summary statement of the battle leaves no impression other than it is a short decisive battle.

The text makes no mention of the part the “chosen faithful followers” play in this battle. It is most likely they are with the Lamb only as observers so that they may witness the defeat of the beast. Who could possibly add anything of strength to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords?

In light of this statement, it is easy to see why the angel told John not to be astonished at the apparent success of the evil and sinful ways (verse 7). Evil cannot prevail. God is going to be victorious. The church (collection of believers) is going to prevail and evil is going to be destroyed.

Read Revelation 17:15 and make notes:

This verse gives a simple but important key to interpreting the visions. “Waters” represent “peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages.” The four fold way of saying “people” probably serves to indicate the universality of the application. Not just one family, tribe, nation, or continent; but everyone everywhere.

Read Revelation 17:16 and make notes:

The woman who earlier appeared as adorned in luxurious clothes is now naked. This is symbolic that even if she was royalty and magnificent at one time, she certainly is neither at this time. This woman who had been earlier viewed as wearing beautiful jewelry is now seen in ruins. This is symbolic that even if she did have great wealth at one time, she has nothing of earthly value now.

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

Eating of the flesh is symbolic of complete destruction. The burning with fire is symbolic of erasing even the trace of existence.

This harlot was the source of the evil these worldly leaders' attitudes and values. These leaders are now seen as turning on their source and destroying it. If this is their source, and they destroy their source, then they destroy themselves!

This imagery is most likely intended to reveal the self-destructive power of sin and evil. The person who is using sinful or evil means to get ahead probably thinks they are destroying others but in the end they will discover that they have been destroying themselves.

Read Revelation 17:17 and make notes:

This verse is a major evidence against the concept of moral dualism in our world. This is the idea that there are two great opposing moral forces in the universe; one good and the other evil. In the final analysis, it is evident that God holds all the real power. There is no contest between good and evil. Evil has no power over which God must win. The beast and any who rule with him ONLY have power “until God’s words are fulfilled.”

These world leaders were among the people who refused to repent and refused to worship God in spite of continued efforts to draw them to him. These world leaders relinquished their authority to the beast and were in “one mind.” God used them to destroy the beast to whom they gave themselves.

Read Revelation 17:18 and make notes:

Once again the woman, or the harlot, is interpreted for us. This woman is that which rules over the leaders of this world. This woman is representing the system that will sell any and all moral values for the purpose of personal gain. This woman represents the denying of any absolute right and wrong. This woman represents the attitude that what is right or wrong is relative to the circumstances and situation. This woman represents the concept that if it helps me get what I want then it isn't wrong for me.

Revelation – Latter Times – 17

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

It is easy for most people to skip quickly over Chapter 18 of Revelations thinking it is simply a dirge or lament of the fallen spiritual Babylon. While it is this to be sure, it has an important message for us.

Read Revelation 18:1 and make notes:

Another angel, not the “interpreting angel” in chapter 17, comes out of heaven to announce the fall of Babylon, the great harlot. This angel that comes from the presence of God has such an anointing upon him that the darkened earth is lighted with his glory. This is harmony with other descriptions of the presence of God:

Read Psalms 104:2; Ezekiel 43:1-5; 1 Timothy 6:16 and make notes:

Read Revelation 18:2 and make notes:

Babylon throughout the Bible has been used as a symbol of opposition to the advancement of God’s kingdom. The literal Babylon of old was a place of immense pride and self-exaltation. The literal Babylon that so oppressed God’s people did fall and was destroyed. The spiritual, or symbolic, Babylon will indeed fall in these last few days and be utterly destroyed.

This spiritual Babylon, in much the same way as did the literal Babylon, becomes a dwelling place for demons, unclean spirits, and even the representation of unclean things (unclean and hateful bird). The words “habitation,” “haunt,” “hold,” “dwelling place,” and “den” are all reasonable translations of the original text. The point is simple. This spiritual Babylon was a “home base” for demons and evil spirits. If you associated with this spiritual Babylon, then you were associating with demons and evil spirits.

Read Revelation 18:3 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

Here we begin to receive the insight as to the reason this Babylon must fall. Many people have attempted to interpret this Babylon with a modern city. To identify this Babylon with any specific literal city would most likely diminish the full impact of the message.

This Babylon has been able to influence entire nations to participate in “her adulteries.” This denotes the unclean and illicit relationships between her and all the nations of the earth. The nations of the earth, in these last days, will have appeared to have profited from their alliance with the beast and their worship of the beast.

