

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

SERMON NOTES  
FROM THE  
SUNDAY MESSAGES

Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 7

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 15 4-2-89

## GOOD NEWS, EVEN IN THE DARKEST OF TIMES

Introduction All of us go through difficult periods in our lives, and for some, it seems like all they have ever known is hard times. Some of you struggle with physical trials. Others of you wrestle with painful family stresses. Some of you are in a good and happy time in your life, and I do not wish to characterize the Christian life as being normally depressing-- and yet for many of you it seems that you face one stress after another and that your lot is trying these days--for whatever reasons. I wish this series of messages from the Book of Revelation to place you in remembrance that our Sovereign Redeemer holds all things in His loving control. He holds the future of the world in His hand. He holds your life; your circumstances in His control. I desire that you be touched with the truth that you should not ever lose heart in the Christian life, even "though fierce temptations threaten hard to bear us down" ("*Let Us Love and Sing*", John Newton, 1774). So it is with your need of ENCOURAGEMENT in view, that we turn today to Revelation 7.

With the previous chapter we began the longest section (chs.6-18) in John's Revelation. These eleven chapters give us some description of that last period in this church age which the Bible calls "the Great Tribulation." From Daniel's ancient prophecy, we know that period to cover seven years; in fact the last seven years of history. Chapter six outlined for us six types of judgement which will usher in the Tribulation. Remember that while no one on earth will be untouched and unmoved by what goes on then, that the Tribulation centers around the nation Israel. Chapter six ended with a question... The great ones of the earth are confronted with world-wide catastrophe. And yet, even in the face of cataclysmic disaster...

(which I remind you, Jesus described "such as not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall" *Matt.24:21*)

...they remain stubborn in their unbelief! Such is the hardness of the unrepentant heart. These hardened unbelievers would rather have the mountains fall on them and bury them, than to flee to the Rock of salvation and hide themselves in the cleft of THAT Rock! And in 16:17 they cry out with a tragic plea, "*from the wrath of the Lamb...WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?*"

Chapter 7 now answers that question..."who is able to stand?" This chapter is like the FREEZE-FRAME feature on your video cassette recorder. Chapter 7 freezes the action for a time--We have an "interlude" for a

brief time in John's narrative. And dear ones, you shall see that even in dark times, there is good news. The sky is darkening quickly in chapter 6 and shall grow much darker before we reach chapter 19. But first John is inspired of the Holy Spirit to give a brief glimpse at a happier time yet to come. "*From the wrath of the Lamb...who is able to stand?*" Come, let us look!

In this chapter we see that there are two groups of people who will be saved during the Tribulation: 1) those who are saved in Israel; that is, JEWS who become Christians during this time; and 2) those of all the nations who, though they will be martyred for their stand for Christ, will also be saved.

Verses 1-3 show us that God will sovereignly protect a great number WITHIN Israel from the terrible judgements of that final time of Tribulation. They will be sealed (9:4), and visibly so ("*on their foreheads*").

In verses 4-8 we read of this famous number, "the 144,000", twelve thousand from each of twelve tribes of Israel. Notice please, that these 144,000 are "*of the sons of Israel.*" They are not Gentiles and they are surely not Jehovah's Witnesses. They are Israeli. And the number of 144,000 arises NOT UNTIL the Tribulation. We will encounter this group again when we get to Rev. 14:1-3.

"The most important fact taught here is that God *continues* to watch over Israel even in the time of Israel's great distress." (Walvoord, in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

Please notice too that here, God is protecting them not from spiritual judgement, for they have already trusted Christ (since the angel terms them "bond-servants of our God." He is protecting them from the plagues that swirl around them.

My friends, Israel cannot be erased from the earth. Jeremiah wrote,

*"Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.' For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he."* Jeremiah 31:10,11

Pharaoh tried to drown the Israelites and failed. Nebuchadnezzar tried to burn them, and failed. Darius tried to feed them to wild beasts and failed. Haman tried to hang them, and failed too. As a nation they are indestructible. They cannot be erased from the earth, and even in their darkest hour, God will faithfully protect them as a nation. But this does not mean that all Jews are saved from their sin-- a host will be, but only because they, like the next group John saw, have fled to Christ for forgiveness from sin!

May I offer a warning here? There is no room for anti-Semitism-attitudes among believers in Christ. First, because it

is stupid. Jesus was Jewish, as were all the original apostles. Second, because it is foolish. God's chosen people cannot be eradicated from the hand of God's sovereign plan. We too are part of that plan...

A GREATER Multitude (vss.9-12) In these verses there is a swell of praise for the Father and for the Lamb. The reason is because from the whole earth there shall arise a great company of redeemed people. Remember, this is not a description of the Church from all history. It is a great new company that emerges during the Tribulation. The fact that they "come out of the Tribulation" and that they receive the consolation that John records, leads me to suspect that they shall be martyred for their faith; that this is the group we read about in 6:9-11. It is the greatest evangelistic campaign of all time. We are reading of a time of world-wide salvation; world-wide in that people from "every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues" will be trusting in Jesus.

Again in verse 11, we read about the worship that takes place in heaven. Again, I would like to remind you that worship is a subject worthy of your study and careful consideration. It is the activity of heaven and the activity of my and your future, if you are a Christian.

Now John's words and descriptions apply to these two multitudes of people, and describe a moment in the future, in heaven. But the BLESSINGS he describes will be ours too, and I would like to spend the rest of our few minutes laying out these blessings, which have *immediate* application for you and me:

1. These people know the JOY OF SALVATION, and that is the joy of forgiveness. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They know justification. They know what it means to be made right with God, to be cleaned from sin's guilt and its debt. They are not in heaven because they are Jews, and they aren't there because they earned the right by being martyred. They are there because they trusted in Jesus' payment for sin by HIS shedding His blood.

Do you notice something wonderfully strange about that vs.14? Blood normally stains doesn't it? Yes. Not so though, the blood of Christ--it cleanses. It washes away the death that sin brings and the guilt.

Do you see too, that these verbs are ACTIVE? THEY have not earned their salvation, but they have appropriated it TO themselves by accepting it in their hearts and minds. They have received the FREE GIFT of eternal life by faith alone. There IS a role that people must play in being saved. They must believe and trust!

2. These people know the JOY OF SERVING. They serve God 'round the clock. There is nothing so fulfilling as serving the Living God. In the ways that we serve Him now, it is only a glimmer of the joy we shall know when we join these Tribulation saints and serve Him before His throne.

3. Third, these people shall know the joy of BEING SHELTERED. I cannot say as I fully understand all that this means. But these enjoy the most intimate of relationships with Him. "He who sits on the throne shall 'tabernacle' over them." It is a scene that scarcely allows imagination, it is so wonderful!

4. Also we will enjoy ETERNAL SHEPHERDING. Isn't it another incredible thing here in this chapter, that a Lamb will do the shepherding? That seems like a contradiction, doesn't it? But John saw the Risen and Sovereign Savior STILL as the Lamb of God. In that Jesus came to earth as a man, He is FOREVER the Lamb of God. He is also forever MAN. He didn't enter in to an experiment of humanness. He is a man forever! It is one of the great marvels of the Word of God. Col.2:9 tells us that "In Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form." In that Jesus will still be a Man, He is one of the flock Himself! The Lamb is the Shepherd. My friends, do not shy away from praying to your Shepherd because you are afraid of Him. Go to Him boldly, if you have made that initial act of trust in Him. Go to Him OFTEN, and go to Him honestly and sincerely.

5. They, and we, will enjoy great VARIETY in heaven. I have often said (although I cannot say *much* about it) that heaven will not be boring. It isn't going to be this one, big interminably long church service, with one preacher after another taking the microphone and expounding one thing and another!

In verse 17 we see that Christians will be guided to springs of the water of life. From one spring to another, from one pasture to another we shall be in the immediate company of the great Shepherd, the Lamb who loved us long before we were conceived!

6. Finally dear ones, we shall enjoy inestimable CONSOLATION. How can there be tears there? I do not know... But He Himself will pull out a handkerchief and dab the tears, and put his arm around you and say, "There--it's all OK, now."

My friends, it is HE who feeds, leads and wipes away the tears. If you have trusted Christ, and follow Him, you and I and Martin Luther and Peter, and Billy Graham and Freddie Bucklin and Mary Magdalene and King David will walk beside the Master, whose blood cleanses us from all sin. Have you fled to Him? Have you made your robes white in His blood? May everyone here have that assurance...

Reference: S. Lewis Johnson, taped message, 1966; Walvoord, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*; A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures...*; Stanley Toussaint, class notes from DTS; George Ladd, *Commentary*.

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Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 8 & 9

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 16 4-9-89

## SEVEN TRUMPETS AS THE SEVENTH SEAL

Introduction You and I are living in a society which has travelled far away from viewing the world and life from a Biblical perspective. Modern Americans (Canadians, Europeans and many others too) have grown so sophisticated educationally and technologically, that we believe ourselves to have outgrown the truths contained in Scripture. Several years ago, one of our own members gradually slipped out of her relationships here, and came to see herself as "further along" in her thinking than the straightforward teachings of the Bible offered, and went from this fellowship to the Unitarian church. There, I presume, she found an environment which encourages no single world-view, but which purposefully invites ALL world-views as potential conveyors of truth.

Why people grow disillusioned with the truths of Scripture is a great study in itself (and of real interest to me). There are many particular reasons, and Scripture itself anticipates such apostasy. The Apostle Paul wrote that

*"...the Spirit explicitly says that in later times [which we may well be in now] some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons..."* I Tim.4:1

*"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."*

2 Tim.4:3,4

If ever there was a book of the Bible that men have either loved or hated, it is the Book of Revelation. It is not the kind of reading that puts you to sleep! But it is also not the kind of reading that flatters the modern "hipster" either. Revelation 8 & 9 describe for us the TRUMPET judgements that will come during the Tribulation at the end of time. People don't generally like to hear about judgement at all.

The idea of finding one's self accountable to a holy and personal God is too much for many modern people to bear! The problem is that modern men do not want God to be God. They would like Him to be their friend. They would like Him to be their teacher. They might even not mind Him to be their Savior of some kind. But they do not want Him to be Whom He really is. And to read about the seal, trumpet and bowl judgements that are surely coming to this earth is especially distasteful to many.

But my friends, if we are true Christians, then we are willing to "open the Book." More than that, we *desire* to understand what God has graciously revealed about the end times.

Know that He could have chosen to reveal nothing about those days. If He had chosen to remain silent, with no warning at all, and simply allow civilization to plunge into its end blindly, it would have been just for Him to work that way. But because "God is love" (I John 4:8), as well as justice and holiness, He *has* decided to reveal MUCH about those days!

### Two Principles for Understanding the Judgements

1. The Seals, Trumpets and Bowls are telescopic in nature. By this I mean that these judgements unfold like a telescope. We read in chapter 6 of the first six SEAL judgements. Now we see that the seven TRUMPET judgements are *in fact* that last (seventh) SEAL. And we will see that the seven BOWL judgements are *in fact* the last (seventh) TRUMPET. As Revelation progresses, we read more and more progressive detail about the Tribulation. This telescopic unfolding of these judgements is how to keep the seals, trumpets and bowls straight in your mind. (See overhead diagram) In fact really, the seventh Seal actually includes all the events from 8:1 through 19:10.

2. Another important technique to use in understanding these judgements, is to interpret them plainly and in as straight-forward a fashion as possible. The reason for this is a practical one, and I believe also a responsible one. When we start trying to say that this star and that locust, or this hail and that eagle REPRESENT something *other than* what they naturally appear to represent-- if we say that all these things are merely *symbolic*, then we are really only doing one thing: we are inviting confusion. Saying that most of all these verses are symbolic transports you into a world filled with endless and contradicting interpretations, none of which really satisfy anyway. (Council of Trent Catholics said that the locusts of Rev. 9 are the Lutherans; Protestants said that the locusts were the Moslems)... And worse than that, believing that the pictures we see in Revelation are generally symbolic invites the temptation that the Book of Revelation is no revelation at all--it is a great confusion; and that God made a mistake in naming the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." And so, it is best (I think) to interpret the judgements and other details plainly and normally whenever possible.

### SUMMARY OF THE SIX TRUMPETS (which constitute the Seventh Seal)

The first thing we read about in Ch. 8 is a 30 minute silence that happens when Jesus opens the seventh seal. The angels and the living creatures and the great multitude of Christians all grow silent. It is the awesome quiet before the storm. The wrath of the Lamb is about to pour forth, and for a half and hour, all wait, completely silent.

The use of the word "trumpet" is important. A trumpet gives forth a very distinct and clear sound. There is no confusion about what instrument is playing when you hear a trumpet solo. The trumpet in ancient times was used to ANNOUNCE, or to herald important events. These judgements that we are going to read about are still only WARNING signals. They are not the final judgement, even as severe as they are. God has sealed up the end of this world, and certain judgements will announce the beginning of the Tribulation.

But before we summarize the six trumpet judgements in these two chapters, notice verses 3 to 5... This incense is what John saw to be, in some heavenly way, the PRAYERS that Christians have prayed (See 5:8 and Psalm 141:2). But I do not believe that these are just any and all prayers. The context hints of something else. These are the prayers for judgement to happen that Christians have uttered. Now if that troubles you, may I ask you, do you not want Jesus Christ's Kingdom to be consummated and completed? All true Christians DO want it, in all that it means, because the Lord Jesus Christ is a righteous Savior. He is a righteous Lord. He is a righteous Shepherd. He is a righteous Lamb, and he is also a righteous Judge. Don't miss this point, dear ones: the judgements that the righteous Judge hands out will be completely just and accurate and fair.

These prayers have already been identified for us back in 6:10. They are the prayers which say, "O God, avenge us!" Now, to my knowledge none of us here has lost a loved one to martyrdom. But there are still martyrs being slain for Christ today in other parts of the world, and if YOU lost a loved one to death by persecution you too would cry out, "O God, avenge us!"

The first Trumpet judgement (vs. 7) is a drastic atmospheric phenomenon. As I have said before, I am not sure as to how the physics of these things work, but I prefer to interpret this at face value. Near the beginning of the Tribulation "the Ghiorzi factor" is going to go right through the floor! An environmental disaster such as the world has never seen will occur and one third of the earth will be ruined.

One speculation about this, that perhaps bears merit is that the one third of the earth is the Western hemisphere. It is not hard to imagine America and Europe falling under this early judgement. This would account for the distinct absence of any mention in Revelation of a United States.

In the second Trumpet (8,9) something "like a mountain" is thrown into the ocean. This may be a huge asteroid or something like it, but the result is a marine disaster that wastes one third of marine life and as well, a third of all shipping.

In the third Trumpet (10,11) the earth's water supply is severely polluted. "Wormwood" is a bitter desert plant and this judgement, possibly in the form of a meteor, ruins drinking water for millions and costs them their lives.

The fourth Trumpet (12,13) involves a great hindering of sunlight, moonlight and starlight. This is another awesome judgement that no doubt will result in great loss of life. People cannot live without the light and energy of the sun. This is why of recent years people have come to greatly fear what is called "nuclear winter," which it is thought would result from a nuclear war. Well, Trumpet-Winter will definitely come in those terrible last days.

In chapter nine we read in great detail about the fifth Trumpet (9:1-12)...

I would like to pause here and make one little observation on these chapters: Jesus is not mentioned at all from the beginning of ch.8 down to 11:8. Not to make too big a deal out of that, except that it ILLUSTRATES the tragedy of facing great trial *without* Christ on your side and in your life! I encounter situations all the time (you do too) where, because of their own unbelief--or because they simply have not *heard* the good news yet--a person finds himself facing one of life's LITTLE trials alone; without a loving and powerful Savior "working all things together for good..." I can scarcely imagine the depth of *tragedy* of facing the Trumpet judgements alone; without personally knowing that same loving and yet powerful and righteous Savior...

This fifth Trumpet unveils an unleashing from Hell of a swarm of locusts TRULY such as this world has never seen. My friends, do not try to make these locusts anything *but* demonic locusts. That is what they are. And unlike normal locusts, these have a king: he is the chief of staff of Satan himself.

I do not cease to be truly amazed at the current fascination in our society with Satan. People are not just fascinated that he truly exists. They actually seem to *like* his evil stuff. Where their religions have failed them, Satan-study and Satan worship fill in the gap. As R.C. Sproul has observed, people would rather involve themselves with a *personal* devil than bore themselves with an *impersonal*, unknowable and disinterested God, which is really all liberal Protestantism has to offer. And yet, what amazes me is the deception (as in heavy-metal rock music) that there is something fun or profitable about Satanism.

Verse 11 gives us two names and they both mean this: destroyer. My friends, that is the one thing Satan does. I find nothing fascinating with it. I find nothing fun about it. Beneath the veneer of deceptive and suave talk that we hear about Satan is just one thing. He wants to take as many poor souls with him to the lake of fire as he can.

Notice the word that shows up often here, "*woe.*" All of this is *truly* a great sadness. That's why it takes some courage to even read these words of prophecy. That's why some Bible teachers will not preach this book. But we are charged with pondering the *whole* counsel of God, not just the happy parts. And in those days it is going to be hard to find a happy moment on this planet. And my friends, I remind you--this is still not the final judgement. These Trumpet judgements are warning



judgements. There is still two thirds of the earth's population left who can repent and trust in the Lamb's free offer of rescue from sin and sin's debt.

The sixth Trumpet seems to refer to a final military conflict involving at the root, four terrible demons. The fourth seal resulted in one quarter of the earth's population (about one billion by today's count) and this sixth Trumpet kills another one "third of mankind. John is strikingly exact in verse 16, as if to say to later skeptics who would bring his account to trial-- a military force of 200 million.

Now today you can call me a true "fire and brimstone" preacher and you can tell your family or friends, that you heard a real, old-fashioned "fire and brimstone" message, because that is exactly what we read in this sixth Trumpet judgement. I cannot guess at the specific military logistics of all this. What is very clear though, is that the terrible things that occur during the Tribulation will be without precedent in this world and would end in the death of all mankind (Satan's ultimate desire) if it were not stopped by the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Even in these dark and fearful days though, many do not repent. The greatest tragedy is not the loss of 1/3 of the fish or the loss of ships or the loss of light and plant-life and food. It is that, as John sadly writes in verses 20 and 21, people will turn to their sin with even greater fierceness. Although this Book of Revelation is so well known, people will still kill each other, practice magic arts, worship idols and commit sexual sin. They are undaunted in their direction.

My friends, I remind you again that John was given this revelation out of the grace of God which warns us. Have you fled to Christ? Have you submitted your will to Him and invited Him to take control of your life and your view of how things work in the world? Does this chapter not spell it out that you need to do this? May you not cave in to unbelief. In closing, let me suggest these things...

#### APPLICATIONS

1. As to God's patience, even in judgement.
2. As to prayer, that He hears our cries for justice.
3. As to living soberly, our decisions must reflect a readiness.
4. As to inviting Christ to be Lord of your life (for He surely is Lord of all).
5. As to interpreting the world around you from a Biblical perspective.

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 10

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 17 4-30-89

### *THE ANGEL, THE LITTLE BOOK & THE STUDY OF PROPHECY*

Introduction Last Sunday evening Don Woodbridge was here at DBC and he presented the entire Book of Revelation in one evening. From the reports I have received his presentation was excellent. Don's approach in sharing Revelation illustrates a great way to absorb Scripture: in large chunks! Sitting down and reading a whole book or several chapters at once really gives you the overall sweep of Scripture and it helps in the fight against getting lost in the details. For those of you who were here last Sunday evening, I hope you enjoyed Don's ministry using the Book of Revelation and I hope looking at the book in one "fell swoop" was edifying and helpful for your Christian life.

Revelation tells us that the future is not unknowable and that it is not out of control. To the contrary, the future of the world *fits* right into God's sovereign plan to redeem for Himself a great company of people out of the world. As the future unfolds the world will experience great change. That change will commence with judgement from the hand of a kind but JUST and HOLY God. And when the judgement and wrath of God are complete, the world will be transformed into a new kind of place. I cannot tell you as much as you would like to know about the world at that point. But Revelation does unveil for us much about the last years of the earth as we know it now. You will remember that most of Revelation, in fact, deals with the last seven years of this age, which Jesus called the Great Tribulation. We looked first at seven SEAL judgements (*see overhead*), the seventh of which was, in fact, seven TRUMPET judgements, the sixth of which closed chapter nine. Now as we come to the tenth chapter, we have a second interlude, a pause or break in the action.

Before we consider this interlude in John's prophecy, I want to say something about prophecy, and about the attitudes that people can hold about the study of prophecy. Liberal churches, whether they be Protestant, Catholic or whatever, do not generally have much to say at all about prophecy because they do not believe that God ever *really* intervened into people's lives and uttered any *authentic* prophecies. They think this Book of Revelation is basically "psychadelic" or maybe just the fanciful invention of some second or third century churchman who *called* himself John, the apostle. We, on the other hand, choose to take the book at face value, and to interpret it plainly and in a straight-forward fashion. I must say that it would be much easier to take the liberal's approach to the book. Then, it poses no threat and it offers nothing really unsettling. It's just another piece of weird literature, and doesn't need

to be taken too seriously... (One wonders also, if liberals really take any part of the Bible seriously...I'll go another step: I wonder why they bother at all!)

Christians, on the other hand, operate with the assumption that God has uttered various revelations into this world which are both knowable and applicable today. We're kind of strange; because we think that God is still in control of the future even NOW! Even in this technologically sophisticated era, if we are "biblicists", then we are a people of prophecy, still listening with open ears. We know that God brings the ancient words of Jewish prophecy alive for us, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit--and we EVEN think that not one single little piece of that prophecy will fail or turn out to have been in error!! (Is that what you think?)

But Christians can still get a weird perspective on prophecy. Even though we believe it, and take it seriously, we are not immune from missing the point. What I'm talking about, is the tendency to get all fascinated about prophecy, and immerse (that's a good "Baptist" word there...) ourselves in prophetic detail, and miss the point altogether! The point of prophecy today, dear ones, is this: GET READY. GET READY. GET READY. Live your life in light of the coming Kingdom of the Savior. He is coming back. And when He comes back He has the right to rule and to judge. He has the right because He is the Creator (see 10:6) and because He is the Redeemer. You were born into this world once already, as part of the plan of God, and you can be born again, also as part of the plan of God. He is YOUR Creator and, if you flee to Him for forgiveness and salvation, He can be YOUR Redeemer. But be assured, He IS coming again. That is the point of prophecy! Now whether you are a premillennialist, an amillennialist, a postmillennialist don't get too swamped by detail; at least not to the point that you forget WHY God has revealed something about the future of this world...

Now let's look at verses 1-4. This next angel that we see comes down out of heaven from the presence of Christ. I do not believe that this angel IS Christ--even though some of what we read here *sounds* a little like Christ--but that this angel is another angel of the same kind (Greek: *allon*) as we met previously in 5:2. This angel has on his uniform, the uniform of a special envoy from Christ: "clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head..." The rainbow echoes God's promise NOT to annihilate the world again by flood. His fiery feet point to the sure settling of accounts with the world that Christ will soon summon. These feet are firmly planted astride of land and sea. The WHOLE of creation will experience the second coming of Christ. Even the sea, as awesome as it is to behold, will bow in subjection to its Maker.

My friends, if this vision of this angel seems too much for your imagination to handle, may I remind you that REALITY is not confined just to what we see in front of our faces. Remember that this earth, and our time and our lives only occupy a little portion of all that there is. In St. Petersburg, Florida this week, I saw another world. Its a different place. Folks live differently and think differently there. But just because I had never been there before doesn't mean St. Petersburg doesn't exist.

Neither does this scene we read about here NOT exist, just because I can't relate to it yet. It is still real and still going to unfold just as you read it here. This world is going to be changed. Believe it, and do not be so tied and in love with this creation as we know it now, so as to think it can never be changed and will always be just like it is now.

This angel holds a "little book" which is open. I think this is the same book that Jesus opened earlier (5:9; 6:1). Here it is a little book because the time of the Great Tribulation isn't going to be long.

Seven peals of thunder are then heard AND UNDERSTOOD by John. This thunder is none other than the very voice of God. And John understood what God thundered. As to why God then told John not to reveal what He had said--and this is the only place in the whole book where that happens --I cannot say. Here is another place where people have tried to speculate what was said. One said the seven thunders were the seven Crusades. Another said they are the seven nations that received the Protestant Reformation. Another said they are the Pope's decree against Martin Luther. Several of the cults have dared to say what these peals of thunder were. How presumptuous! The Lord Jesus commanded John to "Seal them up." And that is how they remain, my friends. Although Jesus Christ is being revealed in this book in so many ways, there are still some things (probably a great many) which the Sovereign God has chosen NOT to reveal. For whatever reason, John was allowed to hear things which he was not permitted to repeat.

In the next verses we see this angel declaring, BY GOD, that the coming judgements would occur soon and that they are in fact part of the plan of God, which has been slowly but surely unfolding since the days of Adam and Eve. In verse 7 we read this phrase, "the mystery of God." For our finite and limited minds all that God is doing IS a mystery. The whole plan, with all its facets and details, have even been a mystery to the angels. As smart and powerful as they are they are fascinated by this plan of redemption that God has been operating. Look with me please at something Peter wrote: I Peter 1:10-12, which restates what we are reading here in the Revelation.

Next, John is told to do something which may seem sort of strange to us, and that is to take this book and to eat it. This is a deliberate allusion to something which happened to the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. Look with me please for a moment at Ezekiel 2:9-3:3. John has the same commission from the Lord. You and I have the same commission, dear ones. We must do the same. We must not just read our Bibles...we do need to do that!...But God intends for us to ingest His Word into the INSIDE of our lives. He didn't just use the prophets OR John as communication robots--unfeeling message-machines, telling facts which do not involve nor touch them personally. Neither does He intend for the Bible to just be learned by people today.

My friends, do you digest God's Word? The more you pour over the Word privately and consistently, the more you will grow. You may not always find everything the Lord tells you to be sweet all the time. Some things, because He is a God

of truth, will seem bitter. They may even nauseate you... But when you are involved in the process of making Scripture part of YOU, my friends, it is the most wonderful, the most profitable and the most joyful experience you can have.

Dear ones, I wonder if you believe that? I think that a number of you do, because I see several evidences of it in our fellowship right now. But if you are here today and you must admit to yourself and to the Lord, that you really do *not* hunger and delight in His Word, God calls you to repent of this, and to seek Him. If you are cold today to the Word, or if you have been willing recently to <sup>only</sup> consider those truths of the Word which you like, then you must turn, change your mind, and be willing to consider the "whole counsel of God." God has revealed much in His Word. Every word is there for a reason and for our profit.

In verse 11, John says he is told that his commission to prophesy was not yet complete. Although much of the Revelation concerns the nation of Israel, Israel is only in the foreground. All other nations will be affected. The entire world will be engulfed in the end times. John had much yet to speak about. His world was the Roman empire. But the world of which he was prophesying was a world which would submit itself to the Anti-Christ. More is coming that we too need to understand.

How about you? Have you finished the course that God has called you to? Do you grow weary of doing the work that the Lord Jesus has commissioned you for? Maybe you have said, "Well, I'm going to take a couple of years off from making disciples." Or, "I'm tired of serving others." Or, "Let the young pups take over some of the work." My friends, your Savior who purchased you with His own blood hasn't given you your retirement papers yet.

