



The Revelation

God's Judgment and Redemption

“The Revelation—God’s Judgment and Redemption”

Study Guide “A”
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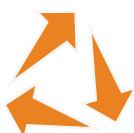
As you apply God’s Word to this study, remember that the Bible was written primarily to show us Jesus. Look for ways in which this book of the Bible points to Jesus, even if this study guide doesn’t point that out for you. In truth, every time you read the Bible, look for Jesus “under every stone.” God gave us His Word to remind us of His love, and His love is most clearly seen in Jesus...look for Him and you will be blessed!

In order to do that, you need to read slowly. Take your time. I pray this study will bless you and further your walk with Jesus. For additional help or clarification, you are welcome to email joe.meyer@gdlc.church for help at any time.

As you take your time walking through this study you’ll encounter three things to help you grow:



Discuss sections are intended to give you an opportunity to think through the Bible passage itself. What does it say in relation to other passages, both those given, and those you may think of yourself or find in your study Bible. If you’re studying alone and cannot discuss without talking to yourself, then take time to write your thoughts down in a journal or in this study guide.



Discover sections are intended to get you to think more deeply about the subject matter. Discover is an opportunity to go deeper into the who, what, when, where and why of the Bible.



Download sections are intended to give you the opportunity to apply the section to your own life. Raw Bible reading isn’t what God intends. Facts for facts sake don’t help. But knowing those things and then applying it to your life is fantastic, and solid Bible study as well.



Study One—The Heart of The Revelation

Discuss

How much studying do you currently do in the Word of God every week?

In your study of God's Word, do you feel adequate to interpret what you are reading or are you concerned you are misunderstanding what God is saying? Along those lines, how do you feel about interpreting the Revelation?

From what you know now, if you had to explain what The Revelation is all about to a friend, what would you say about this last book of the Bible?



Discover

Read Revelation 1:1-8

Perhaps one of the most important questions to ask in this study is...why in the world should we study the Revelation? Most people are afraid of this book...why not just leave it fallow? John gives us two reasons here:

For the first one, take note that John writes "...*things that must soon take place*" in verse one and then at the end of verse three he writes "...*for the time is near.*" Why is that a reason to study this book? Does it say something about the whole of Scripture? Check what Jesus said in **Luke 12:35-40**. Also consider **Revelation 22:20**. So...where is He? Why hasn't He come yet? After you ponder that, look at what Peter wrote in **2Peter 3:8-10**.

For the second one, consider what John wrote at the beginning of verse three. Why would a person be “blessed” to read these words? Why furthermore should they be read “aloud”? Along these lines read **John 6:60-71** and consider too **Hebrews 4:12,13**. When you study the Bible...do you think of it as “living” and “active”?

Right away in the book of The Revelation the Lord reminds us of the Gospel message (middle of verse five). First of all...define “the Gospel message”. Needless to say then, that’s “kind of” important. Why? Why do we need the Gospel in a book like this? Consider that question for a moment and then look at **2Corinthians 5:1-21**. Consider verses ten and eleven together and then look at what the Apostle Paul does at the end, verses seventeen to twenty-one. How does that help you? If the Gospel message is right up front, what does that say about the purpose of this book?

Read Revelation 1:9-20

When John begins this section, there are three things that are noteworthy here. First, the Apostle John writes *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.”* What does that mean? Aren’t Christians always *“in the Spirit”* and the Spirit in them? Consider the possibilities and then look at **Acts 2:38** alongside **Acts 19:1-7**. As you read that passage from Acts 19, when did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit...when they are baptized or when hands were laid on them? For some help, cross-reference these verses with **1Corinthians 6:19,20** alongside **2Timothy 1:3-7**.

The second noteworthy thing is that the Lord designed this book or letter or revelation for seven churches. Why is that important? How does that help you to discern and discover and interpret the words of this book? To that end, what is the genre of this book and why is it important to consider the genre? Furthermore, what does the inclusion of “real churches” say about the genre of this book? Consider the information found in **Daniel chapters 1-6** over-against **Daniel chapters 7-12**. How do the two compare?

