

NOT YOUR DAD'S END TIME STUDY

Session 8 - Revelation 8-11

Over the last two weeks, we have examined the first seven chapters of Revelation. Let me recap the final points of last week's study. The sixth seal was opened and we saw a preview of the day of the Lord similarly described elsewhere in the New Testament. As with other places in Revelation, man is pictured as so adamant in pursuing his own goals that neither demonic plague nor scorching heat are sufficient to make him repent. Nothing short of God dissolving the world itself strikes any terror into these people in these last days. The question was asked by unrepentant mankind as to who could stand against the wrath of God. Chapter 7 provided the answer to this question. It would be all those who are saved by the blood of the Lamb. We see this group of redeemed humans described in two ways in this chapter: as the 144,000 while they are still alive on earth and as the "great multitude, which no one could count" after they are martyred during the Great Tribulation and are now praising God in heaven.

The Great Tribulation will be a time unlike any other in history as it will be God's time to pour out His wrath upon the world and unrepentant mankind. This Great Tribulation will see many, if not most, Christians killed for their faith and will end when Christ returns for His church. In this section we will see the seventh seal opened and the Trumpet judgments come to pass. Remember, that the seals are merely events which are required to unfold so that the book can be opened and God's will played out in human history towards its conclusion. This book is the book of the consummation of human history and can only be opened by Christ Himself. With the last seal undone and the contents of the book open now, we will see God's plan for bringing an end to this creation and what He has in store for mankind.

Throughout this section it is good to keep an eye on where Christ is pictured as being and where John is located in these visions. It helps interpret what's happening where.

I. The seventh and final seal is broken and the book is now open. [Read Revelation 8:1-6]

A. A critical question is answered in the first verse. How do we know that there won't be any women in heaven? Because there is silence in heaven for a full half hour. (just joking)

B. The dramatic pause has a huge impact just as the sights and sounds of the rest of the book have had. In majestic quietness everything, history itself, must wait for God, the King of Kings to take the initiative for final events to continue. History is not just some random jumble of events, as it often appears from earth, but rather that God is over all history and in this case we see holy restraint and might silencing everything in heaven before the terrible events of the end of the world. The silence also represents an attitude of trembling suspense on the part of the heavenly host in view of the divine judgments about to fall upon the world. The heavenly host know that human history is wrapping up and they are watching with great anticipation how God will bring history to a close. (Things in the world will be going on as always but this is what the scene is like in heaven.)

Q: As the scroll represents the wrapping up of human history and how it takes place, what is the event that takes place after the seventh and last seal is opened? *(When the seventh seal is broken, there is no immediate event as there were in the first six. Instead now the contents of the scroll of human destiny can be revealed. The seventh seal being opened allows human history to be revealed - how God's judgment upon the world will take place. The first set of divine judgments*

are symbolized by seven angels sounding seven trumpets, one at a time. The trumpets are the initial events of the final days of mankind and the original creation.)

Q: What did the angel in v.3 hold before the altar of God? *(A golden censer)*

Q: What goes on an altar? *(A sacrifice. As this one is before the throne of God, the Lamb of God was slain on this altar to satisfy God's wrath against sin. Now the offerings on this altar before God are the prayers of God's children. The prayers of the saints are close to the throne of God. This shows believers that their prayers are never far from God. The prayers for vindication are now going to be executed by God and His agents.)*

The hot coals being cast down to earth is another symbol that God's fiery wrath and judgment are going to come down upon the earth in response to the prayers of His saints. The physical signs of lightning and thunder show God's presence, such as we saw around His throne in chapter 4.

2. The trumpets fall into two categories - one set of four, a set of three which are called "woes". **[Read Revelation 8:7-13]**

As we examine the trumpet judgments, we need to realize that though they are horrific and terrible, they are still limited in scope. The reference to "one third" should not be taken literally but rather as a significant portion of something destroyed. Keep in mind that when we get to the bowl judgments, these limits are going to be removed.

Q: What does the number four symbolize in Revelation? *(the world).*

Q: So what do we expect to be the target of these first four judgments? *(These first four trumpets are judgments against the physical earth/nature.)*

1. Trumpet #1 - Judgment upon vegetation and is similar to the fourth plague God leveled against Egypt.

2. Trumpet #2 - Judgment upon the seas and similar to the first plague upon Egypt when the Nile was turned to blood. Sea life and shipping will be affected by this.