When we try to tell new Christians to separate themselves from the world’s system they often have a hard time letting go. What do you think verse 2 tells us about the world’s system and what can we say to a new Christian from this verse?

Read Revelation 18:4 and make notes:

Another voice from heaven is heard. This is not the angel that announced the fall of Babylon, but is probably the voice of God since it says “my people.” Verses 4 through 8 cause trouble for some people. It calls for the people of God to come out of this doomed city of Babylon.

There are two major possibilities: (1) since the rapture has already taken place, there are no saved persons left on earth at this time, this is a prophetic voice not spoken to the people of that last day but spoken to those of us who will read what is written here in this text; (2) some people responded to the torments of the seven bowls and the calls for repentance and this is spoken to those who have become saved during these last days and they are further instructed to disassociate themselves from this corrupt system. The first possibility seems to be the most likely.

The persecuted church (and people of God) has always struggled with the temptation to compromise with the world system. When presented with the possibility that such a compromise might lessen the tension of living in a hostile environment, our flesh tells us this is the right thing to do. The message of this text is timeless; separate from the world system and values, do not have fellowship with the world’s sins, and you will not reap the plagues that will come upon this world system.

Remember Believer, we are chosen to be set apart as unto God for a holy purpose. Can we fulfill our holy purpose while we are participating in a morally corrupt world system?

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3; 1 John 2:15; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 11:32 and make notes:

Read Revelation 18:5 and make notes:

Plagues are going to come upon this Babylon. Since this spiritual Babylon has enticed the nations of the world to drink of her cup of adultery, God will make sure she drinks from His cup of wrath.

Read Revelation 18:6 and make notes:

Verse 4 calls for God's people to "come out" of this spiritual Babylon. Verse 5 gives the reason God's people are told to separate from her; plagues are going to fall upon. Verse 6 gives instructions to what might appear to be unidentified agents to put into action the divine judgment that is to be hers. In lesson 16, we saw that the beast and the world leaders that will destroy this spiritual Babylon.

In lesson 3, a series the martyrs were told to wait a little longer. They don't have to wait anymore. This spiritual Babylon will not receive revenge but will receive divine justice for her cruelty, deception, and evil ways. She will receive double for what she has caused to fall upon others. This is as though her investments in evil have earned interest or that dividends are being paid. And all the saints will witness this take place.

Consider the material of this lesson to this point - specifically compare Revelations 18:4 and 1 Corinthians 11:32. What message does this convey to you and does it give you anything more you might share with a new Christian?

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

Read Revelation 18:7 and make notes:

There are those who have tried to see some type of conflict between the double portion of verse 6 and the equal portion of verse 7. Verse 6 declares spiritual Babylon is to receive double portion from her own cup for all she has done to others. Verse 7 declares she is to receive as much “torture and grief” as she gave herself “glory and luxury.” What she did to others is to come back to her as a double portion, but what she gave herself is to come back in an equal portion but opposite side of the scale.

Whatever the level of pleasure she gave herself, that is the level of misery she will experience. Whatever level of trouble she caused others, she will receive twice as much trouble. This spiritual Babylon has such arrogant pride that she declares she will never mourn.

Read Proverbs 29:23; Luke 14:11 and make notes:

The ancient wisdom as well as current wisdom see the absolute folly in such arrogance and pride. The humbling of spiritual Babylon will involve both torment and grief.

Read Revelation 18:8 and make notes:

Basically due to the arrogant self-confidence of this spiritual Babylon, the plagues will fall upon her suddenly “in one day.” Death commonly causes mourning for those who experience the loss in death. For this text to say that mourning will be one of the plagues suggests there will be no one to come along with words or actions of comfort. This suggests there will be no relief from the mourning.

When people mourn it is a common practice for others to bring food. This isn’t only for the purpose of eating but for the purpose of fellowship around the meal. There is something in us that finds relief and comfort when we can set down together and share a meal with those we love. This text indicates there will be no food (famine) with which such help can be found.

It isn’t enough for this spiritual Babylon to lose that which it loves (represented by death), it also will find or receive no release or relief from it’s grief (represented by mourning followed by famine). Then comes complete destruction (represented by fire) which will leave at most only a trace of previous existence.

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

Read Revelation 18:9 and make notes:

These are probably the very same kings that helped to destroy spiritual Babylon. Now they stand back and realize they what they have done and they personal loss they are about to endure. This illustrates the inevitable bankruptcy of an arrogant existence.

What message do you receive from the judgment of God to the spiritual Babylon; double portion of what she dealt to others and same level of grief for the pleasure she gave herself?