The third noteworthy thing is where John wrote *“When I saw Him, I fell at his feet as though dead.”* First of all, compare the image of Jesus in the Revelation with **Daniel 7:9,10**. Why is the Daniel connection especially important? Second: Note also that the

the “long robe” Jesus is wearing is a reference to the High Priest’s robes and then check **Hebrews 9:11-14**. Third, this idea of John falling down before Jesus says something very important about the exalted Jesus. Consider what John wrote about himself and his relationship with Jesus in his Gospel, **John 21:20-25**. There is a stark comparison between leaning back on Jesus after the Resurrection and falling at His feet as though dead. What’s the difference? The “two Jesus’s” are the same Jesus...right?

One last thing from **Revelation 1:17**: Did you notice what Jesus did for John after he “fell at His feet as though dead”? Jesus said *“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”* Easy for Jesus to say, right? To get at the importance of this verse and what’s going on here, first read **Exodus 3:1-6** and **Joshua 5:13-15**. Note that there’s almost a command to fear in those passages. So...what’s the difference here? In the verse written out above, what clues do you see for the removal of fear? Further...when you experience “fear” from the words of this book, how can this scene help you?



Download

What was the biggest takeaway for you and your Christian faith/life from this study?

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What would your prayer be after experiencing this study? Write it below:



Study Two—The Churches of the Revelation

Discuss

When you write a letter...what generally is the reason that you do so?

In what way is the Revelation a “letter”? Or is it like a letter at all?

From your previous/current study of the Revelation, why did the Lord write this book and have it sent to the seven churches?



Discover

Stars/Lamps: Before we look at the seven churches, it's important to back up to **Revelation 1:20** and be grasped by what is said there. According to that verse: The seven stars are the _____; and the seven golden lamp stands are _____. Why are those two things significant? After you think about it, consider this verse for the “stars”: read **Matthew 18:1-5, 10** alongside **Hebrews 1:14**. As for the “lamp stands” consider two things: 1) Check **1 John 1:5** and **Revelation 21:23** for a definition of the lamp stand’s presence in the churches. 2) What then does the presence of that “Light” say about our Lord’s attention for the Church? Is He absent? Is He missing in action? Or is He...you fill in the blank.

Nicolaitans: Let's handle the people known as the Nicolaitans outside the verses in which they appear. It seems the Nicolaitans were a heretical group whose biggest issue was sexual immorality. **Revelation 2:14,15** seems to make a connection between the “teaching of Balaam” and the Nicolaitans. To that end then, check **Jude 1:3-16** and **2 Peter 2:2-16** as a possible definition of their sin.

Application: As we study each church...consider how the church’s situation applies to your congregational life and how it applies to your personal life.

The Church of Ephesus—Read Revelation 2:1-7: The church in the city of Ephesus had some good things going on. They were working hard; they were enduring persecution; they were intolerant of evil behavior; they were doctrinally solid. But... they had left their first love. In other words, they were living an “academic” or “theoretical” faith. As the Lord said it to them, they had “left their first love.” What does that look like? Read **Isaiah 29:13-16** (also take note of Jesus’ use of this passage as recorded in **Matthew 15:8,9**). How do we apply this to today’s church? How do we apply this to our own personal lives?

Notice also the connection between the opening verse “The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands” and the middle of verse five “If not, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place unless you repent.” What would you say the connection is? Consider what it says about Jesus and then look at **2Corinthians 5:6-11a**. One other thought about Christ’s words “...who walks among the seven golden lamp stands”...look at **Matthew 18:20** and talk about the implications.

Smyrna—Read Revelation 2:8-11: Smyrna is a “good news/bad news/good news” situation. The first “good news” is that they are faithful and they are living for Jesus. The bad news is that they will then be persecuted by satan and those that “work for him” because of their faith. Consider Paul’s admonition about the realities of living for Jesus as written to Timothy in **2Timothy 3:10-14**.