You must ask the Lord this question: "Lord Jesus, what is your will for me today? What work do you have for me this week?" Dear ones, ask Him that question with no regard at all for what you think OTHERS are supposed to be doing. Just get before Him on your own, and seek His face. He will commission you to do some work for Him. And there is no more valuable use of your time than to serve the purposes of the King. I sincerely hope that Hymn # 220 is your creed today!

I serve a Risen Savior, He's in the world today.  
 I know that He is living, whatever men may say.  
 I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,  
 And just the time I need Him, He's always near.  
 He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today.  
 He walks with me and talks with me, along life's  
     narrow way.  
 He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me  
     how I know He lives? He lives, within, my heart.

*THE TWO WITNESSES, AND THE PRACTICE OF "WITNESSING"*

Introduction The first commandment that God gave man was "Be fruitful and multiply." Did you ever think that this is really the only commandment that man has ever really kept? And then at the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ gave His disciples one final commandment: "make disciples of all nations..." Man has fulfilled the first command but he has failed on the second. In fact, many of God's own children today are ashamed of the message they bear. The world has gotten us just where it wants us--insecure about our message, feeling guilty about our evangelistic efforts, unsure whether we even can make disciples of anyone except the weak-minded...

But I'm here to remind you folks that the Gospel message cannot be quieted. The Holy Spirit continually moves about the land, convicting people of their *NEED* of salvation, opening folks' minds to the truth, wooing them to Christ, drawing them to depend and believe in faith on Him. The role we are to play, is to share the good news whenever and wherever we can, and in the process we will *discover* those in whom God's Spirit is working. Those are the people, then, that He wants us to disciple.

This is what we call "evangelism". Evangelism is NOT coercing people into making a commitment to Jesus that they are not really ready to make. Evangelism is NOT getting people to join our church. Evangelism is NOT infringing on other people's right of privacy (whatever *that* is...) Evangelism is sharing the good news whenever and wherever we can. The results are the business of the Holy Spirit.

Now in Revelation, we read in chapter 7 about a great campaign of evangelism that will occur in the last days. In that chapter we read about a troop of 144,000 evangelists from *within Israel*, who will share the good news about Jesus BEING the true Messiah, and that a great number of people will trust Christ (7:9). Even in a period of great judgement on the earth, when wave after wave of tumult will consume both land and sea, still there will be the ongoing work of evangelism.

We return now to the Revelation, and we take up the scene in chapter 11. The setting is Jerusalem. The time is the great Tribulation. Let's look and see some more things about that time which is coming.

In the first two verses the thing that strikes us is that during the Tribulation period, there is a structure present called "the Temple of God." This is another Temple, a new and rebuilt one which has become again the center for Jewish worship in Israel during the last days. Some biblical interpreters have said that this Temple must be rebuilt before the rapture of the Church can occur, but I see no Biblical reason for that at all.

Now John is told to measure several things about this Temple: the inner structure, the altar which is enclosed by the structure, and also the worshippers. This is important. God is very interested in the matter

of this Tribulational worship that is going on. He is also interested in the worship that is sent His way in the years before the Tribulation: now!

My friends, I do not believe at all that we should ever stop talking about the matter of corporate worship. I do not believe that we shall ever reach the place in our church life where we "have arrived" and that we do not need to strive for better worship even further. It is a GOOD thing to prayerfully ponder how our worship services are... Some churches even start "worship committees", who meet explicitly to pray and talk and share about their worship services. John is told to go and "calibrate" this Tribulation Temple and what is going on in it. That should tell us something. That should tell us that the Lord is interested in every aspect, every "dimension", if you will, of what we're doing here. He is not lulled to sleep by routine, or tradition, or even by "corporate competence"--when a church pulls off all the different aspects of worship with great skill! He wants a Body of people meeting here, meeting there, who love to raise their hearts and their minds and their eyes, yea--and even their *hands* up to Him in love and gratitude and praise.

In verses 3-12 we read about two extraordinary individuals who come on the scene in that day. They are simply called "my witnesses." These are not called "my two nice guys", or "my two con-men." They testify to the truth; that's all they have to do. They simply bear witness about Jesus the Messiah and they will do *just that*: they will testify about Messiah. They are dressed in sackcloth, which fits their message. It isn't a flowery, dressed up kind of message, and my friends, the Gospel message should never be dressed up. It is plain. It is simple. It is straightforward. The Apostle Paul wrote,

*"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"* (I Corinthians 2:2).

Do you want to know how to witness? Just look for opportunities to tell people about who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He has done for you. And then do it. That's all there is too it! My friends, how much do you love Him? That's really reflected in how much you're willing to share the good news...

Much speculation goes on about who these two witnesses are. Ultimately we cannot be sure, and if we are going to handle Scripture honestly then we have to admit that--but I believe they are probably Moses and Elijah, sent back by God to perform a final ministry. Moses was the giver of the Law and Elijah was one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest prophet. Both Moses and Elijah had mysterious deaths. Both of them "foreshadowed" the Lord Jesus' great Kingdom. Both had certain experiences in the areas of fire and blood and plagues.

At any rate, these witnesses will "prophecy," having been granted direct authority to do so by God. Their prophecies will no doubt include both predictions and declarations.

Jesus said to His first disciples that they were to go and make disciples of all nations in our age BECAUSE all authority on earth and in heaven had been granted unto Him. We should never feel ashamed or insecure about the message we bear, dear ones. We did not invent it. When you share the Gospel with someone, whether they receive it gladly or not, do not feel after that, "Gee, maybe I shouldn't have said anything about Christ." It is not bad news we bear, it is good news! Again, Paul wrote, *"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16).

Verse 4 is interesting, and it is a prime example of how at first glance some things look strange in the Book of Revelation, but when you see how closely John uses the OLD TESTAMENT, it becomes clear. Verse 4 is John's using of something written by the prophet Zechariah. In Zechariah 4:2,3,14 the lampstand, or candlestick, is Israel and the two olive trees are Joshua and Zerubbabel, but John makes his own use of this symbolism. As John sees it, the olive trees and the lampstands are the same. They are the two witnesses, and they have the authority to say what they say because they have been commissioned to say it, by the Lord of the earth.

Again, I say to you, my friends, if you are a Christian, YOU have been commissioned by that same Lord to bear your message.

Can you see also, that God often works with teams of people? I think these two witnesses are still human, and I think they probably don't really want to face what's coming. They probably draw some comfort, even if they are Moses and Elijah, from being together.

Now for a while these two witnesses will do well in their task, as long as their task is unfinished. Until that point, in fact, they are immortal aren't they (vss.6,7)? But when their task of witnessing is complete, they will be murdered by "the beast that comes up out of the abyss." This is the first mention of this abominable creature. We will meet him again in chapter 13.

Verse 9 seemed an impossibility for most of history. But it is not hard for US to imagine how it can happen, is it? This week I listened to a recorded message on this chapter from 1965. The speaker speculated in that message of 24 years ago, that it wouldn't be long from then that you could turn on your television and look at a channel from another city! Or maybe even from another company. In those days we have 15 or 20 channels. How many do we have today? It is not at all unimaginable as to how these bodies of the two witnesses could be viewed world-wide, at one time. The Word of God is not intimidated by our lack of imagination or foresight!

You see the number of three and a half years come up a lot in Scripture. The prophet Daniel spoke of "a time, times and half a time" in his prediction of the Tribulation, and here it comes up several times. The Tribulation is going to last seven years and in the middle there will be great changes. The world, seduced by a form of world-religion, will



suddenly see two prophetic figures murdered, and suddenly the whole face of religion in Israel will change. Suddenly a beast will take over and will proclaim celebration because the "BAD NEWS BEARS" are dead!

Verse 10 intrigues me. The world and the devil would love to fool people into thinking God's messengers are a scourge on society. Let's get rid of them; then we can have some peace! THEN we can party!

And just as a side-light, and to illustrate the profound amount of ignorance of Scripture in society, you will see, from time to time, a Christmas card with these words on it: "*And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another...*"

Then we learn an incredible thing. After three and a half days, they are resurrected! Then they actually *ascend* to heaven. Although His servants may have to taste death, even then they are not abandoned by God. What incredible satisfaction these two must feel as they "go up"--and this is one of the places where we get the idea that heaven is "up there"-- *with their enemies looking on!* In fact, at the end of verse 11, the English translation doesn't really do justice to the Greek. The Greek indicates that their eyes bugged out!

Finally in verse 13, an earthquake "shakes, rattles and rolls" the city of Jerusalem. Seven thousand citizens die. The rest are not untouched, and for a few moments during this Tribulation, the people turn their wonder to the true God and glorify Him.

Dear ones, God will be glorified by all. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Even tongues that you cannot *imagine* confessing that today--they surely shall in the future!

We've got to realize too, that until the end, the world is not going to get better. This doesn't mean we shouldn't do everything in our power to MAKE it better. But our hopes should not lie in the New Age movement or in socialism or in utopianism. Those things are nothing more than a pipe dream with no room for the Living God. They are bankrupt and toying with them only leads to ultimate misery and disillusionment.

My friends, the Lord Jesus is coming one of these days for His people. I believe that Scripture indicates that there is nothing in history that must happen now before He comes secretly to rapture out the church. It can happen at any day and at any minute. Are you prepared?

One of the things we need to be faithfully working at--and it ought to be one of the biggest things in our week! That is witnessing as to what the Lord Jesus has done, and telling people about what He has done for me. He gave His life. He suffered all the wrath of a holy God for sin. He deserves all my life; all my attention and all my affection. He is truly worthy!

# The Relationship of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls

*Seals*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



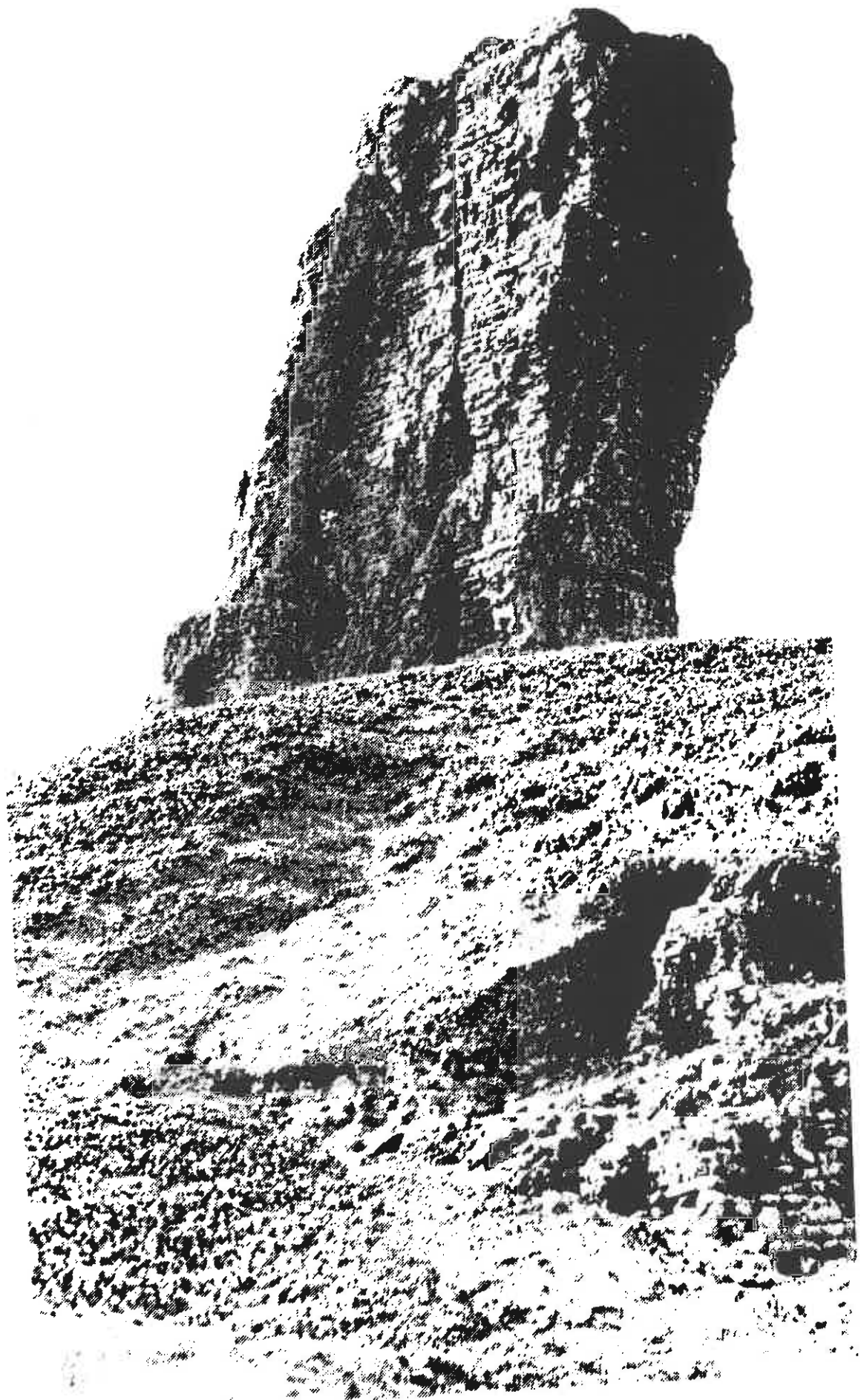
*Trumpets*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



*Bowls*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



Ruins of so-called "Tower of Babel"  
at Birs-Nimrud in Babylonia.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 11:14-18

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 19 5-21-89

## WHEN ONE KINGDOM BECOMES ANOTHER

Introduction We have been talking about a period of time at the end of the world as we know it now, which Jesus called "the Great Tribulation." In chapter eleven we read about two witnesses who will come on the scene in those last days, and who will tell many Jews who are then living in Israel about the true Messiah. They will pay for that privilege with their lives. And then they will be marvelously raised from being very, very dead! More incredible will be the fact that they are given an ascension, much like Jesus' own ascension.

My friends, you and I have much to profit from reading these things and from understanding them. It is not because we're going to be there. The way I understand God's Word, Christians will be raptured out of this world, to be with Christ, before the Great Tribulation begins. These chapters tell us about things that are going to happen--even if they happen soon-- in our absence. And so what relevance do they have for us? What do I care whether God sends two witnesses, whether earthquakes occur, whether the world undergoes judgement or not?

You and I are to read these words about the future, and live our lives in light of God's program. Yes, many of these words relate specifically to Israel in those days. But what is written here, was written for Christian churches, remember, which were largely Gentile (chs. 2 & 3)! Their lives were to be transformed by the revelations John received. AND, Jesus said repeatedly, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

You see, we seem to think that the big thing in our lives in being a good American. Or, being a good worker for your employer--being a "company man". Or, even being the best "family man" around. All of these are important, don't get me wrong. Some people have other allegiances which are real important to them: political membership; being part of an A.A. group; even some Christian *ministries* become the number one thing in a person's life: the Navigators, Christian retreat centers and camps, Christian colleges and seminaries and so forth. All of these are fine too, but Christians should be reminded that LIFE shouldn't revolve around loyalty to some organization. The profit that we get from reading about the last days--even though I don't think we're going to live through them-- is to live our lives *in light of the Kingdom which is coming!*

In early 1979, I was applying to several graduate schools. I had visited five. One of those I didn't even plan to apply to because I didn't think there was much chance of being accepted. I really *planned* to go to a school in Philadelphia. But a friend of mine encouraged me to apply, at least, to what was my first choice, and I said, Well, maybe God might work a miracle, and so I did. I'll never forget the day I received a letter from Dr. John Walvoord informing me of my acceptance to Dallas Seminary. From March, '79 until we moved to Dallas in August, I could hardly think of anything else--being a student at one of the finest theological seminaries in the world! I knew I had to cut my beard, get a couple of new suits, beef up my library. Renee and I really enjoyed getting ready to move to. Neither of us knew much about Texas, and so we read books, talked to people, obtained apartment-finder catalogs. We started getting ready to live in a different life-style. In fact, while it tested our faith--we had no idea how we could afford any of this--it was fun getting ready.

Dear ones, THAT is *why* we have the Book of Revelation--to get us where we're thinking about living in another kingdom. To motivate us and stimulate us to start making "kingdom decisions" about how to live, *as if we were already living there!* I hope that you are growing in this. I hope that as each year passes, you feel a little less loyalty to *this* world, and you are a little more hungry and prepared for "kingdom come."

A Signal Marker: Verse 14 You will remember that there are three sets of judgements for the world that God is going to unleash. The first are the seven seal judgements, the seventh of which is really a whole other set of judgements, called the seven trumpet judgements. Verse 14 of ch.11 informs us that now in our narrative, the trumpet judgements are past, and that last Trumpet--which we'll see in ch.16 includes the third seven of judgements; the bowl judgements-- the last Trumpet judgement has begun.

Notice two things about verse 14. *First*, from God's viewpoint, these judgements are a sadness. He calls it a "woe". God does not enjoy judging His creation, His handiwork. The idea that the Lord really gets a kick out of all this is a lie of Satan. God is not the destroyer. Satan is the destroyer, but he would like people on planet earth to think that Jehovah is no better than he is! *Second*, the marking off of these times (the end of woe #2 and the beginning of woe #3) show us that even with earthquakes and people dying terrible deaths all over the place, and saints being martyred, and all the rest of the calamity of the end times, God is still in complete control. Do you believe that? Do you believe that God has your life marked off and ordered?

When One Kingdom Becomes Another (verse 15) When you get right down to it, Revelation is about one thing. And, it is no surprise therefore, that many folks don't like this Book--that one thing threatens them! The central theme of the Book of Revelation is found in this verse: the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. When that reign begins, it is going to be announced in a big way! "Loud voices from heaven."

Maybe you've wondered, what's Jesus doing now? Is He waiting around playing celestial golf, until He gets the signal to return? No, He is not. He is reigning NOW too, from the right hand of God the Father. But He is not yet physically reigning, with His feet actually planted on dry earth. That is yet to come. The day is still before us when this world is going to have a single ruler.!

Can you imagine living a normal life with King Jesus ruling and governing from Jerusalem? How would your friends and family take it? How much of the kind of things they do with their lives would they still be doing with Jesus Christ literally living over in Jerusalem, running the whole show: politically, financially, entertainment, welfare, news media... Boggles the mind, doesn't it? But my friends, verse 15 tells us that day is coming.

The world today is made up of many little kingdoms. Their cultures and languages are different. But their head is the same. This is still the kingdom of Satan. Really, he is still in charge around here, and he is the authority. When the Antichrist comes on the scene, Satanic authority will become concentrated in a single diabolical leader. But, praise the Lord, then, Jesus will come again and set up His Kingdom. I cannot answer even half of my questions about that reign; but it will be incredible!

#### What Happens At the Beginning of the Millenium (verses 16-18)

In these verses we read several things that happen all right at the beginning of Jesus' reign on earth. (1) some of the greatest inhabitants of heaven are so moved by the occasion--beings who have their own thrones-- that all they can do is fall on their faces to worship Him. What does that say to us? It says something about how WE will respond too, at the crowning of King Jesus. Maybe it says something for us today about how we should view these worship services... (2) thanksgiving is given to Christ, because HE is now the ruler in every sense of the earth. It is always appropriate to give thanks, dear ones; whether publicly or privately. But on that day when we focus ALL OUR ATTENTION on the Lamb Who was slain, how thankful and relieved we will feel too! (3) But even on that day, all is not completely well. If you are a Christian, you will be there, happy, excited. But many people will still not love Him. The event, in fact, will enrage them. You see, having the right information doesn't mean someone is going to automatically love Jesus or trust Him. (4) This is that day about which the Apostle Paul wrote,

*"Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:9,10)*

My friends, if you are a Christian, you will not face the judgement of God for sin--not for even one sin. Christ suffered that FOR you, if you have accepted His free gift by faith alone. But all the dead will undergo a life-length evaluation as to the things he has done. And in some way, full of grace we know, but inescapable, we will see the lives we

have lived as they really were. May you and I have ~~as~~ our ambition today, to be pleasing to Him... That day will include all believers, the famous and those never noticed. It will be a day of full justice.

The fifth event that takes place at this time is a destruction of the destroyers (verse 18d). Next week, Lord willing, we will read a good bit about Satan in chapter 12. The rape of the earth is his doing, and his henchmen. Their environmental terrors will not go unjudged either...

My friends, remember a day is coming when we will be part of another Kingdom. You may not see it now with your eyes, but it is coming. May the Lord Jesus help us to know how to live in light of that fact. May He show you and I the things which distract us, which sap our strength for working for Him, which discourage us. May we take all those things, nail them to the cross, and live each day in light of His coming true and real reign on this earth.

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 11:19-12:17

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 20 5-28-89

### DEALING WITH THE DRAGON

Introduction I'm not going to ask for a show of hands, but I want you to know that I would love to know how many of you have seen all three "Star Wars" movies... For ten years the three "Star Wars" films captured the minds of young America. The stories were simple yarns about good guys and bad guys who shoot laser blasters instead of six-shooters, who fly space ships instead of riding horses, and the basic appeal was the same as the "shoot-em-ups" of the fifties but with eighties technology. But there was something in the Star Wars films that was different. George Lucas, the films' producer, wove into them a certain philosophical theme that was essentially religious in nature. He did not invent the idea, of course, but he did a lot to re-popularize it. The theme was that in the universe there is a single, all-encompassing life-force (which in fact he called "the force") which has both a good side and an evil side. This "force" envelopes all of life, whether you are aware of it or not. The goal of life for real truth-seekers, is to learn how to tie into the force and how to harness the good side without being consumed by the bad side.

Now the thing I want to point out is that this philosophy is very attractive to people today, because it de-personalizes moral and theological decision-making. People would really rather come to grips with a nice, impersonal "force" which in *itself* is not wholly good, rather than to learn about a personal and holy God. They would also prefer to half-heartedly wrestle with evil as a kind of cosmic influence, than accept the reality of a personal devil. I can understand the attractiveness of the philosophy George Lucas was selling. It accomodates my flesh and my schedule quite well.

The hindrance though, is that my Bible sits there and testifies to a state of affairs quite different. My Bible keeps telling me about a real God who is very personal, and a real devil--also a person. It keeps saying to me that time will not just go on *ad infinitum* but that this world as I know it will have a conclusion; a seven-year conclusion, in fact, during which that personal devil is going to have several very powerful, very real and very personal emissaries doing his business on planet Earth.

In the next three chapters in the Book of Revelation we are going to meet seven great actors of the time of the Tribulation. They are the woman (Israel), the dragon (Satan), the man-child (Christ), Michael (representing the angels), Israel again, the beast out of the sea (a world dictator) and the beast out of the earth (a religious leader).



The battles that are waged are not battles between philosophies or ideologies. The warfare of those last seven years on Earth is real warfare between real people. There are essentially only two sides to the warfare of those days--the side of the dragon, and the side of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. And we'll see in this chapter that evil is going to become super-concentrated in a few individual people. Chapter 12, where we arrive today, says a lot to us about spiritual warfare.

You and I are already engaged in spiritual warfare. To be sure, we are not aware of it all the time. Unless I am walking real closely with Jesus on a daily basis I'm going to aware of the spiritual conflict only at certain times, I think. But the battle goes on twenty-four hours a day, as we shall see in this chapter.

Dear ones, not a week goes by when several of you don't come by this "first aid station" in your spiritual battle. I've gotten to the point in my ministry that I can tell when the "front is hot" because in those weeks many come by or call (other weeks are quieter). This church building is sort of like a M\*A\*S\*H unit and myself and others are up here doing the best we can to fix up the troops and get them back into the battle! So troops, let's look at what God's Word tells us about spiritual warfare, and in particular about the spiritual warfare of the last days...

A Picture of What's to Come (11:19) We read in 11:1 of a rebuilt Temple of God here on earth, in Jerusalem. Now we are given a picture of another Temple in heaven. I don't think the Lord intended from this vision to make us think that there is actually a physical structure in heaven where He will meet with us. I think John saw, in graphic form, a picture of something which would be true in the age to come, namely that God will dwell among the redeemed Himself, with no need for mediators and a physical temple as men needed during the Old Testament.

This verse is sort of like a wedding invitation. It tells you about what is going to happen in advance. And you look forward to that event! In this verse the word "temple" is really the word "sanctuary." We also read about this in 3:12; 7:15; and we shall see it again in 15:5 and 21:22. God's presence will be opened up like never before in that time. The presence of the ARK demonstrates that God has always been a covenant-keeping God. He keeps His promises, and in that day ALL of His promises will come together accompanied by great signals of His majesty and power.

The Sign of the Woman (12:1,2) Much time has been spent on arguing who this woman is. Catholics say it is the Virgin Mary. Christian Scientists have said that it is Mary Baker Eddy. Many evangelicals think the woman is a symbol for the church. I believe the best interpretation is that this woman, who will go through the tribulation, is Israel. Israel sprang forth from the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel) and one of those sons, Joseph, had a dream in which the sun and moon and the other sons of Jacob were bowing down to Joseph--because he was the seed through whom the Abrahamic covenant would be fulfilled. In bringing forth the Messiah for the whole world, Israel has indeed had much trial. They have suffered over the centuries for their identity with God, and as well, they have suffered within and among themselves because of their own unbelief.

Again, I say to you, guard against any feelings of anti-Semitism you may ever feel. It is a wickedness. Israel was the source of many blessings which we enjoy: the Savior, the Bible and the apostles all came from among God's people. Pray for revival and awakening among Jews today!

The Sign of the Dragon (12:3,4) Dragons usually symbolize all that is terrifying, evil and loathsome. (I know of only two who weren't--Puff and Pete). In verses 3 and 4 Satan appears as he really is--full of fury and rage. He knows that his time is short and he unleashes his fury as never before. He was present at that stable in Bethlehem, waiting to destroy the infant Savior. He was ultimately behind Herod's plot to kill Messiah. He is nothing more than that--a murderer and a destroyer.

With all the confusion at Christmas time, there should really be one more ornament that people decorate their tree with: a red dragon, because although invisible to men, he was a principal player at the time.

From verse 4 also we take it that Satan pulled many angels down with him when he originally fell from heaven. At first he was a beautiful angel himself, Scripture tells us. And, in this era in which you and I live, Satan can appear still as an angel of light. But in the tribulation the mask will fall away and the charade will end. He is a seven-headed dragon in that time, full of rage and murder.

But fear not, dear ones. The Bible enjoins us to "resist the devil and he will flee from us." It is not because we are powerful of ourselves. It is surely not because we are smarter than he, for that is surely not the case. It is because we have the Holy Spirit within us, and we are the temple of God in this age. We have authority to banish him now because JESUS has shared His own spiritual authority with believers, indeed COMMISSIONED them with that authority. So do not be frightened by this sign. He is full of fury but our Sovereign Redeemer is full of power and glory. Amen, and amen.

The Male-Child (vss.5,6) Israel, through Mary, brought forth the Savior of the world. He was "caught up" to heaven when He ascended. The word "caught up" is the word *harpazo* and it is also in I Thess.4:17. It is the Greek word from which we get the word "rapture." Jesus was raptured and so shall Christians be.

