



**DAYSPRING**  
**WESLEYAN CHURCH**  
REACH | GROW | WORSHIP | SERVE

# A STUDY ON REVELATION

**GET GOING**

**We don't have Forever to Step into Forever**

Dr. Wynand de Wet

(aka Pastor Wayne)





REVELATION

always

encourages me

challenges me

to

live closer to the Lord

connect better with the Family of God

reach the lost

with extreme urgency

with no fear

preach, teach, share, care

boldly

without hindrance

without regret

always acutely aware

of the

POWER

of the

HOLY SPIRIT

*Writing this workbook brought me such joy*

*I pray it serves the Church well*

*I pray it becomes a useful tool to GET GOING!*

*Pastor Wayne*

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## **Introduction**

## WELCOME!

We're thrilled you're joining us for a deep dive into Revelation! Our prayer is that these next 5 weeks will enrich your understanding of God's Word and get you excited about what God is also doing on a Global Scale.

This journey through Revelation will culminate in a Global Missions Celebration! Join us on the 5th Sunday evening for a special international dinner, featuring familiar and exotic foods, followed by inspiring presentations of global ministries. Enjoy a delicious meal and hear powerful testimonies of God's work in His harvest worldwide. In preparation, explore 6 remarkable missionary stories covering the history of our involvement in Thailand, spanning close to 30 years!

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Here's how to make the most of this exciting journey:

**Make time.** Dedicate time for daily devotionals, letting them spark a lasting spiritual habit that deepens your faith beyond this course.

**Make it a priority.** Commit to prioritizing this month. Aim to engage in every daily devotion and all 4 Sunday gatherings. Life may interrupt, but strive to let God's Word saturate your life fully.

**Be honest.** The devotions and discussions invite reflection on your walk with God, your views of His ways, and your lifestyle. Honest answers will foster the greatest growth.

**Participate and be patient.** Open your heart and stretch yourself. Share insights with your spouse, children, or friends as God's Word challenges you. On Sunday evenings, don't just listen, share what the Spirit has placed on your heart. Your voice matters. Be patient with others, creating a safe space where all can share comfortably, regardless of where they are in their faith journey, without judgment.

**Expect great things.** Anticipate being challenged, transformed, and renewed. Pray, read, reflect, and gather with your family and church, expecting God to move powerfully through Revelation and our reflection on missions in these 5 weeks for His glory.

## THE BIBLE

This course is anchored in God's Word, primarily using the New International Version (1984 edition, NIV84). Occasionally, alternative translations may clarify the original Biblical languages. Keep your Bible ready for each lesson. While digital Bibles are fine, a printed Bible is recommended for underlining, highlighting, or note-taking, enhancing your engagement as you pray and ponder the text.



## THEME & LAYOUT - A 5 WEEK JOURNEY

We start our time together with a 4 week journey through Revelation, themed:

*GET GOING: We don't have Forever to Step into Forever!*

Each week we will take a closer look at what this means:

Week 1 - *GET GOING: Answer God's Call to Grace*

Week 2 - *GET GOING: Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully*

Week 3 - *GET GOING: Answer God's Call under His Control*

Week 4 - *GET GOING: Answer God's Call in His Presence*

*JOIN OUR GLOBAL MISSIONS WEEK!*

Week 5 - A six day snapshot of the work in Thailand culminating in a Global Missions Dinner and celebration on our final Sunday evening together.

## COURSE SETUP

This course features *6 daily devotions, Monday through Saturday*, ending each week with a dynamic Sunday evening gathering!

### *Sunday mornings*

Starting on the first Sunday morning, we will begin a seven-week sermon series on the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2–3.

To help you prepare, you'll find a short Bible study summary of these letters in **Addendum 2** at the end of Week 4. We encourage you to begin there so you can be well prepared for the first sermon on the letter to the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1–7).

*Sunday evenings* begin with a meal at 5 pm, followed by three 10-minute messages and three 15-minute group discussions, framed by an introduction and summary, from 6 pm to 7:30 pm.

### *Devotions: Mondays through Saturdays*

Faithful engagement with the devotions will maximize impact. Don't feel overwhelmed. Here are some tips to dive in with peace and joy:

**Designed for 25 minutes.** Devotions are crafted to be meaningful and manageable, ideally becoming a lasting part of your walk with God. Expect around 15 minutes for reading, reflection, and questions, 5 minutes for prayer, and 5 minutes for optional journaling.

**Do what you can.** Something is better than nothing. No guilt needed! Each devotion allows flexibility: Answer all questions, select a few, or simply read and pray briefly. The goal is to engage at your level.

**Do it when you can.** Morning coffee, lunch breaks, or late nights. Simply choose what works. The only bad time is "no time." Commit to finding a moment that fits.

**Do it with someone.** Solo devotions are valuable, but sharing with a spouse, kids, or a friend can be enriching. Decide what suits you, or mix both approaches.

**Use the space for notes.** Each day's devotion has some space for notes. Use this space freely: Draw what God stirs in your heart, jot down notes, write questions to reflect on later or ask on Sunday. If you're a thinker, not a writer, that's perfectly fine too.

**Have fun!** Like enjoying a good meal, relaxing with TV, reading a favorite book, or cheering at your kids' sports, spending time in God's Word should be a joy. With the right mindset, this can bless you, your marriage, and your family. Embrace it with delight!

## A Final Note

You will notice that some themes receive repeated attention throughout this course. In many cases, the Sunday evening gatherings will revisit material we have already covered during the week. This is completely intentional.

The repetitive nature of Revelation itself where themes, images, and symbols return and build upon one another, is one reason for this approach. Another important reason is the rich symbolism and sometimes challenging metaphors in the Book. By spending time in the devotions during the week, you will come to our Sunday evening discussions better prepared. This allows us to spend less time on basic explanation and more time in meaningful conversation with one another.

My goal is that this rhythm helps us grow together in our understanding and love for Revelation.

## **REVELATION**

### **Overview**

The Book of Revelation is the final Book of the Bible. It was written by John (traditionally understood to be the Apostle John) around 95–96 AD, while he was exiled on the island of Patmos during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian. The Book was written to encourage believers who were facing pressure and hostility, reminding them that God remains sovereign and that Jesus has already triumphed.

Revelation follows a clear and purposeful structure. It opens in chapters 1–3 with a majestic vision of the risen Christ, followed by seven letters addressed to real churches in Asia Minor. These letters offer both encouragement and loving correction, revealing Jesus’ deep concern for the spiritual health of His people.

In chapters 4 and 5, the scene shifts dramatically to the throne room of heaven. Here John witnesses powerful worship and sees a sealed scroll that no one is worthy to open, until the Lamb Who was slain steps forward and takes the scroll. This moment highlights a core Message of the Book: Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb, is also the victorious King.

Chapters 6 to 16 unfold a series of judgments through the opening of seven seals, the sounding of seven trumpets, and the pouring out of seven bowls. These visions reveal both God’s righteous judgment on evil and His persistent call for people to repent. Woven throughout these chapters are incredible scenes of worship and glimpses of God’s grace and care toward His people.

Chapters 17 to 20 describe the downfall of evil systems, symbolized by Babylon, the final defeat of the dragon (Satan), and the Great White Throne judgment. These chapters deliver a clear and hopeful Message: Evil may appear dominant and unstoppable for a time, but it will not prevail. God will judge every injustice with perfect righteousness and remove all that opposes His Kingdom.

The Book concludes in chapters 21 and 22 with one of the most glorious visions in all of Scripture: A new heaven and a new earth, and the New Jerusalem coming down from God. Here, God dwells with His people forever. There is no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. The curse is gone, and God’s servants will see His face and reign with Him eternally. The Book ends with a final invitation and the heartfelt cry of the Church: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Written in rich symbolic language, Revelation calls believers to faithful endurance, courageous witness, and wholehearted worship. It reminds us that history is moving toward a glorious conclusion under the sovereign rule of God.

Jesus is coming soon!

## Interpreting Revelation Well

- Let us begin with three important features of Revelation:
  - Revelation uses a significant number of metaphors. Names, places, and numbers are often used symbolically.
  - There are more references to the Old Testament in Revelation than there are verses in the Book, yet not a single direct quote from the Old Testament is used.
  - Revelation was written for a specific group of believers in Asia Minor around the turn of the first century.

*From these features, several implications follow:*

- We should keep the Old Testament in mind when interpreting Revelation.
  - We should also keep the rest of the New Testament in mind.
  - No interpretation of a passage in Revelation should contradict the Truth of the rest of Scripture.
  - The Message of Revelation must have made sense to its original audience.
  - We should place high value on Scripture itself, the original languages (especially Greek), and the historical and cultural background of the time. This includes how people lived, their value systems, and the meaning of numbers, colors, and other symbols common in that culture.
- God controls time. He can stretch, shrink, or pause it as He chooses. He exists outside of time and is not bound by it as we are. This greatly affects how we should understand time references in Revelation.
  - Revelation is not a strict history or a chronological timeline of future events. It is an incredible vision of all that God has been doing and continues to do, especially covering the period between Jesus' first coming and His second coming.

*From this, the following implications apply:*

- The focus should not be primarily on the timing or sequence of events, but rather on the themes and meaning of those events.
  - The order of chapters in Revelation does not necessarily represent the order in which events will occur.
  - A single theme can be developed across several different passages throughout the Book.
  - Certain passages may actually refer to the same event, and sometimes even events occurring at the same time, but described from different perspectives or showing a progression of intensity.
- Jesus can return at any time. If a particular timeline theory puts this Truth in jeopardy, we should be willing to re-examine that theory.
  - Jesus has already won. This means we can disagree on some secondary interpretative matters and still end up in the same place, with our Lord.

## Fun Facts of Revelation

Before we take a deep dive into Revelation, here are 12 fun facts to spark our curiosity and show that Revelation is much more than just a scary Book about the end times.

1. *It's the only Book in the Bible that promises a special blessing for simply reading it.* Revelation 1:3a says, "Blessed is the one who reads the Words of this prophecy...". God gives a blessing to those who take the time to read, and of course, respond to it!
2. *Jesus is called the "Lamb" 28 times in Revelation, but only referred to as the "Lion" once.* While many people expect Revelation to be dominated by the Lion, the Book emphasizes Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb far more often.
3. *It was written to real Churches with real problems.* The first three chapters contain actual letters to seven real Churches in Asia Minor. These weren't imaginary Churches. They were dealing with many of the same struggles Churches face today.
4. *Revelation contains some of the most amazing worship scenes in the Bible.* It gives us a powerful glimpse of what worship around the throne of God looks like.
5. *It connects all the way back to Genesis.* Many themes from the first Book of the Bible reappear in the last, such as the Tree of Life, the river of Life, the removal of the curse, and God dwelling with His people.
6. *There is no temple in the New Jerusalem.* In the new heaven and new earth, there is no temple building, because God Himself and the Lamb is the temple (Revelation 21:22). God's presence fills everything.
7. *The number 666 probably referred to a real person in John's time.* Many scholars believe 666 was a coded reference to the Roman Emperor Nero. This shows that Revelation was very relevant to the believers living under Roman rule and persecution.
8. *Jesus speaks directly in Revelation, and His final Words in the entire Bible are "I am coming soon."* Three times in the last chapter, Jesus says He is coming soon. He clearly wants us to take this Truth seriously.
9. *It contains the longest and most detailed description of the new creation in the Bible.* While many Books mention heaven, Revelation 21 and 22 give us the most vivid and extended picture of the new heaven and new earth.
10. *The Book ends with an open invitation.* Even after all the warnings and judgments, the very last chapter still contains a hopeful invitation: "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of Life" (Revelation 22:17b).
11. *It was written by a man in exile.* The apostle John wrote Revelation while he was banished to the island of Patmos because of his faith. Even in suffering and isolation, God gave him an incredible vision of hope.
12. *Revelation is ultimately a Book about worship and hope, not just judgment.* While it does contain serious warnings, the overarching Message of Revelation is the victory of the Lamb, the faithfulness of God, and the glorious future that awaits those who belong to Him.

## **REVELATION**

**Not to get lost in**

**Not to get stuck in**

**Not to get afraid of**

**Not to get upset about**

## **BUT**

**To energize you**

**To get excited about**

**To find your true identity**

**To transform your today**

**To bring hope to your tomorrow**

**To ensure glory to your eternity**

**Week 1**

**GET GOING**

**Answer God's Call to Grace**

## Devotion - Monday

### Answer God's Call to Grace: In Jesus

#### **Focus passage: Revelation 1:12-20**

*<sup>12</sup> I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and among the lampstands was Someone "like a Son of Man," dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. <sup>14</sup> His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. <sup>15</sup> His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. <sup>16</sup> In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. <sup>17</sup> When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. <sup>19</sup> Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. <sup>20</sup> The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in My right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven Churches."*

#### **A Bible study in a nutshell**

It is deeply encouraging to know we don't have to search far for Jesus. He is right here with us. One of the most precious Truths in Christianity is that Jesus walks "among the lampstands" (vv. 12-13), that is, right in the midst of His Church, His people (v. 20).

From the very beginning of Revelation we encounter Jesus as our High Priest. He wears the full-length robe and golden sash high on His chest (v. 13; see Ex. 28:2-4), no longer working, but having completed everything on the cross (John 19:30). His white hair speaks of perfect wisdom (v. 14), His eyes like blazing fire see through everything (v. 14), and His feet like glowing bronze stand unshakable no matter what storms come (v. 15). His voice, like rushing waters, calms every fear and speaks with sovereign authority (v. 15). In His right hand He holds the seven stars, Church leaders, securely (vv. 16, 20). From His mouth comes a sharp double-edged sword: He judges righteously by His Word, not by human weapons (v. 16; see also Is. 11:4; 49:2). It is very interesting that neither Jesus nor believers are ever found in Revelation with a sword in the hand! His face shines like the sun in all its brilliance (v. 16).

When John saw Him, he fell at Jesus' feet as though dead. Jesus responded with the strongest hand yet the gentlest words: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! I hold the keys of death and Hades" (vv. 17-18).

#### **Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage**

All the grace we need is secured in Jesus. Answering God's call to grace is simply saying "Yes!" to Jesus. In Him you will find everything you need. Open your heart today and truly see Him in all His glory as He is presented on the very first pages of Revelation. He is not distant. He walks among His Church!





## Devotion - Tuesday

### Answer God's Call to Grace: In the Eye of the Storm

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 7:1-4, 9***

*<sup>1</sup>After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. <sup>2</sup>Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: <sup>3</sup>“Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” <sup>4</sup>Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.*

*<sup>9</sup>After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

With God's entire creation under His control, He reaches out to it all (four angels, four corners of the earth, four winds), and *stops any wind from blowing* (v. 1). For a moment all judgment comes to a complete and quiet standstill. This gives time for an angel with the “seal of the living God” (v. 2) to mark the foreheads of the servants of our God (v. 3). This seal was an ancient sign of ownership and guaranteed care, protection, and representation.

Every true believer receives this seal, not one is passed over. The 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel (vv. 4-8) is symbolic language for the complete people of God: 12 (Old Testament) × 12 (New Testament) × 10×10×10 (divine completeness) = 144,000. This group and the great multitude in verse 9 are the same people.

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Just as the eye of a tornado is calm while destruction rages all around, Revelation 7 gives us an encouraging “eye of the storm” moment. In the midst of frightening events, God creates a place of quiet assurance for His people.

You are never forgotten or abandoned in the storm. God has placed His seal of ownership on you. You belong to the living God. This Truth changes everything. In Him you have care, protection, and the privilege of being fully represented by your Creator.

Open your heart today and let Jesus remind you: You are His.

From this place of belonging you can stand firm with confidence.

From here you can call others to answer God's call to grace.

**Reflect on these questions**

1. In what “storm” are you currently living or facing, and how does the Truth that God has sealed you as His own bring you encouragement or peace?
2. How does knowing you are marked as God’s possession change the way you face fear, pressure, or uncertainty?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## **Devotion - Wednesday**

### **Answer God's Call to Grace: On your Knees**

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 8:1-5***

*<sup>1</sup> When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. <sup>3</sup> Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. <sup>4</sup> The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

This chapter opens with a dramatic pause. There is silence in heaven for about half an hour (v. 1)! According to temple practice, a moment of silence preceded the burnt offering. Even though the seven trumpets are ready (v. 2), the focus first turns to the prayers of the believers (vv. 3-4). The "much incense" pictures how every single prayer rises like a pleasant fragrance before God (Ps. 141:2; see also Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18). He hears every one, and He answers immediately with mighty, sovereign, righteous power (v. 5; see Ex. 19:16, 18).

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Sometimes God calls us to grace by allowing judgment to roll out over the world, inviting us to stop, repent, and answer His call.

Sometimes He simply hits the pause button so we can see and hear Him clearly.

Sometimes we answer this call with repentance, sometimes with sacrificing our lives to Him again, sometimes in worship, and sometimes in PRAYER.

In prayer...sometimes? Rather, many times...all the time!

Believers should know: God designed life with pauses so we have opportunities to PRAY.

Don't stop praying! Every prayer is worth praying, and every prayer is treasured by God like wonderful incense.

And He answers: With power from above, immediately, and undoubtedly.

**Reflect on these questions**

1. What keeps you from praying more consistently, and what would change if you truly believed every prayer is heard and treasured by God?
2. Looking at the challenges or needs around you (family, church, community, country, world), how might God be inviting you to pray more boldly?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

[illegible]

## **Devotion - Thursday**

### **Answer God's Call to Grace: Loud and Clear...to All!**

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 14:6-8***

*<sup>6</sup> Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. <sup>7</sup> He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” <sup>8</sup> A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

God is not relentlessly executing judgment without a break. There are repeated opportunities to hear His grace and be saved! The first angel proclaims the eternal Gospel to every nation, tribe, language, and people with a loud voice (vv. 6-7), calling everyone to fear God, give Him glory, and worship the Creator.

Babylon (often linked with Rome; see 1 Pet. 5:13) represents evil in opposition to the heavenly Jerusalem. The angel announces its future fall in the past tense to show absolute certainty (v. 8). Evil misleads the nations with a drug-like intoxication of idolatry and immorality (including spiritual adultery).

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

God's heart is always reaching out. Even as judgment rolls out, He makes sure all from every background hears the loud-and-clear Message: Answer His call to grace!

Evil's final fall is so certain we could write it in the history books, even though it is still unfolding.

Yet the Message from the cross shouts even louder than any judgment can ever communicate:

*Answer God's call to grace...to all...now... and be saved!*

#### ***Reflect on these questions***

1. Who in your life still needs to hear the eternal Gospel clearly proclaimed? How can you be part of that “loud voice”?
2. In what subtle ways might “Babylon” (the world's seductive systems) be trying to pull your heart away from wholehearted worship and service to God?

#### ***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

[illegible]

## Devotion - Friday

### Answer God's Call to Grace: Die in the Lord

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 14:9-13***

*<sup>9</sup> A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, <sup>10</sup> he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." <sup>12</sup> This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

The third angel warns that choosing to worship the beast and receive his mark brings God's undiluted wrath and eternal torment (vv. 9-11; see also Jer. 25:15-18 and Is. 34:9-10).