But again, this is a “good news/bad news...good news” segment. They may very well be persecuted to death. In the face of that reality, Jesus reminds them in **verse eight** that he is...what? Because of that truth, Jesus reminds them of another in **verse eleven**. What does that mean? After thinking about that, consider the amazing words of Jesus to Martha in **John 11:17-27**.

Pergamum—Read Revelation 2:12-17: You’re probably recognizing the pattern here, namely, that the segments/paragraphs on the churches have a thematic connection. Note that in verse twelve we’re told that Jesus has a “sharp two-edged sword” and verse sixteen we’re told that if they don’t repent the Lord Jesus will “make war against them with the sword” of His mouth. Two things to glean from that:

1) They are being persecuted by satan...see verse thirteen for that information. The wonderful truth represented there is that though there is a spiritual battle the Lord is right by their side. Consider then the battle as portrayed in **Ephesians 6:10-17**. How does that passage speak into “the Lord being right by our side”?

2) As mentioned above, in verse sixteen we’re told that Jesus will “make war” with the “sword of His mouth.” So, since you read **Ephesians 6:10-17** already, what is that sword? What does that say about “the battle” Jesus is engaging in? That begs the question: “Is the battle real or spiritual?” That’s a trick question btw...and the answer is?

Thyatira—Read Revelation 2:18-28: As we move to Thyatira we are reminded who it is providing this revelation or vision...we encountered this description in **Revelation 1:12-15**. Why do you think Jesus showed Himself that way, particularly in this segment? What is in this paragraph and what information about this congregation at Thyatira merits a reminder that Jesus is the judge? Along those lines, check how Jesus describes Himself in **Matthew 25:31,32** and what Paul writes in **2Corinthians 5:6-11**.

Who is “Jezebel”? For a clue as to “who” this might be...check Jezebel in the Old Testament. One reference to her that is especially helpful **1Kings 19:1-18**...take note that Jezebel is both vicious and feared...but also take note that she is against the things of the one, true God. How does that inform our study of the Revelation and the mention of “Jezebel” in this context?

Notice finally the end of the paragraph about **Thyatira**. Jesus seems to be describing the role of “the one who conquers and keeps my works until the end” as a person who will reign with Him in heaven...even using the language of **Psalm 2:7-12** to describe him/her. How does that fit with our theology of heaven? Are we “reigning” or are we simply living/worshipping? Or does this mean something else? Check the language of **Galatians 4:4-7** as an answer.

Sardis—Read Revelation 3:1-6: The letter to the church at Sardis is harsh... deserved...but harsh. Take a moment to think about why Jesus, the loving, gentle Lord Jesus, would bring such harsh words to His children? What's the purpose? After thinking through that question, consider **Hebrews 12:7-11**. Also consider Paul's words in **1Corinthians 5:1-5**. What's the purpose of the discipline according to verse five there? Why is Jesus "harsh" in this letter to Sardis? The same thing applies.

Jesus speaks of "coming like a thief" to them. What does that mean? Once you've thought about it, consider similar language that is written in **1Thessalonians 5:1-11**.

Notice finally what Jesus says in verse five is "...*I will never blot his name out of the book of life.*" This is a verse that speaks into a doctrine found in other denominations known as "once saved...always saved." What they believe is that it is impossible to "fall away" from God once you're saved...but we ask then, "Why does Jesus say 'I will never blot his name out of the book', if that, blotting out, can't happen?" To their credit, look at what Jesus said in **John 10:27-29**. But...now look at **Romans 11:17-24** and **Hebrews 3:12**. We believe that a person can indeed lose their salvation or walk away from the faith...as sad as that is.

Philadelphia—Read Revelation 3:7-13: The letter to the church in the city of Philadelphia is enjoyable to read because it's positive all the way through. They were living in Jesus, through Jesus and for Jesus. Look at the beautiful words of "benediction" found in **Hebrews 13:20,21** for an expression of what the Lord does for us every day as we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, share in this faith-life. The Lord is both the giver of our faith and the sustainer of our faith as well. To that end, look at **Hebrews 12:1,2**.