The woman, Israel, on the other hand, is not raptured. She must flee from the dragon into the wilderness, where she is sovereignly preserved by God (because God is not through with Israel, as Paul so carefully argues in Romans 9-11) for the second, dreadful half of the Tribulation. That is why those 1,260 days are mentioned--that is 3 1/2 years.

Angelic Warfare with the Dragon (vss.7-17) Much is told us about Satan in these verses. The main thing to remember is that He is the enemy. Oh, that people in our society would recognize this. But we read that he is a deceiver, and that this world is his temporary domain (vs.9). We also read in verse 10 that he occupies part of his time on "recon

patrol" back to heaven for the purpose of accusing the brethren to God. He is accusing you, my friends. That is his work, to undo what God has done in our redemption in Christ. I don't know how he can think it is possible especially since he can read the same Bible we can. But what he can do, is to blind people here and there about the terms of salvation. He can say to you, "You'll never make it." He says to God, "They'll never make it."

Michael is one of the high angels, an archangel. He seems to have some responsibility for the government of Satan because he disputed with Satan over the body of Moses (I would love to know what that meant), and he is the chief war captain here in this final war with the dragon. What you need to hold on to, brethren, is that as fierce as this battle is, its outcome is clear. Satan will not win; he will not snatch away true believers from their inheritance; he will not annihilate Israel, the woman, and he will not finally destroy this planet.

At the end of the chapter (vs. 17), the dragon is doing battle with Israel's spiritual offspring during the Tribulation. There will be a "remnant" of Christian Jews during the Tribulation, some of whom may be martyred for their stand for Christ and for right living. Some may die but others will survive the time including the 144,000 "Jewish 'Billy Graham's'."

Those are two focal points in our spiritual warfare too: the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. Satan would love to undermine either. And, aren't those two things really what the Christian life boils down to? It is by the testimony of Jesus that we have the hope of eternal life. He said, "*I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*" (John 6:33). It is by HIS OWN WORDS, by personally trusting that they are true and reliable, that a person becomes a Christian. And after becoming a Christian, a person begins to internalize God's commandments. He begins to want to live a life pleasing to God. Satan loves to confuse those two basic messages of true Christianity. He wants to destroy those who bear the message of salvation. He wants to compromise their lives with moral failure. And if he can't accomplish either of those two evil purposes he wants to REVERSE the order of those two things, because he has many people thinking that to KNOW CHRIST--meeting Him in your heart--is earned by keeping the commandments of God. No one can do that without first receiving the free gift of eternal life by faith alone. THEN we begin to give testimony to that fact by a life consistent with God's law.

My friends, take courage. We are not in this time of Tribulation yet. But you and I have much to learn about living for Jesus NOW, by the fate of the world in those last days. Do not be surprised at having to face trials. Don't be surprised that Satan wishes to devour people now just as he stood outside the stable on Christmas, licking his foul chops. Be sober. Be vigilant. Resist Satan by prayer and by nourishing yourself with a regular diet of Scripture, and by arming yourself with the belief and conviction that the battle is the Lord's.

References: George Ladd, A.T. Robertson, John Walvoord, commentaries; taped messages by S. Lewis Johnson, William McRae.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 13:1-10

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 21 6-11-89

## *WHEN MEN GIVE UP ON GOD (and give in to Satan)*

Introduction Jesus said something to his disciple Thomas that speaks volumes: "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" (John 20:29). Having a real and vital relationship with Jesus has always been challenging and sometimes downright difficult, because we cannot see Him. Would it not be easier to keep your eyes on Him if He were physically present in your life every day? For Christians it has always been the supreme test of faith, to believe and trust that He is really there, when we cannot touch Him, see Him, hear His actual voice with our ears. It is also true that sometimes people's faith fails them. They crack under the strain of Christ's "invisibility." It is a fact of life and Jesus knew it would start just as soon as He ascended into heaven (even the appearances He DID make didn't guarantee that everyone would trust in Him)... And, it has proved out over the centuries because church history is littered with all too many examples of people who gave up.

How do you feel about this? Are you ever tempted just to throw in the towel on your faith? You look around you and see other Christians giving up--they quit reading their Bibles, quit praying, quit worshipping a seemingly invisible Savior, and quit fellowshiping with other Christians. You look around you also, and you see OTHER things which are visible and seem to offer something more tangible for today... Are you ever tempted to give it up?

The chapter we want to look at today indicates that a time is coming when countless people will give up their various religions, toss in the towel in being disciples of "invisible" heroes, and instead will begin following a new, very visible and very promising hero.

The Revelation is not the only thing the Apostle John wrote. He also wrote the Gospel which bears his name, and three letters. In the first of those three letters he wrote, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour" (I John 2:18). The word "antichrist" is used five times in the NT, all in I and II John. But the idea of a single person who embodies final opposition to Jesus Christ shows up several other places in the NT:

*"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matthew 24:15,16)*

"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come [the coming of Christ] unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness [or, sin] is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God...and then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming, that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved"  
 (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4,8-10)

In Revelation 13 we are given much more information about this time when people will abandon their hope in everything other than this one final deceiving "hero." It may not be the most pleasant portion of what God has revealed in His Word, but nonetheless you and I need to be aware of all the words given to us in Scripture.

The Appearance of the Beast from the Sea (13:1-3a) The dragon, whom we read about in Ch. 12 will be unable to annihilate the woman, whom I think is Israel; and he will be unable to undo the work of her child who is Christ. So now in verse 1 of Ch. 13 he stands on the seashore and calls forth from the deep the "beast" who will be his primary instrument in his "last hurrah."

That this beast comes "up out of the sea" tells us that this ruler will be a Gentile (cf. 17:15). From 17:12 we know that the ten horns are ten rulers or kings. This central ruler in the Middle East during the Tribulation, will be ten nations--and the seven heads are probably seven other important rulers. It will be an evil "Board of Directors" and one of these will receive a fatal head wound, from which he will recover. I do not think this means that this person really dies and that Satan can resurrect this person, for I do not think that Satan has that power, even once. But he does have the ability, apparently, to heal wounds--for his own dastardly purposes--which would otherwise surely be fatal.

"The important point is that the final world ruler comes into power obviously supported by a supernatural and miraculous deliverance by Satan himself" (Dr. John Walvoord, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

Supernatural things, in and of themselves, should not "wow" us. I know they are fascinating; I know many people are bored with the mundane part of their lives; I know that all people have within them a basic, intrinsic consciousness of spiritual things because we are part of the spiritual realm, whether we realize it or not (Ephesians 6:12). But just because something is supernatural or miraculous--I am speaking here especially to younger people--it should not grab us and captivate us and become the things out of which we get the most joy.

I am interested how powerful the medium of film has on people--myself included. I made the mistake of watching a movie on television not too long ago that really messed with my mind.

Oh it was fascinating all right. And it involved some seemingly miraculous things. But as I stood back from it afterwards, and thought about the kind of effect film and fantasy have on people, I thought, "how sad."

I think many people today are also fascinated by the concept of merging beasts and people biologically. The film I think I made the mistake of watching was called "The Fly." One of the most popular TV dramas on today is called "Beauty and the Beast". Comic books abound with tales of creatures, half "humanoid" and half alien. The merging of life with machine (i.e. "Transformer" toys) is also something which captivates people. Why is natural life not enough to make people happy? My point? Isn't it interesting that in Rev.13 there is also a merging of animal and human characteristics. What is the source? Satan. Beware of the world of modern fantasy. Tales of the supernatural may fascinate you and your kids, but I believe it is this manipulation of what to us seems supernatural and miraculous that Satan will use to accomplish what he does in the following verses...

The EFFECT Which the Beast From the Sea Has (3b-6a) People will really be "wowed" by this beast who will recover from this wound. People from all nations will first be amazed, and then their amazement will be immediately followed by their *discipleship*. Ultimately they will "buy the whole program" and end up in full worship not only of the beast, but of his master, the dragon himself.

If you think the Satan-worship you occasionally read about today is alarming, know that in those last three and a half years of the Tribulation, everyone is going to be "wowed" into serving him. It is his "last hurrah." He would like to have a millennial reign just like Messiah. But his time will be for only 3 1/2 years.

The blasphemies upon which he trades will not shock people. Even though he will be attractive, and seem powerful, he will not be "genteel." Verses 5 & 6 tell us his trade is claiming wrong things about God and about himself. Satan has always hungered to receive the worship due God alone. He assumes the role of God and people just give in...

It will be much easier in that day to just worship this person who will be very visible and real, than to continue worshipping some "invisible" god. Moslems will stop worshipping Allah. Hindus will quit worshipping the sun, the cows and the clouds. Buddhists and Shintoists will forget about honoring the memory of their ancestors. Catholics will stop adoring Mary and the "saints." Even some Jews will quit worshipping Jehovah and Jewish tradition. All of that will seem mundane and old-hat compared with the thrill of following this "hippest of the hip" world ruler. They will easily tolerate, even join in, the arrogant blasphemies of the beast. It will be quite a thing indeed when smart people as well, not just the gullible, will jump on the beast's band wagon!

The TASK Which the Beast From the Sea Undertakes (vss.6b-8)

Satan is not only a destroyer, he is also a liar. His most favorite thing to lie about in the Tribulation will be his own nature. He will spend a lot of "pulpit time" claiming to be all the God there is, and he will convince many (cf. also Daniel 7:23). But he will also try to really do a number on believers. His second favorite lie is in accusing Christians. Sometimes he does this now in our own heads. Then, he will do it from earth, aimed at heaven. It may seem absurd to us that he would think he could accomplish anything against the saints in heaven at that point, but such is the rage and hatred that he is.

Notice again the idea of God dwelling right with us in heaven: "*..His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.*" (vs.6b) It will be indescribably wonderful and exciting to be right with the Lord. Although He seems invisible to us now--even distant at times (although He really isn't), then, there shall be no thought even of it. He shall dwell right next to us. That is HIS desire and plan.

Verses 7 and 8 reveal the dragon's plan for people who are saved during the Tribulation. He won't open up discussion groups. There won't be dialogue. His forces will not be reasonable or open-minded. They will make war with Christians.

General William Sherman, of Union army and Civil War fame, once said, "War is hell." Never will the saying be more true than during the Tribulation.

In verse 8 there is an equation. Those who worship Satan, through this beast--and that will be everyone except those who in the last hour trust in Messiah--are the same group of people "*whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.*" If you are saved, your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Maybe you thought your parents invented your name! But the Lord has known and loved your name from the beginning of time. Incredible, eh? Well, it should not surprise us when we find ourselves awestruck whenever we contemplate His ways!

Even though the dragon and the beast will be burning the midnight oil, trying to find clever (and no doubt sophisticated) ways to undo God's plan of redemption, those names have already been written down and sealed. The rest will worship the devil.

Personal Notices (vss. 9,10) Verse nine is like so many other places in the New Testament. It is an open invitation to hear what God reveals. No one can ever say that God kept the Gospel under lock and key. No one can ever say, "I never had any chance to understand how it would be!" They may say it, but here reads an open invitation to hear the truth about the end times. You got ears? Listen up--its your choice.

Verse 10 is a little difficult, because we are not completely sure who is in view. I think the first phrase refers to those believers who must suffer martyrdom. Resistance will be useless, because God providentially has allotted to them to lose their freedom for the faith, and maybe to be killed for it.

As good Americans we think liberty is the greatest and most valuable thing there is. It is great and precious. I have not had to pay for mine but others have. But it is not the greatest thing there is. The greatest thing is worth even my sacrifice of liberty. It is the condition of my soul. You and I must be willing to sacrifice even our liberty if our spiritual health is jeopardized. That will take courage, to be sure. But the Lord will grant what we need, in the say that we need it.

The second part of the verse is the promise that those who DO the bidding of the beast will not get off. They will meet the vengeance of the Living God, the God of those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

Christians: You and I must hang in there. We must maintain our faith; not grow weary of worshipping a God we can't see with our eyeballs. We must PERSEVERE. Ten years from now, where will you be? What will you be doing? I hope, trust and pray you will be fully busy and content with the worship of Messiah.



# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 13:11-18

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 22 6-18-89

## THE SEASON OF THE UNHOLY TRINITY

Introduction One of the most blessed revelations that God has given us is that He has told us what He is like. Through His prophets and apostles He has unveiled Himself as a Trinity of three persons--Father, Son and Holy Spirit-- but each person is of exactly the same essence. He is one God, but three distinct persons. It is a wonderful mystery and Christians, while never fully comprehending it, have loved this revelation of what God is like.

In the Book of Revelation, we are considering the events and personalities of the end times. Specifically, we're dealing with the last seven years of time in the chapters we are now reading. In Revelation 12 we read John's description of Satan, called the red dragon. In the first half of chapter 13, which we looked at last week, we read about a person called "the beast out of the sea," which we identified as a great political figure in those last years of the Tribulation, who will lead the entire population of the planet in worship of the dragon. In today's passage (13:11-18), we read about a *second beast*, who will be like the first in many ways. The word for "beast" that John uses is not the Greek word for domestic animals like cows and donkeys and sheep. It is the Greek word "*therion*" and it means a wild, ferocious and carnivorous beast. This second beast is of the same nature, although he has some differences, as we shall see...

One of our biggest challenges, dear ones, is the challenge to deal with radical evil. While there are many things in our world which are beautiful and pleasant, it is also a fact that our world is full-to-the-brim with extremely evil influences, institutions and individuals. We may flee into an anesthetized state through TV, isolationism and just plain *busyness*, but nevertheless there is evil all around us. I see it and you see it. Not a day passes when the church isn't faced with the challenge to deal with radical evil. As humble, redeemed Christians, we know that the only hope for this world resides in the power of the slain Lamb, who did not stay dead. It is His Kingdom that we serve NOW, and long to see made complete at His second coming.

Now because dealing with evil is a complex task--although all Christians MUST learn to deal with it--it is important for us to get all the training we can. Every word we can find in God's Word to equip us to meet the challenge of evil, we need to treasure up! That is why YOU need Revelation 13. Do not let this chapter escape your notice! It is not too

difficult for you to understand. It is here to partially equip you to understand the strategy of the evil ones, and to meet the challenge which they pose.

We are going to consider in today's passage EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS of the second beast, who is utterly and absolutely depraved. Most people are just totally depraved; that is, every part of their lives have been stained by sin (their minds, their emotions, their wills, their bodies). But most people are not as BAD as they could be. But the personalities that we read about in Revelation 12 and 13 are not just totally depraved; they are ABSOLUTELY depraved. They could not be "badder." They start with evil, have evil in the middle and end with evil. There is nothing noble, or redeemable in them.

In these two chapters we have a sort of *counter-part* to the Holy Trinity. In the Trinity there is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In Rev. 12 & 13 we see an unholy trinity: the dragon, the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth. The dragon tries to mimic God the Father. God has providentially granted him authority on the earth during the Tribulation. The beast out of the sea, who is the antiChrist, the abomination of desolation (Matt.24) and the man of sin (2 Thess. 2), tries to take the place of God the Son. He is utterly against God the Son, and attempts to replace Him. The beast out of the earth, whom we read about today, tries to act like God the Spirit--*heralding* the first beast:

"Hear ye, hear ye! All must bow themselves before the 'sea-lord. HE is worthy of your loyalty. HE has recovered from the head wound. HE is worthy to be praised."

As the world twists and writhes in the last months of this age, people will *long* for an attractive, visible leader. They will flock to these persons and willingly sell their souls. On earth, it will seem like the true Trinity has gone silent--except to a few brave souls. The Unholy trinity has the stage for a season.

If you find the notion of thousands of people worshipping one single celebrity *hard to believe*, remember only last week when (in Iran) the Ayatollah Khomeini's corpse was jostled off the pallet by the crowds and had to be airlifted away just to receive burial. Thousands of worshippers clamored to touch it, or to snatch a piece of cloth. It defies rational thought, but it happens. Or, if *that* seems too far away, remember what it was like in 1964 when the Beatles first came to this country. Four lads from Liverpool, met by a hundred thousand screaming, hysterical fans. Or if *that* just seems like an anomaly from the youth culture- how about the two little words, "Seig Heil?" No, celebrity worship is very possible. It is just a question of timing, before the subject of the worship is a character called antichrist...

Now let's consider these eight characteristics of the false prophet, the second beast...

Characteristic #1 and #2 (vs.11) As the beast "out of the earth" he is possibly from within Israel, since the beast out of the sea is clearly a Gentile person. This person also has an innocent-seeming power. Unlike the first beast, this guy is a smoothie, a charmer. People will like him, but he will be identifiable by his doctrine, by those who are checking it.

Characteristic #3 and #4 (vs.12) This leader will not promote himself so much as he will promote the program of the political leader, the first beast. Often in history this kind of partnership has had precedent, when a religious leader endorses the political program of the king. 350 years ago Charles I was King of England. His right-hand man was the Archbishop of Canterbury. The two beasts will have that kind of relationship, but greatly intensified. So, the beast out of the earth will sell the program of the beast out of the sea, and will bring it about with his authority.

He will demand nothing short of worship for his boss (vs.12). Again, he will appeal to people's ability to be "wowed" by the miraculous--that is his ace in the hole.

Do you notice, by the way, from verse 12 that the *majority* are not always right? Often times, they are flat wrong! That is the way things are in the world and we must be careful not to be confused into thinking that the majority of any group automatically know God's will.

Characteristic #5 (vs.13) Satan has great power, to be sure. Does this verse remind you of any other event in Israel's past? On Mount Carmel Elijah challenged and defeated the false prophets of Baal with the same display of power. In the last days, the beast will counterfeit that same miracle, and will no doubt try to *authenticate* his claims by an appeal to Malachi's (4:5,6) prophecy that Elijah would come before Messiah. Just as Christ had His John the Baptist, so the antichrist will have his *false* prophet. It will be a most cheap and smelly imitation of the true God!

Now Satan does have tremendous power, and we should not take it lightly. I think that is why I so strongly resent movies like "Ghostbusters" and other popular renditions of the supernatural. They grossly *underestimate* the breadth of Satanic power. But at the same time we should not be frightened of Satan's power. The Bible says, "...*greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world*" (I John 4:4b), and "*Submit therefore to God; Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7).

Characteristic #6 and #7 (vss.14-16) Satan and his henchmen are the masters of deception. They camouflage their true nature very well. Instead of people really looking at them, their doctrine and their motivations, they are able to distract people by the signs they perform. And it is not that you and I are smarter than the people who will live on the earth in those days--It is only God's grace that keeps His elect from being deceived! (Cf. Matthew 24:24)

Second, this false prophet won't be satisfied with faith-religion. He will want people to worship a statue! It might be something beautiful and artistic, but it will be some kind of image of the first beast. The false

prophet will demand VISIBLE worship from people. Many people will flock to it too, because they would rather worship something visible than something invisible!

People won't *mind* have his number--"666"---inscribed on their person. It will be their membership card; their sense of belonging and their economic buying power. Those who *do not* have the mark on their right hand or on their forehead will be in deep water economically. Those new Christians will be sorely tested and it will be like the early church when Christians *had* to depend on one another.

Verse 15 is especially interesting: how can this beast pull this miracle off? Satan cannot create life can he? No, he cannot. But men are approaching the mimicking of what God alone can do with test-tube babies. But neither men nor Satan can create something out of nothing as God does! Nevertheless, the image will look like its coming to life. It, *itself*, will turn into a kind of Frankenstein and terrorize the new Tribulation Christians, and anyone else who refuses to worship the beast...

Characteristic #8 (vs.18)      The eighth characteristic of the second beast IS that strange number, 666. This is a hard thing to interpret, if we let it be.

"Almost anything can be done with these numbers by clever manipulation. If A=100, B=101, C=102, etc. the name Hitler totals 666."  
--George Ladd, Commentary

Once again, I believe a straightforward understanding is best. The number 666 is a number which represents the best that man can produce. In those days everyone will think that man is pretty hot stuff. It will be the epitome of secular humanism. It will make the Arian ideas of Naziism look like child's play. 666 is incomplete though. God's symbolic number is "7" and Satan will try to mark all people on the earth with HIS number, and he will succeed with many. So, I think the number should be taken literally.

Conclusion      Do not be lulled to sleep by this present world. There is radical evil all around us, and not just in this country. But also, be encouraged because ultimate justice WILL prevail and as bad as the evil around you looks, its only for a season. The righteous Judge, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. Maybe it is soon.

Are you ready for Him to come? Are you one of His disciples? Do you know for sure that even if He were to come tonight, or of you were to die tonight that you would stand before Him completely cleansed of sin? If not, I implore you to speak to myself or to one of our other people and seek the assurance that Scripture offers. May all of us "love His appearing."

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 14:1-5

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 23 7-2-89

## THE 144,000, Part 2

Introduction In 1970 John Lennon wrote a song called "Imagine." In it he called on people to imagine a universe with no heaven or hell, no organized religion and therefore, Lennon fantasized, no war. And then he said,

"People say I'm a dreamer; but I'm not the only one.  
I hope some day you'll join us; and the world will be as one."

Is it silly to imagine and dream about the whole world being united under one political system, committed to the same priorities and the same goals? It seems true enough that the biggest flaw with idealistic philosophy, whether your brand is socialism or communism or capitalism is in the basic "*unworkableness*" of idealistic philosophy. In its pure form socialism doesn't work. In their pure form neither do any of the others. Each secular system has its theoretical merits, but when it comes to "carding the members" on real-life Monday mornings, each idealistic system breaks down, and you end up with some kind of vague *modification* of the theory. So, isn't it just futile to imagine the whole human population united under one government, committed to the same priorities and the same goals?

The pragmatic, or maybe even cynical view, is to resign yourself to whatever system you were *born* into, tinker with the existing machinery, monkeying with it here and there, and doing the best you can with what you've got to work with. But to dream of utopia? "Don't waste your time because neither you nor your great-grandchildren are ever going to live to see anything LIKE it."

Now John Lennon wasn't much interested in the claims of Jesus Christ. He imagined a unified and peaceful world that was completely and totally secular. It was a New Age imagination, and a dream that is entertained by thousands of Americans today. As we have seen so far in the Book of Revelation, it is not only a fantasy, however. The day is going to come when the world WILL be united under one secular government. The New Age movement is *not* just the stuff of dreamers. It is coming. But its source will catch people by surprise. The One-world "utopia" will not worship socialism or communism or capitalism. It will be ultimate *fascism*, of a kind that will make Hitler's Naziism look wimpy. The one-world fascism of Revelation 12 & 13 will dwarf Idi Amin's Uganda, Castro's Cuba and the Ayatollah's Iran.

But what does all this have to do with you, you ask? Well, if you're a born-again Christian (which is to say a *Biblical* Christian), then whether you're completely aware of it or not, *YOU* are a dreamer too. You may not have verbally spoken it yet, but part of your creed--because you love the whole Scripture--states that another "new age" is coming. After that terrible end-time on the earth, which Jesus called the great tribulation, Jesus Christ will return physically to the planet. He will set up a world government under Himself and He with His adopted children will rule the planet. Today's passage is a FORESHADOW of what *actually* doesn't occur until chapters 21 and 22. I can understand John's NEED of such foreshadowing. The previous two chapters were very dark indeed and must have troubled John just as perhaps they troubled you.

You and I need assurance from time to time. We need a word from the Lord that as dark as things may look, a bright future awaits us. And we need to know that it isn't just a pipe dream. That is why we have these verse before us in Revelation 14.

#### Tribulation Survivors Vindicated (14:1)

Notice who John now saw, and where... Again, the Lord is the Lamb. He will never outgrow His relation to the redeemed. Even though Jesus is the Creator, the Lord and the Son of God, He is forever *also* the sacrificial LAMB. It is on Mount Zion in Jerusalem that John sees Him standing.

Mount Zion is one of the most prominent symbols in the Bible representing the glory of the one true God, and His chosen people. It always stings me a bit when I hear militant Arabs or Palestinians curse "Zionists" or "Zionism." I am a Zionist, in that I recognize that hill in Jerusalem as holding great significance for Jehovah. And He is not yet finished with that hill, for upon it Messiah will stand at the beginning of His thousand-year reign on planet Earth.

*"For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. This is my resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:13,14)*

*"The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord's" (Obadiah 21).*

Also see Romans 11:26 from Is.59:20.

He is accompanied, John sees, by 144,000, whose "I.D." is either a double-named signature (of the Son and the Father), or, two names, one of each the Son and the Father. These men have it inscribed somehow in their foreheads, and that is what "sealed" them. Their faces are distinctly different from everyone else in the world--who all had to have the number of the beast and of Satan inscribed upon their persons.

There is an implication here that I cannot prove from the text but which I have observed to be true. Have you ever noticed that when a person becomes a Christian, sometimes you can detect a change in their countenance--in their facial appearance? After struggling with their sanctification for a while the "glow" might fade, but OFTEN I have noticed that when a person comes to Christ, right at

first their face seems different. A great burden--the guilt of sin and bondage to Satan--has been lifted and new converts sometimes wear that new freedom right on their face!

Do people know that you are a Christian? Do they identify me as someone who knows Jesus personally? How would they know? It isn't yet that we wear His name on our foreheads. But do I wear His name with my tongue, with my attitudes, with my priorities and with my goals? People often say, "Well, religion is private, you know." I agree. If all it is that a person has, is religion--then keep it private, please. But if it is JESUS that you know, I want to hear about it, and the non-Christians around you NEED to hear about it!

### Singing a New Praise Song (14:2,3)

Now John records that he heard an incredible voice out of heaven. Can you imagine what a chorus of 144,000 voices must sound like? He describes it in very majestic terms, *including*, I might add, stringed instruments! These instruments are sort of like our guitars. Sometimes Christians say that guitar music is inappropriate for Sunday morning worship. Oh yeah? Well, its not inappropriate for heaven itself!

Verse 3 fascinates me, because I am a music lover. This is a NEW song that they sing, and it is their song and theirs only. I do not know what this song will be and neither do you. I can't sing their song. But I can sing MY song. There are hymns and praise songs that I really enjoy, and when I sing them, I feel like they are my own. I know there are songs that YOU have personalized too.

But no one can sing praises to God but the redeemed. Notice at the end of verse 3 that these 144,000 tribulation-evangelists are those "...who had been purchased from the earth." We ought not to ever pressure or even ASK non-Christians to sing our songs. If we do we are asking them to lie. If we put a non-Christian in a situation where he or she is expected to sing, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound; that saved a wretch like me," we are asking them to lie because they have not yet been redeemed.

We cannot sing the song of the 144,000 but we can sing our own songs. You know, we do not have any "holy utensils" or "sacred chalices" around here. In fact, since we are a pilgrim people, strangers in a strange land, we do not see anything PHYSICAL as sacred. Even our Bibles are of no value to us if we leave them on the table. But if there IS one thing that we have which is truly sacred; and, I might suggest, a little *mystical* even, it is our songs. We are careful with them. We don't just rattle them off at any time. We reserve their singing for special times of praise and worship. They are our songs, and we love them.

The 144,000: Chaste Companions for Jesus (14:4,5)

Now as we read this verse 4, maybe your reaction is that which many have at first glance at the verse. "So HERE'S where the idea of celibacy came from!" In the Catholic church it has always been the rule that if you wanted to give yourself to full-time ministry, you must forfeit marriage, and therefore, sex.