Yet even in this intense judgment announcement we find blessing: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...They will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them" (v. 13). This time calls for patient endurance from the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus (v. 12). There is no doubt: The only way to live in the Lord is to die in the Lord.

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

As the Lord's return draws nearer, God's call to grace grows louder. With solemn warning comes eternal blessing. Those who remain faithful may face hardship, but they receive rest and the reward of a life lived for Christ.

*Dying to self and living fully for Jesus is the path that leads to a grave where you do not die alone. Dying in the Lord means the Lord Himself will hold the record of your labor and deeds and present you to the Father.*

Dying in the Lord is the only way to live in the Lord...forever.

#### ***Reflect on these questions***

1. What does "dying in the Lord" look like practically in your daily life, especially in areas where faithfulness is costly?
2. As you think about the promise that your deeds will follow you, what kind of legacy in Christ are you building?



***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

[illegible]

## Devotion - Saturday

### Answer God's Call to Grace: It is Time

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 11:15-19***

*<sup>15</sup> The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever." <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying: "We give thanks to You, Lord God Almighty, the One Who is and Who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. <sup>18</sup> The nations were angry; and Your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding Your servants the prophets and Your saints and those who reverence Your Name, both small and great — and for destroying those who destroy the earth." <sup>19</sup> Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within His temple was seen the ark of His covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

The seventh trumpet sounds only after another encouraging break in the text. God truly wants the effect of the judgments to lead people to repentance, not loss!

This seventh trumpet also brings to a powerful conclusion the section that began in Revelation 4:1-11:19. Chapter 4 opened with God enthroned in glory and majesty, while chapter 12 will begin with the devil trying to seize that same throne. It is therefore no surprise that the seventh trumpet boldly announces once more that God and His Christ's rule must be acknowledged (vv. 15-18), because that is how it will most certainly be. This certainty is so complete that verse 17 intentionally drops the phrase "who is to come"!

God is now visibly present with His people, and the ark of His covenant appears in the opened temple in heaven. A sign of complete reconciliation (v. 19). What a powerful, triumphant moment!

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

No matter how loud the nations rage, God's reign is unstoppable.

This is such a certainty that what is still future is already spoken of as present reality.

No more is God introduced as the One Who is, Who was, and "Who is to come", as He already IS... now...on the throne.

Nothing can stop this. Nothing in the future can change this.

So many things are uncertain in this world. This is not one of them!

This is certain: It is TIME to answer God's call to grace—today...now...this very moment!

**Reflect on these questions**

1. How does the certainty of God's eternal reign change the way you face the "anger of the nations" or the brokenness in our world today?
2. What practical step can you take to live more fully under Christ's *current* Kingship in your thoughts, words, or actions?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Sunday Evening Gathering

### Discussion 1: Revelation 6:1-8:5

**Answer God's Call to Grace: Soon...25%!**

*Revelation 6:1-17 covers the opening of the first six seals*

# BREAK

*Revelation 8:1-5, following the break in Revelation 7*

*<sup>1</sup> When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. <sup>3</sup> Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. <sup>4</sup> The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.*

### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

In Revelation 6, the Lamb Himself opens the seals, showing that every judgment unfolds under God's sovereign control. The four horses represent false propaganda (white), war (red), famine and inflation (black), and death (pale). Together they strike only one-fourth of the earth.

The fifth seal reveals the souls of the martyrs crying out for righteous judgment, not revenge.

The sixth seal brings dramatic cosmic signs that lead to the urgent question: "Who can stand?" (v. 17). This cry, echoing Malachi 3:2 and Joel 2:11, begs for hope...and that hope is unequivocally given in chapter 7.

Chapter 8 then begins with a dramatic pause: Silence in heaven for about half an hour. Even as the seven trumpets are prepared, the focus turns first to the prayers of the saints, rising before God like sweet-smelling incense.

God certainly hears every single prayer and answers with mighty power.

## ***Reflection***

There is no need to be scared of Revelation.

There is no such thing as only relentless, uncontrolled judgments from an angry God Who simply wants to destroy everything. There is no intent to send people to hell while only a privileged few make it to a wonderful new place called heaven.

None of this is true of Revelation!

This week has shown us the opposite.

This week has set your feet on the true path of Revelation. One of the first, most prominent, and most important themes is this: A clear and loving call to answer God's grace.

Even the structure of the Book points to this grace-filled theme. After the sixth seal there is a definite break before the seventh seal is opened. The same thing happens between the sixth and seventh trumpets.

The seven seals affect only a fourth of the earth, and the seven trumpets affect only a third. There is a clear progression of intensity, not a sudden unleashing of punishment. Every judgment begins with God, in a completely controlled manner. They are never random divine acts happening out of control.

*All of this powerfully enforces the fact that God is giving us very intentional time to answer His call to grace.*

The judgments are meant to shout loud and clear: Do not play games with God. Do not underestimate His power or ignore His sovereign rule. Do not assume a sinful lifestyle will go unnoticed or un-judged. Instead, use these break-moments and the clear, intensifying Message to repent, turn your life over into His care, and begin walking in His path.

Even when believers cry out to God while suffering under these judgments, it is never a cry for revenge; it is a cry for what is righteous to prevail. And God answers that cry with encouragement to be patient, so that as many people as possible can have the opportunity to respond to His call to grace through His children in a lost and broken world.

*Once more: God is giving us very intentional time to answer His call to grace.*

## Table Discussion - Revelation: Past and Present Experiences

People's experiences with Revelation vary widely. Some find it too hard to understand and hardly ever read it. Others feel it is scary and doomsday-like, so they stay away. Still others dive deep into end-times theories and sometimes end up in heated debates.

My prayer is that over the past week you have discovered that Revelation has a Message for all of us, that it really is accessible to every believer, and that it does not have to be terribly scary.

I'd like to think we can even enjoy it, understand it, and be deeply encouraged by it.

This week we have seen God's longing for us to answer His call to grace that comes to us in Jesus. A call that invites us to fall on our knees before it is too late. It comes loud and clear, sometimes even through judgments on the world, so that nobody can miss it.

Everybody can hear this call to grace.

Everybody has an opportunity to answer this call to grace.

### ***Let's discuss practical ways to engage the powerful Message of Revelation:***

- 1. Before week 1:** Before this week, how had you generally felt about the Book of Revelation? What shaped those feelings?
- 2. At the end of week 1:** After this week, what has shifted in how you view Revelation? What one thing do you want to remember going forward?

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## Discussion 2: Revelation 8:6-11:19

**Answer God's Call to Grace: Soon...33%!**

*Revelation 8:6-9:21 covers the opening of the first six trumpets*

# BREAK

*Revelation 11:15-19, following the break in Revelation 10:1-11:14*

<sup>15</sup> The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever." <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying: "We give thanks to You, Lord God Almighty, the One Who is and Who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. <sup>18</sup> The nations were angry; and Your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding Your servants the prophets and Your saints and those who reverence Your Name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth." <sup>19</sup> Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within His temple was seen the ark of His covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

### *A Bible study in a nutshell*

The first four trumpets bring striking judgments that now reach into nature itself: Hail and fire mixed with blood, a blazing mountain thrown into the sea, wormwood poisoning the waters, and darkness covering the sky (Rev. 8:7-12). These powerful images remind us that God is sovereign over all creation and that even the things we consider most stable and secure can be shaken by His hand. A clear call to keep our priorities focused on Him.

The fifth and sixth trumpets (chapter 9) then turn directly against evil, releasing terrifying locusts from the Abyss and a vast demonic army from the Euphrates. Yet even in these intense scenes, God remains firmly in control: He protects His sealed people, sets strict limits on the harm, and allows only a limited time of torment.

It is significant that the seventh trumpet does not follow immediately after the sixth. Once again, God inserts an encouraging break (Rev. 10:1-11:14), because He deeply wants the judgments to lead people to repentance. He does not want anyone to be lost, but saved!

This trumpet brings the long section from Revelation 4 to 11:19 to a powerful conclusion. It boldly announces that the kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever. This certainty is so complete that the elders worship God as the One "Who is and Who was," intentionally leaving out "Who is to come" (Rev. 11:17a). God is now visibly present with His people. What a powerful and triumphant moment!

## ***Reflection***

Progressive intensity.

These are words we will keep encountering as we journey through Revelation. Here the scope of judgment widens to include even nature itself. Nothing can stand before the power of our God. He created it all, and He can shake it all as He decides, even mountains that have always symbolized stability and steadfastness.

Clearly we should answer God's call to grace.

Clearly we should get our priorities straight before time runs out!

The seals struck one-fourth of the earth; now the trumpets reach one-third.

This is not random or uncontrolled punishment. It is a measured, progressive warning from a sovereign God.

It is time.

Time to accept God's grace...yet sadly some still refuse.

How is that possible?

They get stuck in their evil ways. What a sobering warning!

*Grab a hold of God's grace today and let go of anything that would pull you into an evil rut.*



## Table Discussion: None Other than GOD is in CONTROL

The repeated picture of “progressive intensity” powerfully underlines another wonderful Truth: Nothing in Revelation is happening out of control.

*Everything is under God’s firm, loving hand.*

Even the details of the judgment metaphors show this: The locusts with scorpion power are not allowed to harm God’s sealed people, and they can only torment for exactly five months, the lifespan of a locust. God controls who is affected, how, and for how long.

Even when the residence of pure evil is involved, it is still happening under God’s sovereign hand. His angel, Abaddon, reigns even there!

*Evil itself is under God’s control.*

Now consider this:

In Revelation 1:8 God is “the One Who is and Who was and Who is to come.”

In Revelation 4:8 the living creatures declare, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.”

But in Revelation 11:16-17 the elders worship Him as “the One Who is and Who was.”

The phrase “Who is to come” is intentionally left out. Why?

*Because the reign of our God is so certain that the future can already be spoken of as present reality!*

What is to come is under God’s control.

Our God *is* in control!

***Let’s discuss practical ways to live in the light of this wonderful Truth:***

- 1. Prior to tonight’s discussion:** Before tonight, have you ever felt that life, or even evil and suffering, seems out of control? How has that affected how you read Revelation?
- 2. After tonight’s discussion:** After our discussion, does it help you to know that everything in Revelation is under God’s clear control? How might this Truth affect how you live, how you view life and death, or how you read Revelation going forward?

[illegible]

## Discussion 3: Revelation 15-16

**Answer God's Call to Grace: Time's up...100%!**

### **Revelation 15:1-8**

*<sup>1</sup> I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. <sup>2</sup> And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God <sup>3</sup> and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the ages. <sup>4</sup> Who will not fear You, O Lord, and bring glory to Your Name? For You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed." <sup>5</sup> After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened. <sup>6</sup> Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. <sup>7</sup> Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, Who lives for ever and ever. <sup>8</sup> And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.*

**Revelation 16:1-16 covers the first six bowls with six painful plagues**

# NO BREAK

**Revelation 16:17-21 covers the seventh bowl with seventh painful plague**

*<sup>17</sup> The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" <sup>18</sup> Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. <sup>19</sup> The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of His wrath. <sup>20</sup> Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. <sup>21</sup> From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.*

### **A Bible study in a nutshell**

Revelation 15:1 makes it clear that these are the final plagues. With them the wrath of God is completed. We see a clear progression of intensity. The sea of glass from chapter 4 is now mixed with fire, showing that God is judging right from His throne (v. 2). Yet even in the midst of fierce judgment we find an encouraging sight: Victorious believers standing beside the sea, holding harps, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. A song of salvation and victory (vv. 2-4; see Ex. 15:1-19; Deut. 31:30-32:43).

The angels come out of the temple dressed like priests, ready to pour out the final bowls, and the temple is filled with the glory of God so that no one can enter until the plagues are finished (vv. 5-8).

In chapter 16 we see a clear parallel with the plagues of Egypt. We can identify at least these:

| Bowls                                                             | Plagues                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Bowl 1: Painful sores (v. 2)                                      | Plague 6: Boils (Ex. 9:8-12)                |
| Bowl 2: Sea turns to blood (v. 3)                                 | Plague 1: Nile turns to blood (Ex. 7:14-25) |
| Bowl 3: Fresh water into blood (vv. 4-7)                          | Plague 1: Nile turns to blood (Ex. 7:14-25) |
| Bowl 4: Scorching heat of the sun (vv. 8-9)                       | Plague 9: Darkness (Ex. 10:21-27)           |
| Bowl 5: Darkness (vv. 10-11)                                      | Plague 9: Darkness (Ex. 10:21-27)           |
| Bowl 6: Euphrates dries up; 3 evil, frog-like spirits (vv. 12-16) | Plague 2: Frogs (Ex. 8:1-15)                |
| Bowl 7: Natural disasters (vv. 17-21)                             | Plague 7: Natural disasters (Ex. 9:13-35)   |

The wrath of God is now poured out upon all (Rev. 16:1; Lev. 26:21; Jer. 10:25).

Things are speeding up. There is no longer a break between the sixth and seventh bowls. The seventh angel declares with finality, “It is done!” (v. 17), followed by tremendous natural disasters (v. 18), collapsing cities (v. 19), disappearing islands and mountains (v. 20), and enormous hailstones (v. 21a).

Yet even then, many people still curse God and refuse to repent (v. 21b).

### ***Reflection***

Progressive intensity.

While the seals affected only one-fourth of the earth and the trumpets one-third, the bowls now touch everything — 100% — nothing is spared.

Revelation is far less concerned with giving us a strict chronological timeline than with showing us a clear flow of themes. Here the seals, trumpets, and bowls all unfold the same theme of judgment, but with increasing intensity: From one-fourth, to one-third, to total. The breaks between the sixth and seventh seals and trumpets, and the lack of any break between the sixth and seventh bowls, make the Message unmistakable.

A progressive, intensifying divine Message of judgment between the first and second coming of our Lord.

Yes. However, it is always grace-filled judgment.

The call to answer God’s grace is on a divine timer. You do not have forever to enter forever. This is grace-filled Truth on a timer.

Time for grace will run out...

## Table Discussion - God's call to answer is on a divine timer

One more time: Progressive intensity.

One more time: 100% of everything is now under judgment.

One more time: No more breaks.

One more time: We are clearly on a Divine Timer.

We are looking at an hourglass for the universe, and like every sand timer, we have no control over it—the sand simply runs its course.

Time is the one thing not even the richest person on earth can buy more of.

Time is in the Hand of our God. He and He alone controls it, and it is running out for every individual, every nation, and for the world as a whole.

Today we are one day closer to the second coming of our Lord than we were yesterday.

Today you have one less day to answer God's call to grace than you had yesterday.

### ***Let's discuss how to look at Time and Grace from God's perspective:***

- 1. Time:** How do you normally think about time? How has this week changed the way you think about time from God's perspective?
- 2. Grace:** Discuss this statement and its implications for our lives: "Grace is abundant for us *right now*, but one day the sand in God's divine hourglass will run out...whether at our death or when Jesus returns, whichever comes first."

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## **Week 2**

### **GET GOING**

#### **Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully**

## Devotion - Monday

### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Take it to Heart — Time is Near!

#### **Focus passage: Revelation 1:1-3, 9**

<sup>1</sup> *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show His servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John, <sup>2</sup> who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup> Blessed is the one who reads the Words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*

<sup>9</sup> *I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and Kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus.*

#### **A Bible study in a nutshell**

What we are sharing together from the Book of Revelation truly comes from God. It will come to pass without a doubt (the word “must” shows it is part of God’s plan), and it will happen “soon” (v. 1). Testifying about Who God is (the Word of God) and what He has done (the Testimony of Jesus Christ) is always done fearlessly and without holding anything back (v. 2).

All of it needs to be obeyed, “take to heart.” This is not just a good story or helpful perspective; it is a powerful Message from God because the time is near (v. 3).

It is no surprise that this urgent Message was entrusted to John, who had already taken it so seriously that he was exiled to Patmos because of the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus (v. 9).

#### **Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage**

Living with a sense of urgency is essential.

Taking this final and eternal Message of God and the Testimony of Jesus to heart is crucial.

*We have the entire game plan of God from beginning to end. We simply need to read it, pay undivided attention, take it to heart, and live it...because time is short.*

We should not linger or shy away from possible suffering. As the time draws nearer, let us follow the Testimony of our Lord with faithful commitment.



**Reflect on these questions**

1. What does it look like for you to “take to heart” the Words of Revelation and live with a sense of urgency?
2. In what area of your life is God inviting you to move from simply hearing to obedient action?
3. How does knowing “the time is near” change the way you view your daily choices and relationships?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

[illegible]

## Devotion - Tuesday

### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Value His Patience

#### **Focus passage: Revelation 10:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. <sup>2</sup> He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup> and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. <sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down." <sup>5</sup> Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. <sup>6</sup> And he swore by Him Who lives for ever and ever, Who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay!" <sup>7</sup> But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced to His servants the prophets."

#### **A Bible study in a nutshell**

A mighty angel, robed in God's glory and power (v. 1), stands victoriously with one foot on the sea and one on the land, holding the little scroll open (v. 2). With a roar like a lion reminding us of God's great power (Hosea 11:10) this angel spoke with thunder (Psalm 29), yet...we will never know the contents of this series of 7 thunders (vv. 3-4)?!

Why?

Time's up...!!

"THERE WILL BE NO MORE DELAY!" (v. 6b).

Now is the time, right now, that God will accomplish what God wants to accomplish (v. 7).

Which is?

That which was "announced" (Greek - *euangelion*) to the prophets:

The Message, the Good News of salvation!

#### **Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage**

We have no idea what the seven thunders would have brought, but we know this: They were sealed up and never happened.

Even as time runs out and judgment draws near, God is still holding back. In the midst of it all, His heart remains the same: He is "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Our Father is patient with us.

Let us value the patience of our Father.

Even though the clock is ticking, He is giving us every possible moment to run to Him and receive the Good News of salvation. Let us answer His call today and follow Him faithfully while there is still time.

**Reflect on these questions**

1. How did this discussion impact your view on God's patience with us all?
2. How does the Truth that God is patient with us, yet time is running out, affect the way you view your own walk with Him?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Go Tell!**

**Focus passage: Revelation 11:1-6**

*<sup>1</sup> I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the Temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. <sup>2</sup> But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. <sup>3</sup> And I will give power to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." <sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup> If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. <sup>6</sup> These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

Chapter 11 continues the powerful theme that began in chapter 10: The Church has a mission, and that mission is to bring God's Word to the nations!

Before sending His people out on this sometimes difficult task, God first encourages the believers with the wonderful assurance that they belong to Him and are under His protection (v. 1). The measuring of the temple, the altar, and the worshipers (as in Ezekiel 40-42 and Zechariah 2:1-5) is a great picture that the people of God are safe in the Father's care. This is even more meaningful when we look ahead to Revelation 21:15-21, where the heavenly Jerusalem is measured; the Church in chapter 11 becomes a symbolic foretaste of the victorious Church in the end.