3. Trumpet #3 - Judgment upon fresh water. Wormwood is a bitter herb of the Middle East. It is not uncommon to see it used by God in judgment in the Old Testament. The bitterness causes toxicity so that those who drink this water die. This is the first time human death is mentioned in relation to a trumpet judgment.

4. Trumpet #4 - Judgment upon the heavenly bodies as they are partially darkened. This is similar to the ninth plague upon Egypt. Darkness through the impairment of natural sources is often a sign of God's judgment. This sort of darkness also happened just after the crucifixion of Jesus.

5. Just after the fourth trumpet an eagle cries out. The word "woe" is onomatopoeia. The word "woe" describes the sound made by an eagle. The sound is often used to warn people in Scripture. The woe is relating to mankind that there is a huge host of demons about to be unleashed over the whole world who will have the power to harm and kill people.

6. The following is a warning concerning the interpretation of the final three

trumpets. The language is symbolic, like most of the rest of Revelation. While it describes actual events that will take place, the pictures painted are highly imaginative because they are at the edge of what is comprehensible to the human mind. Rather than break down each item, it's best to get the big picture of each trumpet and what is being judged.

Q: What does the number 3 represent in Revelation? (*something spiritual*)

Q: So what do we expect to be the focus of these judgments? (*the spiritual world*)

1. [Read Revelation 9:1-12] - Trumpet #5 - judgment upon mankind through demons. These are not locusts but demons being described here. We know they are demons because they do not act like locusts.

a) [Proverbs 30:27]

Q: What is one thing that this verse tells us physical locusts don't have? (*We are told that natural locusts have no king. Yet, these "locusts" do have a king.*)

Q: Who is the king or leader of these spiritual locusts? (*Their leader or king is called Abaddon in Hebrew or Apollyon in Greek. Either language it means "destroyer". This is not Satan but rather the chief demon over the bottomless pit until it is emptied for this trumpet judgment.*)

b) Natural locusts eat vegetation. These "locusts" don't eat anything and don't even harm vegetation but rather torment lost people.

Q: Where do these spiritual locusts originate from? (*v. 1 - These "locusts" originate from a spiritual location - the bottomless pit. The bottomless pit appears to be a provisional place of punishment for Satan and his hosts until they are finally judged and thrown into hell. It is where the antichrist comes from and where he is before coming to earth. (Rev. 11:7) It is where Satan will be kept under wraps during the millennial reign of Christ. (Rev. 20:3) It is also mentioned to be a place of imprisonment for demons. (Luke 8:32)*)

c) God is using the image of the locust to inspire terror as He did during an actual locust plague He sent upon His people in **Joel 2:1-11**. The only difference is that these locusts are spiritual in nature - thus demons.

d) John's further description of the locust demons tells us that they have faces like humans hair like women's hair which symbolizes that these are intelligent creatures. Their teeth show ferocity and the ability to harm people. The description symbolizes their nature and abilities rather than any true appearance they might have and considering they are spirit beings, humans won't see them at all. This torment they cause could be physical, mental, or emotional distress (or all three). What we know is that the pain and suffering they cause will be severe enough to lead those afflicted to want to die, yet they won't die.

e) This is the end of the first "woe". There are still two more "woes" left to come. This is important to note the placement of the end of this woe because the next woe then begins in 9:13 and goes all the way until 11:14. There is an interlude given in the middle of this woe but don't let that confuse you into splitting this section into two different judgments. The parts from

9:13 to 11:14 should be taken together.

2. **[Read Revelation 9:13-21]** - Trumpet #6 - judgment upon unrepentant mankind. Again, this is not speaking of a literal human army. It is an army of demons which has as its purpose to kill a large but limited number of people.

[Revelation 6:9-10]

a) The horns of the altar are where the prayers of the saints were raised and now is the answer to the question of the martyrs back in **Rev. 6:9-11**, when will they be avenged? The answer is NOW. God is directly answering that question in this judgment.

Q: How many angels are bound at the Euphrates River? (*vv. 14-15 - four. Four represents the earth so these angels are showing us that we are back in the physical world and that their judgment will be earthly in nature.*)

b) These four angels who have been prepared for this specific event and have been bound at the Euphrates River. Traditionally, the Euphrates River is where the enemies of God's people crossed in order to reach Israel. It was the crossing place for the pagan armies to attack the Jews. The Assyrians, Babylonians, Parthians and everyone who ever attacked them from the north or east had to cross the Euphrates River to invade Israel. This symbolizes the release of fierce enemies and God is using these enemies to bring death to many unbelievers.

c) The angels loose a hoard of "200 million" mounted horsemen. Just as with the locusts, these horsemen are demons - not men. This is symbolic of supernatural forces rather than natural forces.

d) The translation in v.16 is terrible - in just about all translations (NIV and EV got it right). In the Greek it literally says that John heard the number "two ten thousand ten thousands". This number got inserted into the Bible (erroneously) by multiplying twenty thousand (two ten thousand) by ten thousand and you get 200 million.