Sex has too often been thought of as a necessary, albeit *pleasurable* evil. And this verse was turned to to support that view about sexuality. But what is forgotten is that this verse applies to the 144,000 tribulation evangelists. And it is not that marriage might *defile* any of them. It is the fact that during the tribulation sexual sin is going to be intensified and magnified far beyond even what it is today--I know; that is hard to envision. But the 144,000 are keeping themselves from sexual SIN during the tribulation, and from its perpetrators who, since the 144,000 are male, are therefore *female*. It is not a sexist slur. It is a prophecy of victory for these men. In fact, the Greek text indicates that they will all be virgins. They are men so dedicated to their discipleship that they simply have no time for marriage. Making it a MODEL for this age is a mistake. I think Paul indicates that only a few will be ABLE to give themselves to 100% ministry. Marriage for most others is not only permissible, it is honorable and blessed.

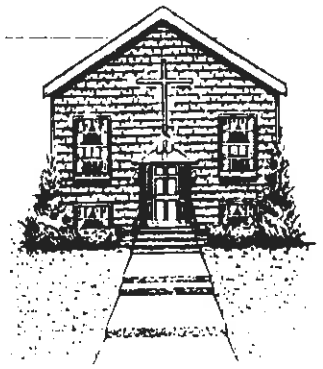
Again in verse 4 they are said to have been "purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb." Have YOU been purchased by the Lord Jesus? Do you look at yourself that way? If so, you are owned by Him. He has the right to rule in your life. He has the right to place you where He wishes in His body; where HE wishes. You are His, if you are a Christian, you are not your own. This is maybe one of the hardest things for a Christian to accept. We want to be our own men. We want complete liberty from any obligation. We desire total independence from any necessary loyalties. Frankly, I think this is one of the reasons people sometimes shy away from church membership. It is much easier to remain aloof from a group of people, than to commit yourself to them. But you are not your own. You belong to the Lamb, if He has purchased you by shedding His blood for your redemption. If you are trusting in HIS atonement on the cross--and you are saying this if you participate in the Lord's table--then you are saying that He is your owner and Lord. Very good. May it be so for all here today.

Verse 5 is one of those short and quick little verses that we are prone to gloss over if we're not careful. These 144,000 tribulation-evangelists will not be connivers. They will not be fraudulent. They will not stretch the truth ever, and they will not flat-out LIE. In this they loom on the horizon for you and I as heroes. Part of growing in Christ is coming to be an HONEST person. Honesty is a great virtue. Lying is a great *insecurity* and really, it is COWARDICE. We are to be a people who speak the truth, when we are asked anything.

If you are a Christian this morning, then what are your thoughts of heaven, and the future? Do you find yourself ever *dreaming* about what is surely coming? Are you living with one foot here on earth and one foot in heaven? May you have His joy as you move towards the day when you are a redeemed subject in His Kingdom...



# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 14:6-20

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 24 7-16-89

## "HARVEST-TIME ON PLANET EARTH"

Introduction Have you ever wrestled in your mind with the problem of identifying who is and who isn't really a Christian? There are many who say that they are. Probably *most Americans* would resent being called a "non-Christian"; because they associate the title "Christian" with being an upright or moral person. And there are a lot of people who do not verbally deny Christ but who obviously do not seek Him in their daily decisions, and they seem to do all right... So, do you find it difficult to differentiate in your mind who are the true followers of Jesus?

Perhaps your question is not, "Is 'so-and-so' really a Christian?" but "AM I really a Christian?" I can't answer that for you. Only you can decide that. But I tell you that the Bible reserves the title "Christian" for those who follow Christ, who seek to understand His will and who do it. A Christian is a person who has fled to Christ for pardon, and who trusts in Jesus' absolute promise to do that. And having trusted Him, a Christian is the person who perseveres over the years in his faith in Christ. I hope that everyone here today has planted their feet squarely on the promises of Scripture and believes wholeheartedly in them.

But we do spend some time wondering about other people too; after we have wondered about ourselves. But during the Great Tribulation things will not be that way. It will cost too much to identify with Christ, just as a hobby or just because it looks good. It *won't* look good. What **WILL** look good is to wear the mark of the beast. That will be popular and chic.

During the Tribulation there will be little doubt about who are really followers of Jesus and who are not. The rest of chapter 14 that we're looking at today makes it clear that at the conclusion of the tribulation all things will be crystal clear; there won't be any ambiguity such as we wrestle with today. It will be "harvest-time" on planet Earth. We are going to look at the harvest in three segments:

- I. Those For Whom the Harvest is Good News
- II. Those For Whom the Harvest is Bad News
- III. The Totality of the Harvest

THOSE FOR WHOM THE HARVEST IS GOOD NEWS (14:6,7,12,13)

Verse 6 seemed laughable to skeptics for many centuries. How could one angel broadcast any good news "flying in midheaven?" But nowadays it isn't laughable at all. Not that angels will use electronic broadcasting as their tool, but it is very easy to imagine a single being addressing the whole world!

What this angel speaks forth is GOOD NEWS to the followers of Jesus. Probably this "good news" (and that is what the word *evangelion*, Gospel, means) is not the good news of salvation by grace through faith alone. Rather it is the news that GOD IS AT LAST ABOUT TO DEAL WITH THE WORLD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS and that His sovereign rule will be established finally and completely on the planet.

Now for us in comfortable, affluent America, that may only seem like mildly exciting news. But to those people who come to Christ during the tribulation it is the best news imaginable.

Verse 7 is a final exhortation to those tribulation saints to hang in there in the final days. *Fearing God* does not mean that those believers (or we) are supposed to live in terror of our Redeemer. It means though that they (and we) are to live wisely, to realize that our God is not to be trifled with. When someone in ANY era comes to Christ God expects that person to live for Christ then. In verse 12 the real Christians are told to keep God's commandments. Now God does not save anyone FOR his works, but He will reward us for doing good works. And the works that you do in this life will follow you like cans tied to a cat's tail. You can't get away from them, so they might as well be works in keeping with the Lord's will!

Verse 13 is a great assurance to those tribulation saints who are martyred for the faith. This is not a verse to use in your funeral! It is for the tribulation saints. Death for *them* will be preferable and it will in some marvelous way be an experience of great rest.

But for us, dear ones, it is not right that we should prefer death. When a Christian says, especially one who isn't very old "I wish God would take me now" he is saying that life here in the Spirit isn't very good. It is an indictment on God's providential care. It also says God can't use me anymore. There is no one else for me to share the Gospel with, and he should take me home. No one ever longed for heaven than the Apostle Paul, but he wrote,

*"But I am hard-pressed from both directions [in a straight betwixt two, KJV] having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better, yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, so that your proud confidence may abound in Christ Jesus though my coming to you again" (Philippians 1:23-26)*

The harvest of the end--the tying-up of it all by the Lord--is good news for those who are His. But for those who are not on His side, it is terrifying news.

#### THOSE FOR WHOM THE HARVEST IS BAD NEWS (14:8-10,13)

The first one for whom God's final harvest is bad news is the people who are wrapped up in "Babylon the great" (verse 8). Probably this refers to some rebuilding of the ancient city of Babylon, which will become both a religious and a commercial center for the Beast's program. I do not know if this re-built Babylon will be on the site of the ancient Babylon. I am not inclined to think that this is a symbol for Rome, as many have thought. But if you think that it is silly to envision an actual rebuilt-Babylon in Iraq (where ancient Babylon was) consider this:

Since the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq in 1987, Iraq has put on the first Babylon Festival, a four-week event showcasing the government's efforts to rebuild the ancient city. Iraq's President Saddam Hussein portrays himself as the new Nebuchadnezzar who will lead the Iraqi people to greatness and the city of Babylon is his visible link to that past greatness.

*Christianity Today, 11/18/88*

Babylon and beast-worship are linked up in the future though. And there will be no hope for those who have accepted his mark. Now, we should make no apology for these judgements that we read about. Modern people have largely ignored the real, spiritual evil that is in the world. And because evil by THAT time will have ripened fully, the harvest will be total.

#### THE TOTALITY OF THE HARVEST (14:14-20)

The Bible testifies to several basic facts about sin. Do not allow the world to put you to sleep in relation to these facts. The Bible testifies:

1. Sin is an awful thing. It is not 'OK sometimes and not OK others. It is always awful and it always grieves the Lord. He has been very patient with this world but the day is coming when His patience will run out.
2. Sin is real and it is in the world. It isn't the product of preachers or other narrow-minded folks' imagination. I believe it takes a colossal effort to ignore sin as the bottom-line explanation for the evil that is so evident.
3. You and I are sinners. We're bona fide participants in the problem. We are card-carrying perpetrators. And the only remedy for sin is the redemption that Christ offered when He shed His blood on the cross and paid the penalty for our sins. Jesus endured the harvest that we read about in vss.14-20 FOR all who will trust in it!

These last verses make it clear: Sin is sin and God is a holy God. "Holy" means that He is pure and He is free from all evil and defect. The language of this passage is very graphic and I believe it is meant to symbolize the totality of the harvest. I like what J. Vernon McGee was led to say when he was preaching through this section. It brings it right home, I think:

My friend, there is nothing that will straighten out your life like knowing that our God is a holy God, that the Lord Jesus Christ is righteous, and that He is *not* going to tolerate sin in your life. And this same concept should be taught to our children. I am heartened to see that some psychologists are returning to this position. My friend, the problem with your little [Johnnie] is that he is a mean, little brat and should be turned across your knee and spanked instead of treated as a cross between a piece of Dresden china and an orchid. As someone has well said, the board of education should be applied to the seat of learning. (J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*, Vol.5, p.1014.)

There is one final observation to make on this passage today. Back in verse 10, do you see how John describes the judgement for beast-worshippers?

*"Mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger..."* I do not think the Lord is going to allow us to be present for that, although He Himself and His angels will be. It is one of the reasons that I believe the rapture of the Church occurs before the tribulation.

Dear ones, may the Lord give us the grace to adjust our lives in accordance with what we read in the Revelation. I hope you will remember this series of messages for the rest of your lives, not because the individual messages are particularly memorable, but because in these weeks and months of your life you are encountering a portion of God's inspired Word that many believers (maybe *most* believers) never venture into.

Whatever we become as Dartmouth Bible Church and however we grow, I hope we are slowly increasing in the sobriety with which we run our daily lives. As the world grows more evil and heads toward the darkness of the tribulation, may you and I grow more full of light. May God help you to love Him and to love His Son. May He help you to long to hear His voice EACH day and to desire to please Him.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 15

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 25 7-30-89

## *When TODAY Will NOT be the Day of Salvation*

Introduction When the Apostle Paul wrote his second Epistle to the believers in the Greek city of Corinth, he quoted from Isaiah's prophecy from six hundred years before:

*"And working together [with God] we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--for He says, AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU; Behold, now is THE ACCEPTABLE TIME, behold, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION. (2 Corinthians 6:1,2; Isaiah 49:8)*

So, twenty-six hundred years ago, God was saying to people, "Trust Me and I will redeem you." Two thousand years ago He was still making the same appeal. Today, in 1989, He makes the same appeal and many are responding around the globe. But the day will indeed come when He will cease making the appeal to people to come to Him for redemption. The days of trusting in the Lord will be over and a different chapter in His book will be opened. This different chapter, which is about His righteous judgement of the earth, is not a long chapter but it is a dramatic one.

As we come to chapter 15 in our study of the Revelation, we come upon the last part of the last chapter of history as we know it. Having survived the first fourteen chapters of the Revelation, I imagine you probably thought the worst was over, but the worst is yet to come. Our chapter today is the PREFACE for the final series of judgements which will come on the earth toward the end of the Great Tribulation.

This chapter and the one to follow lay out for us the seven BOWL JUDGEMENTS, which you will remember make up the seventh of the TRUMPET judgements (Chs.8-10), which themselves make up the seventh SEAL judgement (Ch.6). So you see, as we've gone through the Revelation to this point we see that as the Tribulation progresses the wrath and judgement of God on the world grows more intense and concentrated. It is not because once God gets started handing out judgement, He can't quit. Its that the evil in the world has grown so concentrated and thorough with its poisoning of people's lives and desires.

It is a dark time. It is the *darkest* time the planet will ever see. It is NOT a time for purifying you and me, but its a time for dealing with Satan and all who choose to follow him. Maybe as we read these things it might make you a more zealous witness for Christ!

We read a lot about reducing the population explosion of this earth. Well, hell has had a population explosion for many years too! Someone once said of the evangelist of the last century, D. L. Moody that he personally looked into the faces of more people than any man who ever lived and that he *reduced* the population of hell by two million. --J. Vernon McGee

Real Praise in Heaven (15:1-4)

In the first four verses we read about the beginning of the end. Again we encounter angels, seven of them. Each of these angels holds one of the seven final plagues. It is in these plagues that God's wrath comes to an end.

As dark as this time is, and as sick as Jesus' enemies will become, there IS an end to God's anger. He is not like Satan whose anger and fury and malignancy will NEVER end. But the Lord's wrath DOES come to an end.

In verse two there is a magnificent picture--a sea of glass mixed with fire. And on this sea stand those who made it through the Tribulation. The Church as you and I know it will not go through the Tribulation, but another portion of the Church will grow *during* that Tribulation. Many will be martyred for their faith. Some will not but will successfully stand up to the Antichrist. These are those victorious ones that we read about in verse 2.

Victory over tribulation is no small thing! It means a lot to Jesus when His servants are victorious over their troubles. When you stand on top of the glassy sea that was mixed with fire, it is precious to the Lord. He does not take it lightly!

Sometimes we give in to sin and bitterness. But other times we do not, and we find "one for the win column!" This verse is really a summary of what the Christian life is all about. Dear ones, I'm sorry, but you're *never* going to have NO tribulation this side of glory. You have to fight the good fight from here on in. But sometimes, and increasingly so as you grow in grace, you will have real victory. And at those times you will feel like singing--and thus, you AS THE TRIBULATION SAINTS, will take up your harp and sing to the Lord!

There is a lot of music in this Book--even though there's a lot of judgement, that I do not find particularly appealing to ponder--there is a lot of music too, and I have always been a music lover!

Here the saints sing an ancient song--they tie in their praise with their heritage of old because they sing out the Song of Moses, which goes all the way back to Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32. These saints are more modern than WE ARE, and yet they flip way back in their "praise book" to some ancient lyrics and use them to praise God afresh.

When you think of the Book of Revelation, and you say, "Now what was that Book about?"--you should remember that it is largely a book of praise. In Revelation there are fourteen "doxologies" throughout the chapters. (See handout). God is worthy to be praised as this book

reveals Him, and that is a major theme in the book. Is it one of the themes of your life? Is it something you like to do NOW, and you like to hear other people doing? If so, then you are right in line with John's Revelation!

I'm looking forward to hearing the Jacobs Brothers singers here this Wednesday. Their music is Gospel music and it will be refreshing to listen to something that is like fine, aged wine and to savor its quality. Its not always the new stuff that is the most valuable!

Now during the tribulation, countless thousands of people will willingly receive the mark of the Beast--they will turn to him to meet their needs. They will trust him and they will not trust God. Not trusting God with our lives is the greatest sacrilege there is. Its worse than anything insulting to God that man might imagine. That is why God keeps mentioning this number and mark of the Beast. People will trust the Beast and Satan. They will reject a providing God.

And this is why they are singing the song of Moses. Moses tried to turn the people's attention TOWARDS the God who is a Rock! He is Almighty. He is not weak. He is righteous in all His ways, not just in some. He is worthy of people trusting in Him. And yet most people during the tribulation would rather trust a man--the Beast. They might say, "Him, we can see at least." "He gives us a meal voucher, at least."

But the tribulation saints, when once they reach victory, will sing out a real praise song. They hung in there and found the Lord more than willing and able to reward their perseverance. Then the scene turns to those seven angels again...

#### The Indictment from Heaven (15:5-8)

Verse 5 speaks of "the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven." The temple that was in Jerusalem and the tabernacle--which was a large tent, basically--which the Israelites moved around with them--these are just shadows of a heavenly temple and tabernacle. It is a tabernacle of testimony because it testifies to certain truths. We tend to forget the truth but it is never forgotten in heaven.

The tabernacle that the Israelites transported about was centered around the ark of the covenant. The ark was basically a wooden box, overlaid with gold. In it were three things, each of which TESTIFIED to the truth that man keeps on persisting in rebellion to God, and therefore is always in need of God's mercy...

In the ark which was in the tabernacle, were the tablets of the Law, reminding the people of man's rebellion against God's will. There was also the pot of manna, which reminded them of man's rebellion against God's provision. And there was the rod of Aaron which sprouted, and which was a testimony that the people were so often rejecting God's LEADERSHIP.

Men today are still rejecting God's will, His provision and His leadership. And they are still in desperate need of His mercy, which, praise the Lord, is still abundantly available through the blood of Jesus Christ. TODAY, is still the day of salvation.

I think its interesting in verse 6 that these angels, clean, bright, holy and magnificent to behold...are carrying bowls of wrath. We shall look into those bowls next week, Lordwilling. But their beauty, even in the midst of impending judgement from the Lord, is fascinating to me. They are unstained by those bowls and unintimidated by them. That is because, as verse 3 says, "*Righteous and true are Thy ways*". They are not afraid to encounter God's judgements and neither should we be. Christians so rarely speak of judgement from God as if it were something to be ashamed of. It is not. Some people may not *approve*. SO let them disapprove. These angels bearing the bowls are clean and bright and there is no finer or more noble state to be in.

Dear ones, we must be bearers of the *whole counsel of God*. We have seen the gentle Jesus. And now we see the wrath of the Lamb. A world that has rejected the blood of Christ must bear the judgement for sin.

Verse 8 is a sign of impending doom for those who persist in their disregard for the sovereignty and holiness of God. On that day, even the angels must wait outside until God's direct judgements are completed. Incense in heaven is a symbol we read in Revelation and it refers to the prayers of the saints. But this cloud is SMOKE which comes, as John is seeing it, from God, and accompanying His wrathful correcting of the world.

Now this passage brings several applications to bear for you and me.

1. Let's not forget that judgement is coming to the world. We do tend to forget that. We get angry and frustrated because we see injustice and we don't see any avenging angels right on the spot. Let's not forget that although He is patient at the moment, the day is coming when the world will see the full wrath of God. If you are depending on Jesus to be your substitute for God's judgement, then you will not see His judgement on the world.

2. Music is one activity that Christians never outgrow. In the waning days of the tribulation, when so much is black on this planet, music, and I might add--music with instrumental accompaniment--will be going on in glory. I hope you enjoy the music we sing. It is sort of a preview of the future for us.

3. It is *possible* to have victory over trials, tribulations and your own sinful tendencies. Satan does not want you to believe that. He looks at you and says, "Well, I've lost him; but maybe I can get him to think that he is doomed to be unhappy following Jesus." My friends, the world, the flesh and the devil are worthy adversaries to be sure. But know that some saints are going to stand on the glassy sea. And those saints are just like you and me: born with a sin nature, weakened sometimes, discouraged others. But they "come off victorious" and somehow, keep trusting in Jesus!

4. On that day, it will NOT be the day of salvation. It will be too late to flee to Christ for those living at the end of the Tribulation. But today is not too late. Have you fled to Him and had your heart and life washed in the blood of the Lamb? If you have not yet, may the Lord help you to do that while it is still called "Today."



Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 16:1-11

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 26 8-6-89

### GOD AND MAN AT WITS END

Introduction When you get right down to it, the Bible is about two things: God, and man. Yes, there are angels, and nations, and wars, and churches and so forth. But if you want to remember in a simple fashion what the theme of Scripture is, think of it as the story, from GOD'S POINT OF VIEW, of God and man, and how they do or do not relate... *That's what the Book is about.* If you are interested in understanding that problem--once again, from *God's viewpoint*, then you will be interested in the Bible. If you are not really interested in who God is, what he has done, who MAN is, and what he has done, as evaluated by the Lord, then the Bible will *not* be of too much interest to you...

Unfortunately, what many people do, is to pick and choose those passages they like, and discard the rest. For instance, hardly anyone you talk to would balk if you said to them, "Well, you know the Bible says that 'God is love.'" But if you read them Revelation 16 they might well object. Or, people like to talk about Adam and Eve before the Fall, but suggest to them a verse like Romans 5:12, ("*...through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...*"), and they are likely to respond with something like, "Well, that's *your* interpretation..." or, "We have to not take the Bible too literally." People tend to approach the Bible much the same way they do in a cafeteria line--"I'll have a little dish of this...Oh, that doesn't look too good--Oh, let me have TWO of those over there!"

What God has done though, is to provide us with a *complete picture* of all He wants us to understand about Him, about ourselves, and about how we are to relate to Him. The Bible is like a beautiful crown, consistent all around, priceless and well-fit for the wearer. The crowning jewel on the crown of the Bible is the Book of Revelation. Without it, we would be much poorer, when it comes to really seeing the complete plan of redemption that the mind of God invented... The Book of Revelation shows us the TRUE God, and it shows us a true picture of MAN, as he really exists.

Revelation 16 is important because it defeats a couple of myths that so many people cling to: First, that God is only peace and light and that He would not war against anything, even evil in its darkest forms. The second myth that many people believe (and that this chapter reveals is NOT true), is that just given enough information, all people would ultimately repent of their sins.

Note: It stands to reason that if you *buy* that second line of reasoning, then God must morally give all people the TIME to repent, and thus eventually ALL will be saved and welcomed into heaven. It makes for a convenient package--and it is just the sort of thing you hear in many liberal Protestant churches across the land. The difficulty is that it does not lend itself to any normal, face value interpretation of the Scripture.

The Bible shows us that without the work of the Holy Spirit, drawing men and wooing men to repentance, all men will end their lives cursing God. It HUMBLER me to think that I TOO would be one who curses God, uses His name vainly, hating the Gospel were it not for the fact that God in His love has rescued me and adopted me into the family of His Son.

Now today, before we celebrate the Lord's Table, we're going to take a look at Rev.16:1-11 and peer into the bowls of wrath. My conviction is that this will draw you even closer to Calvary and that in your heart you will huddle closer to the Lamb!

In verses 1 and 2, John views the command of God for the angels to begin the bowl judgements, and the first bowl. I think you will find these bowl judgements reminiscent of a time much earlier in Israel's history when Israel was being held captive by a hard-hearted Egyptian Pharaoh. This first bowl judgement is some kind of open sores on the worshippers of the beast. It will not fall on those families who are hanging in there and are still naming the name of Jesus Christ as their provider.

Can you imagine being in a certain neighborhood, and everyone on the block breaks out in these awful sores--I think some of you can relate to that with this virus that seems to be going around right now with the spots and mouth sores--and everyone is wrestling in the neighborhood with this scourge; *all except this one family*, who haven't been able to buy anything at the store, or hold garage sale even. They've been hanging in there miraculously--but *they* don't have these sores. They have been spared. God has protected the saints from this judgement in His love and concern for them, since they resisted the enticements of the beast.

Again John is led to mention--as if it really bothers the Lord because He keeps leading John to mention it--"*...who had the mark of the beast.*" You know, I don't know if maybe you have found this prediction in the Revelation a little hard to believe... But it is not far-fetched that people should wear the name of their god on their persons:

- \* What about that occasional tattoo that you see where a person has had a cross, or a picture of Jesus, or even His name on their arm?
- \* What about in the Hindu religion? That little mark you see on the foreheads of many Hindus is in fact the name of the god that they worship--and in Hinduism there are almost too many gods to count...

We learn something else about God from these judgements. It is that what He sends to men, is ALWAYS just exactly what they need or deserve. He doesn't judge foolishly. He doesn't touch a rich man's bank account with a tiny government penalty. He doesn't slap the murderer on the wrist. He doesn't say to the worshippers of the beast, "Now, Now, that's not nice killing those children of mine like that, and worshipping that nasty ol' beast." What He sends man's way, whether it is in the way of judgement or mercy, is always EXACTLY appropriate. Praise His Name, the grace from Him I received at conversion was given to my heart and mind in just the right way that I needed it at the time. He is a wondrous God in this, dear ones. There is none like Him!

In verses 3 to 7 we see the second and third bowls, which are the transformation of all salt water and then all fresh water into blood. Usually blood is a token of life but here it is a token of death. The cool sea breeze becomes a stench from the bloody carcasses of sea animals floating lifeless.

I wonder if we realize how much we are dependent on God today? Com Electric, Com Gas, the Water Department send us bills, but where did they get the electricity, gas and water? Obviously they have something to do with getting these things to us, but GOD is the One who created the electricity, the gas and the water! Has God ever sent you a bill for the sunshine, for the water you drink or for the air you breath? Have you paid Him? But God who has been gracious to a Christ-rejecting world, will at last judge the earth in righteousness and complete fairness.

Judgement with a poisoning with blood is appropriate because of the bloody murder of God's servants through time (verse 6). The world is in such a state of sin, and has been so since Eden that it often has responded to the proclamation of the truth by annihilating the proclaimers. I think of the five American missionaries who were speared and hacked to death in Ecuador by Auca Indians in 1956. Great revival followed their murders to be sure, but nonetheless that was five young servants of Christ who were slaughtered because they dared to proclaim the truth of the Gospel. The world has not generally been too kind to those people who preach the claims of Jesus Christ. And so, as the "angel of the waters" said of these bowl judgements, "*They deserve it.*"

At this point in his own exposition of this Revelation, J. Vernon McGee wrote:

"My friend, whatever God does is righteous and holy. If you don't agree with him it is too bad. You are wrong, not God... What are you going to do about it? In fact, what can you do about it? If you are not in agreement with God, you had better get in agreement with Him [because] He is righteous in everything He does."

The speaking altar in vs. 7 probably refers back to the saints who were under the altar who had been praying for justice to be done. They are in hearty agreement with a righteous God sending forth a righteous judgement.

In verses 8-11 we see two more bowl judgements coming in quick succession where the heat grows greater but the light less. In the sixties some of us had "black lights." This will be real black light of a terrifying kind! It may be that the depletion of the ozone layer accelerates so rapidly that is how God uses the sun to judge. It may also be that the depletion of ozone that we are beginning to see today is a "precursor" for the tribulation, which may be much closer upon us than we tend to think!

There is great physical torment for all those who worship the beast and I am sure that those tribulation saints living still are humbled further just as the Israelites must have been as the death angel swept through Egypt on that first Passover!

But what is really tragic (although not surprising) is that these bowl judgements, coming now like waves--do not result in repentance and turning to God for mercy. Instead this judgement just aggravates the natural reaction of the wicked toward God and they "blaspheme". Blasphemy is not a word we hear often today, although it is so much around us that we don't hardly even notice it anymore! Blasphemy is simply saying something wrong about God. It may be accompanied by cursing and anger or it may not be. Here surely it is. These beast worshippers DO know something about God, and yet they twist their sore-ridden necks toward God and rail out against Him with all kinds of curses. They do not beg Him for mercy. They curse His name. It will be tragic, for sure. Man and God are at wit's end with each other. Jesus Christ is the Judge, and unbelieving man is the blasphemmer in the end.

Dear ones, all this makes me thankful for THIS dispensation in which we are living, when people from all walks of life are universally invited *still* to come to the Lamb for forgiveness and lovingkindness. It is not the tribulation yet. The news media keeps us up on all the trouble spots around the world, but praise God we still enjoy a large degree of comfort and freedom and opportunity to share the good news easily.