*For unbelievers, however, the picture is very different. They are allowed to trample the holy city for a specific period of 42 months (v. 2). This period of three and a half years (also described as 1,260 days in v. 3 and 12:6, or three and a half "days" in vv. 9 and 11) is significant because it echoes a time of intense suffering for God's people in the Old Testament (Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7-12). It points back to the brutal reign of the Syrian ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167-164 BC), who severely persecuted the Jewish nation and even desecrated their temple by sacrificing pigs on the altar to Zeus!*

Yet the Church — pictured here as the two witnesses — must not retreat. Empowered by God, they are to prophesy boldly for the exact same period of 1,260 days (or 42 months), calling people to repentance while clothed in sackcloth (v. 3). These two witnesses clearly represent the Church. They are described as the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth (Zechariah 4:2-6), fulfilling their mission as kings and priests in the presence of the Lord and powered by the Holy Spirit. They are never alone in their task! They also remind us of Deuteronomy 19:15, where two witnesses are required for a righteous judgment, and of Elijah and Moses (vv. 5-6; see 2 Kings 1:10; 1 Kings 17-18; Exodus 7:20-21). In the same way, the Church is called to live a bold testimony to the honor of God and can be just as powerful in its witness and miracles.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Answering God's call to follow faithfully includes many things, but at the top is this: Go Tell!

The message may sometimes taste sweet in our mouths but turn bitter when shared. We might encounter a negative response, opposition, or even persecution.

This should never discourage us, because the Church and its mission cannot be separated. A Church that is not testifying is no longer truly Church.

We are not on our own mission. We are on God's Mission, and His Mission is to find the lost.

Remember: We are never alone. God is with us.

Faithful follower of Christ: Go Tell!

***Reflect on these questions***

1. What opportunities has God given you recently to "go tell" others about Jesus? How did you respond?
2. What fears or obstacles sometimes hold you back from sharing your faith, and how does this passage encourage you?
3. How can your daily life more clearly reflect that you are on God's Mission, not your own?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

**NOTES**

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**Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Don't be Swept Away by the *loser*!**

***Focus passage: Revelation 12:1-4a, 7-9***

*<sup>1</sup> A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. <sup>2</sup> She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.*

*<sup>3</sup> Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. <sup>4a</sup> His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.*

*<sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup> The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

***A Bible study in a nutshell***

The description in verse 1 immediately reminds us of Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:1-9. This woman, clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head, looks like a bride. The sun, moon, and twelve stars clearly point to Israel (Gen. 37:9; Is. 60:19-20). Yet in Revelation she represents the New Israel, the Church of believers in Jesus Christ! In this sense the woman giving birth is not necessarily only Mary, but the Messianic community of God's people, the Church (see also Is. 26:16-21; 54:1; 66:7-9). This sign fulfills Isaiah 7:14: "The virgin will be with Child and will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel." How incredible: The Church is giving birth to the Messiah!

Then another sign appears in heaven (v. 3): The devil, pictured as an enormous red dragon, an image well known in the ancient world as a serpent or sea monster filled with demonic power (Ps. 74:14; Is. 27:1; 51:9). Even in the Greek translation of Exodus 7:9-12, the serpent is called a "dragon."

This dragon is fueled with bloodthirsty fury (v. 3a) and displays all the signs of false power (v. 3b), clearly trying to imitate Christ's reign (Rev. 19:12). His tail sweeps a third of the stars out of the sky and flings them to the earth (v. 4a; see Dan. 8:10), reminding us how the devil led a third of the angels in a sad and doomed revolt against God. But right from the start they lost the battle (vv. 7-9; see also Luke 10:18). It was a losing battle that would ultimately be concluded at the cross, leaving behind a wounded, chained, and angry dragon until the very end.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

We live in a world where it is so easy to be swept away by the next new gadget, a big news story, our favorite TV show, an exciting discovery, or the latest AI breakthrough. We can jump from one thing to another almost without thinking. Some of these things may actually be good, but others are dangerous: Drugs, pornography, adulterous relationships, toxic friendships, or destructive habits that slowly pull us away from the Lord.

Our God is a jealous God. “Jealous” not in a harsh or selfish way, but with a deep, protective love. He wants us to follow Him and Him alone, today, tomorrow, and into eternity. There is only one right way to answer His call: All in...*faithfully*.

In Revelation, God graciously pulls back the curtain so we can see the whole story. He lets us look not only at what is happening now and what is coming, but even back before Jesus came to earth. There we see an angel who started a war against God and convinced a third of the angels to join him. A third got swept away simply because it was a “new thing”...a terrifying new thing with eternal, dark consequences.

Why does God show us this? So that you and I can see clearly: He lost!

Child of God, do not let the world and the things of the world sweep you off your feet. It has been on the losing side from day one, and it will remain the losing side until eternity.

This does not have to be your story. Christ paid an incredibly high price for you.

Follow the only Winner!

***Reflect on these questions***

1. What things in life sometimes “sweep you away” from wholehearted faithfulness to Jesus?
2. How does the Truth that the devil has already lost give you courage to follow Christ more boldly?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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## Devotion - Friday

### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: God's got ya!

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 12:4b-6***

*<sup>4b</sup> The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her Child the moment It was born. <sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a Son, a male Child, Who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her Child was snatched up to God and to His throne. <sup>6</sup> The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

The dragon standing ready to devour the Child the moment He is born vividly reminds us of King Herod's cruel attempt to kill all the boys two years and younger (v. 4b; Matt. 2:16). And then the glorious moment arrives: It's Christmas! (v. 5a).

It is striking that in Revelation, Jesus' entire earthly ministry is simply captured in one word, "Lamb". A title used of Him almost 30 times! The focus is not on His teaching, miracles, or daily life, but on the fact that Christ has come and has overcome! He is the One Who came (v. 5a), Who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter (v. 5b; see Is. 66:7; Ps. 2:8-9; Rev. 19:15), and Who is powerfully snatched up from the dragon's reach straight to God and to His throne (v. 5c). Our God is truly in control!

Yet even before He is taken up, the Messiah gives birth to the Church. She flees into the desert to a place specially prepared by God, where she is tenderly cared for for 1,260 days until Christ's second coming (v. 6; see also Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; Hosea 2:13).

How incredible! The Church is giving birth to the Messiah...or rather, the Messiah is giving birth to the Church!

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

A dragon waiting to devour a Baby sounds terrifying.

A dragon going after a Woman who just gave birth sounds horrifying.

BUT GOD.

But God snatches the Baby away.

But God takes care of the Woman.

The devil went after the Church. God took her to a safe place.

The devil attacked the Church. God defended the Church.

The devil will continue to fight the Church.

*But God's got ya!*



**Reflect on these questions**

1. In what area of your life right now do you most need to hear and believe “God’s got ya”?
2. How can remembering God’s faithful care give you courage when facing opposition or difficulty?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

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## Devotion - Saturday

### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Go Conquer!

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 12:10-12***

*<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. <sup>11</sup> They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."*

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

A loud voice in heaven declares a triumphant reality: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ!" The accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accused them day and night before God, has been hurled down (v. 10).

The saints overcame him not by their own strength, but by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony. They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (v. 11; see also Mark 8:34-35).

Therefore the Church does not merely try to survive. Absolutely not! Just like the Lamb, she is called to conquer. Certainly not through fighting, but through bold, faithful proclamation of the Gospel.

Because of this victory there is great joy in heaven (v. 12a). Yet on earth the devil has come down filled with fury, knowing that his time is short (v. 12b-c).

What an inspiring call to live boldly for the Lord!

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

The Church has not been called to survive.

The Church has been called to conquer.

How?

Through boldly proclaiming the Good News with a deep sense of urgency.

Why?

Because the time is short.

Says who?

Even the devil himself!

Even the devil knows the time is short for him to fight against all who live for Christ.



## Sunday Evening Gathering

### Discussion 1: Revelation 10

#### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Even when it hurts

##### **Revelation 10**

*<sup>1</sup> Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. <sup>2</sup> He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, <sup>3</sup> and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. <sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down." <sup>5</sup> Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. <sup>6</sup> And he swore by Him Who lives for ever and ever, Who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! <sup>7</sup> But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced to His servants the prophets." <sup>8</sup> Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." <sup>9</sup> So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." <sup>10</sup> I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. <sup>11</sup> Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."*

##### **A Bible study in a nutshell**

In Revelation 10 a mighty angel, robed in God's glory and power, stands victoriously with one foot on the sea and one on the land, holding the little scroll open. With a roar like a lion and the voice of seven thunders, he declares with a solemn oath: "*There will be no more delay!*" (vv. 5-6). The time has come for God to complete His plan, the mystery of God, the Good News of salvation that was announced to the prophets (v. 7).

This scene clearly echoes Ezekiel 2:9-3:3. Just as Ezekiel was told to eat the scroll so he could speak God's Word to a rebellious people, John is commanded to take the little scroll and eat it. At first it tastes as sweet as honey in his mouth (v. 10a; see Ps. 119:103; Prov. 24:13-14; Jer. 15:16). The Message of salvation is wonderful and delightful. But as he digests it, his stomach turns sour (v. 10b).

That is the reality of our calling as the Church. The Good News is sweet to receive, yet living it out and proclaiming it to a rebellious world can be costly and difficult. Still, the command is clear: "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings" (v. 11). The message must get out. To everyone!

### ***A short reflection***

Seven thunders whose contents we will never know.

*What a beautiful reminder that:*

Even though God shows us so much in Revelation, and even though the scroll lies “open” in the angel’s hand (v. 2), He still remains sovereign.

We will never have every detail perfectly figured out.

*What a huge help:*

As we journey through Revelation, and the normal battles of everyday life, we don’t have to understand everything. We are not called to have all the answers.

We are simply called to stay focused, live on mission, keep our priorities straight, stay close to God, and make a lasting difference every day, everywhere.

*What’s next:*

What comes next for the Church is both sweet and sour.

Receiving and savoring the Message of the Gospel is sweet.

But living it out and sharing it boldly in a rebellious world can turn the stomach sour.

*For the Church to be the Church — even when it hurts — that is our calling.*

## Table Discussion - I don't know it all

It can be stressful not to know it all.

It can also be incredibly freeing not to know it all.

It can be great to have everything figured out.

It can also bring deep peace to realize you don't have to.

Revelation 10 gently reminds us: We do not know it all, and as long as we are in this world we never will.

Revelation 10 makes it clear: All we need to know about what we are called to do comes from our God.

Revelation 10 encourages us: We can't sit around anymore. There is no more time.

Revelation 10 concludes: We do not know it all, but we do know this: The Gospel entrusted to us is amazing, and even though sharing it can sometimes be hard, we are called to get it out, even when it hurts.

### ***Let's reflect on these thoughts:***

- 1. I don't understand:** How do you usually feel when you don't have all the answers, especially regarding God's plans or the future? Does it create stress, or can it also bring peace?
- 2. Why Lord:** When you don't understand everything, what difference does it make to shift from asking "Why, Lord?" to "What's next, Lord?"

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## Discussion 2: Revelation 11

### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: Even when it Kills

#### Revelation 11

<sup>1</sup> I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. <sup>2</sup> But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. <sup>3</sup> And I will give power to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." <sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup> If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. <sup>6</sup> These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. <sup>7</sup> Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. <sup>8</sup> Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. <sup>10</sup> The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. <sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. <sup>13</sup> At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. <sup>14</sup> The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon. <sup>15</sup> The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever." <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One Who is and Who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. <sup>18</sup> The nations were angry; and Your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding Your servants the prophets and Your saints and those who reverence Your Name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth." <sup>19</sup> Then God's Temple in heaven was opened, and within His Temple was seen the Ark of His covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

#### A Bible study in a nutshell

*Chapter 11 continues the powerful theme that began in chapter 10: The Church has a mission, and that mission is to bring God's Word to the nations!*

Before sending His people out, God first encourages the believers with the wonderful assurance that they belong to Him and are under His protection (v. 1). The measuring of the temple, the altar, and the worshipers (as in Ezekiel 40–42 and Zechariah 2:1-5 ) is an amazing picture that the people of God are safe in the Father's care. This is even more meaningful when we look ahead to Revelation 21:15-21,

where the heavenly Jerusalem is measured; the Church in chapter 11 becomes a symbolic foretaste of the victorious Church in the end.

For unbelievers the picture is very different. They are allowed to trample the holy city for a specific period of *42 months* (v. 2). This period of three and a half years (also described as 1,260 days or three and a half “days” later in Revelation) echoes a time of intense suffering for God’s people in the Old Testament (Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 12:7-12).

Yet the Church, pictured here as the two witnesses, must not retreat. Empowered by God, they are to prophesy boldly for the exact same period of 1,260 days (or 42 months), calling people to repentance while clothed in sackcloth (v. 3). These two witnesses clearly represent the Church. They are described as the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth (Zechariah 4:2-6), fulfilling their mission as kings and priests in the presence of the Lord and powered by the Holy Spirit. They are never alone and never doing this in their own strength! They also remind us of Elijah and Moses (vv. 5-6), showing that the Church is called to live a bold testimony to the honor of God and can be just as powerful in its witness and miracles.

*Now comes the hard part.* When the two witnesses have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss attacks them, overpowers them, and kills them (v. 7). Their bodies lie unburied in the street of the great city, figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified (v. 8). For three and a half days people from every people, tribe, language, and nation gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial (v. 9). The inhabitants of the earth gloat over them, celebrate, and send each other gifts because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth (v. 10).

What a horrifying picture of the cost of faithful testimony! Yet even in death the story does not end. After three and a half days a breath of Life from God enters them. They stand on their feet, terror strikes those who see them, and a loud voice from heaven calls, “Come up here!” They ascend to heaven in a cloud while their enemies look on (vv. 11-12). At that very hour a severe earthquake strikes, a tenth of the city collapses, seven thousand people are killed, and the survivors are terrified and give glory to the God of heaven (v. 13).

*This passage ends with an incredible Message of hope: The mission of God and His Church will surely lead to repentance.* Once again we see the urgency: The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon (v. 14). And then the seventh trumpet sounds: The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever (v. 15)!



## ***A short reflection***

Nobody likes to read about people being attacked, overpowered, and killed!

Bodies lying in the street, where people were previously crucified.

The scene is disturbing:

people from everywhere simply staring at these persecuted bodies.

people from all tribes refusing to bury them.

people from all languages gloating, celebrating and sending each other gifts over the killings.

What a horror scene from Revelation?

What a powerful message to the believers though?

do now what you need to do.

proclaim now what you need to proclaim.

do it no matter what...

*even when it kills.*

## Table Discussion: You are Protected!

There is no doubt this is a *scary scene from Revelation*.

There is also no doubt this is a *deeply encouraging scene* from Revelation.

*How so?*

Before the Church is sent out with the Gospel, God reminds us through the powerful picture of being “measured” that we are protected. God’s got us!

*It gets better!*

AFTER they get killed the believers:

get reassured that at exactly the moment God says so His Breath of Life will enter them.

they will stand up and terror will strike those who enjoyed watching them getting killed.

they will rise up...up...up...responding to God’s call, “Come up here”!

*and...*

survivors will turn to God and give glory to Him!

this ignites an incredible worship celebration in heaven!

Following God faithfully, even when it kills, proves to be so worth it!

How do we stay faithful through it all?

We hold on to this Truth: *We are protected. Now. In death. After death.*

***Let’s discuss practical ways to deal with our fears as we follow God:***

- 1. Fear:** Have you ever felt afraid while trying to follow or serve God? How did you handle that fear?
- 2. Challenging times:** Did anything in tonight’s discussion give you a fresh perspective or new courage for difficult seasons?

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## Discussion 3: Revelation 12

### Answer God's Call to Follow Faithfully: As God is Faithful!

#### Revelation 12

<sup>1</sup> A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. <sup>2</sup> She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. <sup>3</sup> Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. <sup>4</sup> His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her Child the moment It was born. <sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a Son, a male Child, Who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her Child was snatched up to God and to His throne. <sup>6</sup> The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days. <sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup> The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. <sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. <sup>11</sup> They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their Testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” <sup>13</sup> When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male Child. <sup>14</sup> The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. <sup>15</sup> Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the Testimony of Jesus.

#### A Bible study in a nutshell

We already covered this powerful chapter during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:

Revelation 12 shows us the cosmic battle behind the scenes. A woman (representing God's people, the Church) gives birth to the Messiah, but a furious red dragon (Satan) stands ready to destroy Him. Yet the child is snatched up to God's throne, and the woman is given wings and carried to a place prepared by God, where she is tenderly cared for for 1,260 days (vv. 1-6).

War breaks out in heaven. Michael and his angels defeat the dragon, who is hurled down to the earth with his angels (vv. 7-9). The accuser of the brothers and sisters has been cast down! The saints overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their Testimony. They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (v. 11).

Heaven rejoices, but the devil, knowing his time is short, turns his fury on the Church (v. 17). Still, God remains completely in control. He protects and provides for His people even in the desert, and the earth itself helps the woman when the dragon tries to sweep her away (vv. 13-16).

The Church is called not merely to survive, but to conquer through bold testimony. Even when the dragon makes war against the rest of her offspring, those who obey God's commandments and hold to the Testimony of Jesus, God is faithful. His protection never fails.

### ***A short reflection***

What a chapter!

In just a few verses we see the devil fail over and over again throughout history:

- The devil failed to overthrow God from His Throne.
- The devil failed to kill Jesus in the cradle.
- The devil failed to keep Jesus in the grave.
- The devil failed to stop the followers of Jesus from testifying.
- The devil failed to scare the Church into silence.
- The devil failed to break through God's protection over His people, no matter what he has tried.
- The devil is failing even now, as he rages with fury because he knows his time is short.

The devil has failed...is failing...and will always fail. He has been on the losing side since before the beginning of time.

*Why would any of us want to follow such a loser?*

This chapter should encourage us to follow our Lord and God with greater intentionality, courage, and joy than ever before.

God is faithful.

His protection is real.

And the victory is already won!

## Table Discussion - God's Protection is Unquestionable

Let us revisit how clearly Revelation 12 reminds us that God's protection over His people is solid, reliable, and never failing:

- God did not fail us when the Church was called to give birth to the Messiah.
- God did not fail us when the Messiah died for our sins and rose victorious from the grave.
- God's unfailing protection over Jesus gives us courage to live boldly for Him.

*God gave the Church a Message for the world that even death could not silence.*

God keeps showing us that He can protect us in the most creative and surprising ways: Giving us wings like eagles when we are chased, opening the earth to swallow a flood when we are about to be swept away, and being our only reliable Help in the desert.

*For the entire time He has appointed, God will faithfully protect and care for His Church.*

His protection is unquestionable.

This is a fact. This is the Truth.

Believe it. Live in it.

### ***Let's share some honest thoughts on God's protection:***

- 1. Let's be honest with one another:** Has there ever been a time when you felt God had let you down or failed to protect you?
- 2. Let's share some perspective:** Looking back, was there a moment when your perspective on God's protection changed? What helped bring about that shift?
- 3. Let's share some hope:** How has this chapter strengthened your confidence in God's care for His people? What gave you the most hope for the future?