Read Revelation 18:10 and make notes:

They are terrified and try to distance themselves (stand far off) as they realize how quickly the judgment fell upon spiritual Babylon (one hour). Verse 8 declares these plagues will come quickly (one day) but to the inhabitants of the earth it seems even quicker than that (one hour). The leaders of the earth (kings) stand astounded that judgment could come so quickly. The system they admired so much, the system that seemed so strong and secure, now lies in ruins.

Read Revelation 18:11-13 and make notes:

The list of items mentioned is most likely trying point out how thorough this problem is going to be. It is going to be world wide and not just some local or national economic difficulty. Most of the items mentioned in this text were the primary items of import and export. This is to draw our attention to world trade.

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

Try to imagine the confusion and feeling of being completely lost that will dominate the minds of those in the business world at this time. The world system set up by the anti-christ, had the whole world connected for the purpose of doing business. No one could buy or sell unless they were signed up on the system. Suddenly, the remarkable system simply doesn't exist anymore. How do we purchase supplies? How do we sell to our customers? What do we do now?

Read Revelation 18:14-19 and make notes:

The profitable relationship (the fruit longed for) is gone. The promise of riches and splendor has vanished. The realization that it can never be recovered is accepted. Everyone who had hoped to make a gain from their relationship with this spiritual Babylon recognizes their hopelessness. It is emphasized that this is a world wide condition by referring to the sea captains. Several times it is repeated how quickly this came about (one hour).

Read Revelation 18:20 and make notes:

Rejoice “saints, apostles, and prophets” because God has judged her “for the way she treated you.”

When the saints were still on earth (before the rapture), they were pressured to take on the mark of the beast because no one could buy or sell without the mark of the beast. Now, no one can buy or sell period. Is this justice?

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

Read Revelation 18:21 and make notes:

There are two aspects of this illustration that need to be considered to grasp the message.

First, try to imagine the splash that would occur as a large millstone is thrown into the water. Whatever is upon the surface of the water is now suddenly thrown one way or another. In fact it would probably rock back and forth several times before coming to a place of rest again. It may also be moved from its original location after the surface of the water has finally calmed down.

Secondly, try to imagine what would happen to those upon the shore of this sea. The waves normally come upon the shore with a predicted rhythm. This would cause an unpredictable wave. It would be difficult to determine just how large this wave would be. It would be out of rhythm from the normal waves and would certainly catch many by surprise.

This is the image of the destruction that will befall spiritual Babylon. It will be out of rhythm with that which is normal and usual. It will occur suddenly. It will disturb not only those who are making use of the system (those on the sea) but will disturb everyone it touches (those upon the shores).

Read Revelation 18:22-24 and make notes:

This is best understood as symbolism rather than a literal city. The image of a city with the following conditions gives us a vivid picture of the state of the spiritual Babylon after it receives judgment from God.

A city in which there is no music of any kind.

A city in which no work is being performed.

A city in which there is no light.

A city in which no one speaks loving words.

What insight did you receive from this lesson and where could you make use of the insight you have received?

Revelation – Latter Times – 18

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

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

Refer to Lesson Eighteen. The first part of chapter 19 records the response to the call for all of Heaven to rejoice at the fall of the “harlot” or the beast’s system for leading man astray. What a contrast to the solemn and mournful dirge of the kings of the earth! All of Heaven breaks forth in jubilant celebration and praise.

Read Revelations 19:1-2 and make notes:

Some believe this “great multitude” is the host of angels in Heaven. The reference to “salvation” in verse 1 and the reference to avenging the “blood of his servants” in verse 2 make it more likely to be the multitude of saints. Nothing is said about God’s judgment being fair, but verse 2 records the saints declaring God’s judgments to be “true and righteous.”

Read Revelation 19:3 and make notes:

You can almost imagine, just as the praise recorded in verses 1 and 2 begin to subside slightly, another wave of praise rises loudly before the throne in Heaven. The word “Hallelujah” comes from two Hebrew words “halal” and “Jah” which mean “praise Yahweh.” This encore of praise is brought about when the saints realize they are witnessing “the smoke from her” destruction. Smoke rising from a conquered foe indicates not only defeat but destruction. The enemy has been defeated and all their resources have not been destroyed. The enemy has been left with nothing.

Read Revelation 19:4 and make notes:

These 24 elders fell down and sang praises when The Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of God. Again, we see them falling prostrate and praising and worshiping God. The word “amen” can be translated as a vote of agreement in “Let it be so” or it can be a testimony of agreement in “It is so.” The final appearance in the Book of Revelations of the 24 elders around the throne of God have them declaring “It is so, Praise Yahweh.”