I hope that by looking fearfully into these bowls that will come to this planet, you DO shudder; but that you do also commit yourself to love Him more fervently, and to do everything you possibly can to tell people about His free grace and how they can come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, rather than as Judge. May the Lord grant us the grace to live in light of His soon coming.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 16:12-21

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 27 8-13-89

## GOD AND MAN AT WIT'S END (Part 2)

Introduction We have been studying through the Book of Revelation together and have been learning for some time about the period of seven years which closes our age; a period of time that Jesus called the "great tribulation." Looking at the tribulation has had an effect on me that I hadn't really anticipated. Often when a Christian thinks about the Book of Revelation, he thinks first about the second advent of our Lord to this planet. But as we have been spending quite a few weeks investigating the tribulation (since that is what chapters 6-18 are about), I have found myself feeling a little more *distant* from the world around me. Looking at the tribulation has damaged my enthusiasm a little for some of the things that normally might entice me. For example, its easy to become fascinated with political happenings, or get excited about new possessions, or enjoy watching my favorite sports team, and so forth. Now, I still read the paper every day; and I still enjoy getting something new; and I think about the Rangers and Redskins. But reading about how evil this world is going to become, and how anti-Christian it is going to become--indeed already is becoming; I have begun to long a little more to see it gotten over with, and to be with the Savior in glory. Its not that I'm tired of living, or that life is drudgery for me. It is not; I take great joy in living, and I want you to have the joy of the Lord too. But as I have been pondering the Book of Revelation, I have found myself feeling a little less excited about the things of THIS world. This world can be very deceptive. It can lull us to sleep! Being a home-owner; being into electronic gadgetry; being a sports fan; enjoying talk about political events are the kinds of things I'm talking about--they can absorb a lot of a person's energy! But this world is growing increasingly anti-Jehovah, I believe. It is growing less tolerant with Christianity and all Christianity stands for. I think that process is going to accelerate. And, I think Christians are going to begin to need to depend upon each other for more and more. That is, up until the minute that the rapture occurs...

Now, in Revelation 16 we are reading about the bowl-judgements that will occur near the end of the tribulation. The church will not be present, per se; but there will be some believers around who have COME TO Christ *during* the tribulation. We pick up John's report in verse 12...

The Sixth Bowl (Vss.12-16) Much speculation has been given to this verse as to WHO are the kings from the east. If you were to survey the top 100 best known biblical commentaries on the Book of Revelation on this passage, you would discover about 50 different interpretations of the

identity of the kings from the East! Here is an example of what we said some months back in HOW to interpret the Book of Revelation: unless there is some compelling reason not to, take what you read at face value. Interpret plainly and normally, unless there is an obvious symbol being given. Here I see no reason to think that John intended to be symbolic. I think the simplest and best explanation is that this refers to kings or rulers from the Orient or East, who will participate in the last world war. And in their logistics, they are aided by one of the seven angels who are orchestrating these judgements. The Euphrates River will be dried up in order to make it passible for a very large body of infantry.

Now, it may occur to you, "Why would these soldiers need the river to be dried up, in this day of mechanized infantry--in this day of 'air calvary?' And in this day of 'combat engineers', highly skilled in the use of pontoon bridges and amphibious landings?" Surely they could just hop in their choppers and into their tanks and swim across, couldn't they? Well, we must remember the SIZE of the armies we are talking about. It may be a military force to the tune of 200 million! And that is a lot of helicopters and tanks! No, as part of the sixth bowl-judgement, the Lord will facilitate their logistical problem with crossing the final stretch of terrain... The Euphrates will dry right up and open the way to the Middle East for these armies.

Speaking of amphibians, we see a picture in verse 13 that may derive from ancient Zoroastrianism, which was an Iranian (Persian-based) pagan religion around the time of the prophet Daniel. In verses 13-15, John sees the unholy trinity--the dragon, the beast and the false prophet--vomiting out three unclean spirits, which looked to John like frogs. John MAY have thought of frogs because in the ancient world, where Zoroastrianism (also known as Mazdaism) was predominant in many places, taught that evil spirits *looked* like frogs.

Here we see the most grotesque example of demon possession that exists in the Bible. Demon possession is real folks, and in those last days it is probably going to be the rule rather than the exception. And the most predominant political leaders of the day are going to be possessed by these repugnant spirits. They will proceed forth from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet in some diabolical way and exert profound influence over the other political leaders of the world. They will do this in such a way as to prompt them together to rally for a battle against God Himself.

We are tempted here, as we look at the end of verse 14, to think that this coming war must be against the PEOPLE of God. But the verse does not say that. It says that these armies of Satan and his deceived followers--deceived with the hope of gaining world political power, always a hot number-- are gathered together "*for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty*". But the focus of this final war will be on God Himself; on the soon-to-return Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot fathom what the dragon, the beast, the false prophet and all their countless followers think that they can accomplish in this war. But their deception will be complete and they will *assemble*, as we are told in verse 16, on the plane of the Mount of Meggido which is about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. Now, we read earlier a passage from the prophet Joel, and if my understanding is correct and

Joel is talking about the last battle too, it will not occur at Armageddon but rather in the valley of Jehosophat, near Jerusalem itself. What we read in Rev.16:16 is that the marshalling of Satan's forces will occur on the plain of Megiddo. But, wherever the battle occurs, it will be terrible and it will quite possible last for several days.

Verse 15 is a parenthesis. It is not directed specifically at US but at those saints who are still hanging in there at the time of this final war. They should not give in, even under terror. It is probably an image John used from the Temple guard from his day, where if they were caught sleeping at their post their *clothes would be set on fire!* And then they would have to walk about naked or nearly so, in pain and humiliation both. We are living still in a time when through the completed work of Jesus, on the cross, we walk about clothed with HIS righteousness. See 2 Cor.5:1-5 and I Peter 5:5; Rev.3:4,5; 19:13,14. But even though this "beatitude" in verse 16 is directed as a promise for the tribulation saints, it is very applicable for us too! We do not know when he is going to come. For non-Christians the rapture will catch them COMPLETELY by surprise. Even for Christians His coming will be with stealth and WE need to be watchful and expectant of His coming for us,, living our lives as though it could occur literally at any moment, which, I believe, it surely can. Jesus says to you, if you are a Christian-- **"STAY AWAKE! KEEP YOUR CLOTHING ON, spiritually speaking. Do not let your guard down. Do not be caught in an unprepared state of mind when I come for you."**

#### The Seventh Bowl Judgement (vss.17-21)

Finally the last bowl is "poured out" from God. Again, it is an angel who performs the work and this time the target is the air itself. Scripture tells us in Ephesians 2:2 that Satan is "the prince of the power of the air". The atmosphere of this planet is his dominion. He has been allowed by God to be the boss and to exercise a limited and controlled sovereignty over the planet. Gorbachev is not the strongest individual on the planet. Bush is not the strongest individual on the planet. Trump is not, Mary Kay Ash is not; Molly Yard is not; Arnold Schwarzenegger is not. The dragon, Satan is...

So it should not surprise us that God directs that the final bowl of wrath should ransack Satan's castle itself. In verse 17 we see that the voice of God Himself pronounces a conclusion-- **"IT IS DONE."** Jesus will say this once more when He sets up a new heaven and a new earth (Rev.21:6). It is one word in the original Greek: "GEGONEN." Period. The plagues and judgements are over. There is no negotiating, no arguing with the justice that has been enacted. It is finished. We can't help but think of Jesus' last words on the cross too, when He uttered his last breath and said "TETELESTAI", it is finished.

Dear ones, when our God finishes a job, it is completely finished. It is done. When He created, and then rested, the world was perfect. When He judges that fallen world, and all its creatures, that too will be complete. All the papers will be in; all the arguments complete; all the punishment fulfilled. And when Jesus paid for our sins, He didn't just pay for SOME of them. He didn't just complete the FIRST STAGE of your redemption. He took care of ALL your debt. And He completely took care

of the needs of all who would ever trust in Him, whether they trusted in Him before He came (based on the prophecies), or after He came (based on the New Testament record).

The last verses of the chapter start talking about the aftermath of the seventh bowl. The atmosphere was the target at the end of the war, but it causes a final upheaval on the surface of the planet. The greatest earthquake of all time occurs--call it a 30 on the Richter scale! We see a mention here of "the great city" which I think is a literal and rebuilt Babylon. It falls under God's judgement and we will learn more about what this means in chapters 17 and 18.

Again, too, we see that men are not repenting at this point. Their reaction is not, "Yes, Lord, now I see--save me please." It is "Cursed be the unfair and terrible God of heaven!" What they say, they say in earnest and in fierce wrath, but it is blasphemy. It is untrue. We are surrounded today by blasphemy. It is not just the religious stuff, or the anti-Christian stuff that makes it into the press. We are surrounded by blasphemous entertainment, and we don't much care. We are surrounded by the educational assumption that God, even if He DOES exist, doesn't care about people. We are surrounded by the belief--and I do mean BELIEF that God did not specially create this planet and its inhabitants but that it all evolved and developed by chance. And we don't much care.

My friends, I am glad that I won't be around (if I understand the Bible correctly) on the last day. If that day is appointed to be soon; within just a few years, will you be around? If you know the Savior personally; if you are relying on His death on the cross and BANKING on His resurrection, than you are what the Bible calls a CHRISTIAN. You are a saint and you will be raptured along with the rest of the Church before the tribulation opens. You will not find yourself clothed in your own supposed good works, but you will look down and see yourself clothed with garments which God Himself has provided you with--the garments of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If you have not yet found Jesus Christ in your heart, may you find Him today, simply by asking Him to take control of your life and to be YOUR Savior.

If you are a Christian, are you living in light of Christ's return? Are you making those decisions that you make each day and week as if THIS world is going to pass away, be pummeled with hundred-pound hailstones one day and even the geography changed? Then you are living as a pilgrim, not too enchanted with the trappings of modern life; not too in love with entertainment and technology. May the Lord give us a vision of HIS perspective on this life. May we act like His disciples, busy with His work. And He has promised that He will be with us always, even until the day in which He snatches us out!



Dartmouth Bible Church  
N. Dartmouth, MA

Thursday Evening Fellowship  
August 24, 1989

### A PRIMER ON REVELATION 17 & 18

Intro. In Rev. 17 & 18, John reveals the fate of "the great harlot", which is "Babylon the great" (16:19). One of the features of this Babylon is her commercial greatness. What examples of commercialization in religion (of any brand) can you think of?

This Sunday we will be considering both chapters 17 & 18 from the Book of Revelation, which deal with the subject "Babylon." Twice before these chapters, John suddenly and without explanation introduced "Babylon" into his prophecy (14:8 and 16:19). Now, as Sunday morning's message will outline, John receives a lengthy revelation about Babylon. Since the Sunday morning exposition will deal with the entire two chapters (42 verses) and will therefore only survey the subject, it is good for us to lay some groundwork tonight.

"BABYLON" IN SCRIPTURE: The ancient culture of Babylon really begins, from a biblical standpoint, in Genesis 11:1-9 with the tower of "Babel". There the people go into rebellion against God, they swell with self-sufficiency and a lust for power and glory. Much later, it is under the empire of Babylon and the throne of King Nebuchadnezzar that the "times of the Gentiles" begin (Jer.27:1-11; Dan.2:37,38), and Judah is defeated and taken into captivity as a stern measure of discipline from Jehovah. Even Jerusalem is destroyed, for a season... During this time both Isaiah and Jeremiah give striking prophecies about the future role of Babylon. (See Isaiah 13,14; Jeremiah 50,51). Although some Bible scholars feel these ancient prophecies about Babylon have been fulfilled at one time or another, others (myself, for instance) feel that they have not yet been fulfilled, and therefore what we encounter in Revelation 16:17 through chapter 18 is YET FUTURE.

"BABYLONIANISM" AS A WORLD-INFLUENCE: Since Babylon plays a very prominent role in Revelation, it must have relevance for Christians... What IS that relevance? It is this: during the tribulation, there is going to be a single, dominant world religion. It will be the CLIMAX of the collective rebellion against the true God that began at Babel. While it will not be the only religious force on the planet--there will be some believers left--it will not tolerate any true Christianity. Religion will have political, commercial and even entertainment influence. Religion will be a very big thing in those last days. But it will be a completely secularized religion. Today's "ecumenical" movement sets the stage for the "Babylonianism" of the end. It is a final example of what was true in Jesus' day as well: organized religion doesn't tolerate too much of the truth!

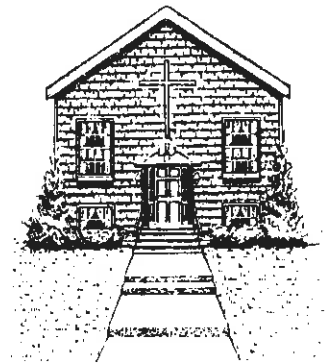
WHO IS "BABYLON"? There are five major interpretations: 1) a general prophecy of the whole world of EVIL; 2) a symbol for a secularized, future Jerusalem; 3) a symbol for the city of Rome; 4) the Roman Catholic Church; 5) a literal & rebuilt Babylon, on the Euphrates River--wherein is headquartered a "new" world religious order, comprising Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.

WHAT IS INDISPUTABLE ABOUT "BABYLON" 1) At the end of this age two powerful forces, a federation of nations and an ecclesiastical apostate (*departed from orthodox Christian doctrine*) body, will unitedly (at first) exercise jurisdiction over the world. 2) there will be a severe persecution of tribulation Christians, both by the ten-headed beast, and by the apostate church. 3) a godless, economic, commercial & worldwide activity will hold sway. 4) a dual judgement will bring this condition of abomination to an end. 5) the federation of nations will turn on the ecclesiastical power and tear it to pieces. 6) the whole ungodly system, staggering in drunkenness of Babylonian pride, power and wealth, will be destroyed by an act of God, which will bring rejoicing to the people of God (18:20).

? Does it seem out of character to contemplate Christians rejoicing over Babylon's judgement?

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages

52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 17 and 18

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 28 Aug. 27, 1989

## BABYLON, AND THE END OF ECUMENICAL RELIGION

Introduction Today we are going to do a broad survey of both chapters 17 and 18 of the Book of Revelation. These two chapters in Revelation deal with the subject of a future organization of world-wide proportion. John calls this organization "Babylon." In doing a brief survey of the 42 verses of these two chapters today, we're going to look at:

1. What "Babylon" is
2. How much "Babylonianism" there is today
3. Why Babylon's destruction is significant
4. How Babylon's destruction is relevant

If you are visiting with us today for the first time, or if you have not been with us for too many recent messages in Revelation I want you to know up front that this message may be difficult to follow. These two chapters contain some of the most difficult images in the whole Bible to interpret well, and they really need to be understood within the entire sweep of the Book of Revelation. But I am going to try my best to lay out the meaning of Rev. 17 & 18 for you in the plainest way possible.

All the way back to Revelation chapter 6, we have been studying together that seven-year period at the end of time, which Jesus called the "great tribulation." It is the final gasp of world-wide and Satanic evil before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ physically returns to the planet.

By the way, did you know that Jesus Christ is planning to come back to Earth physically? That is one of the most precious truths of the New Testament, and one not much talked about in a lot of churches. But we look forward to the fact that He has promised to come back, and that actually, the "rapture" of the Church could occur at any time!

During the great tribulation there are going to be many things happening on the world scene, and they are going to happen very quickly--that the world has never experienced. Time will almost seem to be accelerating as it races to an appointed end. There will be some people who trust in Jesus in that time, but most people will join up politically and economically with the unified federation of nations which we know from the Book of Revelation, is headed by Satan himself (called the dragon). There will also be this other organization, *religious* in nature, whom John calls "the great harlot", or, "Babylon." In 17:3 John sees the woman sitting on the beast. This is the picture of these two world powers, in cahoots,

exercising a global influence. Of those people who resist their programs, who trust still in Jesus Christ, some will courageously forfeit their lives as martyrs.

It is that kind of person whom the Bible holds up as the real hero of the faith. It isn't the pastors of the biggest churches. It isn't the people who give the most money to the churches. It isn't the Bible teacher who writes the most books or preaches the most sermons. The person the Scripture recognizes as a real spiritual hero, is the person who was willing to take a risk for Christ's sake, and for the testimony of knowing Him. I wish that more of you were willing to take the little tiny risk of being baptized in the name of Christ. That is one little thing that I know entails a feeling of risk, for some, that I think the Lord delights in!

Well, in those last days some Christians will stand firm for Christ. They will not transfer their trust and faith and hope to Satan or to the systems of philosophy of the world--all of which ultimately end up at Satan's feet--they will stand firm in their trust of Jesus Christ to vindicate them.

I think the purpose of the two chapters is summed up in verse 20 of chapter 18: "*Rejoice over her [Babylon] O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgement for you against her.*" These chapters may seem of a distant relevance for us and that is because they are not DIRECTED AT us. They were given to John to write down for the believers to read *during the tribulation*. Those are the Christians who will be suffering deeply for Christ, and God's final and complete judgement on this beast and on this harlot are ON THEIR BEHALF.

Does it seem out of character to you, that Christians should be told to "rejoice" over the judgement of God on somebody else? Does it bother you at all, or does it seem contradictory? Aren't we supposed to be filled with sorrow whenever we contemplate any person coming under the judgement of the Lord? If your answer is, "Yes, that does make me a little uncomfortable," let me remind you of a couple of things: God is never unfair. Period. Second, the evil of the end times is in a form so concentrated that believers become the unusual target of the enemies of Christ, and their persecution will be almost beyond belief. If you could watch a video in advance of how believers will be treated, you would long for their vindication!

WHAT IS BABYLON? Now let's make an attempt to identify who this "Babylon" is that we read about... In the Old Testament times, Babylon was the center of a huge and powerful empire. Its history began all the way back in Genesis 11 with the construction of the tower of Babel, and the reign of a king named Nimrod. We know the Babylonian empire best because of King Nebuchadnezzar and the prophet Daniel. That empire fell in 539 B.C. (just as Daniel said it would) when the kingdom was taken over

by the Medes and Persians. But Babylon still had a future in the Old Testament prophets. The fall of Babylon as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah described it seems to be something that still has not occurred yet.

It is interesting to note that even today the area of Babylon is still one of the most fertile places on the planet and a very likely place for a new economic and commercial center. Westerners should never become so arrogant to think that the power centers for all time have to be in the West. Babylon is a prime candidate for revival--and in fact, I pointed out some weeks ago that the nation of Iraq is, just in the past couple of years, rejuvenating the ruins and rebuilding the ancient city to make it a showcase for Iraqi culture.

Now there are several interpretations that biblical scholars have offered as to what is the identity of this Babylon in Revelation. I have listed them on the study sheet that you can pick up by the door today, but I am just going to tell you simply who I think John has in mind here. I think this "great harlot" is in fact a religious organization, headquartered at a literal and rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates River in what is now called Iraq. It will be the world center of a "new" religious order which has welcomed former Protestants, former Catholics, former Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. It is a world-church that encompasses all kinds of people.

HOW MUCH "BABYLONIANISM" IS THERE AROUND TODAY? Well, this is all very interesting for the future, but what about today? Can we see any of this starting to shape up in the world yet? I believe we can, and it seems to be picking up speed in this century.

"Babylonianism" is really anything which contributes to false religion. It is anything in history, or around us today which is in rebellion against the true God. It is the New Age movement, because the New Age movement encourages mysticism and a rejection of Christian truth. It is any church, recognized or not, which promotes anything at all other than biblical Christian doctrine. It is the commercialization of religion which is so prominent in so many churches. And, I might add, it is not just the commercialization that has become so prominent in Catholic churches and in liberal Protestant churches, but we can see "Babylonianism" creeping even into our evangelical and Bible-believing churches when they commercialize the Gospel and the things of the Lord. "Babylonianism" is anything at ALL which promotes collective rebellion against Jehovah, against Jesus Christ and against the absolute and sole authority of Scripture.

One example of "Babylonianism" that has become frighteningly powerful today, is the World Council of Churches--the American branch of which is called the National Council of Churches. The history of these organizations is interesting if for no other reason than to see how many supposedly "Christian" denominations have linked up. They could never agree doctrinally, and so they have linked arms together for other endeavors and that is why you hear about so many religious activities around that seem to have nothing whatsoever to do with the Lord.

I have found it interesting to learn too, how many of the practices in Roman Catholicism do not have their origin in that church. The traditions of mother-and-child, purgatory, holy water, saints who intercede for people, and a number of other Catholic doctrines did not begin with the Church, but have their origins in ancient Babylonian religion. Now I am not interested in "bashing" Catholicism, but I just want you to see that a significant part of the Church's history has been infiltrated by worldly traditions that God did not institute at all. Behind it all, of course, is the dragon who loves to distract Christians from the things that the Lord wants us to concentrate on. Satan would have us think religion is supposed to be complicated. He would have us think that we should link arms with all other religious people and just abandon our convictions about right theology. He would have the people of the world work in a little immorality, a little profit-making along the way, and a little cooperation with politicians too.

WHY BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION IS SIGNIFICANT We may not see any advertisements today for the "Church of Babylon" but if we are really near the beginning of the tribulation (which, by the way, means we are very near to the rapture), we are also near to the end of all religion!

I have never really liked the word "religion." It isn't "getting religion" that we are telling people about. It is coming into a brand new RELATIONSHIP with the living God, through the atoning blood of His Son. Babylonianism and all the other world religions under it will never announce THAT kind of good news! And when God destroys Babylon at the end of the tribulation, all the religiosity, all the commercialized, sophisticated religious businesses of the world, and all the man-glorifying teachings will be done away. It will just be the Savior, and the sheep, of whom there will be a great host!

Babylon's destruction is also important because it will be the great display of the fact that the true God is in fact completely sovereign over His creation (17:17). He is the creator of it, the boss of it and the king over it. Not too many people in the world submit to that fact, but when the great harlot is destroyed--albeit by the hands of the beast on which she rode--it will testify to those left that Jehovah's program cannot be thwarted. It cannot be ignored. It cannot be defeated.

HOW BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION IS RELEVANT Since we have already acknowledged that Rev. 17 & 18 are primarily here for the tribulation saints to lean on and to find comfort in, how is it relevant at all to us? Well, Paul assures us that, "*all Scripture is inspired by God and PROFITABLE for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be ADEQUATE, equipped for every good work.*"

These passages say a couple of other things TO US, as I read them.

- 1) It is time for US to leave "Babylon"; and to withdraw all responsibility of partnership with ALL organized apostasy and rebellion against the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I'm sorry, but I do not believe it when someone tells me, "I am staying in such and such a church, whether its doctrine is apostate or not, because God told me to stay there as a witness." I'm sorry dear ones, but I do not believe it. The apostate

church is not headed for revival. It is headed towards unity with the Satanic federation of nations, and from there right to destruction. God NEVER compromises with the forces of the dragon, and neither should we.

2) We have no business adopting the policies, practices or cynical attitudes that are so prevalent in the apostate churches, even if we DO stay within our own church. Worldliness can creep into a good church, even if they never change their church name.

3) It stands to reason (even if we didn't know it plainly from other scriptures) that since the doom of secular religion is sure, the victory of the Gospel is therefore also sure. Keep witnessing, dear ones. I know that many of you have yet to encounter your first evangelistic convert. But keep telling folks about Christ; about how good and loving and powerful He is; about how THEY can come to know Him so easily. Know that the philosophies you are competing with--New Age philosophy, big time religion, sensuality, cynicism all are predetermined to fail in the end. Only the Gospel will prevail. Take comfort in this fact, and rejoice with the fact that the Lord does not miss it when His children suffer and struggle for the cause of the Gospel.

Dear ones, keep on seeking the Lord Jesus Christ. Seek Him. Seek His face. Do not seek a greater religious experience. Do not just seek biblical or theological knowledge. Do not just seek new friends in the church scene. Seek the Savior. Look for Him. Do not be satisfied until your hunger is satisfied! The Scripture promises that those who seek His face sincerely will find Him, and will be filled and satisfied completely! There has never been anyone who has really known the Savior well, who has walked closely with Him and come away disappointed. He is a wonderful God and a sovereign redeemer. False religion will pass away. Satan will pass away. All your hurts in the here and now will fade away and He will wipe away every tear when you are at last with Him. Long for that day and look towards that day!

Let's sing now "In Moments Like These"...

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: I Cor.13:12; Revelation 19:1-6

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 29 Sept. 3, 1989

## What "Hallelujah" Means...

Introduction I want you folks to know that this pastor feels for the fact that some weeks, life is pretty tough for some of you. And as I review this past week for those of you with whom I was in touch, especially this past week was real trying. And so it is not without sympathy for your lot that I bring this message today. From a personal standpoint, I have never much enjoyed sermons that talked about things that were not relevant to me, or that seemed so high and lofty that they did me just about as much good as going to an art gallery--"Well, that's real nice, but now I've got to go back out the door and live my real life." I know that when we come in our service to the time for instruction, you are looking for something you can use this next week. And as we approach this scripture--and you are faced with a day-to-day routine that requires a lot of strength to stay on top of it--I want you to know that I have kept that in mind as I put together this message. And it is BECAUSE of the very real day-to-day pressures that I think this passage is intended to cheer us in the Lord; to *give us courage*; and to *provide us with a tool* for living above the pressures.

You know, the first century Christians who were the first to read these chapters from the Apostle John were not the ivory-tower, cloistered and monkish types they are sometimes thought to be. The earliest Christians were mostly poor, hard-working common folk, for many of whom it was just life to work seven days a week. Even more so, the Christians of the tribulation period about whom we have been reading will have hard lives; even to the point of seeing many of their brethren *executed* for the cause of the Gospel, in those final days. So, the thought I want you to bear in mind as we approach this chapter 19, is that the verses we will consider were written TO and ABOUT Christians, all of whom know what a hard life is about. As John reveals for them some of the scenes that will take place in the future, they are scenes meant to *encourage* and to *empower* believers who had to struggle with their faith. And, even as some of you have had a tough week--and those of you who had a great week, GIVE THANKS to the Lord today--keep in mind that these wonderful words we are considering today are given to you as FUEL for your Christian life.

Now the subject that is before us today, is the matter of PRAISE. And *learning how* to give praise to the Lord, is the "tool" for you to use in your day-to-day walk with the Lord. Beyond having "utilitarian" value for us, praise is the sacred OBLIGATION of every true Christian. But "praise" is another one of those Christian "buzz-words". We use it so often that the danger arises of the word losing its meaning.



There are people who are no more born-again than Stalin, who because they go to a church where the WORD "praise" is used, and printed in the liturgy or in the bulletin, they think they are really "praising" God. And there are also too many genuine Christians, who although they are saved from sin, rarely do they sincerely make the effort to offer up what the book of Hebrews calls, "*the sacrifice of praise...the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name*" (Heb.13:15)

Revelation 19 begins the last section of the Book of Revelation. From back in chapter 6, through chapter 18, we have been studying together about the tribulation period. It will be a time when this planet and all the people on it who have not followed Christ will come under the wrath of God in judgement. Remember that all the judgements which the Lord enacts are done in complete fairness. Man in those last days, has adopted a form of evil so concentrated and Satanic that he fully deserves exactly what we read about in those chapters if Revelation.