Now, the Christians in Philadelphia were weak, or as Jesus says it "I know that you have but little power." They were living under persecution and as you can imagine, living under persecution will bring exhaustion..."faith exhaustion" that is. Read the amazing segment of Scripture in **Romans 8:26-39** and consider why Paul was moved by the Holy Spirit to write those words and also consider how those words apply to you in our day and time.

If you had to answer the question “What is the purpose of the end times?” What would your answer be? In other words, why doesn’t Jesus just come back and take us home.. quick and swift? Why all the cataclysmic activity that is described in the pages of the Revelation? After you’ve discussed that, consider **Revelation 3:10** and consider too **2Peter 2:1-10**. Let me ask this question also: “Is it possible to see the end times as God’s mercy?” If so...how so?

Laodicea—Read Revelation 3:14-22 The church at Laodicea is perhaps the most famous of the churches in the list because they are forever known as “the lukewarm church”...ouch. The Lord uses amazing language in verse seventeen to describe them. Re-read that verse and compare it to the very famous story in **Matthew 19:16-22**. How do they compare?

Verse nineteen reminds us of the nature of our God who is also our “Heavenly Father”. What does that mean however? Consider the meaning of God as Father by looking at **Hebrews 12:3-11**. Is every persecution “from God” then? Sure sounds that way from Hebrews 12 but is that the case?

Considering Laodicea’s status, you’d think the Lord would “kick them to the curb” and move on. But take note of **Revelation 3:20**. This verse is often quoted for a non-believer to find Jesus...but that’s not what that verse is for, even though it would apply. This verse is for the Laodiceans! What does that say about our Lord and His love?



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Study Three—The Lord, The Lamb, The Throne

Discuss

When we come across segments where Jesus and the Father seem “separated”, e.g., Jesus praying to the Father, how do we reconcile those instances considering our doctrine of the Trinity?

In the Revelation...or elsewhere in the Bible...where can we see Jesus intimately connected to the Father, giving credence or support to our understanding/faith in the doctrine of the Trinity?

In truth...the Lord and the Lamb are not just an important “part” of the story...the Lord and the Lamb are the story. Why would I say that and why is it important to consider and embrace?



Discover

Read Revelation 4:1-11. This is an amazing section and honestly, what makes the Revelation truly a wondrous book. John opens this chapter with “*After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’*” **Revelation 4:1.** When you read those words, what amazes you? Think of it this way: How would you react if you were John? He was a human being just like you and me...we can, on that level, understand what it would have been like to have been John...yes?

In verse four we encounter what is called “the twenty-four elders”. Needless to say, we want to know what/who these “elders” are. Of course we have to admit that there are only clues as to their identity as the Bible, and in particular, the book of the Revelation, does not give us the answer. Before we go on then...what clues do you see from the text about them? If you’re saying to yourself “the number twenty-four” you are on a good line of thinking. Let me ask you this: “How many tribes of Israel were there?” “How many Apostles were there?” As you can see then, perhaps this is designating both the Old and New Testament people of God...not necessarily a literal presence or people... but a designation for God’s Old Testament and New Testament people. Along those lines, consider how the Bible is spoken about in **Ephesians 2:11-22 (particularly verse 20)**. Also remember that Jesus made a reference to the Apostles and thrones in **Matthew 19:28**.

Okay then, what about “the four living creatures” in verses six and seven, what in the world are they? The best place to look for an answer is found in **Ezekiel 1:4-28**. While there are differences, particularly when you look at the description of them in **Ezekiel 10:14,15**, it’s apparent that these are the Cherubim (angels) seen by Ezekiel long before the Apostle John had the vision of the Revelation. Why are they surrounding God? Where else do the Cherubim show up in the Bible? Check **Exodus 25:17-22**.

Read Revelation 5:1-14. John writes down what the angel is proclaiming “*Who is worthy to open the scroll...?*” We will look at the “scroll/seals” in the next study, but in this drama, which is unfolding before the eyes of John, the Lord is setting the stage for reminding John and all the readers of this book that Jesus is the only “worthy” one.