Read Revelation 19:5 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

The phrase “our God” tells us this isn’t the voice of God nor is it the voice of the Lamb. Since it appears to be addressing the saints “you who fear him, both small and great,” it isn’t likely to be one of the saints. This voice most likely is one of those special beings who surround the Throne of God and minister to Him continuously.

Read Revelation 19:6-8 and make notes:

This “great multitude” in their praise refers in verse 7 to the “wife” of the Lamb and in verse 8 as “her” and “she.” This is most likely referring to the great heavenly host of angels. This could easily account for the sound as “mighty thunders.”

When the great harlot was defeated and destroyed, the call came for all of heaven to rejoice. In these first 8 verses of chapter 19 we see the “saints,” the “24 elders” around God’s Throne, and the entire “heavenly host of angels” all praising God.

As recorded in some of the previous chapters, the earth will endure a season when it appears that evil and sin is simply overcoming that which is good and righteous. Regardless of the propaganda Satan will distribute and regardless of how it may appear that Satan is winning, all of Heaven will indeed rejoice and have the victory celebration. After witnessing one apparent triumph of evil after another, would you celebrate the destruction of an evil world system?

Read Revelation 19:8 and make notes:

There is an interesting contrast between the clothes of the harlot and those of the Bride of Christ. The harlot’s clothes were of bright colors and those specifically that claimed to be someone special. She was also adorned with costly jewelry. The Bride of Christ is said to be clothed simply with “fine linen” that is “bright and clean.” There was nothing “clean” about the clothes worn by the harlot.

Read Ephesians 2:10 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

In the explanation that “Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints” another key to understanding can be found. The plural aspect of the word “acts” indicates the fine linen garment of the Bride of Christ is carefully woven from the many threads of faithful service and ministry performed by God’s people.

Read Revelation 19:9 and make notes:

Some have trouble with the saints being referred to as both the “wife” and “those who are invited to the wedding supper.” This should not be a problem and certainly is not a contradiction. This freedom is a normal characteristic of apocalyptic literature.

Read Revelation 19:10 and make notes:

Read Acts 10:25-26 and make notes:

It is the natural tendency of man to worship that which he perceives to be greater than himself. Peter told Cornelius that it is inappropriate for a man who is a servant of God to be worshiped. It is just as inappropriate for a heavenly being to be worshiped for they too are only servants of the Living God. He alone is to be worshiped and not his created beings. The angels are great and mighty creatures, to be sure, but they are only “fellow servants” with man.

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” This phrase has caused many different interpretations to be presented. Many of these are used to try to give those with the gift of prophecy some elevated position with the Church.

Examining this phrase in the context of this Scripture where it is recorded helps us to see the real message intended. This angel has what would appear to many as a strong gift of prophecy. He is not only telling John what is going to happen but is able to explain it also. This angel is quick to point out that John should not bow to him or worship him.

Look again at this phrase in verse 10. What the angel is saying to John, and to us, is that the spirit of prophecy is not to be worshiped. The “spirit of prophecy” is the “testimony of Jesus.” If what we are hearing is not the “testimony of Jesus” then it IS NOT the “spirit of prophecy.” A true spirit of prophecy from God will testify of Jesus and point people to Jesus. It will not point people to the one giving the prophecy, nor to another person whom that prophet honors, nor to the organization to which that person belongs.

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

Read Revelation 19:11 and make notes:

Read Ezekiel 1:1; Matthew 3:16; John 1:51 and make notes:

The concept that heaven opens to reveal things to man is not new. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel saw heaven open and things were revealed to him. The people during Jesus' earthly ministry saw heaven open. And Jesus prophesied that his disciples will see heaven open.

Read Revelation 19:12 and make notes:

Read Jeremiah 23:24; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Hebrews 4:13 and make notes:

The “blazing fire” eyes simply tell us nothing will be able to hide from the penetrating vision of Jesus. He will see through anything and everything to examine the heart and mind of each one.

In contrast to the 7 crowns of the dragon and the 10 crowns of the beast out of the sea, Jesus has “many crowns.” This is symbolic of an unlimited authority and sovereignty. As King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he has ALL authority. It helps to remember this is a vision and concrete specific interpretations can cause more confusion than insight.

Read Philippians 2:9-11 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

There are a number of interpretations regarding the name that no one knows except himself. The most likely is that it refers to a name above all names, kept secret from all of creation, to make sure it is not defiled even in the slightest degree.