But now John writes, "*After these things...*" It is an expression we ran into way back in 1:19. After WHAT things, we ask? After the great tribulation... As terrible as the tribulation will be, it is not the end of God's program. When things are blackest, THAT is when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the planet: literally, physically, powerfully. He is the only One who can end the tribulation, you see.

And John heard--"back to the future", as it were-- a loud voice from heaven; "a great multitude", he calls it. Now a great number of tribulation-born Christians are added to the chorus of elders, and US, and uncounted angels and created intelligences, ALL OF WHOM would rather do nothing other than to offer up praise to God.

Now in this verse 1 we encounter another very familiar word. It is the word, "hallelujah." This is a word we hear and use all the time, but in fact it is a fairly rare word in the Bible. In fact, it is only used four times in the whole New Testament--all of which are here in these six verses we're looking at today.

"Hallelujah" is a word John heard, which no other New Testament writer used. But it IS found in the Old Testament, especially in the last five psalms, and in Psalms 104-106, where it is repeated often. Hallelujah comes from the two Hebrew words *Hallel* and *Yah*. "Hallel" means to praise, to highly commend, to extol. It is something we do with each other sometimes (Bob Graham, Joe Tavares and some others did a super job of painting the 29 church windows this Spring). It is something that we do for "sports-heroes" (like when your favorite Red Sox player wins the MVP award). It is something, shamefully so, but nonetheless true, that is done for entertainment stars (I can't forget how the Beatles were treated when they came to this country; and, how I treated the members of the Jefferson Airplane, when I met them in 1970). It is something the Standard-Times does once in a while, when they "take their hats off" to various citizens for notable community service. My friends, it is something we should do far more often to our God, who is the TRUE and LIVING God, Who "*has demonstrated His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners,*

*Christ died for us.* "Yah" is the most basic Hebrew word for the name of God. It is the word from which we get "Jehovah." God cared about men so much that He was willing to reveal His NAME, and the angels and tribulation saints and the rest of the church, all are seen extolling God's Name in His very presence.

In his good book Reflections on the Psalms, the British writer C.S. Lewis wrote:

*It is not out of compliment that [two] lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the DELIGHT is incomplete until it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly at the turn of a road upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than a tin can in a ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with.*

C.S. Lewis noted that the Westminster Catechism says that man's chief end is to "glorify God and enjoy him forever." But when we are with the Lord, Lewis says, we shall know that glorifying God and enjoying Him are the same thing... "In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."

Now I would like to spend the rest of our time suggesting a few things about PRAISE, which I think we can draw from Rev. 19:1-6...

1. PRAISE IS INTELLIGENT. In the rest of verse 1 we see that what these "praisers" are praising God for, are things they have observed. They know that God has engineered the rescue of all who would trust in Jesus. That is salvation. Salvation means being saved. It means that those who were and are saved, NEEDED being saved from something! *They were not safe.*

Second, this praise is informed about God's GLORY. They look at God and the heavenly environs and they see nothing but the signature of God, His glory, the *out-shining* of His perfection and magnificence and splendor. The "praisers" are not cruising in some hallucinogenic trance. They are FASCINATED by the fullness of glory in heaven, which is the PLACE of God's abode.

Thirdly, this praise that they (we) give is informed of God's POWER. Real praise recognizes and dwells upon the evidence that our God is not weak. He is not limited in any way. The God who created this world, populates it, and watched it decay; who judged it, and who rescued a great multitude from it, is full of inexhaustible power. Christians should focus on that fact when they praise Him, whether in church with the brethren or in their own Quiet Times, or in their day-to-day experience when they NEED the power of the Lord to fuel them to live for Him.

2. PRAISE IS VERBAL. Four times this strange and wonderful word "Hallelujah" is repeated in unison. While we aren't told in THIS passage that the praising is musical, it clearly is in other revelations from the Book of Revelation. It seems strange, but a word which so many redeemed and

holy beings will cry forth on that day, completely unashamedly, many modern evangelical Christians are afraid to utter in church services today because we fear that someone may think I'm a fanatic or out of control.

Dear ones, the praise of heaven is unashamedly verbal. No one will say, "Well, you know, I'm a quiet person, and I let my husband/wife do all the talking. I'm really kind of afraid to testify to God's goodness to me. And anyway, religion is supposed to be personal and private..." There will be nothing private about the praise that is offered around the wedding feast of the Lamb!

I get a kick out of how people express praise. Charismatics and Pentecostals love to raise their hands. Nazarenes raise one hand to the Lord and wave. At Dallas Seminary we used to joke that we praised the Lord by raising our two forefingers so that no one would see...

Now even though this praise is verbal, it is not careless. It isn't crass or given in a flippant way. I say again to you my friends, you need to prepare your hearts for worship, each week. You should not just carelessly "trapse" into church, whip off a few "praise choruses" and think you've done your duty for this week. Guard against that danger--Remember Paul's words, "*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face, now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known*" (I Cor.13:12)

3. At this point let me gently point out that praise is also to be GOD-CENTERED. God-centered praise knows something about God that makes Him, to that person, WORTHY to be praised for it. And beyond knowing in the head something worthy of praise, it has RECENTLY EXPERIENCED the salvation, glory or power of the Lord. Too often Christians will use an informal service like what we have here to air their troubles, to vent their anger, and then tack on a short acknowledgment that the Lord is to be praised anyway. Praise should be centered on HIM, not on me. It is edifying to hear something about God that you have come in touch with; that has meaning for you. It is NOT edifying to hear, WHEN WE ARE IN A WORSHIP TIME, all your frustrations or troubles. Another pitfall I fear Christians wrestle with in testimony-giving, is milking a past experience to death. I want to hear what the Lord Jesus is doing in your life NOW, last week! I'm just saying that we need to be bold and verbal; and at the same time sensitive and discerning about the FOCUS of our praise.

4. PRAISE IS OBLIGATORY. In verse 5, the command to praise (for those of you who like Greek) is the second person plural, present tense, active voice, imperative mood, of the word aineo, "Give Him praise."

Praise is not something in Revelation; and it should not be something NOW that is done when there isn't anything else to do. Praise is what a worship service is all about. It is the first reason to go to church. I will admit to you that I am jealous for your Sunday mornings. The Lord expects to be honored and worshipped regularly, often and in a prepared state of mind. You owe this to Him, dear ones, if you have been redeemed by Him.

In verse 5, the command of the future--and I can think of no exegetical reason to limit it to the future--is to ALL His bond-servants. Do you know what a bond-servant is? It is one who has been bought with a price and who serves his master faithfully because the master owns him. Now this CHURCH doesn't own you; and I do not own your Sunday mornings. But the LORD owns you, if you have trusted in the saving work of His Son. And therefore by deduction, I humbly suggest that if you have chosen this address and these saints with whom to worship, you should not just dabble in worship. Never mind the fact that this ministry needs your faithful and regular attendance--GOD demands your worship. And when other things crowd out that worship those things become an idol to you.

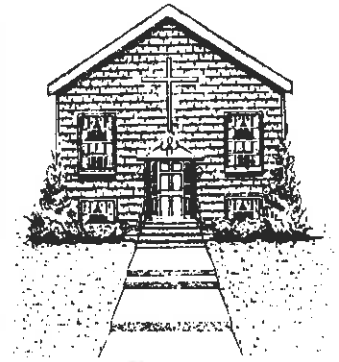
I know that not every church service is fantastically exciting (and I resist the temptation to *falsely generate religious excitement*)... And I know that sometimes you're tired or worried. So what? Pull aside from the things of the week; from the world. Get together with the saints and offer up a SACRIFICE OF PRAISE. The Lord knows what worshipping Him costs you. What did your having access to His throne of grace cost HIM? It cost Him His Son.

Let's be swept away, in love with the Lord, who is worthy of our worship and praise. Let's concentrate on His goodness and mercy, ignoring the distractions that arise in public worship sometimes. The mind set on Christ; on the Lamb; will be full of gracious acceptance of each other, and full of gratitude for all the things the Lord has done for us, and continues to do for us.

As we celebrate His Table today, and think back on the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for us, may you be fueled up for this week too, by having intentionally remembered your King and His kindness to you.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages

52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 19: 7-10

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 30 9-17-89

## THE REALITY OF THE COMING MARRIAGE

Introduction I love a good Christian wedding! I'm a little unusual, I suppose, in that I never attended a wedding until I was twenty years old, and the first wedding I ever went to, was the wedding of a fellow named Don Crigler who disciplined me when I was first saved. Don and Marilyn's wedding was a wonderful event for me--I was so full of joy and actually *wonder* at Marilyn's splendor, at Don's integrity, at being together with so many believers--and all of us were new in the Lord at that time. It was a great time for me; one of my fondest memories.

And I guess that God graciously used that wedding to set me up in a good way, because my first impression of weddings left me with a kind of permanent excitement now still whenever I am invited to a Christian wedding. From time to time I feel especially privileged when someone actually invites me to *officiate* at a wedding, and to oversee the ceremony. Each of the couples whom I marry--and really, it is the LORD who does the marrying, not me--each of those couples is special to me and they bring me great joy. When someone invites me to marry them I find myself looking forward to that event so much, even though it happens very quickly once it arrives, and it really makes my whole year!

One of the most basic ideas--hopes--that Christians hold to, is the notion that somewhere in the future they will enter a beautiful new reality, free of the burdens of life here; free of the "bentness" of our nature that we each carry now.

I think our modern society has come to scoff at this hope for the future. Last Sunday's Standard-Times had a feature article that struck me as representative for how many people--at least many baby-boomers feel today. The article addressed the prospect of "total salvation" as offered by the Jehovah's Witnesses. The writer's response was pretty cynical, basically saying, "No thanks, and please don't bother me anymore." I think it is because our society, the baby-boomers at least, have become cynical about everything in general. And along with everything else, the idea of "total salvation" has become a cliché in our society too, and really disbelieved by many thinking people. Friday's USA Today newspaper ran two articles side-by-side which spoke volumes: one was about the PTL trial of Jim Bakker and Richard Dortch's testimony. PTL always stood for roughly evangelical beliefs. The other article was about Mother Teresa's deteriorating physical condition, who, I am sorry to say, does not hold to evangelical beliefs. But as an average reader, which story would you feel more sympathy with? The tendency towards cynicism is compelling even to us as

Christians, wouldn't you say?

Nevertheless, as *evangelical* Christians, we remain steadfastly committed in our conviction that verses (and promises) like I John 3:3 are both reliable and true. We remain tenacious in our faith that the Bible is dependable even when religious personalities out there cause us to question who's for real and who is not... Our confidence in the Scripture then, is one thing that sets us apart, at least in our creed, from the rest of the world.

I say all this to you today, because of the very high nature of our subject. Our subject this morning is this HOPE that we cherish in our hearts and minds about the future. Our passage is Revelation 19:7-10.

It is the passage which deals with the *marriage or wedding feast of Jesus Christ*, an event which will occur just after the great tribulation and just before His second coming. The marriage of the Lamb is an event at which you will be present if you are a true Christian. But there is a problem we are faced with. The problem is that while this marriage, or wedding feast is ASSERTED, it is not for us DESCRIBED. Perhaps that is no problem for you, but I wish I knew more about it. But that is perhaps part of the blessing we enjoy, for anticipation of a thing is part of how we enjoy a thing!

Now let's look at the things we *are* told about this great event:

The Announcement (19:7a) Now if you are like me, you enjoy receiving wedding announcements. But even MORE you enjoy receiving a wedding *invitation*! It's much more fun to GO to a wedding than it is only to hear about it. In our passage, the people addressed are invited to "rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him." They are active participants, and you will be too, if you belong to Christ. Now, they are told to do three things: to *rejoice*, to *be glad*, and to give glory to Jesus Christ.

When we're told to rejoice, it is always with good reason. When we see our Savior face to face; when the veil of doubts or worries or distractions that we endure in this life is put aside, and "we see Him as He is," then there will be no hesitancy and no reservations about letting loose in happiness! We will be singing, I think, and slapping each other on the back and happier than any Super Bowl celebrants, I assure you! Rejoicing will be the complete EXPRESSION of the joy that will be total and real.

Also, the invitees to this wedding are told to be glad. Coupled with "rejoice" this is somewhat of an unusual expression in Scripture. The occasion of being present at the wedding feast of the Lamb, deserves not only rejoicing, but full, unrestrained *gladness*! It is a time of no more tears, no doubts, no insecurities, no jealousies and no disunity. It is the time of gladness and enjoyment. No one will be looking at their watches. There won't be any, "Gee, when this is over, I'm gonna go back and work on whatever..." There will be nothing competing with the gladness that the occasion produces. I can scarcely imagine such an occasion but I know it is coming!

Third, the focus will be *first* on the Bridegroom, on the Lamb. You know, when you go through the receiving line at a wedding, isn't it natural to commend the bride and the groom and the rest of the party too at how fine they look. In essence you are giving them a little glory, aren't you? And I think the bride's mother usually glows with pride and wonder at this special moment when she sees her daughter decked out, full of beauty. She maybe recovers a little of her *own* glory for those moments... Dear ones, and fellow saints, it will be no labor on your part to step up to the Savior, your

Groom, and say, "Lord Jesus, You look magnificent", and all the angels will concur and applaud!

The Bride (7b-8) The second thing we *are* told about this coming event is something about the Bride. Who is the bride? The bride is the church, the body of Christ, the family of people from all history who have trusted in the Christ of God. Notice that John says she "has made herself ready..." Ready for what? Ready for salvation? Yes and no. No, people do not pull themselves up by their bootstraps, they cannot make themselves good enough, they are unable to prepare themselves by quitting their sin nature--in order to get ready to BECOME Christians. That conversion is by the gracious work of God alone, through the blood shed by His Son Jesus. It is not a cooperative venture. So, NO, people (and the Church) do not make themselves ready to meet Christ as unbelievers. But, YES, after they have already become believers by faith alone, THEN they begin the process of getting ready to meet Christ literally. They spend the rest of their lives looking forward to the wedding feast, making every preparation just as diligently (MORE SO, it should be) than the bride-to-be in her last days before the wedding. Look with me please, at a very precious passage written by the Apostle Paul: Ephesians 5:25-27. In that passage Paul also sees the Church as the Bride of Christ. He is getting US ready, having cleansed us, and getting ready to present us to Himself. It is a picture of tremendous mercy and kindness and not of condescension. We are like Israel in the Old Testament book of Hosea. We are an unfaithful spouse, betrothed to our Savior to be sure, and yet desperately in need of His mercy.

I wonder if you look at yourself that way: Do you consider yourself as basically unworthy of the Lord's kindness to you, or do you figure He owes you certain graces? We cannot appreciate the depth of His kindness towards those who trust Him, until we are struck with the depth of our need. We have been sinners, and continue to be so. But in Christ--having depended fully on HIS finished work on the cross--we are completely cleaned! And what's more, after coming to Christ initially, we begin to *contribute ourselves* to the work of making salvation mean something in the here and now, while we are still breathing earth's air!

Verse 8 tells us that she will be clothed in "fine linen, bright and clean...the righteous acts of the saints." This is a reference, I believe, to the things which Christians do NOW, in their lives here for Christ. If you perform a righteous act now, having already *become* a Christian, you will be rewarded for it on that day. That may not sound too exciting though for many American Christians, whose culture has taught them that the only things worth getting excited about are things which INSTANTLY GRATIFY us. But I am here to tell you my friends, that anything the Lord Jesus hands out on THAT day will not be junk! To receive a robe of linen on that day, will be the most exquisite, the most priceless commendation that you can imagine--indeed, far *beyond* imagination! Do not forfeit your rewards in heaven by saying, "I'll be happy NOW, thank you, and content myself with just *making it* to heaven." That is the strategy of a fool.

The text also calls the members of the Bride, the Church, "saints". Now while I think most of you understand the meaning of this word, we need to acknowledge that for many people today there is still a great amount of medieval confusion about this word. The word "saints" is the Greek word, "hagion". It simply means "holy ones." It does not mean SuperChristians that have achieved SuperStatus. It means those who have been made holy. Who is that? That is you and me and all people in all history who have been made positionally holy and perfect by virtue of having trusted in the saving work of Christ. So, if you have done that, you are a saint. And the things you do for Christ

in the here-and-now, out of obedience to His Word, these are recognized--and you shall actually wear them in some marvelous and heavenly way--at the wedding feast.

The True Invitation (verse 9) Who's invited? Whoever it is, God says they are "blessed"; that is, they are the happiest people in the universe. Getting invited to this event defies description, and I think *again* of our cynical culture which does not allow for even the feasibility that these promises are true. Do not listen to our culture, dear ones. The Lord says, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Do not expect unbelievers to understand your hope or your steadfast clinging to that hope.

Have you been invited? I do not know. I DO know that if you are not, that you CAN be. Flee to the Savior. By faith alone wash yourself in His blood. And wrap yourself up in the Christian life. Don't let materialism distract you. Don't let worry distract you. Wrap yourself up in seeking Christ, in getting to know Him spiritually in this life. Allow the Holy Spirit to work His will in your life, in your habits, in your attitudes and viewpoints, in your giving to people of your time and other resources. Invite the Holy Spirit to take control of your life today, even IF you have been a Christian for many years! You cannot WIN invitation to the wedding feast, but you can VALIDATE your invitation!

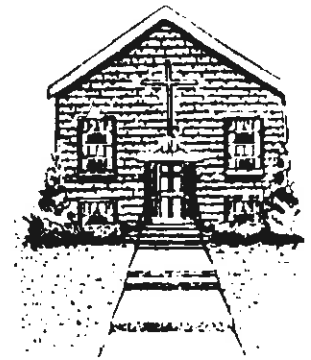
Then at the end of the verse, rather abruptly it seems, John hears, "These are true words of God." Why is that there, do you think? It is because with all the trouble believers must endure, and with self-doubts, and with little, subtle voices all over the place saying, "It's your imagination; it's a pipe-dream; it's balogne!"--you need an assuring word thrown in! Bank on it, dear ones. Put all your eggs in His basket. Depend on the written promises of God, of which the promise of invitation to the feast is one of the most exciting!

Finally, in verse 10, John is overwhelmed. He turns to the angelic messenger and prostrates himself before him. We would probably make the same mistake! The angel gently rebukes him and says that they are both brothers in a sense. We are like the angels in NO way, except we have the same name--the name and doctrine of Jesus Christ. That makes us brothers with the angels. We are of the same family and headed for the same glorious destiny.

Dear ones, every time you have the privilege of attending a Christian wedding, look at it as a preview of a greater wedding feast which is coming. The players in Christian weddings HERE, are models of the participants in that wedding which is to come. I hope two things are true of you today--one, is that you can look at yourself and conclude that you are going to be invited. Two, that you are concentrating on the white linen wedding gown! May the Lamb give you the grace to keep the marriage at the front of your attention.



# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 19:11-16

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 31 9-24-89

## When "Pistos Kai Alēthinos" ("Faithful and True") Comes Back

Introduction If I were to tell you (and if, let's say, you *believed* me), that next week our nation was going to go to war with a foreign enemy, how would you react? Or if I told you that next week every resident of the State of Massachusetts is going to receive a check in the mail for one million dollars--how would you react? Or if I announced that next week, on such and such a day, the local authorities are going to distribute a magic pill which when taken, instantly makes all marriages blissful or, in the case of single people, instantly leads you to the person BEST suited to be your mate--how would you react?

Would you respond to news like this by saying, "Oh, that's interesting..." Or, "Well that will be nice, and what *other* news do you have?" I tell you friends, that if you heard news like any one of those things, you would not respond casually! You would fairly hop up and down for sure, wouldn't you?

I remember in the summer of 1972 I was living in a dormitory room in Brodie Hall at Virginia Tech. I had been a Christian for about four months. My roommate John had checked out a copy from the university library, of a book called *The Late Great Planet Earth* by a fellow named Hal Lindsey. John slept on the top bunk and I slept on the bottom, and I remember kicking him up there, telling him to put his light out and quit reading that silly book. He was staying up late reading this thing, and it wasn't even a required reading book for our classes! When he finished one night, he threw it down to me and said, "Here, check this out..." Here is some of what I read:

Many so called Christian leaders today do not believe that Jesus Christ will literally and physically make a personal return to the earth. Some teach that Christ returns spiritually when people accept Him and say that this is all that is meant by the various predictions of His return. Others teach that Jesus may return some day, but that it is irrelevant to study or to talk about it. The latter are worse than the former, for one out of every 25 verses in the N.T. is related to the second coming of Christ...[while] in the O.T. there are >300 prophecies regarding Christ's first coming, but >500 relating to His second coming. (Lindsey, pp.170, 171)

How Does It Grab You? I don't know what the prediction of the second coming does for you. I know what it does for me--it gives me real hope for the future of this world! It aids my drive to tell people about Christ; the real Christ. And frankly, it just plain excites my imagination and I am really looking forward to taking part in it as a redeemed sinner!

In our passage today we reach the climax of the entire Bible. From the Book of Genesis right on down through the Revelation we find ourselves awaiting Messiah's return to the planet. In His first coming the Messiah came as a suffering Savior and that coming lasted but a scant 30 years or so--His actual *public* ministry only three.

I can't help but feel sorrowful for two thousand years of Jewish history since Christ; groping for meaning, longing for a Messiah who has already come once and put it all together. Still most reject Jesus of Nazareth. And the way I see it, the Old Testament, without the New is a book of unfulfilled promises, unexplained sacrifices and unsatisfied longings, is it not? But also I am encouraged because the New Testament predicts, and I am convinced reliably, that in the end times there will be a great awakening among Jews and many will turn to Christ. Only then will they see that all along Jesus was and IS the Coming One; the Coming Redeemer.

When "Faithful and True" Comes Back Now in Rev. 19:11, John records what He saw. The first thing is heaven opened. Most of the time heaven has been closed. We do not know very much about heaven, and that which we are told even so is awesome and full of wonder. Heaven is veiled to us now, but people should not believe that it does not exist. Many things exist which are invisible to our eyeballs! But John saw it opened for him and out of heaven comes the glorified Christ who does two things: He judges and wages war. This is a vision again of what will occur just at the close of the tribulation. Every action He takes will be just, for He makes no mistakes as Judge. And part of His action in judging His opponents will be to make war with them.

Truly, I cannot imagine the fury of a divine war-maker. It will be terrible and infinitely more effective than all the *combined* military strategy and technology of those who side with His enemies.

The passage before us gives us several names to call this conquering Messiah. First, He is called "Faithful and True." I think the Greek is beautiful and I would like you to know it--the text says that the rider of this white horse (He entered Jerusalem on a donkey!) out of heaven is *PISTOS KAI ALĒTHINOS*! He is called "Faithful" because He has come indeed to execute God's long-time program, just as He made clear that He would. He does not break His promises, dear ones--not the ones about His coming, and not the ones made in tenderness to His lambs, who cling to the hope that He will gently shepherd them.

He is called "True" (*alēthinos*) because He IS the truth. It is not just that He *tells* the truth, although He surely always does that. But more than that, He is the "BUREAU OF STANDARDS OF TRUTH--THE YARDSTICK OF TRUTH" (J. Vernon McGee). Men scoff today that there can even BE anything

which is always true for everybody, anywhere. We have become so relativistic and really, confused today. But Christ will be acknowledged as TRUTH itself when He returns to the planet.

He is also called in verse 13, "the Word of God." I am thankful that I have the Word of God. I may not always understand everything I read in it, and then I have to study to understand it--but I am glad I have the words, the philosophy, the morals, the values, the goals, the comfort of the One who is True. Other men and women may have stumbled onto some good things once in a while and said some things which, in fact, are true. But no one other than Jesus Christ had *everything* which He said be absolutely correct. What a wonder to know Him, dear ones! It drives me to praise Him and to long for His presence more in this "bent" life of mine.

More Description Other description is given. On His head in verse head are many diadems crowns--He is the Ruler of Rulers; the Majesty on High. For all the glories men can experience; indeed that even the dragon and the first beast (12:3; 13:1) wore certain fraudulent emblems. But He will wear "many crowns."

I think it is foolish for Christians to make too much out of religious clothing here. We are not in our final glory and we shouldn't pretend that we are! We are pilgrims; strangers in a strange and foreign land. We should not get too anchored to this world. But the clothing and adornments of heaven--that is where my hope lies and I trust yours too!

At the end of verse 13 we read about another name, a name which is a secret to all except Him, and yet it is written on Him. I am unsure as to what this means. But since we read here several other names, none of which are mysterious, perhaps this name will be that which was His favorite when He walked in Galilee: The Son of Man. We cannot be too sure, but it will be fascinating to behold Him.

Also we read that His robe will be dipped in blood. I don't think this is an allusion to His own blood, shed on Calvary. I think it ties in with verse 15--as Judge His raiment will be stained with the blood of His enemies as they curse Him under His sword.

Among our youth there is a fascination (especially in boys) with heroes in battle. Just look at the cartoons and the comic books and the video games. Heroism is the great theme of today's grammar-school culture. It hints of something more basic, something deeper in man. I think all of us long to HAVE a hero. Most of us adults are no different than kids; they're just more transparent about their fantasies. But when Christ returns, at the conclusion of the great war, He will have all the fury and appearance of a Warrior. It will be splendid and if you are a Christian, it will make your heart beat fast!

I find verse 15 completely consistent with the whole of Scripture's prediction that Christ will judge the nations. This is the verse from which the first verse of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was based. But the armies of the Union, for whom this was written, will be mighty small potatoes compared to the armies of the Conquering Redeemer.

By the way, did you notice that while HIS robe is blood-soaked, the robes of His troops are clean? That is because the battle is not theirs. It is not a time of striving or struggle for the armies of saints out of heaven. Their robes are white and clean and their steeds are white. They are arrayed behind Him too, not out to the side. Armageddon will be One, pitted against thousands and yet, as we'll see in the last part of this chapter, it is no contest!

Finally, when we sing the little children's song, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," it is a faint harbinger of this final Name, inscribed on Him. It will be echoed not as a little ditty or slogan, but it will be the thing that strikes terror into the foul legions of the beast and dragon. From old, Satan has dreaded gazing on this Name. He has loathed it and no doubt spits every time He hears it. But it will burn Him down on that last day.

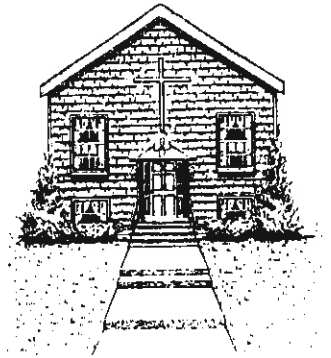
Dear ones, look at one other passage with me in closing--it is Peter's final words on this same subject that I want to impress you with. Turn with me please to II Peter 3:3-9 to see something incredibly relevant for today.

My friends, many snort at the teachings of this Bible. Many say, "See, the apostles died--they were but a flash in the pan." But God is faithful and true. His promise may look like its taking forever to unfold but listen to this: its going to happen; just as it was revealed to John.