1) This is the exact same wording used in **Revelation 5:11**, except the "two" does not proceed the first ten thousand, when it translated "myriads upon myriads" (or a number too big to be counted). The meaning in the Greek is clear. A force of demons that is way too big to be counted is being unleashed upon the earth to kill a large number of people. (The ancient Greeks expressed the idea of infinity through the use of "ten thousand ten thousands". It was used to describe something too large to count or number.)

2) However, to put to rest the Hal Lindsey (Late Great Planet Earth) view of this number being a literal army of people, General William K. Harrison had this to say about an army of 200 million people. He said it would be completely impossible to field such an army as it could not be supplied much less moved. At the height of WWII, there were 70 million people in all the militaries of all the world and it took the rest of the world to support these troops. China once boasted it had an army of 200 million people but that's absurd unless they gave every male between the ages of 5 - 50 a pitchfork and said, "Welcome to the army." Raising it, supplying it, and moving it would be completely beyond human limitations. That's the word from a military man. So, it's better to take this as a "whopping big number" of demons - a number too large to be counted.

e) Again, don't get caught up in the exact picture of the demons. It is enough to know that these demons kill a lot of people. Just note that it isn't the riders who do the killing but the horses - demons. The fact that they kill people from the mouths and tails means that they kill going and coming - a great threat against human life no matter how one encounters them.

f) The goal of this judgment is shown in verses 20-21. Even in this judgment, God wants people to repent. His amazing love, grace and patience is on display for all to receive. It is not too late to be saved, even at this late time in human history.

Q: What is the response of lost humanity to God's judgment? (*v. 20-21 - Lost humanity here is shown as totally immoral and idolatrous. These people are bent upon worship of selfish ends and possibly the antichrist, though that isn't mentioned directly in this passage. This is one of the most distressing passages in the entire book of Revelation as it shows the truth of what Jesus taught about the heart of man growing cold and being unable to love anyone but oneself is playing out in history at this time. There were other clear passages that taught the same thing.*)

3. At this point, just after trumpet 6, we are poised and ready to see the seventh and final trumpet blast. If these first six brought this level of intense judgment upon the earth, what does God have planned for the seventh? As it turns out, there is a break from the trumpet judgments and instead we are confronted with an interlude that consumes the next two chapters and answers two questions for us.

II. The interlude of two related visions.

A. Just as the interlude of chapter 7 had a purpose to answer a question, so this interlude of two parts answers two questions. This isn't so much a pause in the action as it just showing us the action from another point of view. This is a literary device which instructs the church of its role and destiny during the final period of history. Here are the two questions:

1. The first question is brought up by the martyrs in 6:10 is how long do we have to suffer and wait for justice which is answered in 10:7.

2. The second question is one which has not been raised yet in the visions but asks what is the task of the church in these troublesome times? (11:1-13)

B. The vision of the mighty angel and the little open scroll. **[Read Revelation 10:1-7]**

Q: Where is John located when he saw this vision? (*on earth - the angel is coming down to where John is in the vision.*)

1. The angel who descends is one of splendor and glory. His descriptions all deal with divine promises.

Q: What two promises, one of which we have seen before in Revelation, are associated with this angel? (*#1 - The clouds deal with the promise that Jesus would descend back to earth in a cloud as He was taken up in one (Acts 1:11). #2 - The rainbow is a promise not to flood the world again. (Rev. 4:3)*)

This angel is about to make a promise based upon the One who always keeps His

promises. He can do this because his face and feet shining is symbolic of having been in God's direct presence. This is not Christ as every instance in the New Testament and Revelation where the word angel is used, it means a created spiritual being. This is an angel on divine assignment.