Two things make Him “worthy”:

- 1) Note that His pedigree or lineage make Him worthy. He is both “The Lion of the Tribe of Judah” and “The Root of David”. Where do those titles come from? “Lion of the Tribe” look at **Genesis 49:8-10**. “Root of David” look at **Isaiah 11:1-10**. Those are both prophecies of the...?

- 2) More importantly however, His worthiness is found in His sacrifice at the cross. Notice that the Lamb that looked “as though it had been slain”...hinting at the cross of Jesus and the title by which John the Baptist called Him in **John 1:29**. Notice then the two ascriptions of praise which both begin with “Worthy are You/The Lamb...”. Consider how Christ’s worthiness is found in His sacrifice in the amazing words of **Philippians 2:1-11**. What amazing truth does **Philippians 2:1-11** bring to us? Consider too the words of **Hebrews 10:1-10**.



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+Important Excursus on the Flow of the Revelation+

The Three Sevenfold Visions Before we jump into the text of this segment of the Revelation, we must consider how the majority of the Revelation is broken down. The Lord reveals the Revelation to John through the “threefold-sevenfold vision” scheme outlined below. (The schema below is taken from Brighton, Louis A. Concordia Commentary: Revelation Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1999, pg 151)

First Vision: The Seven Seals

Scenes 1-5: Seals 1-5 (**Revelation 6:1-11**)

(No Battle Scene)

Scene 6: Sixth Seal—End of this World (**Revelation 6:12-17**)

Scene 7: Seventh Seal—Introduces the Second Vision (**Revelation 8:1-5**)

Second Vision: The Seven Trumpets

Scenes 1-5: Trumpets 1-5 (**Revelation 8:6-9:12**)

Scene 6: Trumpet 6, Great Battle, (**Revelation 9:13-21**)

Scene 7: Trumpet 7, End of this world (**Revelation 11:15-19**)

Third Vision: The Seven Censers

Scenes 1-5: Censers 1-5 (**Revelation 15:1-16:11**)

Scene 6: Censer 6, Battle of Armageddon (**Revelation 16:12-16**)

Scene 7: Censer 7, End of this world (**Revelation 16:17-21**)

Why is Dr. Brighton’s scheme likely when studying the Revelation and how does it speak to interpreting the entirety of the Bible?



Study Four—The Seals and the Sealed

Discover

In this study, we make the turn to what everyone wants to know about from the Revelation, namely, “End Times Talk”. Let me ask this: Why are you studying the Revelation with me? What’s in it for you? Are you interested in the timing of the Second Coming and the events surrounding it? Are you afraid of what is to come? Something else?

As we look at the “End Times” stuff, what thoughts come to your mind? Are you afraid of what is to come? Are you “excited” for what is to come...that is..excited about Jesus returning? Or are you somewhere in between?



Discuss

The First Vision—The Seven Seals

Read Revelation 6:1-17. The scroll/seals in and of themselves are an interesting study because of what they stood for and because of their Old Testament connection. As to the OT connection, look at **Ezekiel 2:1-10**. In Ezekiel 2 we read that the scroll contained “mourning and woe”. Is that what’s contained in the Revelation? Why is the answer to that question both “yes” and “no”? And how does a “yes” and “no” answer to that question help you to interpret the Revelation?

But what did these Revelation scrolls represent? The first answer to that question takes us back to **Ezekiel**, but **Ezekiel 3:1-4**. What was the scroll in Ezekiel? (To better answer the question, compare **Ezekiel 3:1-4** with **Revelation 10:9,10**). Why are the scrolls in Ezekiel and the Revelation the same?