Have you "come to repentance?" That is the only escape. The world all around us is screaming, "Repentance is not necessary to get to heaven." Have you changed your mind about yourself, about the world and about what you think about the future? To repent means to change directions in your thinking. It means to change your mind and to agree with God about the way HE CALLS things. Becoming a Christian, or, getting back on track AS a Christian, are BOTH a simple process. It means to humble your will and pride and your *beliefs*, to agree with God, to then flee to the cross in dependence that Jesus' work there is all you need.

I hope these words from John and Peter thrill you. I trust they don't depress you--they are intended to challenge and to comfort believers. It isn't any wonder that unbelievers find them something else. May He who is Faithful and True be your greatest passion. May you have a hunger that is never satisfied, to know Him better and to make Him known.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 19:17 - 20:6

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 32 Oct. 15, 1989

## "THY KINGDOM COME..."

Introduction Today you must forgive me if I open with a medical illustration. I'm sure you can imagine yourself at the doctor's office, when he comes to you and says, "I have bad news and I have good news for you. Which would you like first?" How many of you would say, "OK, Doc, let's have the bad news first...?" Today's passage is something like that, because we have to deal with some bad news before we look at some good news. Actually though, if you are really a Christian and have the assurance that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of life, then there really isn't any bad news for you to face; it is just real bad news from the angle of those who are living in the last days who DO NOT have a personal saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ...

Our passage today lays out for us the coming of the Kingdom of God's Son--not in a figurative or mystical sense, but in a very literal sense, I believe. This passage is one of the most controversial in all of the Bible, but the controversy has been largely a family matter--among those people who DO take the Bible at face value and choose to interpret its meaning plainly and straight-forward.

At the second coming of Christ, the first thing we notice in these verses is that His foes are vanquished simply and quickly. It is very conspicuous that there is no conflict mentioned when the Lord Jesus Himself comes onto the scene. The forces of the antichrist and Satan have been doing battle, for some time perhaps, with the remnant of people on earth who have NOT compromised and given in to their evil designs. But when the "King of kings and Lord of lords" shows up, all contest is ended.

Dear ones, these are the things that we are looking at today, and I would like to point out one thing about this passage before we consider it in detail...

Scripture is not always arranged according to the schedule of our lives. It has been handed down according to the will and plan of a sovereign God. We may not always find just the point we are looking for when we consider the Bible in a verse-by-verse fashion. But we always find truth--God's truth. The Bible is a treasure chest of priceless jewels. It is a library of the deepest and most wonderful writings ever composed by men. It does not answer our beckon and call, but it unfolds for us many things of wonder that sometimes are hard to fathom. That is the MARVEL of Scripture, is it not? And today we come to a revelation of the future plan of God. It is His

plan not only to come again to the planet in the person of His Son, but to set up a literal REIGN ON the planet. There is much hope for us in this, dear ones. There is much excitement too!

The Great Supper of God (19:17-19) When you think of the word "atrocities" you may conjure up thoughts of concentration camps, invading armies, and all kinds of extremely cruel and evil acts perpetrated on innocent people. For all the noble talk we hear of the advancement of mankind, we hear just as often--even this week in the news--of continual atrocities visited on one people by another.

When we read in these verses of the devouring of the beast's forces by birds, we are not reading of an atrocity committed by God on men. We are reading of justice. As we have glimpsed before in the Revelation, the level and advancement of evil in those last days will be so complete that you and I here in 1989 can scarcely imagine it. When the Lord Jesus releases the birds of the air to clean up the planet, it will be in total justice and righteousness. But the incredible irony is that even as the troops are being consumed by "the birds" the beast and his commanders still aim their twisted scowl at the coming Lamb. I call Jesus the Lamb here, because even as the conquering Messiah, for you and I He is still the Lamb of God (and I am still proud of the red medallion we have by our front door which testifies to that blessed title of His!)

The Beast, the False Prophet and the Dragon Doomed (19:20-20:3)

As we noted earlier, I find it wonderfully curious that there is no final contest between these three and the Lord. Verse 21 tells us that the victory is won and the field is carried "with the sword which came from the mouth" of Jesus Christ. It is not by fire or by cosmic phaser banks that the Lord completes the victory. It is just by His Word. He simply speaks these foul enemies into submission.

We saw a little hint of this back in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:5) when Jesus responded to His captors with "I AM" and they all fell back. Dear ones, God's written word is powerful enough--it challenges and convicts and comforts and gives assurance of salvation. But when the Word of God is spoken by the WORD HIMSELF, there shall no flesh or spirit-being be able to stand, even though Satan will be released briefly after the thousand years.

Verse 20 mentions the lake of fire. This is not the "hell" we talk about today--and sometimes so glibly. "Hell" seems to be a holding place for the lost in THIS age. It is bad enough. But the "lake of fire" is, I think, an indescribably more terrible place which is the place of final judgement for Satan and all of his. It is not at all popular today to think of such places as even existing. It is thought outmoded, obsolete and narrow-minded. Nevertheless such places do indeed exist and their reality will be fully unveiled in the last day.

The Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ (20:1-6) In one sense I have been looking forward to arriving at this passage ever since we began this series one year ago. As I told you in the beginning of this message the bad news (for the lost), now here is the good news! In this one passage

there stands one of the most happy and fascinating truths revealed in the whole of Scripture. The reign of Christ on earth is spoken of often in the Bible, but nowhere is it quite described as it is here. A time period is actually given by John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Dear ones, I can think of no reason worth adopting, to take this in any way other than at face value. I believe that believers will have a part in the reign of Christ on this planet. But let's understand one thing clearly though: the text does not tell us that anyone shall be a CO-REGENT with Christ!

In fact the only ones that are mentioned here who will reign with Christ, are those who were beheaded by the beast. I understand these martyrs, though, as representing the whole church who have been faithful to Jesus, whether or not they have been killed (See 5:10, for instance).

This is a case where we build our doctrine not just on one or two verses of Scripture, but we take the sum total of all that is given in Scripture, and build up the doctrine SYSTEMATICALLY. This is what we call "systematic theology" and we must employ that science at times like this.

Well, the practical side of all of this, is that those who actually serve Christ during this thousand year reign, are those who have "overcome." Those believers through all the ages who have hung in there and kept on following Him are the ones to whom Christ will impart millennial responsibilities (Matthew 25:23). I cannot imagine what those responsibilities might be; they will surely be fulfilling.

What we are to see here is that the way we live our lives in this age has bearing on how we shall live during the Millenium. My friends, Christians are the only people in the world who have that assurance. But isn't it wonderful that Christians are found in every era, every tribe and tongue, every nation on the planet. The Lord's plan is truly universal!

Verse 5 has seen some confusion among believers. Here is my understanding of what it means. This resurrection is not intended as the first in NUMBER, because it will not be that. It is the THIRD, and the fourth if you count Jesus' own resurrection. But this resurrection is the first OF ITS KIND. It is the universal raising to life of all the dead in Christ who were not included in the rapture or in that resurrection in Jerusalem right after Jesus' execution. It is an even that takes place AFTER the Millenium evidently, and marks the beginning of the last of the last things.

Verse 6 (as in 5:10) equates faithful Christians with the priestly office. Do you think of yourself as a priest? You should. Despite the upbringing many of us have had, the Bible makes it very clear that all Christians are priests, both in this age and in that to come. It is not that we shall offer up sacrifices for sins--Jesus, our great High Priest has done that, once for all. But as ministers, carrying on His praise and service, we shall all equally enjoy the office of priests unto the Lord, even as we do today through the ministry of prayer. The distinction of clergy and laity is foreign to the New Testament when it comes to spiritual equality and importance of position.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. "Overcoming" ought to be our #1 priority in this life. When you get to the end of your life, and its all counted up, how much of your attention and time and energy were invested in overcoming the flesh and the world? Sometimes you may feel like that exhausted swimmer who just can't go any further--you may feel like that spiritually from time to time. We all get weary like that on occasion. But the shore is not all that far away.

2. We have a future; a grand and glorious future. That ought to be worth something in the fight against depression that many of us endure. Your hope is not based in YOUR righteousness. It is based on the totally sufficient life and sacrifice of Jesus! My friends, here's some words from Paul:

*"Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*  
Romans 5:5

3. Do not let the Satanism of this age get you down; and do not be afraid of it. The victory is already won in Christ, and he knows that "Lo, his doom is sure."

This passage is one of the most controversial in the Bible. But when we take it at face value, plainly, and straight-forwardly, it is a blessing to our hearts and minds. May the Lord help you this week to live in light of His Millennial Reign.



# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages

52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 20:7-15

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 33 Nov. 5, 1989

## THE END OF EVIL

Introduction If I were to ask you, "What do you look forward to MOST about Christ's return?" what would you say? If we took a number of responses, probably at least one of you would respond with, "I really look forward to the end of evil." When you force yourself into a moment of awareness about the social state of this country (let alone the world), you HAVE TO admit (I think) that evil is very plainly occurring, and I also think, is accelerating. Take a few examples, for instance...

- \* More people are dying in wars in the 20th century, than in all other centuries combined.
- \* Divorce has become an accepted, almost EXPECTED norm; and children of divorced parents are told to "buck up."
- \* Homosexuality, pedophilia and bestiality are all explained as new "expressions" of man's becoming aware of himself.
- \* No one has any good answers for the scourge of drugs; there is a political despair about the subject.
- \* Urban violence is on the increase.
- \* The environment seems to be suffering serious damage.
- \* Interest in Satanism and the occult is on the increase.
- \* Interest in less obviously satanic approaches (New Age issues, astrology, secular humanism, etc.) is just as strong as ever.
- \* World-wide, more people are becoming Moslems, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, than are becoming evangelical Christians.

Now even the casual observer must admit these phenomena are real, and I cannot see how any thinking person can swallow the empty optimism of the secular humanists. The problem of evil in society is growing, and it ISN'T ALWAYS "THE OTHER GUY", is it? Every person sees within himself and herself, the potential, and sometimes the DESIRE for evil, and they find themselves COMPLETELY UNABLE to rid themselves of it. I cannot say, "Evil is in Columbia, is in Nicaragua, is in Moscow, is on the streets of L.A. or in Boston, but its not here"--because its in ME too!

Well, dear ones, our passage today predicts the END of evil in the world, and without further delay, let's see what it says.

The End of Satan (20:7-10) We read in the first six verses about a one thousand year period after Jesus' second return, during which He shall reign on the planet, and also during which Satan will be bound and imprisoned. The Millennial reign of Christ is one of the most fascinating

predictions in the whole of Scripture. It will be a wonderful time, I am sure, when many of OUR great, philosophical questions will be put to rest. We will enjoy a world political situation that is replete with JUSTICE, EQUALITY and TRUTH. In some sense, if you are really a Christian, you will enjoy service in Christ's Kingdom that will be both interesting and fulfilling. In short, your millennial experience will not be a disappointment. But the millennial reign of Christ is not the end of evil.

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released from his imprisonment. His purpose will be, once again, to UNDO the reign and majesty of Christ. His METHODOLOGY will be in deception. The text does not specifically say HOW he will deceive people, but some a large number of earth's residents--most of whom have been born AFTER Jesus' coronation, will be led into rebellion a final time against Him.

Now you may wonder WHY Satan has to be released? Why should God want to allow him to spoil things all over again? I cannot say for certain, but here are some suggestions:

1. to demonstrate that man, even under the most favorable circumstances, will always fall into sin if left to his own choice.
2. to demonstrate the incurable wickedness of Satan.
3. to justify the eternal punishment of the wicked.
4. to display God's sovereign foretelling of all events.

In verse 8 we read two interesting words, "Gog" and "Magog", which derive from the Old Testament prophecy of Ezekiel (chs. 38 & 39). It has become popular for preachers to identify Gog and Magog with the Soviet Union, because Ezekiel (38:6,15; 39:2) sees them as enemies coming upon Israel from the north. But the Apostle John sees Gog and Magog (the evil ruler and the people) as coming from all over the place, from ALL directions against Israel. So I'm not too sure we should just suppose that Israel's postmillennial enemy is just the Soviet Union--also, one wonders how *believers* in the Soviet Union TODAY might interpret this verse...

Well, this great army--even after a thousand years of the most righteous and equitable government the planet has ever seen--will surround Christ and His people. Notice where He will be: "the beloved city." Even at the end, Jerusalem (as I interpret it) will be the chosen place of the Lord. And once again, the conflict will be very brief. Satan must know this, and yet so great is his rage and hatred for Jesus that he is compelled by his own absolute depravity, to curse the Lamb of God, even as he and his followers are burned down.

Verse 10 teaches their eternal judgement. It will be "torment" for them, as they have always known (See Matthew 8:28-32). Satan and even his lowest ranking henchmen have always known what is coming for them. They knew it when Jesus walked in Palestine and they know it right now, dear ones. That is a side to Satanism that is so ironic. Satanists TODAY seem to sense the utter FUTILITY of their endeavors. These poor people, blinded and discouraged by their pursuits are almost UNIVERSALLY people

filled with a cynical despair and resignation. It is one of the reasons why I think Christians need to beware things like Halloween, even though I hear it so often, "Don't take it all so seriously..."

The End of Evil in People (20:11-15) In these last verses, John tells us that he was given a glimpse of the final judgement of people. I'm not sure why so many modern people find this so hard to believe. Final JUSTICE is something we would all LIKE TO happen, when we see all the INJUSTICES in the world... In other words, it is a philosophically LOGICAL happening, isn't it?

But people are afraid that final judgement by a just God may catch up with them, I think. And it shall, for everyone who has not personally trusted Christ.

The Lord's Supper, by the way, is your making the personal statement that YOU have asked Christ to be YOUR personal Savior. It is a SIGN that you are making, that you're depending completely on the HISTORICITY and "realness" of the cross, and that it not only *happened*, but it applies to YOUR sins...

Some final points from these verses:

1. At that point, the character of everything will fade, leaving only ONE reality--God on His throne, and all standing before Him (See I John 2:17). All that will matter THEN, is what has been sown in your life that was pleasing to Him. His verdict alone is holy and righteous. His determinations will be indisputable, but completely fair.
2. Hades ("hell") is distinct from the lake of fire. Hades is bad enough now. But the lake of fire will be forever. It is terrifying, to be sure. But what Jesus underwent on the cross was the same terror, and He substituted Himself to that punishment, so that "*whosoever would believe on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.*" So, anyone who hears the Gospel can make the decision to ACCEPT Jesus' experience of the lake of fire in their place--and free of charge, at that!
3. There is a scary objectivity to verse 15. ANYONE whose name was not found written in the Lamb's book of life will be consigned to eternal judgement for their own sins.

How does one GET his or her name *written* in that book? That's the great question in life, isn't it? Many people sincerely believe that they can purchase it by doing good deeds for other people. Other people are convinced that by AVOIDING too many big vices, that this will inscribe their names into that record. Other people think that by consistently following a church-prescribed set of sacraments, that this will place their name there. All of these false hopes and beliefs, sincere though they may be, are just the deception of the flesh and Satan.

Only one thing works to get a person's name in that book. It is when a person comes to the point where he/she really asks, as did the Philipian jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" And then hears Paul's

response, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." It is by faith alone in what Jesus did. Period. That does it. Not THAT PLUS anything else...

So why would anyone REFUSE such a deal? I do not know. Personally, I refused it for a year after I heard it. And God in His sovereign grace and love, wooed me and I kept hearing the message of grace from the handful of people who were faithfully witnessing to me, and one day the Lord just opened my heart to it. And I fled to the cross, and Lo and behold, He saved me...amazingly and wonderfully.

If that has not been your experience yet, may it be so today. The consequences of refusal are total and final. But the Gospel is still before us. We are not at that final day yet, even though the world and Satan grow very old and more in rebellion against the Lord. Praise God He has rescued us, and by His kindness to us, we will sit at His feet and offer Him honor and praise, unbridled by sin, discouragement or doubt in that day...

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 21:1-5

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 34 Nov. 12, 1989

**THE BLISS OF THE BLESSED**  
(or, "REASONS TO BE HAPPY")

Introduction Are you happy today, dear ones? How would you respond to this ad: "FREE BEAUTIFUL HOMES, to be given away in a PERFECT CITY! The transaction includes 100% Pure Water for Free, no electric bills, perpetual lighting, permanent pavement (no pot holes guaranteed), Perfect Health, Immunity from Accidents, the Best of Society, Beautiful Music, Free Transportation, Everything New, Nothing Undesirable anywhere"?...Oh, and the bottom of the ad invites: "Secure a Contract Today for the New Jerusalem."

Today we're going to talk about the "bliss of the blessed", or, a more direct title for this message might be "Reasons to Be Happy." Maybe you might want to take one of the Sermon Notes pads today and jot these things down... There is no loftier, more splendid, or more encouraging section of the Bible than what we cast our eyes on today. We have reached the 21st chapter of John's Book of Revelation--we are at the last of the "last things"--and I can think of nothing I would rather preach about!

Now in seminary they tell you that at the beginning of every good sermon, you have to convince the audience that they have a NEED--a need that the Scripture you're going to look at MEETS. My friends, I am here to tell you today that each of you needs to hear these verses. I am keenly aware, for some of you at least, of the need for *encouragement* or maybe also for *healing*. And today we're going to look at TEN REASONS TO BE HAPPY. In Revelation 21 John begins to tell us of his final vision. For him not the least, an old man, the last of the apostles, lonely, hurting no doubt, these revelations must have been life-giving and exciting. So let's get right into it.

REASON NO.1 TO BE HAPPY (21:1): This old world will pass away and a new one is going to be created. Even the sky and all its wonderful stars and planets will pass out of existence, and perhaps the word "heaven" even includes the current abode of God. All these will be replaced by new ones. The Greek word "new" here is not the word for "new in time," but rather it means "fresh", new in quality. God intends that there should be this planet on into the eternal state, but that it will be a NEW one, perhaps even BETTER than how this planet was before the Fall.

There are a lot of things about this planet that will be good to see no more. Evil in all its forms, disaster, and just general aging and "oldness" that is so sad to behold; like a favorite old public park that has become run down and vandalized--all this will be gone. The decrepitness of the planet will end.

The second law of thermodynamics states that the amount of ENTROPY, (which means DISORDER or RANDOMNESS) in a system is either "0" or "+". In other words, physicists have consistently observed that the universe is tending to "wind down." When Rev.21:1 becomes a reality there will be no more "winding down" and the second law will become only a distant and insignificant memory.

I think this is a reason to be happy, because as Christians standing on the claims of Scripture, we have a reason to have HOPE. The world is not just a place of random chance and arbitrary fate. Don't believe that, it isn't true. You can be happy with the assurance of Scripture that the day will finally come when this world will be replaced.

REASON NO.2 TO BE HAPPY At the end of verse 1 John says that on the new heaven there will be no sea. Now, he doesn't say there will be no bodies of water at all, but that the condition of the planet NOW, which is about 60% ocean will be over. It is not that the sea is inherently evil, I don't think (Gen.1:9). But that there will be plenty of land mass to dwell upon, and there won't be erosion, and hurricanes and gales and drownings to deal with.

I know we tend to think of the sea romantically ("The Love Boat"), but actually the sea is not really a place for men. It is a fearful place and not too many people really love to be out on it. If you are afraid of the power of the sea, fear not! The new earth will be sea-less.

REASON NO.3 TO BE HAPPY Let's read vs. 2 again. It's interesting that we only have one verse to learn about the new heaven and the new earth, but John gives us 21 verses about the New Jerusalem. What IS this New Jerusalem. We cannot say for sure, but it is possible that it is some kind of orbiting city or even another planet (as J. Vernon McGee believed). I don't think its really too important that we should have to understand all the physics of it today...

We have seen a lot of fantasy through the years about this kind of future phenomena. In particular in our culture much of it has been kind of an apocalyptic science fiction, involving benevolent and wise beings from other planets and so forth. Our greatest (and richest fantasizers--George Lucas and Steven Spielberg and Gene Roddenberry ponder apocalyptic happenings in this way--"E.T.", "Close Encounters", etc.) And it has the effect of making people *skeptical* of similar Biblical imagery, because we know Lucas and Spielberg and Roddenberry are just fantasizing. But I remind you, if you have ever struggled to sense the REALITY of the Book of Revelation, that *it was around and being pondered by smart people* long before Lucas and Spielberg and Roddenberry--even before Jules Verne!

The reason you can be happy and have real hope today and tonight is in looking forward to the BEAUTY of the unveiling. The New Jerusalem, which will be your home if you are really a Christian--BY THE WAY, ARE YOU REALLY A CHRISTIAN?--will have the same effect on all as does the bride at the moment she enters the room!

Have you ever noticed that the audience doesn't "ooh and ahh" at the preacher when he comes out? And they don't do it for the groom even. It is the splendor and the loveliness and the radiance of the BRIDE. many things are beautiful on this old planet--sunsets, gemstones, mountain vistas... But nothing compares to the "aliveness" and hope and fairness of the bride at her entrance--it is one of the great privileges of my being in the ministry.

William Montaguhe Dyke was a young man who went blind at the age of ten. But despite the handicap he grew to be a very smart, witty and handsome young man. While attending graduate school in England he met the daughter of an English admiral, fell in love and soon the two became engaged. Though having never seen her, William loved her very much. Just before the wedding, at the admiral's insistence, William submitted to a special treatment for his loss of sight. Hoping against hope, William wanted the gauze removed from his eyes cut during the ceremony. He wanted the first thing he saw to be his wife's face. As she came down the aisle during the wedding, William's father started unwinding the gauze from around his head and eyes--still not knowing if the operation was a success. As the last circumference of gauze was unwrapped William looked into the face of his new bride for the first time. "You are more beautiful than I ever imagined," he said. **THOUGH WE HAVE NEVER SEEN JESUS, IT WILL BE WORTH THE YEARS OF DARKNESS TO FINALLY "SEE HIM AS HE IS."**

Now I can get happy when I ponder this. In the future the Bible tells me that this New Jerusalem will be unveiled. It is the eternal home of all people who ever trusted in Messiah. It is the home of the Bride of Christ and it LOOKS like the Bride, clothed in the righteousness of her Sovereign Redeemer, her Groom, our Lord Jesus Christ!

REASON NO.4 TO BE HAPPY God is going to finally get His wish! He has been trying to dwell with men ever since He made them. It finally happens in verse 3. John told us earlier in his Gospel, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt, ("tabernacled", or "pitched his tent") among us..." (John 1:14). But that flesh was crucified on a Roman crucifixion cross, then was raised ("glorified") and went back to heaven. You and I will get new bodies too, but here in this verse we see that our very home will be the Lord's home too!

God will not just VISIT His people, His Bride. He will DWELL with them. Does His love not "blow you away," to think that He would desire such an existence? Can your trials today stand up to that prospect? Can you really MAINTAIN your depression in light of this verse? I think it is really what all men want, deep down inside--and for all the redeemed it will become a permanent, irrevocable reality on that morning!

REASON NO. 5 TO BE HAPPY Verse 4 brings the end of all broken-heartedness. Our comfort will be at the hand of the Savior Himself. He Himself will reach over to you, wipe those tears away.

Dear ones, many of you have known great disappointment. You were raised in broken homes. You lost loved ones early, maybe a parent. Some of you are in hard, disappointing marriages. You may struggle with a less than fulfilling career. You may be physically or emotionally weak. Even your Christianity may not have proved out all that it was cracked up to be when you first heard the Gospel. Hang in there. Grow some tough faith, because the Savior Himself, no stranger to disappointment, will reach over and personally comfort you on that day. Does that help you TODAY? It sure helps me when I dwell on it...

REASON NO. 6 TO BE HAPPY Is there any greater tragedy we must all face than death? We loath it, we romanticize it, we digest it and re-digest it and we are puzzled by it. To our spirits it just doesn't seem to make sense, does it? But it is appointed to all men to die, sayeth the Word, and so we face it. My friends, you can be happy today because the Scripture assures you that death will die on that day when the New Jerusalem is unveiled. This is the great hope of the Christian. Conversely, it is the great IRONY for those who REJECT the Gospel. They have NO hope, and I think, no rational CAUSE for hope. They must face death and the hereafter blind and alone. But the redeemed can look forward to a future existence just as real as this one--yea, more real, where there shall be no more death--ever.

We will list the last <sup>four</sup>~~six~~ more quickly...

REASON NO. 7 Reason #'s 7,8 & 9 are also in verse 4. No more mourning or crying. When we move into the New Jerusalem we will check all sadness at the door.

REASON NO. 8 No more pain. It is only mentioned by John as part of the list, but it is a big thing? The Lord is not unacquainted with pain--it is one of the things the Son experienced profoundly during His incarnation here on the planet. Physical and emotional too. There will be none of it for you, if your destiny is to live with God in the New Jerusalem. Is it?

REASON NO. 9 At the end of the verse, John repeats, "...the first things have passed away." For our lives now--and a big thing these days in counseling, is coming to grips with memories of the past--reconciling yourself to them, bringing them to the surface, and being healed from any lasting effects; either conscious or unconscious. It is called "inner healing." I believe that on that day, all memory of the pain of this life will be erased or at least SO changed as to not be the slightest bit troubling any longer. Won't that be a glorious thing?

REASON NO. 10 The flip side of the old passing away in verse 4 is that God will make all things NEW (from verse 5). We get a little taste of this when we first come to Christ. You remember Paul's words to the



Corinthian believers, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold: all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17).

Conclusion My friends, how do you stand now with your trials and troubles? Dr. Hendricks, very wryly, talks about an encounter with a defeated Christian: "Hi Bill, how are you doing?" "Oh Okay, I guess, under the circumstances." To which Hendricks replies, "Oh really, what are you doing under there?"

Christians have lots of reasons to be joyful. We really have very little justification to run around sad and depressed and defeated most of the time. We are a FUTURE people; not just a NOW people. And if you need more convincing, recover the fact that Jesus endured the cross, the writer to the Hebrews tells is, despised the shame, "FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM." May the Lord Jesus Himself, by your asking Him to do it on faith alone, may He renovate your JOY and HOPE this day.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages

52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 21:7-27

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 35 Nov. 19, 1989

## THE PLACE WHICH JESUS WENT TO PREPARE

Introduction One of the most precious passages that is shared at Christian funerals, is found in the Gospel of John (14:1-3), where Jesus said to His friends,

*"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; FOR I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

I find it satisfying that He anticipated their doubt... He knows the future and what He has planned for them. If, as they secretly feared, their fate was going to be disappointing, He would have prepared them for that. But instead, He assured them that where the Father dwelt, there was plenty of room for Peter and James and John and the rest too. My friends, have you ever wondered what that place is like, and *where* it is? And, it is interesting that Jesus had some preparation of that place to do. First of all, He had to prepare a WAY OF ACCESS to it, which He did by offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all who would trust in His offering. And beyond that, perhaps He had some cosmic work to do on the place itself. The notion of Jesus working on something, full of power and love, intent on getting it ready for His bride excites me!

In today's passage we see some things about that place. It is a place for redeemed people only. Redeemed people have been freed from the grip of sin. Unredeemed people are slaves to sin and cannot escape it. To this John refers in Revelation 21:7-9.

A Prologue-Reminder to Viewing the New Jerusalem (vss. 7-9, 27a) Do you think of yourself as an "overcomer?" Well, if you are saved, then you are one. We overcome sin, whatever brand, by faith alone in Christ to live in and through us. And if you are saved, I think it is clear that you can point to some areas in your own life where you have overcome. If you cannot, then you have good reason to ask yourself if you've truly BEEN saved yet.