2. The other image, which is often misunderstood, is the small book. This is not the scroll of human destiny which was sealed with the seven seals and was opened by Christ. That scroll is in the hands of Christ who alone is worthy to possess it. This scroll is more like the prophetic scrolls of Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 or Jeremiah 15:15-17. This scroll contains a prophetic message which is about to be explained in detail.

a. There are seven peals of thunder which speak but the message is not revealed to us. In other words, it was a message just for John and not for the rest of the saints. It was not part of the main revelation of Jesus. The thunder represents God's awesome power and majesty of God's presence. We are confronted with the intimacy of God's love and care as He speaks directly to John at this point in the vision.

b. The lifting of the right hand is the Jewish manner of taking an oath. The accurate translation of v.6 is "*there will be no more delay*". This answers the question raised by the martyrs of chapter 6:10. The oath declares that the time has come for God's final judgments to be poured out upon mankind. The mystery of God is God's purpose for mankind through the grace of Jesus as revealed by the Lord's prophets. What was understood by faith is about to become sight for all.

3. The contents of the little scroll **[Read Revelation 10:8-11]**

a. Ezekiel was also commanded to eat the scroll of prophecy handed to him (chapters 2-3) and now John is commanded to eat this scroll. While it is sweet in his mouth, it causes him to have a sour stomach. In other words, John received God's Word with great joy but since the words were an oracle of judgment, it ends up being bitter to digest.

Q: What does eating the scroll represent? (*Eating it symbolizes taking it into his innermost being and becoming part of oneself. This is necessary if one is to believe it fully, be transformed by it, and proclaim it boldly. This is similar to Jesus' use of the idea in John 6:53-58. Side note here. While the true prophets never backed down from preaching unpopular or harsh messages, the false prophets only preached "good" news - even though it was not to ever come to pass. To them the book would have been double sweet - good news as they spoke it and good news as others praised them and paid them for their oracle of good news.*)

b. The message is for the believing church and really the whole world. The contents of the book are what follows in chapters 11 & 12.

C. The vision of the two witnesses. Before we read it, just so you know, chapter 11 is by far the most challenging chapter of Revelation to interpret and is probably the most hotly debated chapter, as well. Almost everything that could be considered a flashpoint in prophetic interpretation is found in chapter 11 (temple, holy city, witnesses, three and a half, etc.) The key is that after examining it honestly, you have to get it to agree with the clear teachings in rest of the New Testament or at least not contradict those teachings. **[Read Revelation 11:1-6]**

Q: What does the action of measuring signify? (*It represents some form of sealing or divine protection.*)

Q: Who is being measured and who is left out of the measurement? (*vv. 1-2 - those in the temple get sealed, those outside of it are not sealed*)

1. The action of measuring the altar and those who worship there is a dramatic way to convey the message. The measuring of items and people was a symbolic way to show that these people are to be protected and preserved spiritually in the upcoming time of great peril. (See II Samuel 8:2). What John measured was sealed off. So we see the temple, the altar and the faithful saints are to be considered the faithful people of God, the new Israel.

2. Though these people will suffer horrific physical danger and evil, they will not suffer any spiritual danger. The temple stands for the people of God - not the actual physical temple. (How many times in the New Testament are the saints called the temple of God and our bodies are the temple of God? I Corinthians 3:16-17, II Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-22, Revelation 3:12 and Revelation 13:6). This represents the church in the Great Tribulation (like mentioned in chapter 7 sealing). It is both saved Jews and Gentiles and as we'll see next week, this is the symbol of the woman in the beginning of chapter 12.

3. The altar is where things were sacrificed to God. The only people who would be there are the priests and the faithful worshipers. Remember last week that believers were made to be the priests of God when they were saved. Before God is where we belong. By being measured, they show themselves to be the true servants of God in these last days. Why is this thought repeated as it was described in chapter 7 already? The events since chapter 7 have been terrible and unnerving to say the least. Those who will be alive at this time will need the constant reassurance and encouragement that God is still watching over them and is sovereign and moving history along with a purpose. This last generation of believers will need the hope of understanding that God is still in control which will be an act of great faith to believe at this time in history. While things will look bad from their perspective on earth, God will keep them secure and He will be faithful to keep all His promises to His children. (Remember the angel giving John the little book to eat was taking an oath that these things would happen at once and since he had come from God's presence, they were completely trustworthy.)

4. The outer court is not measured and thus not protected. In other words, those who are not saved are not safe. The outer court was the portion of the temple dedicated to those who were not Jewish men to worship and seek God. Instead of seeking God, the lost are now trampling the message of God underfoot. This will go on for 42 months.

a. This is significant. In the letters to the seven churches (chapters 2 & 3) Jesus was concerned about the people who were associated with the local church but not true worshipers of Him. When this great test comes, these who failed to repent earlier will join ranks with the beast and reveal their true colors - lost. They call Jesus "Lord" but don't do His will (Matthew 7:21-23)

5. The "holy city". This is another reference to the church, in the community of faith in God or true believers. When you take this "treading action" in context, it shows that the church will be trampled down during this 42 month period of time by the world and false Christians and the antichrist. The trampling can refer to persecution that leads to apostasy.