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## **Week 3**

### **GET GOING**

#### **Answer God's Call under His Control**

Answer God's Call under His Control: The Beast from the Sea

**Focus passage: Revelation 13:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup> One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" <sup>5</sup> The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His Name and His dwelling place and those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup> He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. <sup>8</sup> All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. <sup>9</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear. <sup>10</sup> If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

The dragon and the beast work closely together. The terrifying beast rising from the sea has ten horns and seven heads with blasphemous names, imitating the power and authority that belong only to God (v. 1). The blasphemous names remind one of the godly titles that the Caesars had claimed for themselves, for instance Domitian even called himself around 95/96AD "dominus et noster" (our lord and god)!

One of the beast's heads appears to have received a fatal wound that has been healed, causing the whole world to be astonished and follow the beast (v. 3). The 7 heads most probably relate to the 7 Roman Caesars of the time (see also Rev. 17:9-11), with Nero who committed suicide in 68AD, and supposedly came back to life again according to the legends of *Nero redivivus*.

People even worship the dragon and the beast, asking, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" (v. 4). The beast is given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and is allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. He makes war against the saints and is given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation (vv. 5-7). All whose names have not been written in the Lamb's Book of Life will worship him (v. 8).

Yet nothing escapes God's control. The beast can only act for the exact time God permits. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints (vv. 9-10). Even when evil seems overwhelmingly powerful, and some believers endure a physically difficult time, we can take heart. God is still sovereign, the Lamb has already won, and our names are safely written in His Book of Life!



***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Terrifying...yet all fake!

*The devil can only copy and twist what belongs to God.*

A paper crown on my birthday does not make me a king. Claiming to be the president does not make me one.

A fake resurrection is not the real thing. A blasphemous title is not the true Name of the Lord.

Evil is trying hard to be like God, yet everything the beast does is allowed only for a limited time and under God's sovereign hand.

Let us not be fooled by Who is actually  
the *true* God and *in* control,  
and who is a totally  
*fake* god and *under* control!

***Reflect on these questions***

1. What in our society today can you identify as “fake” or evil imitations of God and His ways?
2. Who around you might have been drawn in (even unintentionally) by these imitations? How is this passage calling you to respond with love and truth?
3. How does knowing that everything is still under God's control give you courage and peace in the face of what feels powerful or scary in the world?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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**Answer God's Call under His Control: The Beast from the Earth**

***Focus passage: Revelation 13:11-18***

*<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup> And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. <sup>14</sup> Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup> He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. <sup>16</sup> He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, <sup>17</sup> so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.*

***A Bible study in a nutshell***

Then another beast comes up out of the earth. It looks like a lamb (gentle and harmless on the outside) but speaks like a dragon (v. 11). This second beast exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. It performs great and miraculous signs as Elijah did, even calling down fire from heaven, and deceives the people into making an image of the first beast (vv. 12-14).

The beast from the earth is a powerful imitation of the Holy Spirit's work. Just as the Spirit points people to Jesus and empowers true worship, this beast points everyone to the first beast and uses false signs, propaganda, and religious deception to demand loyalty (see also 2 Thess. 2:9-12). It even gives breath to the image so it can speak and cause anyone who refuses to worship it to be killed (v. 15). This reminds of heathen priests that would often, under demonic influence, make statements on behalf of idols (see also 1 Cor. 10:19-20).

The beast forces everyone — small and great, rich and poor, free and slave — to receive a mark on the right hand or forehead so that no one can buy or sell without it (vv. 16-17). This mark is the name of the beast or the number of his name, 666. This calls for wisdom. Everything is still under God's sovereign control. The beast can only operate for the time God allows, and those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will not be deceived (v. 8). The call is clear: Patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

*\* Refer to Addendum 1 at the end of week 4 to understand the symbolic number 666 better.*

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Who we follow is important.

Who we look up to is important.

Who we listen to is just as important.

The devil knows this, so he uses clever imitation through religion, propaganda, and false signs to redirect our hearts away from God. Twisted messages may sound spiritual or promising, but they steer our actions quickly into a self-focused rather than God glorifying direction, ultimately leading to self-destruction.

*Let us not be fooled.*

The true God is still in control. The Lamb who was slain has already won. Keep your eyes fixed on Him, listen to the Voice of the Holy Spirit, and stay faithful no matter what deceitful messages the world proclaims.

***Reflect on these questions***

1. Who do you follow? Is it truly still God and the ways of God?
2. Who do you look up to? Are their lives truly in alignment with God and His agenda?
3. Who do you listen to? Answer with great care. Can you say for certain that this “voice” is still the “Voice of God”, the Holy Spirit and nobody else leading you?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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Answer God's Call under His Control: The Fall of Babylon

**Focus passage: Revelation 17:1-7, 13-18**

<sup>1</sup> One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. <sup>2</sup> With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." <sup>3</sup> Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. <sup>5</sup> This title was written on her forehead: Mystery; Babylon the great; the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth. <sup>6</sup> I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. <sup>7</sup> Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns.

<sup>13</sup> They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup> They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers." <sup>15</sup> Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. <sup>16</sup> The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup> For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish His purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's Words are fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

One of the seven angels invites John to see the punishment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters (v. 1). She seduces the kings and leaders and intoxicates the multitudes, leading them into spiritual adultery (v. 2). In the context of Revelation this woman represents Rome (Babylon), but she also stands as a timeless symbol of evil's seductive power: A deadly combination of corrupted political power, sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry. Evil is intentionally "breeding" more evil, as the title "mother of prostitutes" makes clear (v. 5). Sadly, some believers get caught in the crossfire and pay the highest price (v. 6a).

This strong coalition of evil forces tells us that we are progressing with undeniable intensity toward the end. Yet we already know the outcome: Evil came from the Abyss and will end in destruction (vv. 8a, 11b). Although they rise up for war against the Lamb (v. 14b), the Lamb and His faithful followers will overcome, because He is already reigning as Lord of lords and King of kings (v. 14). And here is the great irony: Evil only has power for a very short time, because that power has been given to it (v. 12).

*How could it ever truly win?*

God is surely in control. Not only does He empower evil when He chooses, but He can also confuse and cause evil to turn on itself (vv. 16-17). Evil will eventually self-destruct. It will fight the worst kind of war: A war against itself. In the end it will lose the very war it had placed all its hope in...by losing to itself.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Our God does not want us to commit adultery, against one another or against Him.

He treats our relationship with Him as a sacred marriage covenant. Jesus is the Bridegroom, and the Church is His bride. Our God is a jealous God; He does not want to share our hearts with other gods, other loves, or the idols of this world. He wants us to be fully His.

Revelation 17 warns us that evil tries to catch our attention through money, power, pleasure, success, and relationships that pull us away from God. When we give our hearts to these things, we not only drift from our First Love, we can also begin to lead others astray.

*Danger! Danger! Danger!*

A life that has wandered can start to “give birth” to other wandering lives.

But there is wonderful hope. A return to our First Love is always possible.

***Reflect on these questions***

1. Have your eyes started to wander around a bit? Have you lost sole focus on God?
2. With whom and what are you sharing your relationship with God?
3. Why not take a quiet moment to return your heart completely and solely on your Groom?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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Answer God's Call under His Control: Babylon's Judgment

**Focus passage: Revelation 18:1-10, 19-24**

<sup>1</sup> After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. <sup>2</sup> With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries." <sup>4</sup> Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, My people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; <sup>5</sup> for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. <sup>6</sup> Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. <sup>7</sup> Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' <sup>8</sup> Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her. <sup>9</sup> "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. <sup>10</sup> Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: " 'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!'

<sup>19</sup> They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: " 'Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin!

<sup>20</sup> Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.' " <sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. <sup>22</sup> The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. <sup>23</sup> The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. <sup>24</sup> In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth."

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

With power, authority, and inspiring splendor it is loudly proclaimed: Babylon (evil) is going down with such certainty that a future event can be stated in the past tense, "Fallen! Fallen..." (vv. 1-3). What was once a powerful center of luxury, immorality, and idolatry has become a desolate haunt for demons and every detestable thing. The nations have been intoxicated by her adulteries, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from her excessive luxuries (v. 3). This is the result of continuous spiritual adultery, greed, corruption, and the shedding of the blood of the saints (vv. 23-24). Her judgment is sudden, complete, and final like a huge millstone thrown into the sea, never to be found again (look at the repetition of "never" and "ever" in vv. 21-23).

Like a loving Father, God calls His children to flee from this sophisticated ungodliness (v. 4; see also 2 Cor. 6:14-17). The time to run is now. Now, before it is too late. Evil will be punished completely, severely, and suddenly (vv. 6-8). What she boasted about will be brought to nothing in a single day (vv. 7-8; Verse 7 actually reminds of Caesar Claudius' wife, Messalina, boasting as both queen and temple prostitute).

The reaction of the world is deeply sad. Instead of repenting when they see Babylon's destruction, the evil leaders stand at a distance, weeping and mourning over the loss of her luxury and wealth (vv. 9-19). They cry, "Woe! Woe, O great city!", not because they recognize their own sin, but because their source of power and riches has been taken away.

Yet heaven is called to rejoice. God has judged Babylon. Righteousness has triumphed. The Lamb won.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

"Come out of her, My people..."

***RUN!***

Not contemplating what to do.

Not wondering how it will look if you leave.

Not considering whether there might still be something good in it.

Not planning to retreat slowly or quietly.

***No — RUN!***

Run from sin.

Run from evil.

Run toward what is good and right.

Run out of the reach of evil and into the safe hands of God.

*The time is now to listen to the loving call of the Father: "Come out of her, My people."*

***Reflect on these questions***

1. God does not want you to share in evil's sins or receive her plagues. What stirs in your heart as you hear this loving warning from verses 4 and 5?
2. Is there any sin, situation, or circle of people that has slowly become a "sticky," sin-filled trap in your life? What would it look like for you to run from it?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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**Answer God's Call under His Control: The Rider on the White Horse**

**Focus passage: Revelation 19:1-16**

<sup>1</sup>After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, <sup>2</sup> for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." <sup>3</sup>And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever." <sup>4</sup>The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!" <sup>5</sup>Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" <sup>6</sup>Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. <sup>7</sup>Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup>Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) <sup>9</sup>Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God." <sup>10</sup>At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." <sup>11</sup>I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup>He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. <sup>14</sup>The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup>Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

After the fall of Babylon, heaven erupts in the loudest worship imaginable. A great multitude cries out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are His judgments" (vv. 1-2). The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures join in, and a voice from the throne calls all God's servants to praise Him (vv. 4-5). The celebration reaches its highest point with the wedding of the Lamb. The bride has made herself ready, clothed in fine linen. Bright and clean, which represents the righteous acts of the saints, given to her by grace (vv. 6-8).

Then heaven opens, and Jesus appears as the Rider on a victorious white horse. With justice He judges and makes war, as the sharp sword from His mouth signifies. His eyes are like blazing fire and see all things. On His head are many crowns. He is sovereign over all, and no one has power over Him. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, which could refer to His own sacrificial blood, the blood of the martyrs, or even the blood of His enemies (v. 13; see also v. 15 and Is. 63:3). His Name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven follow Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean (vv. 14-15).

On His robe and on His thigh He has this Name written: *King of kings and Lord of lords* (v. 16). Jesus is not only the victorious Rider. He is truly God. The One who was slain is now the reigning King, and all who belong to Him share in His triumph.



***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Answering God's call must include worship. Not just singing politely with the praise band in church, or sometimes barely moving our lips. Not just listening without singing a word.

True worship is so much more. It is the kind of worship that rises from a heart so full of God, whether through deep pain or overflowing joy, that it simply has to come out. It can happen in church, in the car, in the shower, or in the quiet of your room.

But there is also a heaven-like worship. The kind we will one day offer in the very presence of a holy God. Why not begin practicing that kind of worship right now? We already live in the presence of God. So why not worship Him here on earth the way we will worship Him for eternity?

Heaven-like worship **sounds** like this:

*"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God..."*

*"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!"*

Heaven-like worship **looks** like this:

*The elders and living creatures falling down before the throne and worshiped God.*

Heaven-like worshipers are **dressed** like this:

*With fine linen, bright and clean...dressed with righteous acts provided by God's grace.*

Is this not stirring your soul?

Is this not true worship?

***Reflect on these questions***

1. If you honestly reflect on what worship looks like in your life, how would you describe it?
2. What would you like to change or grow in the way you worship your Lord and God?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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Answer God's Call under His Control: The End of Evil

**Focus passage: Revelation 19:17-21; 20:1-10**

*<sup>17</sup> And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup> so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great." <sup>19</sup> Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the Rider on the horse and His army. <sup>20</sup> But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. <sup>21</sup> The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the Rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.*

*<sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. <sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup> He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. <sup>4</sup> I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. <sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. <sup>9</sup> They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

After the victory of the Rider on the white horse is proclaimed and celebrated in the first part of chapter 19, the armies of evil gather against Him and His army (v. 19). Not much is said about the war itself, but the result is described in detail: An angel calls the vultures to gather for a gruesome meal of kings, generals, mighty men, and people from every social class (vv. 17-18). The beast and the false prophet are captured and thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur (v. 20). The rest are killed by the righteous judgment of God (sword from the Rider's mouth), and the vultures gorge themselves on their flesh (v. 21).

We can debate the meaning of the thousand-year period in chapter 20, but a few things are clear. Throughout Revelation we have seen that numbers multiplied by ten and three carry special significance. The number 1,000 ( $10 \times 10 \times 10$ ) most likely refers to a divinely appointed, complete period of time between Christ's first and second coming; a time marked by increasing intensity as the end approaches (vv. 1-3, 7-9a). During this period, God remains fully in control. Those who die faithfully serving the Lamb will be raised to reign with Him forever, and the second death will have no power

over them (vv. 4-6). At the end of this period the armies of evil are met with the full force of God's judgment: Fire comes down from heaven and devours them, and all of evil is thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (vv. 7-10).

Evil's end is certain, complete, and final. God is in full control from beginning to end.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Many things can be said about these chapters, and even more has been written about them. But the bottom line is simple:

*God is in control.*

*Evil will end.*

Evil comes to its end with a full stop at the second coming of Christ, forever. Whether described as a gruesome meal for the birds, a lost war, fire from heaven, or being thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, the message is the same: Evil's power is broken, its time is short, and its end is certain.

*What matters most is this:*

Be on the right side of the fight.

Answer God's call before it all ends... because it **will** end.

***Reflect on these questions***

1. How do you think about God's total control over history and evil?
2. Has this devotion shifted how you think about the end of evil? In what way?
3. How is this Truth encouraging you today?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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## Sunday Evening Gathering

### Discussion 1: Revelation 13 and 17

#### Answer God's Call under His Control: Evil's Last Desperate Attempt

##### **Revelation 13:1-18**

<sup>1</sup> And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup> One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" <sup>5</sup> The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His Name and His dwelling place and those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup> He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. <sup>8</sup> All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. <sup>9</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear. <sup>10</sup> If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup> And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. <sup>14</sup> Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup> He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. <sup>16</sup> He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, <sup>17</sup> so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

##### **Revelation 17:1-7, 13-18**

<sup>1</sup> One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. <sup>2</sup> With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." <sup>3</sup> Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. <sup>5</sup> This title was

*written on her forehead: Mystery; Babylon the great; the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth. <sup>6</sup> I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. <sup>7</sup> Then the angel said to me: “Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns.*

*<sup>13</sup> They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup> They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers.” <sup>15</sup> Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. <sup>16</sup> The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup> For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish His purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God’s Words are fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”*

### **A short summary**

*We already covered these two chapters during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:*

In **Revelation 13** we are introduced to two terrifying beasts that work closely together as instruments of the dragon (Satan). The first beast rises from the sea with ten horns and seven heads. It imitates the power and authority of Jesus and even appears to recover from a fatal wound, leading the whole world to follow and worship it in stunned amazement. This beast is given authority to speak proud words, blaspheme God, and make war against the saints for a limited period of forty-two months. It receives power over every nation, but only within the boundaries God allows.

The second beast rises from the earth and looks gentle, like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. It acts as a powerful religious deceiver and propagandist, imitating the work of the Holy Spirit. It performs false miracles, deceives people into worshiping the first beast, and forces everyone — rich and poor, free and slave — to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead. This mark, represented by the number 666, shows who all belong to the beast and brings economic pressure on those who refuse it. Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will not be deceived.

Even though these beasts appear overwhelmingly powerful, nothing escapes God’s sovereign control. The beasts can only operate for the exact time God permits. This calls believers to patient endurance and faithfulness. Even when evil seems to dominate and some believers suffer greatly, we can take heart: God is still on the throne, the Lamb has already won, and our names are safely written in His Book of Life.

In **Revelation 17** we are shown another powerful symbol of evil’s seductive influence: The great prostitute who sits on many waters. She represents more than just ancient Rome. She stands as a timeless picture of evil’s deadly combination of corrupted political power, sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry. She intoxicates the nations and even causes some believers to suffer and die. This coalition of evil forces is impressive and intense, but we are reminded that evil only has power for a very short time because that power has been given to it.

The most striking Truth in this chapter is that God remains fully in control. He not only limits evil’s power but even causes it to turn against itself. The beast and the kings who once supported the prostitute eventually hate her, strip her naked, and destroy her. Evil ultimately self-destructs. It fights the worst kind of war, a war against itself. In the end, the Lamb and His faithful followers overcome, because He is already reigning as Lord of lords and King of kings.

## ***A short reflection***

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Formidable, Three-In-One, Almighty, *and True*.

The devil, presented as the dragon, the beast from the sea, and the beast from the earth: Controlled, acting as one, powerful, *yet false*.

An evil trio is at work, desperately imitating the true God:

- The dragon gives authority to the beast from the sea, just as the Father gives authority to the Son.
- The beast from the sea appears to recover from a fatal wound, imitating the resurrection of the Son.
- The beast from the earth works fiercely through propaganda, empty religion, and self-glorifying signs to point people toward the first beast, just as the Holy Spirit points people to Jesus and empowers true worship.

With such deep deception, Godly wisdom is needed to recognize this evil trio, its actions, and its followers. It is as if they carry a mark...like the number 666. Beware of all who reveal such an identifier through the way they think, speak, and act. Stay away, even if at some point you are pressured to carry such a mark simply to survive. Remember the words of our Lord: "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it" (Matthew 16:25).

*What does the world do?*

Its attention moves from astonishment... to loyalty... to worship.

*What does the evil trio do? Under the control of the true God:*

It continues its forceful crusade against God and His people.

It works viciously, knowing its time is running out.

It skillfully combines humanity's hunger for power, sexual desires, and greed

to create a perfect storm of destruction.

*And what should the children of the one true God do?*

"This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints" (Revelation 13:10b).

*And what will happen to evil? After one final, desperate push...*

evil will eventually self-destruct

it will fight the worst kind of war, a war against itself

in the end it will lose the very war it had placed all its hope in... by losing to itself.

### Table Discussion: Who...who...who?! WHAT!

So much time, ink, and energy have been spent trying to identify the dragon, the two beasts, and the meaning of 666. Believers have argued with one another, written books defending their views, and spent countless hours debating *who* this evil figure might be.

Perhaps the more important question is not *who*, but **what**.

- What is evil trying to do?
- What is evil requiring from those who follow it?
- What is evil trying to consolidate to cause the greatest harm?
- What will be the end of all evil?

And...