Read Revelation 19:13 and make notes:

Read Isaiah 63:1-4 and make notes:

The blood that has stained the robe Christ is wearing at this time is not His blood shed on the Cross. It is the blood of those He defeated in the conflict. There are those who argue against this saying the battle has not yet taken place. Again, it is important to remember this is a vision. His coming forth with his garments stained with the blood of the conquered is a symbolic way of showing the outcome of this battle even before it begins.

Read John 1:1; Hebrews 4:12 and make notes:

While He has been given many titles, or names, His name has always been the “Word of God.” The “Word of God” is not simply a bunch of lifeless words but it is “living and active” and able to “penetrate” to the greatest depths. And this is what the people of the earth are going to fight against.

Read Revelation 19:14 and make notes:

Read Jude 1:14-15 and make notes:

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

Refer to Revelations 17:14. The army of heaven at this point does not consist of an army of angels. This army is made up of the “chosen and faithful ones.” This is the saints and the martyrs. Only the robe of Jesus is dipped in blood. The robes of the army are all “white and clean.”

As mentioned in Lesson Seventeen, the part the army plays in this battle probably consist of nothing more than witnesses. Jesus, the Word of God, needs no assistance from us at this point.

Read Revelation 19:15 and make notes:

Read Ephesians 6:17 and make notes:

The image of the “sharp sword” coming out of his mouth is symbolic of the pronouncement which he will make. On the one hand it will be a destructive pronouncement and on the other hand it will be a victorious pronouncement.

It would certainly be impressive for someone to swing a sword with their mouth and defeat even one enemy, not to mention a great army. But so much of the message is lost if we interpret this as a literal sword coming from this mouth with which he will do battle.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and make notes:

The “breath of his mouth” reinforces the interpretation of words spoken rather than a literal sword.

Read Isaiah 11:4 and make notes:

The shepherd carries a “rod” but it isn’t used to lead the sheep. The shepherd’s rod is an instrument of war and punishment. It is used to defeat the enemies of the flock, such as the wild beast. To say that he is going to rule with a rod of iron means he is going to destroy.

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

The stern reality of the punishment for those who reject Christ is reinforced by the image of the wine-press of judgment or wrath.

Read Revelation 19:16 and make notes:

This probably refers to His name being displayed in the most prominent place of a warrior riding a horse into battle. The breastplate and the thigh would be the parts most visible as he rode toward his enemies. Those who have dared to come against God will see the name “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” before the battle is actually begun.

The Greek text lends itself to the possibility that this is either written in two places or is written in two parts. The name could be written in its entirety in two places or part could be in one place and the rest in the other place; such as breast and thigh.

What do you think is the message for us in the saints going with Christ as his army in this battle?

Read Revelation 19:17-21 and make notes:

This is not a description of the actual warfare. All we have is a summary statement of this great battle. This is the battle so often referred to as the Battle of Armageddon. There isn't much of a battle actually. It would appear to be more like a righteous slaughter.

Refer to Lesson Sixteen, Revelations 16:13-14. Evil spirits came out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet to go throughout the earth to get people to assemble for battle against God. These evil spirits, as is the normal goal of evil spirits, simply lead the people to their destruction.

Revelation – Latter Times – 19

Refer back to the lessons of this study series that covered the Beast. Take notice of all the awesome and impressive power, wisdom, and strength the Beast exhibited. Then notice in this text how easily and quickly Jesus was able to capture the Beast and his false prophet. Although the Beast is quite impressive in the eyes of man, he is no match for the power and strength of Jesus.

To the people of that day, to leave a dead body out in the open so that the scavengers could feed upon it was a great act of dishonor. It was the most disgraceful thing that could happen to anyone. An angel is seen calling forth the birds to come a feast upon the slain bodies of those who dared to war against God. These people won't even get the respect of being buried.

Read Matthew 25:41 and make notes:

The “eternal” lake of fire has been prepared for the “devil and his angels.” It was never intended for any human being to put into this place. The first two beings that are cast into the “fiery lake of burning sulfur” is the beast and the false prophet. It is interesting to note that these two were thrown “live” into this place of torment.

“The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse.” The beast and the false prophet are captured and cast into eternal imprisonment. The rest of the world's army is defeated by the Word of God. The only one of this evil army left standing on the battle field is Satan himself, or the great dragon. What an emotional impact this must make upon Satan. What kinds of thoughts would rush through the mind of a general who suddenly experienced his entire army being destroyed and he is left standing alone upon the battlefield surrounded by the slain remains of his army?

When reading the previous texts regarding the power and success of the Beast, it is normal for people to experience a certain level of fear and anxiety. Even reading of the success of the false prophet is leading people astray can cause some distress.

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

Revelation

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