6. 42 months - Again, this is not a literal measurement of time but symbolic of a fairly short amount of time, a time which is limited by God, where evil will be allowed free reign.

Q: Why is the time frame given as 42 months in v.2 while 1,260 days in v.3? *(42 months is mentioned in v.2 while in v.3 the time is given as 1,260 days. It is technically the same length of time but since it is stated in two different units, it denotes two separate times - both relatively short in duration and limited by God but when evil reigns. Though the times are given as symbolic, they represent real calendar times. What happens in that time is far more important than the amount or length of time. The first of these times is when the two witnesses will be preaching and the second time is when the beast brings about bitter trials.)*

7. Who are the 2 witnesses?

a. [**Zechariah 4:1-14**] - Zechariah has a vision of two olive trees and a lampstand. Olive trees have been used to describe peace between man and God. In Zechariah, they represented channels through which God supplies power for His work to be done - how He was going to bring peace with Himself to mankind. So these two witnesses are two channels by which God is going to demonstrate His power for His purposes of bringing peace to mankind.

b. There are also two lampstands used to describe the witnesses.

Q: What do lampstands represent in Revelation? *(1:20 - the churches)*

Lampstands represent the channels by which God demonstrates or illuminates His mighty works. This is the function of a church - to glorify God and make clear His love and power. Churches are the visible manifestation of the body of Christ in this world between Christ's first and second coming. He demonstrates His power and light through the church to bring peace.

c. The olive branches and lampstands are two different ways to symbolize the true church of Jesus Christ. These witnesses are the redeemed Jews and Gentiles, the community of faith at work in the world. Both saved Jews and Gentiles are channels of peace and God's power in the world. They are fulfilling the prophetic call of God to the nations in the last days. Notice that these two witnesses ALWAYS act together, suffer together and are raised together. This shows the collective nature of their work. If this were just two people why not just imprison them or kill them outright? War would not be the correct term to use against just two people (v.7).

d. These two have powers that mirror Moses and Elijah. In v.4 we are told that they are in very close proximity to the Lord while on earth. It is this closeness that empowers them to do all that they do. The witnesses are acting in God's power for God's purposes, not their own purposes. Their existence proves that God exists and thus people should repent. In the end of the Old Testament, **Malachi 4:5**, God foretells sending Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord. This doesn't mean that Elijah will be sent in person, similar to John the Baptist being described as Elijah by Jesus in **Matthew 11:4**. Jesus is expanding upon this thought here in this vision. The believers of the last days will be acting in the prophetic role of Elijah, who acted at a time of great apostasy in Israel. (Remember that Elijah prophesied during the reign of king Ahab, who was married to Jezebel and were together some of the worst and most ungodly leaders Israel ever knew. They intentionally made Israel to worship Baal and the other false gods of the Canaanites. Into this historical context, Elijah performed many mighty miracles to bring God's people back to Himself. That's the role of the church in the end times.) These two witnesses will display the mighty power of God and God grants them immunity from destruction until their mission of proclaiming the saving work of Christ is done. Despite the number martyred, they will remain faithful to the mission.

8. Rise of the antichrist. **[Read Revelation 11:7-14]**

a. During this time, the church's mission is completed and the beast appears. This is the first mention of the beast in Revelation. He comes from the abyss which shows his demonic origin, he has supernatural powers that come from Satan. His first order of business is to wage war against the saints and the church. (This is further detailed in 12:17 & 13:7). This is only a quick overview of the war. The antichrist will in some way prevail over the church, at least temporarily.

b. The killing of the witnesses symbolizes the wearing or treading down the saints. In his war against the church, the beast seeks to obliterate the church and will martyr many Christians as they will not worship him. The place of the death of the witnesses is given as the great city.

9. What is the Great City?

a. Mystically is an odd translation of this word here. In other places it is translated "spiritually" or "in a spiritual manner". In other words, what John is describing is a city that is spiritual in nature - NOT a physical location on a world map. This isn't an actual physical city.

b. There are three actual locations used to describe this spiritual city:

1) Sodom - wiped off the planet by God due to their great sin. Abraham couldn't even find ten righteous men in the city to have it spared. The "great city" is a place of unrestrained and ferocious immorality and ungodliness.