Connected to that idea however, is the seals. The seals and the scrolls need to be understood both separately and together. Dr. Louis Brighton writes “*Seals offer security and keep the contents safe from unlawful usage.*” He also writes “*It was a practice in Roman civil law for a last will and testament to be sealed with seven seals.*” (Brighton, Louis A. *Concordia Commentary: Revelation* Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1999, pg 134) So, what connection is there between the scrolls representing the Word of God and the seals representing the Lord’s “last will and testament”? Consider this: Dr. Brighton writes concerning the scrolls “*The message of the scroll has to do with events on earth from the time of Christ’s victory and ascension to the end of all earthly things. The ultimate purpose of Christ receiving the scroll and then revealing its contents to John and the church is to strengthen the church’s faith and to encourage the church in the midst of sufferings...*” (Brighton, Louis A. *Concordia Commentary: Revelation* Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1999, pg 139). Reading that, in what way is the Word of God found here in the Revelation a “last will and testament” then?

The Seals and the Four Horsemen: Perhaps one of the most famous segments of the Revelation is the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The most important thing to keep in mind about these four is that they are connected and they don’t just follow one another, but they ride alongside one another and are coming/happening all at the same time. You could even say they “build on one another”. They are evidence of cataclysmic events happening on the earth between the Ascension of Jesus and His Second Coming.

The First Seal: The White Horse: This horse/rider is sent to conquer and to conquer completely. At first it would be easy to assume this is Jesus...white horse, crown, bow etc. But in comparing this rider to what is clearly Jesus in **Revelation 19:11-16**, this rider comes up short of being the Lord. Who is he then? What does this mean? It is possible that this is “The AntiChrist”. Note that there is a difference between things that are anti-Christ and “The AntiChrist”. Why would I say that? Look at **2Thessalonians 2:1-12**.

The Second Seal: The Red Horse: Following the conquering horse/rider is the red or better said, “blood red horse.” It’s important at this point to connect the horses/horsemen together. The reason the “blood red horse” follows the “conquering horse” is that the conquering will no doubt bring bloodshed. Check Jesus’ words in **Matthew 24:3-14** in that regard. What is frightening about Jesus’ words there by the way?

The Third Seal: The Black Horse: The third horse/horsemen signals economic imbalance in the world and as such, likely famine among many (as spoken of with the next horse/horseman). Look at a passage very similar to the Matthew 24 reference above: **Luke 21:10-18.**

The Fourth Seal: The Pale Horse: Again, the connection between the horses/horsemen can be seen as critical here. This horse is “death and hades” and they are given authority to slay a fourth of the earth. It’s important at this point to remind those studying the Revelation that these events will occur over time, between the Ascension of Jesus and the Second Coming of Jesus. The “Millennial Reign of Christ” is a long period of time between those two events and will encompass what you are reading. Having said that, this rider reminds us that things will get more intense as time goes along. What the Apostles experienced in the way of persecution, trial and tribulation may be mild compared to what we will experience in the future and towards the end of time. Go back to **Matthew 24:3-14** and remember Jesus’ frightening words there in **verses six and eight.**

The Sixth Seal: The Great Cataclysm: For this, skip down to **Revelation 6:12-17.** Take note of what I said above and consider what is happening in this scene and with the sixth seal. In other words, note that the world is flying apart! Check Paul’s words in **Romans 8:18-25.** Paul reminds us there that the universe we live in is under sin and degradation and this “cataclysm” is simply the final straw prior to the Second Coming of Jesus. But also look at **Isaiah 34:1-4** for similar language. Besides the obvious, that our world is falling apart, there is also a curious thing said in this section, namely, that “everyone” is seeking shelter from “the wrath of the Lamb”. What does that mean when you consider **2Timothy 4:6-8.** Will we “love His coming” or not?

The Fifth Seal: The Souls Under the Altar: This seal is an important seal to consider under the genre of Apocalyptic Literature. Remember that we cannot take everything as literal here. While we have “four horsemen” it’s not likely that four spiritual horses are coming out of heaven, rather that the things associated with them are happening nonetheless, namely conquering or war, blood, death, famine. The Great Worldwide Cataclysm above is clearly real and will happen but the imagery given in the Revelation may not be exactly how it will happen. Similarly, the description of the souls under the altar is to be understood to represent those who have died in the faith and are waiting. This is important because in God’s presence we lack nothing! Is it possible to be in God’s presence and away from the ills of this earth and still need something/lack something? I don’t think so. This seal is a way of reflecting what the Psalmists and others would write, namely, that the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper...so, “How long O’ Lord?” Check **Psalm 73** and then **Revelation 19:1-10** in that regard.