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

***Let's discuss practical ways to fight evil well:***

- 1. Identifying evil today:** How can we identify evil at work around us today? Is it more helpful to focus on specific names (or numbers like 666), or on *what* evil is actually doing?
- 2. The “WHAT” of evil:** What about evil’s strategy or desperation struck you the most tonight? How does seeing how evil operates affect the way you want to live as a follower of Jesus?

[illegible]

## Discussion 2: Revelation 18:1-10, 19-24; 19:1-16

### Answer God's Call under His Control: God's Sovereign Victory

#### Revelation 18:1-10, 19-24

<sup>1</sup> After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. <sup>2</sup> With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries." <sup>4</sup> Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, My people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; <sup>5</sup> for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. <sup>6</sup> Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. <sup>7</sup> Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' <sup>8</sup> Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her. <sup>9</sup> "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. <sup>10</sup> Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: " 'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!'

<sup>19</sup> They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: " 'Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin! <sup>20</sup> Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.' " <sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. <sup>22</sup> The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. <sup>23</sup> The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. <sup>24</sup> In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth."

#### Revelation 19:1-16

<sup>1</sup> After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, <sup>2</sup> for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." <sup>3</sup> And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever." <sup>4</sup> The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!" <sup>5</sup> Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" <sup>6</sup> Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. <sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) <sup>9</sup> Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God." <sup>10</sup> At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." <sup>11</sup> I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup> He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white



*horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.*

### ***A short summary***

*We already covered these two chapters during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:*

In **Revelation 18** we witness the dramatic and certain fall of Babylon. With great authority and splendor, an angel loudly declares, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!" What was once a powerful center of luxury, immorality, idolatry, and greed has become a desolate haunt for demons. The nations had been intoxicated by her adulteries, and the merchants of the earth had grown rich from her excessive wealth. This judgment is sudden, complete, and final. It is like a massive millstone thrown into the sea, never to be found again.

Like a loving Father, God calls His people to flee from this sophisticated ungodliness with urgency: "Come out of her, My people, so that you will not share in her sins." The time to run is now, before it is too late. Evil will be punished completely, severely, and suddenly. What Babylon boasted about will be brought to nothing in a single day.

The reaction of the world is deeply sad. Instead of repenting when they see Babylon's destruction, the kings, merchants, and sea captains stand at a distance, weeping and mourning over the loss of her luxury and power. They cry, "Woe! Woe, O great city!", not because they recognize their sin, but because their source of wealth and influence has been taken away.

Yet heaven is called to rejoice (**Revelation 19**). God has judged Babylon, and righteousness has triumphed. After this, heaven erupts in the loudest worship imaginable. A great multitude cries out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God!" The celebration reaches its highest point with the wedding of the Lamb. Then heaven opens, and Jesus appears as the Rider on a victorious white horse: Faithful and True, with eyes like blazing fire, many crowns, and the name King of kings and Lord of lords written on His robe and thigh. The armies of heaven follow Him, and all who belong to Him share in His final triumph.

### ***A short reflection***

No person on earth controls time, no matter how rich or powerful. We cannot go back and fix the past, add even one second to a day, or see into the future to secure a better outcome. We do not even know for certain what will happen in the next thirty seconds.

Our sovereign God, however, controls it all. He can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, however He wants, and through whomever He chooses. It should therefore be no surprise that He can declare victory over evil in the future as if it has already happened in the past. Only our sovereign God can say with absolute certainty:

*"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!"*

Evil has not yet been fully removed. This will happen at the second coming of our Lord, but it is such a guaranteed certainty under God's control that He can already announce it in the past tense.

*It is as if God has a verb tense all of His own: Declaring future events with the certainty of things already accomplished!*

And His victory will happen with no long, drawn-out struggle. God will bring a total end to evil swiftly and completely. Listen to how Revelation describes it (Rev. 18:8, 10, 17):

*"In one day her plagues will overtake her..."*

*"She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."*

*"In one hour your doom has come!"*

*"In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!"*

Different metaphors, but the same powerful Truth: God will judge evil with a single, decisive Word from His mouth, followed by swift and final execution.

Evil, however, will not give up easily. It will continue to attack until the very end. We have already seen that it can appear as a terrifying dragon or snake. We have also seen how it mimics God through an evil trio. From this passage we learn that evil can also present itself in very sophisticated and attractive ways. It can look refined, successful, and even respectable: Dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, glittering with gold, precious stones, and pearls. Kings, business leaders, and powerful people can be drawn to it. Evil does not always look scary. Sometimes it looks impressive, cultured, and successful.

Yet all of this happens under the complete control of our sovereign God. He has already secured total and permanent victory. Evil will "never" recover...ever! "Never/ever" is repeated 6 times in the 3 verses of Rev. 18:21-23! This is why heaven erupts in the loudest worship the New Testament ever records. Four times in Revelation 19 we hear a great multitude cry out "Hallelujah"! A word used nowhere else in the New Testament. It is reserved for this moment because of both *who* Jesus is and *how* He saved His people and defeats evil.

Jesus does not arrive on a war horse. He rides a white horse as *Faithful and True*. His eyes are like blazing fire. He sees everything and judges perfectly. He already wears many crowns, for He is already sovereign over all. His robe is dipped in blood *before* the battle begins: His own blood, shed on the cross for our salvation, possibly mingled with the blood of the martyrs and His enemies (Isaiah 63:3). The armies of heaven follow Him, dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword, His Word, and with it He strikes down evil. On His robe and on His thigh is written:

*King of kings and Lord of lords.*

No evil power, no wealthy or influential person, no war, and no sophisticated temptation will ever change this.

It has already been written

Victory in our Lord and sovereign God

**King of kings and Lord of lords**

Answer His call

AMEN!

**HALLELUJAH!**

## Table Discussion: Sovereign God - Sophisticated god

Two important warnings rise from these chapters:

- We can lose power and growth in our faith if we lose sight of the Truth that we serve a *sovereign God*. A God who truly controls all things and has the power to do what He wants, when He wants, and how He wants. Fighting this Truth with “why” questions or demanding full understanding often leads to confusion, pain, and spiritual struggle. Embracing it in faith, even when we do not understand everything, leads to peace, strength, and deep spiritual growth.
- We can also lose the fight against evil if we underestimate how it works. Evil does not always look like a scary dragon. It is not only found in obviously dangerous places or situations. Evil can also present itself as a very *sophisticated* power: Attractive, cultured, successful, and even respectable. It often comes through people who speak eloquently, dress well, live in fine homes, and move in influential circles. In other words, we face not only a “scary” evil, but also a “sophisticated” evil that can look impressive and even do some good in the world.

***Let's discuss practical ways to serve our sovereign God faithfully in light of these Truths:***

1. **Sovereign God:** How do you personally understand or struggle with the sovereignty of God? Has anything shifted for you after tonight's discussion?
2. **Sophisticated god:** How has seeing this “sophisticated” face of evil changed the way you think about temptation and how to resist it? In what ways has your understanding of the devil and his strategies grown or shifted through this study of Revelation?

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## Discussion 3: Revelation 15 and 20

### Answer God's Call under His Control: The Final Defeat of Evil

#### Revelation 15

<sup>1</sup> I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. <sup>2</sup> And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God <sup>3</sup> and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the ages. <sup>4</sup> Who will not fear You, O Lord, and bring glory to Your Name? For You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed." <sup>5</sup> After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened. <sup>6</sup> Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. <sup>7</sup> Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. <sup>8</sup> And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

#### Revelation 20

<sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. <sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup> He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. <sup>4</sup> I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. <sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. <sup>9</sup> They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him Who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

## ***A short summary***

**Revelation 15** introduces the last plagues, because with them God's wrath is completed. We see a clear picture of progressive intensity. The sea of glass from Revelation 4 is now mixed with fire, showing that God is judging right from His throne.

Yet even in the midst of fierce judgment, we find an encouraging sight: Victorious believers standing beside the sea with worship instruments, singing a song of salvation and victory (vv. 3-4; see also Ex. 15:1-19; Dt. 31:30-32:43)! Angels come out of the temple dressed like priests and guests ready to celebrate in the wedding of the Groom (Jesus) and His bride, the Church.

They have one more task: To pour out the final bowls of God's wrath. During this time, the temple is filled with the glory of God, and no one can enter until judgment is done: No one can stop it; nothing can slow it down.

Progressive intensity.

Grace and time are running out.

*We already covered the first 10 verses of **Revelation 20** during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:*

We can debate the exact meaning of the thousand-year period, but a few things are clear from the text. Throughout Revelation we have seen that numbers multiplied by ten and three carry special significance. The number 1,000 ( $10 \times 10 \times 10$ ) most likely refers to a divinely appointed, complete period between Christ's first and second coming. This is a time marked by increasing intensity as the end approaches (vv. 1-3, 7-9a).

During this period, God remains fully in control. Those who die faithfully serving the Lamb will be raised to reign with Him, and the second death will have no power over them (vv. 4-6). At the end of this period, however, the final armies of evil are met with the full force of God's judgment: Fire comes down from heaven and devours them. The devil, together with all evil, is then thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (vv. 7-10).

When God arrives on the scene, even earth and sky have to flee to give way for what is complete, perfect, glorious, and new (v. 11).

- Those who belong to Christ appear first. Their names are found in the Book of Life, not because of their own good deeds, but because of the grace they have received through Jesus (v. 12).
- Next come those who have rejected God's grace. They are judged according to what they have done, and their deeds are never good enough to save them (v. 13). Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (v. 14). Anyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life is thrown into the lake of fire (v. 15).

This is the final and eternal separation from the presence of God. This is what the Bible calls, "hell".

Evil's defeat is certain, complete, and final.

God is in full control from beginning to end.

## ***A short reflection***

Revelation is often seen as a scary book filled with terrible events. *But these chapters were written to **encourage** persecuted believers with **hope** from a heavenly perspective.*

- Even in the midst of fierce judgment, we see victorious believers standing beside the sea of glass mixed with fire, worshiping God with harps and singing songs of salvation. From chapter 4 we learned that this sea of glass is in the throne room itself. In a powerful way, the metaphor shows us that God does not even need to leave His throne to deal with evil. Right from His throne, He judges the sea of evil with fire, and evil's defeat doesn't even cause a ripple on the glass-like surface.
- From God's perspective, the devil is already bound with an unbreakable chain. He can only do as much as God allows.
- It is deeply encouraging to know that those who have suffered and died for their faith will be raised to reign with Christ forever.
- We are also reminded that evil's final defeat will not require a war with an uncertain outcome. Whether described as fire from heaven or being thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, evil's end comes swiftly and completely under God's control.
- Finally, we are assured that as God's children, saved by grace, our names are written in the Book of Life. No matter how hard life may be, we have the wonderful assurance of a righteous, grace-filled judgment, and the promise that we will reign with our eternal God forever.

*This is why there is also an urgency: Use this encouraging News well.*

*Answer God's call now! Now, before time for grace runs out and the door is closed forever.*

We cannot imagine the church doors being closed, with the glory of God inside and no one able to enter anymore. Whoever is inside will remain inside. Whoever is outside will only experience the bowls of God's wrath being poured out.

Has Jesus not warned us? The wise virgins will be inside, celebrating with the groom, while the foolish ones will be outside, knocking and knocking on a closed door...with no avail (Matt. 25:1-13). Futile. Left outside in the dark. Once the door is closed, it will stay shut. Forever!

Time. Does. Run. Out.

Final defeat of evil and final moments for grace are both inevitable.

Taking either lightly will be a mistake of eternal proportions.

Taking both seriously will lead to a life — and an eternity — of blessing.

Even this warning, therefore, is also deeply encouraging!

## Table Discussion - Progressive intensity

We have seen throughout Revelation a clear pattern of progressive intensity, like a conical spiral, that becomes tighter and more intense as it moves toward the end.

Evil is not only aggressively trying to destroy lives and capture souls.

Evil is also pushing harder and harder.

### At the same time

God is not only calling people to receive His grace

God is calling with greater intensity and urgency as time runs out.

*God controls the time and the power of evil.*

*Once God decides Jesus should return, both will run out. At that moment all is final:*

- Time for grace has run out.
- Time to repent has therefore run out.
- Evil's power has run out.
- Evil's defeat is therefore final.

Answer God's call

Without delay

Grace is abundant

NOW

***Let's talk one more time about progressive intensity:***

1. **A distinct pattern:** We've seen a pattern of progressive intensity throughout Revelation in the seals, trumpets, and bowls, as well as in evil's growing opposition and God's call to grace. How has this idea shaped your understanding of Revelation?
2. **Living with urgency:** How does knowing that both grace and evil's power will one day run out affect how you want to live and share your faith?

## NOTES

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## **Week 4**

### **GET GOING**

#### **Answer God's Call in His Presence**

## Devotion - Monday

### Answer God's Call in His Presence: The Throne Room

#### **Focus passage: Revelation 4:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." <sup>2</sup> At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with Someone sitting on it. <sup>3</sup> And the One Who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. <sup>4</sup> Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. <sup>5</sup> From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven Spirits of God. <sup>6</sup> Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. <sup>7</sup> The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come." <sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him Who sits on the throne and Who lives for ever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who sits on the throne, and worship Him Who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: <sup>11</sup> "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."

#### **A Bible study in a nutshell**

The chapter opens with a powerful invitation. A voice like a trumpet calls John to "Come up here" through a door, opened by costly grace, into the very presence of God (v. 1). At once he finds himself in the throne room of heaven, where Someone is seated on the throne (v. 2). In ancient times, true authority was often shown by sitting still. Here, God is seated. An excellent picture of His sovereign rule and unshakable power (see also Isaiah 6:1-4 and Ezekiel 1:26-28).

God is described using the imagery of precious stones: Jasper, clear like a diamond, speaking of His glory and purity; carnelian, red like fire, pointing to His righteous judgment; and a rainbow, green like an emerald, encircling the throne — a powerful reminder of grace, covenant, and restoration (v. 3; Ezekiel 1:28). These images together give us a glimpse of the indescribable radiance and holiness of our God.

Around the throne are twenty-four elders, representing the entire family of God: Twelve from the Old Testament and twelve from the New. They are dressed in white, showing purity through the blood of Christ, and wear golden crowns, showing that they share in God's reign (v. 4). Before the throne is a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the ancient world the sea often symbolized chaos and evil (Psalm 74:14, 104:26; Is. 27:1), but here it lies perfectly still. A great picture of God's complete control. Nothing escapes His sight, and evil cannot disturb His sovereign rule (v. 6a).

Closest to the throne are four living creatures, each with six wings and covered with eyes all around. These eyes represent their constant watchfulness and their ability to serve God with perfect awareness,

speed, and efficiency. Day and night they never cease to worship Him, saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come” (v. 8). Whenever they give glory to God, the twenty-four elders fall down before the throne, lay their crowns before Him, and declare: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being” (vv. 9-11).

All of creation finds its purpose in worshiping the One Who created it, rules over it, and holds it together.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Being alone and thinking of someone truly awesome is wonderful.

Talking with that person over the phone is even better.

Seeing their face in a video call is better still.

Sitting across the table and sharing a meal with them is richer.

But spending extended, quality time in their presence. That changes everything.

Imagine that person is the most precious person in your life...

Now imagine being in the direct presence of **God**  
the most powerful, holy, and loving One in the universe.

Not just talking to Him in prayer  
sensing His presence on earth

but standing in the throne room itself, before the One Who sits on the throne!

***Reflect on these questions***

1. How did you think about the presence of God in the past?
2. Did this discussion shift or deepen your view of what it means to be in God’s presence? How?
3. What excites you most about the thought of one day standing in that throne room with your Father... forever?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

**NOTES**

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Answer God's Call in His Presence: The Worthy Lamb

**Focus passage: Revelation 5:1-10**

*<sup>1</sup> Then I saw in the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" <sup>3</sup> But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. <sup>4</sup> I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. <sup>5</sup> Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." <sup>6</sup> Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven Eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> He came and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. <sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

The scene shifts dramatically from the worship around the throne to a moment of deep tension. In the right hand of the One seated on the throne is a scroll, written on both sides and sealed with seven seals (v. 1). A mighty angel asks the question that brings all of creation to a standstill: "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" (v. 2). No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth is found worthy. John weeps bitterly, for without someone to open the scroll, God's plan for redemption and the renewal of all things cannot move forward (vv. 3-4).

Yet, just before all hope is lost, good news breaks through: Someone has been found! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed and is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals (v. 5). John expects to see a powerful Lion, but when he looks, he sees a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain and standing in the center of the throne (v. 6). This is the great paradox of the Gospel: the conquering Lion is the sacrificial Lamb. The Lamb has seven horns, symbolizing complete power, and seven eyes, representing the fullness of the Holy Spirit. He is fully God and fully able to do what no one else could.

The Lamb steps forward and takes the scroll from the hand of the One on the throne (v. 7). At that moment, worship erupts. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall down before the Lamb. They hold harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and they sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll... because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (vv. 8-10).

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

How much effort would you put into finding the right person to help you with a serious challenge — whether it's a medical crisis, a financial struggle, or guiding your child through a difficult season? Finding someone truly worthy of trust and capable of bringing real help matters deeply.

In this chapter, all of heaven searches for someone worthy to open the scroll and set God's plan in motion. No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth is found worthy. John weeps, because without someone worthy, everything comes to a standstill.

Take heart.

Take note.

There *is* Someone worthy. Only One. And His Name?

*Jesus!*

He proved that He cares...more than anyone "out there".

He proved that He loves...more than anyone "out there".

He proved that He can overcome anything...better than anyone "out there".

He died. He is risen. He sacrificed. He is victorious.

*HE ALONE...IS...WORTHY.*

***Reflect on these questions***

1. When you think about your own life and the challenges you or your loved ones are facing, how does it change your perspective to know that Jesus is truly worthy to handle what no one else can?
2. How does recognizing that Jesus alone is worthy affect the way you bring your burdens, fears, and hopes to Him?
3. If everything ultimately hinges on this worthy Lamb, how might that Truth shift the way you approach both the big and small challenges in your life, including the most important one: Your own salvation and the salvation of those you love?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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## Devotion - Wednesday

### Answer God's Call in His Presence: The Great Multitude

#### ***Focus passage: Revelation 7:1-4, 9-12***

<sup>1</sup>After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. <sup>2</sup>Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: <sup>3</sup>"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." <sup>4</sup>Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." <sup>11</sup>All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

#### ***A Bible study in a nutshell***

Before the final judgments begin, God first ensures the protection of His people. Four angels are commanded to hold back the destructive winds until the servants of God receive a seal on their foreheads (vv. 1-3). This seal is a powerful sign of ownership, protection, and belonging. It assures believers that they are known and kept by God, even when trouble comes upon the earth.

The number of those sealed is given as 144,000 — 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is not a literal count of ethnic Israelites, but a symbolic number representing the complete people of God from both the Old and New Testaments. Multiplied by  $10 \times 10 \times 10$  (a number of divine completeness), it refers to all true believers who belong to God from every nation.

After this, John sees an even more exciting sight: A vast multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and the Lamb (v. 9). They are dressed in white robes and holding palm branches, signs of victory and celebration. With one voice they cry out: "Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels join them, falling on their faces and declaring God's worth forever (vv. 10-12).