Now there are eight classes of lost people who have not overcome, who will not be in the New Jerusalem, and who will spend eternity in the lake of fire. Even though we as believers are freed from the bondage of sin, that is, we do not HAVE to sin these sins any more--it is good for us to

take note of them. For we are not immune from them, and need to guard especially against them. Remember that there is NEVER any good reason to sin these sins--they are ALWAYS evil and wicked.

COWARDICE - the Lord here is speaking to those in John's day (and after) who did not have the courage to suffer hardship, including death, for the name of Christ.

UNBELIEVING - these are those whose lives are characterized as rejecting a saving relationship with Christ.

ABOMINABLE - those who have polluted themselves morally, and probably in particular by submitting to the worship of the beast.

MURDERERS, IMMORAL PEOPLE, SORCERERS - these things were a "normal" part of the lives of the followers of the beast (9:21) and we should flee them. I don't know why we go "soft" on certain sins but we do, to be sure. These things should not be named among us ever, and we should guard against them.

IDOLATERS - worshipping anything at all but the Lord is just plain idolatry. What things dethrone Christ from your life? Give it over to the Lord, dear ones. Confess them to Him and kick them off the throne of your life.

LIARS - Falsehood is often condemned in the Book of Revelation. Lying is just as evil as murder. It is a basic practice of Satan, and its mentioned again in vs. 27. Its repeated so that we, the readers might be impressed with its evil, and with the fact that in the New Jerusalem there won't be any lying at all.

In verse 9 the angel--who was a judging angel--invites John to gaze upon the Bride. Again, ponder the fact that all believers will be unto Christ as a wife. He has redeemed her from the world, because He loves her. He will dwell with her in the most intimate and beautiful of places. It is when the angel says, "Come and I will show you..." that John is whisked away to gaze down on the New Jerusalem.

The "Jewelry Box" of the Bible (21:10-27) Do you have a special place where you like to keep some special things; things that may be valuable, or not--they may just be special to you personally??? A drawer, a jewelry box a shelf? These verses are like looking into the jewelry box of the Bible. Each verse is worth gazing at and admiring its beauty... Let's look these jewels together now...

Vs.10 - Here we see that this place comes down OUT OF heaven. Did you know that you're not going to live in eternity in heaven? You're going to spend eternity as a resident of the New Jerusalem.

Vs.11 - But it will be no prison! It will be filled with the glory of God. That is a term which means the sum total of all His wonderful attributes. It is the shining forth of His perfection and excellence. And the city has God's own brilliance to it. "Jasper" is an opaque quartz mineral and it occurs in various colors. The city will have something of the appearance of the finest opal. The "place" that Jesus went to prepare will reflect all that God is, as we dwell in His light forever.

Vss. 12-14 As John was seeing it, the city will have walls, twelve gates, twelve angels and twelve foundation stones. I think the walls display the fact that there will be some still in existence who cannot enter this place; they will be in judgement. The gates though, display that the city's *residents* are not prisoners. The inhabitants can come and go in their service of our Lord Jesus Christ and this city will serve as their residence. The walls and gates are, respectively, the 12 tribes of Israel and Jesus' twelve disciples. The point here is to show us that God's program in eternity will always testify to His fully integrated program back here in OUR era. The Old Testament and the New Testament both point to the same Kingdom!

"Twelve" shows up a lot in this chapter. It is because God wants us to see the consistency and the perfection of His grand plan of the ages, for which the number "12" has always played a prominent role. It is the number of God's plan of redemption.

Vss. 15-17 - Now we need to say something about how literally we should interpret some of these details. John is telling us what he really saw, of this there is no doubt. But his record clearly uses figures and images that John would understand. I do not think His account is allegorical. There really be a real city, and it will have something resembling walls and gates, with dimensions to be measured.

But let's remember that we are glimpsing the eternal state in this chapter. In that realm things will be profoundly different and almost unimaginably free and creative. That realm, the New Jerusalem included, will not be bound by the fallenness and physics of this world, which is the only world we know. So I say to you that we should interpret what we read literally, but with the realization that it does not tell us all there is to understand about the New Jerusalem. We shall have to wait till then, I am afraid, to "know even as we are known."

Now the dimensions are given as 1,500 miles in all directions. Some think it is cubic in design; J. Vernon McGee thought, *within* a crystal sphere. Its walls measured (by an angelic survey crew) 72', which probably meant thick! However all this works out, it is a city of incredible dimensions and magnitude: the absolute perfection of architectural creativity.

Vss. 18-21 - Here is the *beauty* of the city. Have you ever seen CLEAR GOLD? I have not. Sounds interesting though, doesn't it? These stones accentuate the glory and beauty of the Lord as PURE LIGHT shines through PURE STONES--all reflecting and transmitting *perfectly* the glory of the living God.

In verse 21 only one street is spoken of; not the *streets* of gold. The streets of John's day were far dirtier than our streets. To picture a street like John saw was an almost unimaginable thing! It really meant something to him!

Vss. 22-27 - I John 1:7! At that time our fellowship will be perfect; no quarreling among individual people, nor among nations. There will be no need for a meeting house of any kind. The implication is that we won't need ANYTHING but the presence of the Lamb, which all the redeemed shall enjoy fully.

Even light and energy sources will be things of the past because somehow--and I do not pretend to know how this works--all light and energy will radiate from God. That really shouldn't surprise us, because all light and energy have always come from Him anyway--energy has never been an independent god unto itself. Its very existence testifies to its Maker.

Evidently there will still be some remembrance of ethnic history from this life, from vss. 24 and 25, although there shall be no meaningful classifications. Its just that the ACCESS--the gates shall never close to anyone who is of the redeemed.

Are you of the redeemed? Will you be going to and fro through those gates? Is Jesus just a god who exists for you, or is He YOUR PERSONAL Savior? Have you met Him? Have you really turned your life over to His rule? Verse 27 reminds us that only the redeemed in Christ have any part in the "bliss of the blessed", the New Jerusalem.

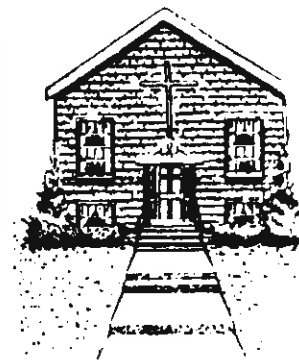
*Now let's summarize what we know about eternity:*

1. It is a place designed and prepared by the celestial craftsman, Jesus!
2. It is a NEW place, unencumbered by the physics of this world.
3. It is a massive place.
4. It is a populated place.
5. It is a beautiful place.
6. It is an open place.
7. It is a brilliant place.
8. It is a timeless place.

Do you want to go there? It is not a pipedream. It is not imaginary. It is not just a state of mind. It is not Iowa... It is a real place; far more real than anything we know here. There shall be pain there and no disappointment. And the gates stand open to anyone who simply says, "YES, Lord, I invite you on faith alone, to come into my life. Become MY Savior. Take your place on the throne of my life and be my Lord of lords. And all this wonderful chapter of Scripture shall move from vague fairy-tale to exciting reality.

Jesus told His handful of closest followers, "I go to prepare a place for you..." That place will become reality on that day, and on that day your fears and doubts and confusion of THIS LIFE will pale and fade in the light of the glory of the New Jerusalem.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 22:1-9

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 36 Nov. 26, 1989

## MORE "JEWELS" FROM ETERNITY'S BEACH

*Introduction* "Epistemology" is an academic word which designates the area of philosophy that concerns itself with how we know what we say we know. And knowing things is part of what life is all about. Now in particular, we would like to know more than we do about the future--maybe that's part of the reason the '85 film "Back to the Future" was popular to the tune of grossing \$209 million (10th all time)--that film dabbles in a fun way with the idea of how the past affects the future. And the new film (Part II), toys with how *knowing* the future affects the present.

There's lots of things we would like to know about the immediate future. We might like to know the political future of the United States. I might like to know who my daughters are going to end up with, and how many children they might have, and what *their* children will be like. It could be fun to know if the Redskins are ever going to win the Super Bowl again (or the Sox, the Series), and wouldn't those of you married to non-Christians like to know if your spouse will ever accept Christ? With areas of knowing like this, "future Epistemology" has more meaning.

Christians tell people (by implication if not verbally) that we know something of the future of the planet. Skeptics say, "No, you don't." But we remain steadfast in our confidence that the prophecies proclaimed by the ancient Hebrews Isaiah and Ezekiel, and by the early Christian apostle John (as representative of reliable spokesmen for Jehovah), that some of their most profound utterances are as yet unfulfilled and that they shall YET be completely realized. We can say with confidence that we DO KNOW some things about the future because we base our Epistemology--the science of HOW WE KNOW what we say we know, on the Bible. We freely admit that we cannot honestly answer all the questions that are raised without resorting to speculation. But the Lord has been pleased to clearly reveal a number of things about the future and today we look at the final chapter of the final revelation in Scripture of those things. If the Lord allows, next week, before we enjoy our celebration of the Lord's Table, we will consider the final verses of chapter 22.

Do you know that I feel very inadequate to expound these things to you? These past two weeks I have often felt like I know next to nothing about the glory of God, and that I would rather sit down and let someone else more informed of it than I expound these verses... We are looking at some very high truths. We are thinking about some realities that defy our finite minds, and it compels me to praise and extol the Lord that He has thought enough of us to tell us anything at all of the scenes of glory that He has planned. So let us look on

these verses again today with wonder and with love. *Let us return worship to the Lord as we read what He has lovingly revealed to you and me.*

Now let us turn our attention to Revelation 22, and gaze upon some more "jewels" from the beaches of eternity's shore...

A River and a Tree (vss. 1,2) The scene is in the capital city of the new heaven and new earth. The city, John saw, is called the "New Jerusalem." Even though there is no more sea as we understand oceanography, there IS water! It is a river which flows from God's own throne in the middle of its street. This is fascinating and yet hard to picture. Sure I don't understand it--there are many things in this book I don't understand. But I believe it, and look forward to seeing it in glory and *then* maybe understanding it a little better!

Do you see that the Lamb is EQUATED with God in verse 1? Once again I urge you, dear ones, do not ever let someone (like many cult-adherents) get away with telling you that the Bible does not teach the deity of Jesus Christ. Here is just one more place.

In the Garden of Eden there was a tree similar to the one that grows here in the new heaven (Genesis 2:9; 3:24) First, do you see the unity of God's grand plan for the ages. Man's beginning provided him with access to that tree--it was only when he and Eve disobeyed God's prohibition from eating of that *other* tree that was there (of the knowledge of good and evil), that they forfeited their enjoyment of the tree of life.

I think the tree of life provides something which enables a person to live forever. I wish I knew more about it--but I think in short, it is PARADISE RESTORED.

The tree of life tells us two other things here. One, its fruit--apparently meant for our consuming--will bring a heavenly health and from all the emotional and spiritual pain from this life. The Greek word that John employed here (*therapeian*) means more HEALTH-GIVING than healing. It is not that when we enter the city's gates we will still experience the pains of this life. But that this tree is provided by God to restore God's people from the pain of this time that we live in now. And please notice that the tree and its incredible fruit are meant for people from all nations--God cares far less about ethnicity than we do. All through the New Testament resounds the theme that in heaven, the New Jerusalem, the eternal state, the redeemed will represent people from all nations and walks of life, not only Jews, not only the smart, or the advantaged. (Cf. Galatians 3:28,29).

#### Seven Results of the Blessed River and Tree (vss.3-5)

1. No curse. Creation fell under a true curse when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. The plants and animals and the environment all reflect it, not the least MAN. (Cf. Romans 8:18-22). You and I cannot imagine living in such a way and in such a place. I do not care HOW "right-brain" a person is wired, even the most creative and imaginative person on the planet cannot envision living without the curse. Only the

man Jesus knew what it was like. But if you are truly a Christian--I mean, if you have really invited Christ into your heart as your Savior and Lord--then you WILL experience what life will be like with no curse...

2. We shall serve our God and the Lamb. Here is a blessed verse! We shall not be bored ~~in~~ throughout eternity, which I think is one of modern man's GREATEST FEARS about God. We shall each have some work to do which will further glorify the Lord.

3. We shall also view Him directly. We shall not have to do as the Old Testament saints did, view the EVIDENCE of His presence and a shrouded visage. Moses saw the PRESENCE of God and it just about burned his face off! When Jesus came to the planet, He wasn't particularly fascinating looking, in accordance with the O.T. Messianic prophecy about Him that we read in Isaiah 53:2.

All the effort that has been put into religious art over the centuries to try and portray Christ is futile. We cannot imagine what He looks like--even IF the Shroud of Turin were genuinely reflective of Jesus Christ. We cannot see His face now, but we see it then.

One old Bible scholar said, "Just give me my first thousand years to look upon my Savior's face, then I'll go look for Paul and John next."

4. OUR appearance will be altered because we shall have HIS name right here on our foreheads. We shall feel no embarrassment for such a thing. By that point we will know that the world has passed through a time when people had OTHER beings' name on *their* foreheads... It will be with a holy pride and overwhelming thanksgiving that we shall have the name of God and of the Lamb inscribed right upon our persons.

5. This weekend Renee and I spent in Hyannis and I saw this lamp that really grabbed me. I thought about it for a whole day before I went back and bought it for the office here. I really like it, but there will be no lamp-buying on that day. Just being in the blessed presence of the Lamb and His (and *our*) Father, will provide all the illumination needed for anything.

6. Here we're also given an ADDED detail--no night. Now because we were told that the fruit of the tree of life would come every month it seems there will be some reckoning of time. But it will not be a planetary and solar reckoning because there will be no night! Heavenly time won't be like earthly time. No, I can't speculate HOW IT WILL work. You will have to wait--

--Isn't it exciting to know a little bit, and look forward with anticipation to when we shall experience the reality of these things?

7. At the end of verse five it is repeated that the Lamb's bond-servants (for they are the subject mentioned in vs.3) will REIGN. That is part of the SERVICE we shall render to the Lord. I don't know who believers will be reigning over, but be rest assured it won't be a puppet government or a kangaroo court! It will have glorious meaning and will make the reigns of earthly kingdoms and empires and "reich's" seem childish by comparison.



Back to "this" Reality (vss.6-9) Now in these verses the Revelation begins to "wind down". John comes back into the picture, the revealing angel who has accompanied John through these 22 chapters (and US over the past year).

What the angel says in the beginning of verse 6 is so important... Look please at 19:9 and 21:5. The angel tells John, and he tells us and all who read these chapters--these words are true. They are not hallucinations. They are not mythical stories. They are not what would be worse, intentional fabrications to deceive--lies... They are true pictures of the future, given to the old apostle; the last apostle, for him to relay on down to the church through this book.

Verse 7 says FOLLOW THE BOOK. It may seem like Jesus is delaying His return. But time on earth is folly and deceptive. From where Jesus sits, His coming is quick.

People, we need to FOLLOW THE BOOK. What have you learned from the Book of Revelation. I don't mean what have you learned from my messages in it. What have you learned from the book itself. Many of you have spent the last year of your life considering this book in detail. What have you learned? Jesus says, *"the person who follows the lessons of this book, whether he lives during the final days or not, is a happy Christian."*

Again in verse 8, John wants us to understand that his writings here are reliable. They are not a forgery and not written by someone using John's name as liberal scholars have long suggested.

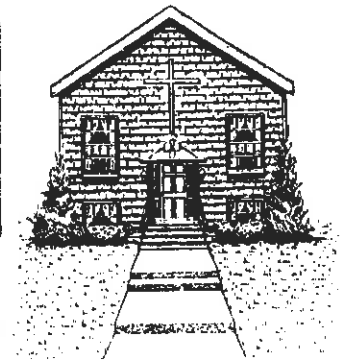
The angel's conversation is interesting. It must have greatly buoyed John's old spirit to be able to have this short conversation, but even so the holy angel is quick to direct John's attention away from him, and onto God. In heavenly time, it was only yesterday that this angel, no doubt, watched Lucifer fall from heaven by wanting HIMSELF to become important.

Only God is to be worshipped. Not angels, not apostles, not Mary, not things, not power and money. God is to be on the throne of my life, receiving FIRST CONSIDERATION in the decisions I make. Worship of anything else, religious or not is a violation of the first commandment and a great offense to the Lord.

If you ever secretly (or openly) doubt if what we do here on Sunday morning has any meaning, remember that we are here for one reason and one reason alone--to worship God together. That is why this lot, 240' X 240' is occupied by a church--to worship the true God. We are not the only ones worshipping the true God, to be sure. And we are not the only ones doing it right either. But dear ones, that is why we are here. Keep it in view.

He is holy and righteous. He is powerful and loving too. He is worthy of our going to the trouble to drive over here every Sunday morning and giving Him our affection and service. He is worthy of our faith and trust.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE Sermon NOTES Notes From Sunday Messages



52 Morton Ave. N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Series: Exposition of the Revelation  
Scripture: Revelation 22:10-21

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 37 (of 37) Dec. 3, 1989

## ADVENT, and the SECOND ADVENT

Introduction When a computer takes more than a few seconds to perform a task, we say that it is slow. But when the printer gives you the output in only a few seconds, we say that it's fast. When a car drives 90 miles/hour, we say it's fast. But when a plane flies 90 mph, we say it's going slow. Speed is relative, a matter of perspective and expectations. When OUR LIVES are over and we are in heaven, we might just say to ourselves, "That sure went fast." Jesus Christ is NOT being slow about His return to this planet, and He will come soon. In the last section of the last book of the Bible, Jesus told John 3 times, "I am coming quickly."

The second advent of the Lord is one of the plainest and greatest teachings of the New Testament. It has reference there at least 300 times and only a bold denial of the reliability of the N.T. can avoid this teaching. The second advent of the Lord will be your glorification if you are a Christian. It is not just some abstract, theological corollary. It is the final step in God's plan for us. We have looked at this truth from many angles in our studies in Revelation over this past year. I for one, can see why non-Christians, be they church-goers or not, do not like to look into this book. It is too immediate and too threatening, if you don't KNOW Christ personally and as Savior.

I find it interesting that so much emphasis is placed in many modern churches on ADVENT. The coming of the Savior as a baby is not at all threatening. And, that blessed event makes no demands on my life. But the suggestion (and it is no mere suggestion in the NT) that the Lamb will return to this planet, literally and sovereignly makes EVERY demand on my life and on yours. This Book of Revelation in the final chapter does not end in the way we might like. One way we might prefer it to close off the NT is with words of gentle comfort. Or, we might rather it tie off ~~the~~ written word of God by answering some lingering questions we have. But it ends in neither fashion. It ends with an alarming URGENCY. And it ends in a starkly non-compromising way. It is point-blank and direct. It plainly calls its 1st and 2nd century readers to live for Christ, in the midst of a perverse and hostile world. Let's consider now, the final verses of the Book of Revelation.

22:10-12 The Book of Revelation was a message from Christ intended to be read and understood by the people of John's time, and by us as well. The angel tells John what to do after his vision is over. Instead of sealing up what he has written, as Daniel was commanded to do (Dan. 12:4-12), THIS book is to be left open for others to see and understand. Daniel's mes-

sage was sealed because it was not a message for Daniel's time. But the Book of Revelation IS A MESSAGE for our times. Don't you feel that the closer we draw to Christ's return, the greater the polarization grows between God's true followers and Satan's followers? Revelation is much more palatable to people in our generation than it was for people who lived, even Christians, 100 years ago. You and I must pay careful attention to the Word of God, and INCREASINGLY so. We need its point-blank, frontal word. As the times grow more evil, even we as Christians (much more so, the world) will become increasingly prone to fuzzy thinking on what is right and what is not right.

Verse 11 is not, I don't think, a fatalistic "let 'em burn, who chose to burn." I think John is pointing out that at the end, when judgement comes, there will be no more time for repentance. There won't be any time for pondering and considering what is right and what isn't. Doing wrong is always doing wrong, whether "wrongness" is popular or not. Immorality, sexual or otherwise is ALWAYS evil. Sorcery, hatred and murder and worshipping anything OTHER THAN Jesus Christ are ALWAYS evil. A person will chose what he will, but right is still right and wrong is still wrong. And when the season for repentance passes, every person will exist forever with their choices.

People often struggle with the idea of God withdrawing His mercy at some point--withdrawal of the offer to repent, trust personally in the Savior. It would be easier to accept an offer from God to allow people to repent and receive salvation during a single hour, say, once per generation than to live in an AGE OF GRACE, when people can come to Christ at any time. But because we live in an AGE of grace, does not obligate God to always hold open the offer. Especially since we have the Book of Revelation which clearly outlines the end of the age of grace...

22:13-16 Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is like He was saying, "I am the A to Z." He is the reason for living, dear ones. He is the reason the world exists, and, He is in control of what happens in the world. He was there before there WAS a planet Earth. And He will be there, the same, when the Planet is no more (as we know it).

If you ever get tired, I mean bone-weary, discouraged and disenchanted with living the Christian life today...as some do; take note of verse 14. This is the last beatitude in the Bible; the last "blessed [or HAPPY] is he, who..." The person who gives attention to HOW to live for Christ, and then works on LIVING for Christ, will not end up ultimately disappointed. "Washing their robes" in verse 14 are those people, then and now, who are seeking to purify their lives from the grip of sin. They are the people who are DAILY striving to remain faithful to Jesus and to prepare for His return. Now, Nintendo, and making lots of money and being the most successful person in your company and investing all your energy trying to win an unsaved spouse or meet the expectations of an elderly parent, or LOTS of other things we get all tired out from, don't get you ready for Christ's return. You and I need to put a

second-coming perspective over how we use up our time and resources. We need to sanctify how we use the time that we have on this planet to primarily do the things He wants us to do.

I don't know how many times I have been told, "I don't have time to go to a conference (that I might get some real spiritual help in washing my robes), because I've got other more important things to do... I don't have time to go to church...I don't have time to read my Bible and to pray." My friends, time is short. Jesus is coming quickly, and when He comes there will be no time for making excuses. You and I need to MAJOR in washing our robes; in giving serious and long-term consideration as to how to grow in the Christian life. The nurture and care of your own soul is the most important thing you do on this planet. Do you believe that?

Verse 15 is John's reference again to the fact that in the realm of judgement, which is outside the New Jerusalem, that is the place where all those whose lives were summed up as murderers, sex-addicts, idolaters, liars will be. Evidently, they WILL BE. They will not, "won't be," as those who teach the doctrine of annihilation say. Also, the gates seem here now to be for going in. Nothing is said of exiting the city. It may be that the saints will make forays out in the service of the Lamb, but nothing is said of that, and so we should not dogmatically teach it. (Whatever our tasks, they will not be boring or unpleasant in any way.)

I just want to mention one word in verse 16, although there is so much in each of these verse that a passing glance surely does not do them justice... Notice the word, "testify." Jesus sends an angel to testify as to who He is ("the root and offspring of David", and "the bright and morning star"--two beautiful names!) We should have the same philosophy of ministry as this sent angel: simply testifying of what we know to be true. (By the way, being sent is the simple meaning of the word "apostle") As Christians, we don't need to feel too bad when exactly the people we WANT to respond to the Gospel, do not. That is not our task. Our task is the same in a general sense, as the commissioned angel here: to testify as to who Jesus Christ is. But we are to perform THAT task. Are you testifying to anyone these days? When was the last time you had or took or made the opportunity to tell someone about the real Christ? I think the world is crying out, "Will the real Jesus Christ, please stand up!!!"

22:17 Verse 17 is a great verse! The times have not closed up yet, for people to still repent. There is a free invitation to anyone who will come, to come. Coming to know Christ is free, according to this verse (and of course, so many others). People who are 1) hearing the invitation, can come. People who 2) thirst, can come. And lastly, people who 3) WISH it, can come. Not only the Holy Spirit draws people, but the Bride also makes the invitation! God and us are partners, by HIS design in the work of evangelism. And the Gospel is unlimited in scope--all people, everywhere may come. Salvation cannot be earned, but God gives it freely. The thirst that people feel, as they scramble to find meaning in life is quenched in the water that Jesus offers. He offered it to the Samaritan woman at the well; He offered it still at the end of the Revelation. And He is still offering it today. But He will not always offer it; Today is the day of salvation.

22:18-21 Verses 18 and 19 are a scary warning to anyone who might distort the prophecy of the Book of Revelation. The Lord does not take kindly to anyone messing with Scripture! And yet the two largest cults in the world today, who are winning people to their causes in droves, do just this. They are foxy, because they say that they honor and love the Bible. And yet in their false translations of Scripture, and in their added books they are in perilous danger. Christians should not compromise one iota with the cults; and we should not feel insecure or ashamed in taking a stand on a responsible interpretation of the Bible.

You might have noticed that a couple of months ago I added a little line at the top right hand side of our bulletin, intended for first-time visitors. It should be crystal clear that we submit in this church to the authority of Scripture. We recognize no other infallible authority than the Word of God.

In verse 20, Jesus states the fact ("testifies") that His second advent is right around the corner, to which old John, lonely, old and persecuted responds, "*Amen, come Lord Jesus.*" The old commentator Seiss tells the story, "Fiction has painted the story of a maiden whose lover left her for a voyage at sea to the Holy Land, promising on his return to make her his beloved bride. Many told her that she would never see him again. But she believed his word, and evening after evening she went down to the lonely shore and kindled there a beacon-light in sight of the roaring waves, to hail and welcome the returning ship which was to bring again her betrothed. And by that watchfire she took her stand each night, praying to the winds to hasten on the sluggish sails that he who was everything to her might come.

Even so, that blessed Lord, who has loved us unto death, has gone away to the mysterious Holy Land of heaven, promising on His return to make us His happy and eternal Bride. Some say that He has gone forever, and we shall never see Him again. But His last word was, "Yea, I come quickly." And on the dark and misty beach sloping out onto the eternal sea, each true believer stands by the love-lit fire, looking and waiting, and praying, and hoping for the fulfillment of His promise, calling out, '*Amen--even so--come, Lord Jesus.*'" (quoted in Walvoord's Commentary) And one of these nights, while the world is busy at play, and laughing at the maiden on the shore, a form shall rise over the surging waves, growing in brightness, as the morning star, bringing to the faithful a joy and triumph and glory which nevermore shall end!

It is not insignificant how the Book of Revelation (and the Bible) ends (verse 21). It ends with John's farewell, a benediction for the kindness of the Lord to prevail in the lives of believers. The Bible is the story of GRACE. It is not a law-book which constantly taunts and accuses us. The story of God's plan for the ages is the story of grace. Make no mistake about it, God has been and is still offering a relationship of grace to people on this planet. The planet as we know it, will end in a howl of rejection of that grace and then will suffer the consequences of rejecting the Lord. But for us who are the saved, we enjoy the season that remembers the first advent of the Savior. And we look with hope to the season that will see His second advent.

As we prepare for the Lord's Table, we are reminded of Paul's words in I Cor.11:26, where he was instructing the Corinthian believers about what the Lord's Table is all about: "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*" Each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are implicitly stating also our belief not only in His first advent, but our belief in His second.

Today, let's make this transition to the Table with Hymn # 140, a very special hymn which not only commemorates His coming as a "natch'rl born baby", but the purpose for which He came, to purchase pardon for us who are trusting in it!