The Interlude in the First Vision “The Sealed”

Read Revelation 7:1-17: We encounter two groups in Revelation 7, the 144,000 and the Great Multitude. So? Who are these people?

The 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-8): This is a difficult one to interpret, but it seems that the best interpretation is that it is the “church on earth,” particularly since the first few verses seem to locate the scene on earth. Besides that however, why would we say that it is the church on earth and not “Jewish believers in Jesus” since the Twelve Jewish Tribes are named. Well, a couple things to consider: 1) We must first consider the fact that there is a perfect number of “Israelites” for each tribe. We know of course, that Jews believed in Jesus and continue to come to faith in Jesus, but to insinuate that it’s a perfect 12,000 per tribe wouldn’t make any sense...remembering that to the ancients, the number 1000 was like 1,000,000 is to us...just a really huge number. 2) Along the lines of this not being just Jewish Christians then, also take note of the order of the tribes...what’s wrong with the order? Read **Genesis 29:31-30:24; 35:16-21** for the true order of the sons. How does that help? Let me ask and answer this: Who is of the tribe/lineage of Judah..what did we learn in chapter five? And in connection with that then, consider **Romans 11:11-24** as to who this might be. Let me ask it this way: Who are the “Chosen People” now? For a reference, look at **1Peter 2:9**.

The Great Multitude (Revelation 7:9-17): Now, as we move into verse nine and following, our attention has been turned to heaven or as John writes it, “*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands...*” **Revelation 7:9.** It makes sense that John would be given a vision of “The Church” which is both on earth and in heaven. Isn’t that how we confess the Church in the Apostle’s Creed by the way? Let me ask this: What does the line from the Apostle’s Creed “I believe in...the communion of the saints” mean for us?

What is amazing about this scene is the fact that is all “tribes, peoples and languages”. Why would that have been amazing to a Jewish reader? Consider the story in **Acts 10.** Also consider the wording of the Great Commission in **Matthew 28:18-20** and what Paul writes in **Galatians 3:23-29.**

One more thought...though this doesn’t resonate with everyone...what are those who live in heaven doing in heaven? What does that say about what we’ll do? In fact, go back to **Revelation 4:8.** What do the “Cherubim” of chapter four do? “Day and night” they do what? If that’s what they are doing all the time...then what is heaven all about for us? Consider that question in the light of **Revelation 7:9-12; Isaiah 6:1-8.** In other words, heaven isn’t about me and my comfort and my future...although, all those things are involved (**See Revelation 7:15-17 for that**)...instead however, heaven is all about glorifying God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What does that say about our lives now?



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Study Five—Frightening Silence and Announcing Trumpets



Discuss

When something frightening is happening around you, what is your physical response? How did you react when you saw the Twin Towers collapse...if you did?

If you encountered the presence of the Living God, how do you think you'd react? We got some clue about that in chapter one by the way, with John's reaction to Jesus, but how do you think you'd react?



Discover

Read Revelation 8:1-13. At the outset of this chapter, we find out that the Lamb is opening the seventh of seven seals. Interestingly the opening of the seventh seal is actually the beginning of the next cycle of seven...this time, trumpets. To begin with however, when the Lord opens the seventh seal...what immediately happens? From what we learned in chapters four and seven, why is this amazing (**Again see the Revelation 4:8**). What do you think the silence indicates to us about the information coming up in chapter 8?

In **Revelation 8:3-5** we are taken back to **Revelation 6:10**. In chapter six the “souls of those who had been slain” symbolically cry out to God and ask Him “how long before you will judge...?” **Chapter 8:3-5** answers their question.