#### ***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

There is something special about being in the presence of God by yourself.

It becomes even more meaningful when you are with your spouse.

It grows richer still when you worship with your family.

And there is something unforgettable about standing with thousands of believers, and especially with believers from other nations: Worshiping, praying, and crying out to God together.

Now imagine something even greater: “a great multitude that no one can count,” from every nation, tribe, people, and language, gathered before the throne and the Lamb. This is not just a future hope. It is the certain destination of all who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and remained faithful.

Can you imagine such a gathering in the presence of your God?

Is this not worth living for?

Is this not worth staying faithful for?

***Reflect on these questions***

1. What are some of the most meaningful gatherings of believers you have been part of? What made them special to you?
2. Do you believe there is still great value in gathering in person with other believers, both in your local Church and occasionally in larger gatherings? Is there a step you feel prompted to take in this area?
3. Have you ever worshiped with believers from other nations or denominations? How did that experience affect you, or would you like to seek out such opportunities?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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Answer God's Call in His Presence: The 144,000 and the Harvest

**Focus passage: Revelation 14:1-13**

*<sup>1</sup> Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His Name and His Father's Name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup> And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. <sup>6</sup> Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. <sup>7</sup> He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him Who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." <sup>8</sup> A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." <sup>9</sup> A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, <sup>10</sup> he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." <sup>12</sup> This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

After the dark picture of evil's power in chapter 13, we are given a bright and encouraging scene. The Lamb stands on Mount Zion with 144,000 who bear His Name and the Father's Name on their foreheads (v. 1). They sing a new song before the throne. A song that only they can learn. These are those who kept themselves pure, followed the Lamb wherever He went, and were offered as firstfruits to God. They are described as blameless, walking in Truth, and fully devoted to the Lord (vv. 2-5).

Three angels then deliver urgent messages to the whole world. The first angel proclaims the eternal Gospel, calling every nation, tribe, language, and people to fear God, give Him glory, and worship the true Creator (vv. 6-7). The second angel announces the certain fall of Babylon the Great, warning that evil's seductive influence will come to an end (v. 8). The third angel gives a sobering warning: Those who worship the beast and receive his mark will face the full strength of God's wrath (vv. 9-11).

In the midst of these intense messages, believers are called to patient endurance. They are to remain obedient to God and faithful to Jesus, even when times are difficult (v. 12). Then comes a word of great comfort: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." The Spirit confirms that they will rest from their labor, and their deeds will follow them (v. 13).



***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

*The only way to live in the Lord is to die in the Lord.*

This is a powerful statement that calls for deep reflection.

We could also say it like this:

To be in the eternal presence of the Lord, we need to be in a living relationship with Him while we are still on earth. Only then will He be present with us in our death, unlock the gates of the place of the dead, and lead us into that heavenly throne room to be with Him forever.

Living in the presence of the Lord includes:

- Keeping ourselves pure and blameless before Him.
- Staying faithful even when things get tough.
- Walking in Truth.

It also means:

- Being part of a vast family of believers across time, represented here by the 144,000, who will one day gather in joyful worship before God.
- Looking forward to the great harvest when we will be with the Lord forever.

And it means understanding that those who reject the Lord will not share in that eternal presence.

*To be in His presence came at a great cost to our Lord. May we never take it lightly.*

***Reflect on these questions***

1. Of all the Truths in this passage about living in the presence of God, which one resonated with you the most, and why?
2. Is there anything the Lord is prompting you to change, adjust, or repent of as you reflect on what it means to live in His presence?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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Answer God's Call in His Presence: New Heaven and the New Earth

**Focus passage: Revelation 21:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." <sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of Life. <sup>7</sup> He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son. <sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

In powerful contrast to the wicked and corrupt city described in chapters 17 and 18, we now see the new Jerusalem. This city is presented as a bride beautifully prepared for her husband, symbolizing perfect purity and intimate relationship with God (vv. 1-2). Because God Himself will dwell with His people, the sea — often a symbol of chaos and evil — is removed, and everything is made new and perfect. The presence of God brings complete transformation: No more death, mourning, crying, or pain (vv. 3-4). An exciting detail is hidden in the Greek: While the old covenant was made with Israel, this new covenant is made with His "peoples" (plural). His bride now includes believers from every nation!

God declares with absolute certainty, "It is done." As the Alpha and the Omega, He speaks of this future reality as if it has already been accomplished. He promises to give the water of Life freely to those who are thirsty and confirms that those who overcome will inherit all these blessings and be His children (vv. 5-7). This new heaven and new earth is not a temporary improvement. It is the final, eternal reality guaranteed by God Himself.

However, those who reject God's grace and continue in rebellion will have no part in this new creation. Their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur, the second death (v. 8). The contrast is clear and sobering: Those who belong to the Lamb will live forever in God's presence, while those who reject Him will be separated from Him forever.

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

Many of us long for something new: A fresh start in our relationships, our work, or our personal lives.

Often we look for someone to help bring about that change: A counselor, a mentor, a leader, or even a loved one. Sometimes change happens, but it is often incomplete or temporary. Things may improve for a while, only to slowly return to the way they were before.

Yet our God is the only One Who can bring about something truly new...and make it last forever.

When He promises a new heaven and a new earth, He means exactly that:

- Evil completely removed (no more “sea”)
- Death, mourning, crying, pain. Gone!
- No more hunger and thirst, physically or spiritually
- All wickedness. Removed!

*This is not a temporary fix.*

*It is final and eternal.*

How certain is this promise? So certain that God speaks of it in the past tense: “It is done.”

Who is included? Only Israel? No.

Who is included? All believers. All “peoples”. The New Israel.

*This is true. This can be trusted. It is written.*

*The presence of God Himself guarantees it.*

***Reflect on these questions***

1. What about this passage stood out to you the most, and why?
2. How does the promise of a new heaven and new earth encourage or strengthen you?
3. Is there anything in your life that this passage challenges you to surrender to God more fully?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

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Answer God's Call in His Presence: The New Jerusalem

**Focus passage: Revelation 21:9-27**

<sup>9</sup> One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>13</sup> There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. <sup>14</sup> The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. <sup>16</sup> The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. <sup>17</sup> He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. <sup>18</sup> The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. <sup>22</sup> I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of Life.

**Focus passage: Revelation 22:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. <sup>4</sup> They will see His face, and His Name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

**A Bible study in a nutshell**

The angel shows John the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven (vv. 9-10). This city shines with the glory of God and is described as being made of pure gold and precious stones. It has twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles. These details clearly show that the city belongs to the complete people of God from both the Old and New Testaments. Everything about the city — its

perfect measurements, its materials, and its open gates — speaks of holiness, beauty, and the perfect presence of God providing complete and eternal protection (vv. 11-21).

Unlike the old Jerusalem, this city has no temple, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb *is* its temple (v. 22). It has no need of the sun or moon, for the glory of God gives it light and the Lamb is its lamp (v. 23). The gates of the city are never shut, for there is no night there, and nothing impure will ever enter it; only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (vv. 25-27).

The vision then shifts to an inspiring picture of the new Eden. A river of the water of Life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's great street. On each side of the river stands the tree of life, bearing fruit every month, with leaves for the healing of the nations (vv. 1-2). Whether we are dealing with the image of a new Jerusalem or a renewed Eden, it really doesn't matter. Both are simply John's way of trying to describe something that is ultimately indescribable: The perfect, unbroken presence of God with His people. The curse has been removed, and God's servants will see His face and reign with Him forever (vv. 3-5).

***Pause and open your heart to what God desires to reveal to you through this passage***

My wife and I have had the privilege of walking the streets of Jerusalem many times. It is a city with a rich history spanning thousands of years, filled with fascinating smells, vibrant culture, the ancient sounds of Hebrew and Arabic, the religious clothing of our Jewish brothers and sisters, and a deep sense of spirituality. If those ancient stones could talk, and if the layers of pavement beneath our feet could recall everyone who has walked there over the centuries. What stories they would tell!

And then, of course, there is the ultimate story: Our Lord walking those very streets. As an eight-day-old baby carried by His parents to be circumcised, again at forty days old when He was dedicated to God in the temple by Simeon, and once more as a twelve-year-old boy teaching in the temple courts during Passover. And then our Lord walking these streets crowned with thorns, carrying His cross.

*What a city!*

And what do you sense most strongly from the people, the smells, the food, the worship, the languages, the pavements, and the walls?

*The presence of God crying out across the ages for all to come to Him, just as He sacrificially came to us.*

Now imagine being given a "preview" of the New Jerusalem. How would you even begin to describe it? One way is to use many different metaphors and images to paint a picture of what you see, which is exactly what John does.

John describes the New Jerusalem as...

- Beautiful as a bride. Not just any bride, but the Wife of the Lamb!
- An amazing city. A Holy City shining with the glory of God, set apart for Him and for His holy people.
- Built with precious jewels, stones, pearls, and gold. Not ordinary building materials, but a reminder that this city was built by a different kind of Builder: God Himself.
- A city with an unusual Temple. One unlike any other, because it has no building. God Himself and the Lamb *is* its Temple.
- A city that needs no sun or moon. The glory of God and the Lamb provides all the Light it needs.
- A garden. Not just any garden, but one that is perfect and remains perfect, free from the curse, with clean water flowing from the throne of God, bearing fruit and leaves for the healing of the nations.

- A throne. Not like any throne we know, hidden away where only a few may enter. This is a throne where anyone can come and see the face of God at any time.

What do all these metaphors and images of the New Jerusalem have in common?

**The presence of God is there. Everywhere. Always.**

***Reflect on these questions***

1. How have you always thought about the earthly Jerusalem, and how have you imagined the New Jerusalem?
2. Has this passage challenged or refined your view of what the New Jerusalem will be like? What stood out to you the most?
3. Does this vision of the New Jerusalem increase your longing to be in the presence of God? How does it encourage you to live faithfully in the present?

***Pray & Journal - Take a moment to share your heart with God***

## NOTES

[illegible]

[illegible]

## Sunday Evening Gathering

### Discussion 1: Revelation 4-5 and 7

#### Answer God's Call in His Presence: Worship at the Throne

##### **Revelation 4:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." <sup>2</sup> At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with Someone sitting on it. <sup>3</sup> And the One Who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. <sup>4</sup> Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. <sup>5</sup> From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven Spirits of God. <sup>6</sup> Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. <sup>7</sup> The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come." <sup>9</sup> Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him Who sits on the throne and Who lives for ever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who sits on the throne, and worship Him Who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: <sup>11</sup> "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."

##### **Revelation 5:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw in the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" <sup>3</sup> But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. <sup>4</sup> I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. <sup>5</sup> Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." <sup>6</sup> Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven Eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> He came and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. <sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." <sup>11</sup> Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, Who was slain, to receive power and



*wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”<sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To Him Who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”<sup>14</sup> The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

### **Revelation 7:1-4, 9-12**

*<sup>1</sup> After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. <sup>2</sup> Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: <sup>3</sup> “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” <sup>4</sup> Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.*

*<sup>9</sup> After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” <sup>11</sup> All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”*

### **A short summary**

*We already covered most of these three chapters during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:*

### **Revelation 4**

The chapter opens with a powerful invitation. A voice like a trumpet calls John to “Come up here” through an open door into the very presence of God (v. 1). At once he finds himself in the throne room of heaven, where Someone is seated on the throne (v. 2). In ancient times, true authority was often shown by sitting still. Here, God is seated. A great picture of His sovereign rule and unshakable power.

God is described using the imagery of precious stones: Jasper, clear like a diamond, speaking of His glory and purity; carnelian, red like fire, pointing to His righteous judgment; and a rainbow, green like an emerald, encircling the throne. A powerful reminder of grace, covenant, and restoration (v. 3). Around the throne are twenty-four elders, representing the entire family of God from both the Old and New Testaments. They are dressed in white and wear golden crowns, showing that they share in God’s reign (v. 4). Before the throne is a sea of glass, clear as crystal. A powerful picture that God is completely in control over all chaos and evil. Closest to the throne are four living creatures, ever seeing and worshiping God without pause, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come” (v. 8). All of creation finds its purpose in worshiping the One Who created it, rules over it, and holds it together (vv. 9-11).

### **Revelation 5**

The scene shifts dramatically from worship to deep tension. In the right hand of the One seated on the throne is a scroll sealed with seven seals (v. 1). A mighty angel asks, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” (v. 2). No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth is found worthy. John

weeps bitterly, because without someone to open the scroll, God's plan for redemption and the renewal of all things cannot move forward (vv. 3-4).

Then hope breaks through. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has triumphed and is worthy to open the scroll (v. 5). But when John looks, he sees not a Lion, but a Lamb looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne (v. 6). This is the striking paradox of the Gospel: The conquering Lion is the sacrificial Lamb. The Lamb takes the scroll, and worship erupts. The living creatures and elders fall down before Him, holding golden bowls full of incense (the prayers of the saints), and sing a new song: "You are worthy... because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (vv. 8-10). The worship then expands to include countless angels and finally every creature in heaven and on earth, all giving praise to both the One on the throne and to the Lamb (vv. 11-14).

## **Revelation 7**

Before the final judgments begin, God first ensures the protection of His people. Four angels are commanded to hold back the destructive winds until the servants of God receive a seal on their foreheads (vv. 1-3). This seal is a powerful sign of ownership, protection, and belonging to God. The number of those sealed is given as 144,000. A symbolic number representing the complete people of God from both the Old and New Testaments, from every nation.

After this, John sees an even more amazing sight: A vast multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and the Lamb (v. 9). They are dressed in white robes and holding palm branches, signs of victory and celebration. With one voice they cry out: "Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels join them in worship, falling on their faces and declaring God's worth forever (vv. 10-12).

## ***A short reflection***

I've had the privilege of worshiping with believers in many different settings: From war-torn areas in Myanmar, to traditional worship dances in Thailand, to loud and joyful worship in Haiti, and solemn organ music in South Africa.

*All of it...amazing!*

*True worship implies being in the presence of the one true God...and that is always amazing, no matter the setting!*

What is far *more* amazing, though, is the worship we see around the throne of  
God, the Lamb, and the Spirit.

*Nothing can top the worship we will experience in heaven!*

Day and night you hear all the beings serving God saying:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty Who was, and is, and is to come."

*Imagine that!*

Then you see with all these heavenly beings the twenty-four elders, representing all believers over all the ages, falling down before God and laying their crowns before Him saying:

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."

*Imagine that!*

Then the same beings and elders fall before the Lamb, lifting up the prayers of all the saints, singing:

"You are worthy...because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation!"

*Imagine that!*

Next, countless angels join in with a thunderous voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb, Who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

*Imagine that!*

And finally, every single created being from everywhere joins in one great choir:

"To Him Who sits on the Throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

*Imagine that!*

*Yet there is even more!!*

We also see a countless multitude of believers from all people groups of all nations through all the ages, of all languages ever spoken, crying out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Then all the angels, elders and being serving God fall down on their faces worshiping God and say:

*Amen!*

*Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength  
be to our God for ever and ever.*

*Amen!*

*Imagine that! Imagine that! Imagine that!*

All of this happens in the Presence of the one, true, eternal God — Creator, Lamb, Spirit!

Let us worship Him — now.

Let us worship Him — tomorrow.

Let us worship Him — when He comes again.

Let us worship Him — forever.

## Table Discussion - Worship the One True God

These chapters in Revelation give us the most glorious picture of worship.

They also remind us of **Who** we are worshiping; in Whose presence we are when we worship:

The One...True...God.

- Chapter 4 describes *God as Creator and Father* on the Throne.
  - Rev 4:5 describes the *full presence of the Holy Spirit with God*.
- Chapter 5 describes the *Lamb* on the Throne.
  - Rev 5:6 describes the *full presence of the Holy Spirit with the Lamb*.

*Remember, because of the way the metaphors are being used the Spirit is from this point forward actually always by implication included as we read the remainder of the worship!*

- Chapter 4 describes the beings serving *God* and the 24 elders falling down and worshiping Him.
  - Chapter 5 describes the beings serving the *Lamb* and the 24 elders falling down and worshiping Him.

*Look now at how One True God (Creator, Lamb, Spirit) receives the same worship:*

- Rev 4:11a says, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power..."
- Rev 5:13 says, "To Him Who sits on the Throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"
- Rev 7:10 says, "Salvation belongs to our God, Who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb."
- Rev 7:12 wraps it all up into one huge praise, "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

At this point in Revelation it is merely impossible to tell whether "GOD" in Rev 7:12 is referring to the Creator, Lamb or Spirit. It is simply, GOD. One true God receiving the same worship, all of it, by all!

*And all fell down and said, "AMEN!"*

*Are you ready to do the same?*

***Let us discuss the worship of our God:***

1. **Personal worship experiences:** What worship experiences or settings have been especially meaningful to you? What made them stand out?
2. **Future worship:** Has anything from these chapters changed how you think about worship or how you want to worship God going forward?
3. **The One we worship:** How has this passage affected the way you see the one true God we worship: Father, Son, and Spirit?

[illegible]

## Discussion 2: Revelation 14

### Answer God's Call in His Presence: Presence that Sustains

#### Revelation 14

<sup>1</sup> Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His Name and His Father's Name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup> And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. <sup>6</sup> Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal Gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. <sup>7</sup> He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him Who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." <sup>8</sup> A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." <sup>9</sup> A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, <sup>10</sup> he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." <sup>12</sup> This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. <sup>13</sup> Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." <sup>14</sup> I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was One "like a Son of man" with a crown of gold on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. <sup>15</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to Him Who was sitting on the cloud, "Take Your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." <sup>16</sup> So He who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. <sup>17</sup> Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." <sup>19</sup> The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. <sup>20</sup> They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

#### A short summary

*We already covered most of this chapter during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:*

After the dark picture of evil's power in chapter 13, we are given a bright and encouraging scene. The Lamb stands on Mount Zion with the 144,000 who bear His Name and the Father's Name on their foreheads (v. 1). They sing a new song before the throne, a song only they can learn. These are those who kept themselves pure, followed the Lamb wherever He went, and were offered as firstfruits to God. They are described as blameless and fully devoted to the Lord (vv. 2-5).

Three angels then deliver urgent messages to the whole world. The first angel proclaims the eternal Gospel, calling every nation, tribe, language, and people to fear God, give Him glory, and worship the true Creator (vv. 6-7). The second angel announces the certain fall of Babylon the Great (v. 8). The third angel gives a sobering warning: Those who worship the beast and receive his mark will face the full strength of God's wrath (vv. 9-11).

In the midst of these messages, believers are called to patient endurance, to remain obedient to God and faithful to Jesus (v. 12). Then comes a word of great comfort: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." The Spirit confirms that they will rest from their labor, and their deeds will follow them (v. 13).

The chapter ends with two harvests. The first harvest (vv. 14-16) appears to refer to the gathering in of believers. The second harvest (vv. 17-20) is a judgment harvest, where the grapes of the earth are thrown into the great winepress of God's wrath. The scene is horrific, showing the terrible consequences of rejecting God.

### ***A short reflection***

My first thought is that if we want to reflect on "God's presence that sustains us," we could literally pick almost any chapter in Revelation and be encouraged by this Truth. But let's focus on chapter 14.