2) Egypt - the place where God's people were enslaved and cruelly treated. The great city will be a place where Christians are mistreated, persecuted and enslaved.

3) Jerusalem - the place where the Lord Jesus was crucified. The great city will be a place where justice will be perverted and twisted to serve the ends of men in power as opposed to serving the poor, oppressed or needy. It is a place where Jesus Christ will be held up and crucified in a spiritual sense to open mockery, insults and abuse (through the proxy of His followers).

4) Keep in mind that in other places in Revelation, the cities of Babylon and Rome are both used to describe this same city.

c. What is important to note about the book of Revelation is that apart from the seven cities mentioned of in chapters 2 & 3 (the ones which received the letters) there are only two cities mentioned in the rest of Revelation: The new Jerusalem which is the holy city of God and this "great city" which is of the world where Satan rules. This does not refer to any particular city but rather to any place where God is opposed, His testimony discarded and His servants maligned and persecuted and killed. It is any place where God's witness is despised and dismissed. It is a place characterized by spiritual darkness. Thus with the witnesses being the church, we are talking about dead Christians littered all over the planet where Satan is exercising his authority against God's people.

d. In v.8 - what is generally translated "bodies" is actually singular - one body. It means that in reality, there is only one united witness which is the united church body of Christ.

10. Notice that the world revels in the antichrist's victory over the two witnesses. The entire beast-worshiping world is gleeful at the destruction of the church. It's like a new evil Christmas. Those who brought conviction of sin upon them are now dead. (This doesn't mean that all Christians are dead. We know from other passages that some remain until Jesus returns but what it does mean is that they will have very limited impact upon humanity.)

a. The beast's victory is short lived. The time span is again given and its 3 and a half days. While this isn't to be taken literally, it is a limited time set by God and could correspond to

three and a half days. Just don't count on it being that long if you are here. In other words, this time of universal celebration will be limited.

At the end of this time we see a foreshadowing of the return of Christ and the resurrection of the saints from **I Thessalonians 4:16-17**. This is the vindication of the saints after the final victory over the antichrist. The witnesses remain dead for three and a half days. This is half a week but again it's best to take this symbolically. It's a short time but since if it were literal it would give the exact time of Christ's second coming, we need to view it as symbolic. The church's death is short-lived.

b. After this, a great earthquake hits. This is a sign of associated with God's judgment upon mankind. The 7,000 means that it is a complete number from God's standpoint but not infinite. Here we see the words of Philippians 2 come to pass: "every knee bowing and every tongue confessing Jesus as Lord" - because they now see Him. This shows us the end of hope for lost mankind as faith is no longer a tool for salvation as everyone sees Christ as He truly is.

III. The end of the second woe and the announcement of the third woe. [Read Revelation 11:15-19]

A. The interlude has now ended and the third woe is coming soon. The seventh trumpet sounds. Like the seventh seal, nothing happens right away. The seventh trumpet actually sets in motion the seven bowl judgments which are to come. (This won't be described until chapter 16.)

Q: Where is John located at this part in the vision? (*v.15 - in heaven*)

1. John is back in heaven and hears the voices proclaiming the reign of Christ has come. The world has been under the control of the antichrist but now the world is under new management. The rule of God has come and is being exercised in heaven and will soon be exercised on earth as well. (We see the full description of the return of Christ in chapter 19.) There is the prophetic sense here in that the outcome is so certain and sure that it is spoken of in the past tense.

2. VV. 18-19 give a summation of the rest of the book of Revelation. It's assuring the saints and church that Christ is victorious in the end and they will be with Him forever at that time. As long as hostile nations are allowed to defy God and His rule, the need for God's wrath to be visited upon mankind will be essential. Again, this is given to reassure the Christians that they will not lose their place in heaven despite what happens in this life.

Q: Who are the three groups of people who are rewarded in v.18? (*God's bondservants, His prophets and the saints who fear God's name*)

a. The heathen nations will make one final assault upon God's people in the last days but it will be met with God's wrath which will overthrow the pagan world. God's wrath is essential to setting up God's gracious rule on earth.

b. The ark of the covenant was a sign to Israel of God's love and faithfulness in their journeys and battles in the wilderness. It is a sign to those in the New Israel of God's new covenant will assure believers of God's loyal love through their severe trials and battles against the antichrist. The lightning and thunder reassure believers of God's presence.

c. This is the end of the second woe as the third is yet to come - after another set of

interludes that encompass chapters 12-15. These intermediate visions are needed to prepare the church for the great day of wrath to come upon the earth and that their eternal place with God is sure.

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?