The Second Vision—The Trumpet Judgments

When considering this section of **Revelation 8:6-13** with the rest of God’s Word, the trumpet blasts make perfect sense. Check **Zephaniah 1:14-16** for the connection but also couple that with **Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**. Interestingly, the

“trumpet blast/sound” is a regular occurrence in Scripture. Consider the very unusual account of Mt. Sinai found in **Exodus 19:16**. Dr. Brighton writes: “*The sounding of the trumpet serves, then, to draw attention to the coming judgment of God over the wicked, and also to signal the coming salvation of His people.*” (Brighton, Louis A. Concordia Commentary: Revelation Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1999, pg 218). Also check an important connection between the angels with trumpets and the Lord’s voice in **Revelation 1:10; 4:1**.

Once again we’re reminded that the judgments pronounced in the Revelation (and judgments found elsewhere in God’s Word) are meant to proclaim that the earth is under judgment and that the Lord will bring final condemnation upon this earth, not just on the people of the earth. The first four trumpets speak of judgment on earthly things in other words. Know this...as we approach the Second Coming of Jesus, our world will begin to fall and fly apart. Check Jesus’ words **Mark 13:14-27** and see what Peter wrote in **2Peter 3:1-13**. Besides the fact that God will judge and destroy the earth and this universe, what is causing it to decay and fall apart? Why is that important as we understand sin and its ramifications?

The “1/3...1/3...1/3” language found in this segment is very similar to what is found in **Ezekiel 5:8-12**. A comparison can also be made between what is happening on the earth in these latter times and what happened in/through the plagues of Egypt. If you have time, look at the plagues of Egypt found in **Exodus 7-12** understanding that there is not a one-to-one correlation, it’s just similar.

One last question about these judgments...besides the obvious...what do you think is God’s purpose in regard to these earthly cataclysms...for us as humans beings that is? After you’ve thought about it, consider **Revelation 9:20,21**.

Re-read Revelation 8:13: This verse reminds the reader that there are indeed seven trumpets to be blown, but the last three, designated by the “woe, woe, woe” from the voice of the “eagle flying directly overhead”, are different and far more terrifying. Why? What is the shift here? Consider the shift by reading **Revelation 9:1-21**.

“Woe” Number One: In a very real sense, the scene described in the first “woe” found in **Revelation 9:1-12**, could be called “hell on earth.” Take note, first of all, to the connection between **Revelation 9:1-2** and **Revelation 9:11**. In all likelihood, who is this “star fallen from heaven”? To that point, the Hebrew word “Abaddon” and the Greek word “Apollyon” seem to mean _____.

So, why was he “given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit”? If this is satan...and it’s likely that it is...doesn’t he have that key? Consider that question but then read **Revelation 1:17,18**. What does this then say about what is happening in this first “woe”? If that’s the case, why would satan torment his own? Look at verse four to see what I mean and consider **John 8:44**. Last, but not least, consider the connection of the locusts to **Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2, 11**.

“Woe” Number Two: The second “woe” seems only slightly different but definitely worse. In the previous “woe” people “will long to die, but death will flee from them”... in this “woe”, one-third of mankind will die...in other words, “death will seek them.” In this instance however, who are the four “tormentors”? Why is that important? And... who are the “tormented” or better said, who are the “slain”? Why is that important?

Having said that, what are the forces brought forth by the angels, or as John writes it “the number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand”? Dr. Brighton writes “*As in the fifth scene (9:1-12), the forces of evil that wreak such havoc upon the human race in this sixth scene are demonic in character, as attested by their number and grotesque appearance.*” (Brighton, Louis A. Concordia Commentary: Revelation Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1999, pg 246). This is especially intriguing as Dr. Brighton sees this scene as coinciding with **Revelation 16:12-16** and with the Battle of Armageddon described there, especially since “The Seven Bowls of God’s Wrath” found in **Revelation 16** are connected with “The Seven Trumpets” and “The Seven Seals”.

Is “The Last Battle” or “Armageddon” a physical battle or spiritual battle? What does “Armageddon” mean and why is that important to defining what Armageddon is?



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