For the longest time, I kept my baptism certificate as a reminder that God knew my name as His child. Today, after moving halfway across the world, I no longer know where that certificate is. Yet thank God that you and I never have to fear that God will forget our names or that our connection to Him will be lost.

Read this slowly: Verse 1 says the Name of the Lamb and the Name of the Father are written on our foreheads. Symbolically, every time we look in the mirror, we are reminded of Who we belong to. And every time God looks at us, He sees His Name on us.

Nothing that happens around us or to us can change this Truth: You belong to God. His Name on you will sustain you. No one can steal this Truth from you, and you can never lose it. It goes where you go. It even carries you through death into eternal life, because the Name written on you is the Name of Life itself.

And when you arrive in the direct presence of God, it is this Name on your forehead that will cause you to burst out in a worship song that only the redeemed can sing. A song accompanied by so many harpists that it will sound like the roar of rushing waters and a loud peal of thunder. Worship that will echo through the entire existence of everything ever created, proclaiming that you have been created and redeemed by the Name on your forehead! The Name that will sustain your worship forever.

This cannot be faked or duplicated. The devil tries something similar by placing his mark on the foreheads and hands of people, but that mark only identifies them as those destined for God's wrath.

Those without God's Name will be so close to the Only One who can truly sustain us

yet

so far removed from Him...forever.



## Table Discussion - His Name on my Forehead

His Name on your forehead.

What a powerful picture!

Even today we hear people say things like: “I know you — I’ve got you,” or “I know you — I’ll support you,” or even “I know you — I’d take a bullet for you.”

We understand that when people truly know us, they often do special and extraordinary things for us. The better they know us, the deeper their love and care usually become.

But our God does something utterly unique.

We could not do anything to make God choose us.

We could not earn the right to have His Name written on us.

We cannot claim to be known by God on our own.

We cannot expect special favor from Him in our own strength.

*We cannot be sustained by God...*

*except for this:*

THE LAMB OF GOD

sought us out

died for us

saved us

and wrote His Name and the Father’s Name on our foreheads

so that all will know:

“This is My Child

I paid the Price

I know \_\_\_\_\_

I love \_\_\_\_\_

I sustain \_\_\_\_\_

forever.” (Jesus)

[Take a moment to thank God that His Name is written on you with the Blood of the Lamb,

and then write with deep thanksgiving your name in the blank spots above.]

***Let us reflect together on God sustaining us:***

1. **God knows and sustains you:** What does it mean to you personally that God has placed His Name on you? How does it affect you that He knows you, loves you, and sustains you?
2. **Living in His sustaining presence:** How does knowing you are deeply known and sustained by God's presence change the way you want to live?
3. **Sustaining others:** Who are some people in your life that you feel called to care for and sustain? How can you reflect God's sustaining love to them in practical ways?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Discussion 3: Revelation 21-22

### Answer God's Call in His Presence: Forever!

#### Revelation 21

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." <sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of Life. <sup>7</sup> He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son. <sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." <sup>9</sup> One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>13</sup> There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. <sup>14</sup> The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. <sup>16</sup> The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. <sup>17</sup> He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. <sup>18</sup> The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. <sup>22</sup> I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

#### Revelation 22

<sup>1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the

Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. <sup>4</sup> They will see His face, and His Name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. <sup>6</sup> The angel said to me, “These Words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His servants the things that must soon take place.” <sup>7</sup> “Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the Words of the prophecy in this Book.” <sup>8</sup> I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the Words of this Book. Worship God!” <sup>10</sup> Then he told me, “Do not seal up the Words of the prophecy of this Book, because the time is near. <sup>11</sup> Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.” <sup>12</sup> “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. <sup>14</sup> “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. <sup>16</sup> “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” <sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of Life. <sup>18</sup> I warn everyone who hears the Words of the prophecy of this Book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this Book. <sup>19</sup> And if anyone takes Words away from this Book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of Life and in the holy city, which are described in this Book. <sup>20</sup> He Who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

### **A short summary**

*We already covered some of these chapters during the week, so here is a short wrap-up:*

### **Revelation 21**

In powerful contrast to the wicked and corrupt city of chapters 17 and 18, we now see the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (vv. 1-2). Because God Himself will dwell with His people, the sea (a symbol of chaos and evil) is removed, and everything is made new and perfect. There will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. An exciting detail is hidden in the Greek: While the old covenant was made with Israel, this new covenant is made with His “peoples” (plural). His bride now includes believers from every nation!

God declares with absolute certainty, “It is done.” As the Alpha and the Omega, He speaks of this future reality as if it has already been accomplished. He promises the water of life freely to those who are thirsty and confirms that those who overcome will inherit all these blessings and be His children (vv. 5-7). However, those who reject God’s grace will have no part in this new creation. Their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur, the second death (v. 8).

The angel then shows John the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the New Jerusalem (vv. 9-10). This city shines with the glory of God and is made of pure gold and precious stones. It has twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles. The city has no temple, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is its Temple (v. 22). It has no need of the sun or moon, for the glory of God gives it light and the Lamb is its lamp (v. 23). The gates

are never shut, and nothing impure will ever enter, only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (vv. 25-27).

## **Revelation 22**

The vision then shifts to an incredible picture of the new Eden. A river of the water of Life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's great street, with the tree of Life on its banks (vv. 1-2). Whether we picture the new Jerusalem or a renewed Eden, both are simply John's way of describing something ultimately indescribable: The perfect, unbroken presence of God with His people. The curse has been removed, God's servants will see His face, and they will reign with Him forever (vv. 3-5).

Every generation is called to live with a sense of urgency, as if Jesus' return could happen in their lifetime. The Book of Revelation repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus is coming soon (vv. 7, 12, 20). We should not miss this, be ignorant of it, or ignore it. The only reason Christ has not yet returned is God's grace, patience, and longing that more people would come to Him (see also 2 Pet. 3:8-9). We are therefore called to take His mission seriously, and when we do, God promises that we will be blessed (v. 7b).

In the end, it is all about worshiping God alone. This is what drives our mission: To call people to bow before the King of kings and Lord of lords. This Message must be shared with urgency, for time is running out (v. 10). Verse 11 shares this fact hyperbolically, driving the point home with shocking force! Wake up, be alert, Jesus is coming soon, and His reward is coming with Him (v. 12)! Get ready to meet your God, the Alpha and Omega (v. 13); get your robes washed by the blood of the Lamb (v. 14a) so you can share in the tree of Life (v. 14b), walk through the gates of the city (v. 14c), and not get stuck outside (v. 15)! Now is the time to rush to the Lord, to answer to the call of the bright Morning Star (v. 16).

Up to the very last page of Scripture, God continues to extend His invitation: "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of Life" (v. 17). It is vital that this Message is not changed or distorted, but shared truthfully and faithfully (vv. 18-19).

What else remains to be said but to echo Jesus' promise with a joyful shout: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (v. 20)?

Indeed, may the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you, people of God. Amen (v. 21).

**Soli Deo Gloria!**

### ***A short reflection***

Revelation 21 and 22 are packed with powerful symbols and metaphors, up to 25 major ones, depending on how you count them.

Many of these reach their fullest expression in these final chapters.

The overarching theme that ties them all together?

The place of God.

The people of God.

To say it differently:

The presence of God with the people of God.

His presence that restores all things, forever.

His presence that drives evil away and keeps temptation out, forever.

His presence that removes death, mourning, crying, and pain, forever.

His presence that satisfies every physical and spiritual hunger and thirst, forever.

His presence that unites us with Him as closely as a bride is united with her husband, forever.

His presence that elevates worship to what it was always meant to be, forever.

Who can come into His presence?

**All.**

All who wish to have their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.

When should they come?

**Now.**

**Come!**

Because Jesus is coming.

When?

**Soon!**

For how long?

**Forever and ever!**

## Table Discussion - Forever and ever

At the beginning of this study, we were challenged not to view Revelation only as a “scary” book filled with judgment after judgment.

We were invited to also see it as a Book of encouragement, especially for believers facing extremely difficult times.

Throughout our journey, we have seen again and again  
the deep longing and love of God drawing us to Himself

**Forever and ever.**

It is striking that “forever and ever” appears 12 times in Revelation.

It is striking that most of these occur in the context of

**Worship**

God longs to have you with Him,  
God longs to enjoy your worship,  
God longs to have you in His presence,

**Forever and ever!**

God loves you so much that He came for you,  
God loves you so much that He died for you,  
God loves you so much that He is coming for you,  
God loves you so much that He wants you with Him...

**Forever and ever!**

**Let us share some final thoughts together:**

1. **Forever with God:** How does the promise of being in God’s presence *forever* encourage you? Does it also challenge you in any way?
2. **What stood out most:** Looking back over our time in Revelation, what are two things that impacted you the most?
3. **Personal takeaway:** Is there one Truth from Revelation that you want to hold onto or live out more intentionally?

[illegible]



## Addendum 1

### 666

We have already seen that the mark mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8 is probably not a physical mark. It would therefore be strange for its counterpart in chapter 13 to suddenly refer to a literal, physical mark. The fact that this mark is placed on the right hand and forehead is significant (v. 16a). In chapter 7, the mark on God's people showed that they belonged to Him. In the same way, the mark in chapter 13 shows that the followers of the beast have surrendered both their working abilities (right hand) and their thought processes (forehead) to the Antichrist. In other words, just as the followers of Jesus belong to God, the followers of the beast belong to the devil. And just as God has followers from every part of society, so too does evil (v. 16a).

As a group, the followers of the beast can even exercise economic pressure on believers by preventing them from making certain purchases or holding certain jobs (v. 17). Before anyone can freely buy or sell in some contexts, they would first have to denounce Jesus, become the "property" of the beast, and bow before certain idols. Can you think of examples in history where this kind of pressure was placed on believers? Can you think of examples of this happening in our own day?

If this is true, then it raises an important question: Have people carrying this mark not already been present since the time of Jesus' first coming?

Verse 18 helps us understand that even people in John's time would have been able to grasp the meaning of the number 666 with the wisdom they were called to exercise. This is an important reminder, as it protects us from strange or far-fetched interpretations. In the society of that time, a popular game called *gematria* assigned numerical values to the letters of the alphabet. The first nine letters represented 1 to 9, the next nine represented 10 to 90, and so on. In this way, every name could be given a numerical value. An example of this is found in a love-graffiti from Pompeii, where someone wrote, "I love her whose name is 545."

In the time of Revelation, the number 666 most likely referred to Caesar Nero, specifically when his name and title were written in Hebrew letters. Interestingly, Nero was sometimes referred to as a "monster" or "animal," and these titles also added up to 666 in Hebrew. In some early manuscripts, the number appears as 616 instead of 666. This is a variation that occurs when Nero's name is written in its Latin form in Hebrew, which changes the numerical value.

It therefore becomes clear that we have good reason to understand 666 as referring to Nero in John's time. At the same time, many other names throughout history could also add up to 666, since different combinations of letters can reach the same total. This is why Revelation 13:18 calls for wisdom. Not only so that we do not wrongly accuse someone of being "the 666," but also so that we do not miss what is already happening around us.

The bottom line is this:

- Since the time of Jesus' first coming, people carrying this mark, people who could be described as "666," have been present.
- The 666 can refer to one person, but also to many, all who belong to the devil and think and act according to his will.
- It is just as important, if not more important, to understand *what* the 666 is doing, rather than focusing only on *who* it might be.

Much time has been spent trying to identify a specific name,  
while the enemy and his ways have been at work for a very long time.

May God give us wisdom not to miss what is already happening all around us.

## **Addendum 2**

### **Seven Letters to the Seven Churches**

*This summarized journey through the seven letters does not necessarily follow the order in which they will be preached on Sunday mornings. This addendum is intended as a short overview. The letters are addressed in a theme-oriented way, not in the order they appear in Revelation 2 and 3.*

#### **Introduction**

A few things seem to be common to all, or at least most, of the letters. Each one refers to Jesus in a way that connects with how He was described in chapter 1. Jesus also reminds each Church that He knows their deeds, both the good and the bad. This is both encouraging and sobering at the same time. Not only does Jesus know about the Church's struggles and is ready to support them, but He also knows about their failures and is ready to judge righteously.

Each letter is soon followed by a call to repentance and obedience, which will one day be rewarded. It is striking to see that these rewards are often tailor-made to speak directly to the specific struggles or strengths of each Church. Every letter ends with an encouraging call to truly listen to and obey what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

#### **Spiritual Complacency and Lukewarmness will hinder God's Mission for the Church**

##### **(Sardis & Laodicea)**

##### ***Revelation 3:1 — Sardis: Alive... or Dead?!***

Sardis had the reputation of being alive, yet Jesus judges them to be dead (v. 1b). The city seemed very much "alive." It was known for its wealth, thanks to gold found in nearby streams, a flourishing textile trade, and fertile soil. The goddess Artemis, who was believed to have the power to bring the dead back to life, was also worshiped there.

In the same way, the Church in Sardis appeared to be "alive." They enjoyed prosperity and a time of relative peace with no major persecution. Yet Jesus sees them as spiritually "dead." This message is made even stronger through a wordplay in the Greek. The word for "dead" (*nekros*) would have reminded the original readers of the *nekropolis*, the large cemetery just outside the city gates of Sardis.

##### ***Revelation 3:2a, 3d — Sardis: "Wake Up!"***

The call to "wake up" would have carried special weight for the believers in Sardis. The city was built on a steep citadel hill and was considered almost impossible to conquer. Yet it had been captured twice through surprise attacks, first by the Persians in 546 BC and again by the Syrians in 214 BC.

The Church had become spiritually complacent. They had settled comfortably, like a household getting ready for bed, unaware that a thief might come at any moment. Christ is not well served by people who are only half-awake (see also Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:35-37; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

***Revelation 3:1a, 2b-3c, 4a — Sardis: Use the Light, be Strengthened, Remember, Obey, and Repent***

Jesus reminds the church that He holds authority over its leaders and that He is the One who brings the light of the Holy Spirit. This echoes the powerful vision in Zechariah 4:2 and 10, where a golden lampstand with seven bowls, each containing seven wicks (a total of 49 points of light) provided strong, effective light to motivate Zerubbabel in rebuilding the temple. In the same way, Christ and the Holy Spirit can awaken a Church and bring it back to Life. This is where revival must begin.

Revival must start with those who are still spiritually awake (v. 2b) and have not “soiled their clothes” (v. 4a). It must happen quickly, before they too become spiritually dead. The world may still see this Church as active and alive, but from God’s perspective, it is almost completely lifeless.

The next step is to look back and remember the spiritual high points of their journey (v. 3a). This generation needed to remember the powerful Gospel Message that the first generation had received. A Message that came alive through the parables, miracles, words, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They were called to obey this Message (v. 3b) and, where they had fallen short, to humble themselves and repent (v. 3c).

***Revelation 3:4b-6 — Sardis: A Reward for the Faithful***

Because Sardis had a thriving textile industry, the promise that they could one day walk with the Lord dressed in white would have been especially meaningful to them (vv. 4b-5a). The color white appears 19 times in Revelation and often symbolizes purity, victory, holiness, and salvation. White robes were worn during festive occasions, sacred ceremonies, and even by Roman generals celebrating military triumphs.

Jesus also promises that He will never blot out the names of faithful believers from the Book of Life (v. 5b). Something that could happen with names recorded on ancient earthly citizenship rolls. Most hopeful, He promises that one day He will speak on their behalf and affirm them before the Father (v. 5c). It is always worthwhile to listen to and obey what the Spirit says to the Church (v. 6).

***Revelation 3:17-18 — Laodicea: Rich... Yet Poor, Blind, and Naked!***

Laodicea thought they had everything. Located on major trade routes, the city grew wealthy. Their black wool clothing was known throughout the empire, and their medical school was famous for its eye ointment made from powdered Phrygian stone. After an earthquake in 60 AD, they were so rich that they refused help from Rome to rebuild.

Yet when Jesus looks at the spiritual condition of the Church, He describes them as “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (v. 17). They would have immediately understood how serious this was. Jesus tells them there is only one solution: They must return to Him to receive true wealth, proper clothing, and healing for their eyes (v. 18). A strong Church is one that keeps its focus on the heart of God.

***Revelation 3:14-16 — Laodicea: Lukewarm***

Laodicea had one major problem they could not fix: Their water. To the southeast lay Colossae, known for its cold, refreshing water. However, by the time it traveled through the aqueducts to Laodicea, it arrived lukewarm and unpleasant. To the north was Hierapolis (modern-day Pamukkale), famous for its hot springs. Yet even this water became lukewarm by the time it reached the city. Over the years, the

calcium-rich water flowing from the Hellenistic spa-town of Hierapolis left behind layers of white calcium carbonate as it cooled, creating the stunning terraced landscape known as the “Cotton Castle.”

This is why Jesus’ words would have struck the church in Laodicea with particular force. When He called them “lukewarm” (v. 16a), they would have immediately understood the imagery. Jesus longed for them to be either cold — spiritually refreshing to everyone they encountered; or hot — bringing spiritual healing and renewal to others, like the hot springs of Hierapolis. Instead, their complacency and spiritual indifference made Him want to “spit them out” of His mouth (v. 16b).

### ***Revelation 3:19-22 — Laodicea: An Open Invitation***

These letters are written because Jesus loves His Church. Because He loves them, He rebukes and disciplines them (v. 19a; see also Prov. 3:11-12, 13:24 and Hebrews 12:1-13). He calls the Laodicean Church to be earnest, to repent with deep passion and commitment (v. 19b). Jesus is already at the door, knocking (v. 20a). The invitation is clear: Hear His knock, open the door, and enjoy close fellowship with Him (v. 20b). Those who overcome will one day share in His victory and reign with Him (v. 21). Once again, the call is to listen to and obey what the Spirit says to the Church.

## **A Heartless or Loveless Ministry and Assimilation will hurt God’s Mission for the Church**

**(Ephesus, Pergamum & Thyatira)**

### ***Revelation 2:1-7 — Ephesus: Let your First Love always be Passionately First!***

The Church in Ephesus had many strengths. They worked hard, persevered, did not tolerate evil, and had good spiritual discernment (vv. 2-3). They also endured hardship and hated what God hates (v. 6). Yet something essential was missing.

It is not enough to do good things or even to do the right things. We must do the right things with the right heart. A heart filled with passionate love for Jesus (v. 4). The solution is to return to their first love. They are called to remember how they once responded to Christ with fresh passion, to repent, and to follow Him obediently again (v. 5a). This is how the Church can boldly and passionately fulfill God’s mission to the lost.

### ***Revelation 2:12-17 — Pergamum: Warning — Do not Conform or Assimilate***

Pergamum was a center of pagan worship. It had a massive altar to Zeus on a hill, a temple dedicated to Emperor Augustus, another to the goddess Roma, and a temple to Asclepius, the god of healing. This is why Jesus describes it as the place “where Satan has his throne” (v. 13a). While some believers remained faithful, even to the point of death (v. 13b), others were misled into making compromises (vv. 14-15; see also Numbers 22). Some compromised for economic survival, others for financial gain, and some simply to fit in socially. This kind of “blending in” weakens God’s mission, because people will only recognize that we follow a different Lord when we live differently.

Jesus will not tolerate compromise or assimilation in His Church. He calls His people to repent (v. 16a) and warns that He will fight against such compromise with the sword of His mouth (v. 16b). For those who overcome, He promises wonderful rewards: Hidden manna to eat with the coming Lord (v. 17b; see also Exodus 16:32-34 and Hebrews 9:4) and a white stone with a new name written on it (v. 17a; see also Isaiah 62:2). In ancient culture, white stones had various meanings: A judge could give one to

declare someone innocent, they could serve as an amulet for protection, or they could act as an “entrance ticket” to special events. In this context, the white stone with a new name points to acceptance, identity, and the privilege of sharing in the heavenly feast with Christ!

### ***Revelation 2:18-29 — Thyatira: Warning — Do not Tolerate False Teaching***

Thyatira was known for its many trade guilds, including potters, tailors, leather workers, and coppersmiths. It is no coincidence that Lydia, the seller of purple cloth, came from this city (Acts 16:14-15). The believers there would have clearly understood Jesus’ self-description as “the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze” (v. 18), as well as His warning that He would “dash them to pieces like pottery” (v. 27). With the same authority He uses to lead and protect His people, He will also powerfully judge those who oppose Him.

The Church in Thyatira was tolerating a woman referred to as “Jezebel” (drawing from the Old Testament figure in 1 Kings 18–19), who was leading believers into spiritual compromise and immorality (vv. 20-21). Remarkably, God had given her time to repent (v. 21), a recurring theme in Revelation. She continued to mislead people by promoting what she called “Satan’s so-called deep secrets” (v. 24). Jesus exposes this as false teaching that encouraged believers to participate in pagan practices while claiming special spiritual knowledge. Such assimilation with the world cannot advance God’s mission. We are called to both know the Truth and live it out, so that others can clearly see the light and follow it.

### ***God’s Mission Grows when the Church faces Persecution and Endures Faithfully***

#### **(Smyrna & Philadelphia)**

### ***Revelation 2:8-11 — Smyrna: Persecution is Coming—Don’t be Afraid, Endure Faithfully to the End***

The believers in Smyrna faced strong opposition, especially from the local Jewish community, who had labeled them as heretics. This led to raids on their property, loss of legal protection, and difficulty finding work or owning land. As a result, many Christians became very poor. Yet Jesus reminds them that He is the One who overcame death (v. 8) and that, from His perspective, they are rich (v. 9a). He warns them that their suffering will increase, but it will only last for a limited time, described as “ten days” (v. 10b; see also Daniel 1:12-16). This shows that even persecution happens under God’s sovereign control.

To remain faithful to God’s mission, the Church is called to be fearless, bold, and obedient...even if it costs them their lives (v. 10c; see also Matthew 10:28). True victory comes through faithful endurance, not through avoiding suffering.

### ***Revelation 3:7-13 — Philadelphia: Walk Encouraged toward the Open Door***

The Church in Philadelphia was small and poor, and also faced opposition from the local synagogue (vv. 8-9). Yet Jesus gives them an encouraging promise. He holds “the key of David” and has placed before them an open door that no one can shut (vv. 7-8; see also Isaiah 22:22). While the world may see them as outsiders, God sees them as insiders, and one day others will have to acknowledge this (v. 9).

This open door likely also refers to mission opportunities. Philadelphia was a strategic military and trade center that served as a gateway to the East. Because they had remained faithful to Jesus’ Name,

He was opening doors for the Gospel. Jesus encourages them to continue enduring patiently (v. 10a) and promises protection in times of trial (v. 10b). Persecution in Revelation is never meaningless. It becomes a platform for Christ's power and victory to be seen.

As a Church that had often experienced earthquakes, they would have been deeply encouraged by Jesus' promise that they would become "a pillar in the temple of God" (v. 12a), a symbol of strength and permanence; and that they would carry special names belonging to God (v. 12b). They would stand secure forever in His presence, enjoying full citizenship in His kingdom (see also Ezekiel 48:35).



## **Week 5**

### **GLOBAL MISSIONS**

May what God is doing in Thailand

INSPIRE

your missions heart

NURTURE

your soul for the spiritually lost

CONNECT

you with faithful ministry workers

and

lead you to make a lasting

IMPACT

in partnership with One Plus God Ministries & Dayspring Wesleyan Church



## **Embark on a Spiritual Journey**

### **The Light of Christ breaking through Spiritual Darkness**

This week covers in short the roughly 30 year

Ministry Journey of Bible Church Thailand

We encourage you to watch 4 short videos of pastor Wayne

capturing the heart of the ministry in Thailand

Follow the link to the OPG Youtube Channel from the bottom of any OPG website page

Search for the 4 “Thailand Overview” videos

### **More information and videos including the above**

Visit [www.oneplusgod.org](http://www.oneplusgod.org)

Go to Menu — Global Ministry Areas

### **THAILAND**

**Don't miss the “Multimedia” button on the THAILAND page**

## Monday

### Spiritual Poverty

Spiritual and physical poverty should be addressed with the same urgency. When Jesus walked the earth, He ministered to both the physical and spiritual needs of people. While meeting physical needs is important, Jesus made it clear that the spiritual condition of a person's soul matters even more. Is it not better for someone to enter heaven hungry or sick than to remain spiritually lost?

It seems that in today's world, physical poverty awakens far more concern among believers than spiritual poverty. As a result, there is often an imbalance. Physical needs receive strong support, while spiritual poverty is sometimes placed on the back burner.

Thailand is a first-world country with a stable economy, government, and strong military. Physical poverty is absolutely present, but limited. Yet the spiritual need is overwhelming. Buddhism, Hinduism, and Spiritism have blended together into a powerful mix of idol worship and demon worship.

*I will never forget the first time I realized just how sad this spiritual darkness really is...*

I remember listening to Patrick, who served with Pastor Ben, sharing that in his early twenties a Christian student from America asked him if he knew Jesus. He responded, "No, I don't know your friend Jesus, but this is the music department...perhaps you will find your friend at the engineering department just around the corner." Imagine being over 20 years old and never having had the opportunity to hear anything about Jesus. Not even His Name!

*I will never forget the first time I realized just how true it is that only the Lord can break through this spiritual darkness...*

Early on, while visiting Thailand, I walked the streets of Bangkok with our new missionary friend, Patrick. We were astonished to see hundreds of people looking at rows and rows of street vendors selling idols, trying to find the most authentic and powerful one...even though others were making these same idols just down the street! My question to Patrick was: "How is it possible that they cannot see that these are dead things being manufactured right in front of their eyes, yet they purchase them believing they can do something for their lives?" Patrick's answer has stayed with me ever since:

"I cannot tell you why they do not see it, but what I can say is this: Until I met Jesus that was me!"

I turned to God's Word to help me understand this, and I saw these two texts in a new light from that day forward:

*Truth 1: The devil blinds minds so people cannot see clearly what is right in front of them.*

2 Corinthians 4:4, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God."

*Truth 2: The LORD is the Only One Who can remove this veil so people can see clearly and find salvation.*

2 Corinthians 3:16, "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

With only 1% Christian

Thailand

remains a spiritually lost nation



## Thailand

1 of 11 countries  
in Southeast Asia

Less

Physical  
Poverty

Spiritual  
Poverty

**HUGE**



**Tuesday**

**1999**

**Miracle 1**

### **A Phone Call at Just the Right Time**

It all began with a simple but remarkable chain of events. A Thai missionary named Noi came to South Africa and shared about the work in Thailand. She invited Pastor Wayne to speak at the Thai Ezra conference in Phu Khiao. On the Sunday before the conference, Pastor Wayne was the guest speaker at Ben's church, which was meeting in a hotel. When Ben looked at Wayne's sermon ahead of time, he remarked that the sermon was a little short. The people were traveling long distances to attend, and he wanted to make sure it was worth their while.

At the conference, Pastor Wayne taught the adults in the afternoons while Somari led three sessions for the youth. Ben served as her translator. Because the campsite had very basic facilities, the four South Africans stayed in a guesthouse, and Ben and his family stayed there with them. Other than sharing meals, there was not much interaction until the last day, when Ben asked if there was any way they could support his work and gave Wayne his business card.

At the end of that year, while planning youth activities for the church Pastor Wayne served in South Africa, the team began discussing the possibility of taking a group to Thailand. They called the number on the business card, which was the office number. It was after hours, but Ben answered the phone. They were able to talk because he and his family were staying at the office that night. Their home's air conditioning was broken.

*If he had not been there, the call would likely have gone unanswered, and the connection might have been lost forever.*

*That one answered phone call opened the door to what would become a long and fruitful partnership. What could easily have been a missed opportunity became the quiet beginning of something much bigger.*

We found out that Ben's biggest need was training and teaching resources. He expressed the hope of becoming a well-trained pastor and focusing on planting indigenous churches in Thailand.

Pastor Wayne had a close relationship with the University of Pretoria and was able to arrange for Ben to enroll as a Biblical scholar. With Wayne as his study leader, they created a tailor-made program for him.

For years to follow, Ben and his family came to South Africa, and Pastor Wayne and Somari went to Thailand until Ben completed his studies up to the master's level.

Ben's dream of becoming a well equipped "Pastor Ben" was fulfilled, and this propelled his desire to start planting churches in Thailand!

A few years ago, pastor Ben finished his PhD in Thailand.

Praise be to our Father!





## Wednesday

### God Provides for the Land and the First Church Building

The church Pastor Wayne served in South Africa began raising funds to help Ben and his team purchase land for a church. When the tsunami struck Thailand in 2004, money was sent for relief work in the Phuket area. Two years later, a team from South Africa visited the people who had come to faith, some through powerful visions after meeting Pastor Ben and the outreach team.

At the same time, the team looked at possible properties. However, raising the kind of money needed to buy land in Thailand felt almost impossible. After fundraising for a very long time in South Africa, we were still far from the target needed to pay off the debt on the land.

Then something unexpected happened.

Pastor Wayne and his family emigrated to the USA at the end of 2008 and continued supporting the ministry in Thailand. In 2012, pastor Wayne went on a small mission trip with David Whittaker and his daughter Jenna to get footage to start One Plus God Ministries. Pastor Ben showed them the piece of land, which was now completely overgrown.

They stood there and prayed that God would make a way to finish the debt on the land so they could start building.

At that time, David had pledged a piece of land toward a church building in his hometown of New Hampshire, Ohio. A project that unfortunately did not come to fruition. After praying about it, David spoke with his wife, and they decided to redirect their pledge toward the land in Thailand.

*Miraculously, the value of their land in Ohio ended up being just about the exact amount still needed to pay off the land in Thailand! In an incredible way, God provided for the land to finally be paid off, and the building of the first church plant could get underway!*

Once the land was secured, a new challenge arose. The local authorities required a permanent building to be erected within a limited time, or the project could be shut down. Being an engineer, David initially recommended assembling prefabricated modules to meet the immediate need. However, as district leadership was about to change, it became clear that a permanent structure had to be built quickly. A new leader who might not favor a Christian church in his district could actually force the project to slow down or stop.

Then another unexpected development took place. Members of the congregation in New Hampshire, Ohio, heard that David had redirected his pledge toward Thailand. Several of them chose to redirect their own pledges as well. Together with some remaining funds from South Africa, the building process could rapidly proceed.

The first church building was completed and dedicated in July 2014.

*What began as one man's decision to redirect a pledge grew into a church-wide act of generosity that made the building possible in a remarkably short time.*

*What had seemed financially impossible was provided through a series of Spirit-led decisions.*





**Thursday**  
**The Second and Third Church Plants**  
**&**  
**The Miracle of a Sport Center and Parking Lot**

For years it felt like the ministry was growing very slowly, with only one church plant and a handful of believers. Yet we were in the Father's school of faith. Over those first twenty years, God taught us many valuable lessons: To be patient, to trust that His timing is always perfect, to believe that no one can put things together like He can, and to truly live out the faith that moves mountains. The faith that believes nothing is impossible for God.

*"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Jesus, Matthew 19:26)!*

One totally unexpected development helped accelerate the planting of new churches. Around the time we were preparing for the second church plant, the government introduced new regulations requiring smaller, independent churches to either merge with larger, recognized denominations or to have at least three church plants of their own within a set timeframe. This new requirement created a sense of urgency and became one of the factors that moved us forward more quickly than we had originally planned.

Under the leadership of Pastor Nice, we planted our second church in 2023 in the ancient city of Ayutthaya, about a two- to three-hour drive from Bangkok. We converted a small house into a church building, and Pastor Nice began reaching out to a much poorer part of the city, leading many to eternal life and hope in the Lord.

Over the years, we held youth camps using English as a second language as an evangelism tool to reach young people in Bangkok. Eventually, we had enough believers to employ a youth pastor, Suwat. Right there in Bangkok, on the same property as the first main church building, we planted a youth church in 2024 in the original modular building that the first church had started in!

*It was time for another miracle.*

In the same year, 2024, while visiting the churches in Thailand, we saw that parking had become a significant issue for the two churches on the same property in Bangkok. We looked at other properties, but nothing was practical except to acquire the land right next to the church. Pastor Ben confirmed he had lost complete contact with the owner of the land for many years. So we did the best thing we could do: We stood in front of the land, where squatters had settled and were raising roosters for cock-fighting events, making a huge mess and terrible noise, and we **prayed**.

It was not even a month later when Pastor Ben received a phone call "out of the blue" (God-ordained, of course!) from the Buddhist owner of the land. She said something like:

*"Pastor Ben, I came to Bangkok to visit my land and was appalled at the squatters and roosters making such a mess! Would you be interested in renting this land from me for parking for your church?"*

Wow! But the miracle didn't end there. Someone committed on the spot to support the rent of the land for a period, and we even raised enough funds not only to prepare the land for parking but also to erect a sport center so the youth could now use basketball and soccer as Evangelism Outreach tools!

Today the youth church has grown to roughly 60 young people gathering every Sunday evening, causing them to run out of space! As this update is being written in July 2026, we are strengthening and extending a permanent structure so that it can hold up to 120 youth under pastor Suwat's leadership!





Second Church Plant: Pastor Nice — Ayutthaya



Third Church Plant: Pastor Suwat — Youth, Bangkok



Busy enlarging pastor Suwat's youth church, July 2026

**Friday**

### **The Miracle of the Fourth Church Plant**

By July 2024, three church plants were established. During a church camp that month, members from all three churches gathered, along with pastor Den and Suzan from northern Thailand. Pastor Den and Suzan care for children in need and had become part of the outreach ministry of pastor Ben's churches.

At this church camp, Pastor Ben shared his dream of planting seven churches. Den and Suzan listened and prayed. Halfway through the camp, they told pastor Ben they believed God was calling them to plant a church where they lived. They asked for guidance and support.

A short time later, when the original building they were using was reclaimed by another denomination, God provided new land. Although the land was more affordable than in Bangkok, it was part of a rice field and needed land fill and retainer walls. With the daunting task of raising more funds to prepare the land and build another church, Sara Williams, missions director of OPG Ministries, felt a distinct prompting from the Holy Spirit to go and speak with pastor Chuck Osborne. Dayspring agreed to help significantly with the building — a huge praise!

And there was more! At the time, pastor Den was working as a night guard to support his family. For him to plant a church full-time, his income would need to be replaced.

*Dayspring Church also stepped in to help with this need, allowing pastor Den to leave his night job and solely focus fully on ministry!*

With some additional funding from the One Plus God Family, all the funds were raised a short while ago to finish the building and begin purchasing everything needed to furnish the church, which will be able to seat 250 people!

*This fourth church building will be dedicated to the Lord, God willing, on September 6, 2026.*

*What began as a simple dream shared at a church camp became another clear evidence of God's provision and perfect timing!*



Pastor Den, Suzan and their child starting a small children's ministry



Above: Pastor Den and his family at the church camp answering God's call to plant a church



## Saturday

### How God uses a Flood to Propel the Fifth Church Plant

We were still in the early stages of the fourth church plant in mid-2025 when another miracle happened.

*Pastor Ben's 88-year-old mother, Sanit, decided by God's grace to give her life to the Lord!*

She was immediately all in! She wanted her house to serve the Lord, and Pastor Ben started having church services in her home. We're never too old to do great things for the Lord.

*The fifth church was planted in the far southern parts of Thailand!*

Some people in the area had come to the Lord over the years as Pastor Ben ministered there during visits to his mom, and now some new people came to faith for the first time. Pastor Ben's mom was so excited when Pastor Suwat and some of the youth made a wooden cross and put it on the front of the house, showing everyone in the village that salvation in Christ is near to all.

*Then another miracle!*

A typhoon hit Malaysia and then shifted over the Mueang Satun District in southern Thailand, where this new church plant was located. The flooding reached 6–8 feet deep in many areas. So many homes were washed away. Yet nothing happened to the new church-home or the surrounding houses! When people tried to understand what had taken place, Pastor Ben's mom simply responded that her Lord had protected her and everyone around her.

Pastor Ben and his team went down south from Bangkok for an outreach to help the people and preach the Good News in Christ.

*So many came to the Lord that the church is now about 30 believers strong, and 25 were baptized in a nearby river!*

At the end of June, we started initial conversations about purchasing the land of Pastor Ben's mom, turning her home over time into a ministry house, and building a church.





Pastor Ben and his mom, Sanit





## Sunday Morning

### A Vision for Seven Church Plants

God gave Pastor Ben a vision to plant seven churches across Thailand. Currently, we have five that you learned about during this past week.

Join us in prayer that our Father will reveal to Pastor Ben where the remaining two should be planted.

Join us as we are now raising funds for the land of the fifth church and the church building that will follow.

Join us in going to Thailand so you can see what God is doing there and how we can join hands in this incredible ministry for our Father's glory.

**30 years of ministry**

**5 church plants**



**Breaking the spiritual poverty in Thailand**

**one church plant at a time!**

**Sunday Evening**  
**GLOBAL MISSIONS CELEBRATION**

**DINNER WITH A TWIST**

Enjoy a warm dinner featuring a mix of familiar favorites  
and  
unique international dishes for the curious eater

**TABLE DISPLAYS**

Browse engaging tabletop presentations  
with photos and items from around the world

**MISSIONS IN FOCUS**

Wrap up the evening with inspiring stories, testimonies,  
and prayers about God's work in global outreach

**Conclusion**

**Gratitude**

**Dedication**



Get Going

We don't have Forever to Step into Forever.

The call of grace is loud and clear.

Tick tock...answer soon.

Listen. Respond. Come now.

Follow faithfully

when life feels steady,

when life feels chaotic,

when everything is on the line.

For your God is faithful.

God is in control.

Evil cannot hide from Him,

cannot shake Him,

cannot overcome Him.

Evil has already lost.

So get going.

Read. Pray. Live. Tell.

Get going

into the presence of your God

now and forever.

A mighty praise to my Lord

without Him

I would be lost

forever and ever

A heartfelt thank you to our missionary friends in Thailand

A deep thank you to my wife

unfailing at my side

through every season

A profound thank you to my Christ-family at Dayspring Wesleyan Church

whose love and partnership have been vital in this journey

Dedicated to my family

Somari, Eli and Shana, Nic and Ava