



Hearing the **book of Revelation**
The end of the world? ...or the completion of a project!

STUDY GUIDE

A transforming Bible Study that will help you prepare both for things to come on earth, and for the Kingdom of God to follow.

The Patmos Project presents...

“The time is near” Hearing the book of Revelation

Preface

Thank you for your interest in this Bible Study on the book of Revelation. I hope that through it your life will be transformed and that you will be prepared both for things to come on earth and for the Kingdom of God to follow.

We live in a culture that is quite fascinated with the question of the “end of the world.” It is a theme explored in our literature, entertainment, music, science, and philosophy. If you are familiar with Christian ideas, you may be aware that the Bible creates expectation of the return of Jesus Christ to earth as part of the unfolding of “end time” events. But even if you know little or nothing about Christian views, very likely you are aware of a diversity of ideas about how the world as we know it may come to an end.

So, what will bring about this end of the world? A meteor strike? Nuclear War? Disease? Alien invasion? Global warming? Or will there even be an end to the world?

The book of Revelation provides us with the Biblical description of what is to come. It speaks out of a world view rooted in a sovereign, creator God, who is in complete control of earth’s destiny. It reveals planning and purpose rather than random chance with regard to things to come.

While as literature Revelation is considered enigmatic and difficult, the book itself claims to be understandable. But at the same time, it suggests that a “reader” will be necessary: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it, for the time is near.” (Revelation 1:3)

After many, many years of professional and personal study, I have now felt called of God to “read” this book to people who will listen. The series, “The time is near”: Hearing the book of Revelation, whether through the online talks or in book format, will provide my reading. This study guide will help you to re-process what you have “heard,” it will enable you to check the Scripture itself to see whether my reading is based on the text, and it will invite you to bring your life to Jesus Christ, the One alone who can rescue you out of things that are coming.

I pray that through this effort you will find yourself in the middle of the blessing promised to those who hear and obey what God is saying. For look around you and see for yourself: “The time is near.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Christie".

Rev. Jim Christie, Ph.D.

“The time is near”

WORKBOOK

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to this journey through the book of Revelation. We hope that as you do these nine studies you will learn much and experience meaningful reflection on what you are learning; but even more, our hope is that you will be able to apply to your life what you find written in the book of Revelation.





A weakness in many studies and discussions about the Bible is that we share our opinions and compare our ideas but never really bear down and ask ourselves, “What does the Bible say?” Therefore, the intention of this study is to help us first and foremost to read the Bible. Then to go on to discern what it means and how it applies to our lives.

We recognize that when it comes to a study on the end times (eschatology), there are almost as many versions as there are people. Therefore, let us state clearly right from the beginning the intended purpose of this study. What matters to us is not “your” version or “my” version or that of someone else in the group; what matters is this: *What does the Book of Revelation say?* You will find many of the questions in the study simply leading to that end: “What does the text say?” Then, of course, comes the reflection and practical application.

Each Bible study is based on the respective talk and is intended to lead each of us to:

- ❖ OBSERVE what the relevant texts of Scripture say
- ❖ DISCUSS what is meant by these Scriptures
- ❖ REFLECT on how these Scriptures are relevant to us in our day
- ❖ APPLY Scriptural truth to our lives

To help facilitate these purposes, we have used a system of icons to identify the four kinds of questions we use:

I C O N K E Y	
	OBSERVE
	DISCUSS
	REFLECT
	APPLY

In addition to these four icons, we have provided a fifth to indicate items of further information or explanation.



One last note: Answers to most of the questions are found at the back of the study guide. You will gain the most from the questions if you determine your own answers before checking the back of the book.

We hope that the answers provided will help you keep in step with the progression of the study. However, there may be times when your own answer differs from that provided, and you may not understand or even agree with an answer provided. We suggest you bring this matter to your group for discussion.

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“THE TIME IS NEAR”
HEARING THE BOOK OF REVELATION



SECTION 1

“The time is near”

Our Revelation series has in its title, “The time is near.” This sentence is an actual quote from the book, Revelation 1:3, repeated again in Revelation 22:10.



1. According to the following verses from the introductory chapter of the book, what is it that is “near”?

Revelation 1:1 and 1:19

Revelation 1:7



The writers of the New Testament Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) were reluctant to refer to themselves in their own books. In fact, none of the Gospels even identify the writer by name. It is the early church that reports to us who wrote the Gospels; though internal features of the Gospels tend to corroborate what the early church has passed on to us. The report passed down to us is that the apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation, is also the author of the 4th Gospel which we know as the Gospel of John. John is not mentioned by name in that Gospel though he figures largely in the other gospels and in Acts. However, the Gospel of John sometimes mentions “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” It is probably right to assume that this unnamed disciple is John himself.



2. Read John 21:20-23.



a. Which disciple does Peter see in John 21:20?



b. Who is this disciple?



c. What books of the New Testament have we seen that this disciple wrote?



d. According to John 21:23, what rumour went around the early church about this disciple?



e. According to John 21:21-22, what caused this rumour to start?





f. Apparently, then, how soon did the early church believe that Jesus' return might be?



g. What correction does John provide to the rumour about himself that was circulating? (John 21:23)





h. John therefore did not assume that Jesus would return in his own lifetime. He was not convinced that he himself would not die. Nevertheless, when did he say would happen the coming of Jesus with the clouds? (Read again Revelation 1:3 along with Revelation 1:7)



i. Can we justify John's use of the word "near," or was he just plain wrong? Look up the following two verses, and write down what each tells us about time from God's point of view.

2 Peter 3:8

James 4:14



3. Well, it turns out that about 2,000 years have passed, and Jesus has still not yet returned. Inevitably, there have been countless predictions of his return (including the one we just saw in John 21!); and as you know, it has simply not yet happened.



a. Do you think that the public perception of Christian faith has been damaged by failed predictions about when Jesus would return? How about you: do failed predictions make it difficult for you to expect his return?



b. It has been 2,000 years now since the New Testament was written. How possible do you think it is that Jesus will come in your lifetime?



c. If Jesus were to return this week to take his followers into eternity with him, would you want to go? Are there things that would hold you back from going with him?

SECTION 2

Revelation as a predictable sequence of events



Jim’s introductory talk gives us an indication of how he views the book of Revelation. Clearly, he views it as a book of prophecy or prophecies which may have had “interim”, partial fulfilment; but which will have final, ultimate fulfilment yet in the future.



1. Will you be disappointed if this series of talks on Revelation does not give clear predictions of what is going to happen and when?



2. Read Revelation 1:3. What specific purpose did John have when he wrote the book of Revelation?



3. What therefore should be our primary purpose in studying this book?



4. According to Revelation 1:19, what are the three general divisions of timing that provide the structure of the book?

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5. Study the following table, and then suggest a title to summarize each section. You might have to quickly scan each section or page through it a bit to help you. Also, paragraph titles might help if your Bible provides them.



Timing	Section of Revelation	Suggested Title
“things you have seen”	Revelation 1	
“things which are”	Revelation 2-3	
“after these things”	Revelation 4-22	



6. Jim describes how the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy is complex rather than simple. Look at the following two examples of Old Testament prophecy. See if you can suggest how the fulfilment of these prophecies was complex.





a. Isaiah 7:14, along with Isaiah 8:3 and Matthew 21:21-23



b. Isaiah 9:6-7



7. Given that the fulfilment of prophecy is so complex, what attitudes should we practice towards one another when it comes to interpreting Biblical prophecy?

SECTION 3

How will we interpret the book of Revelation?



Jim pointed out that the book itself (in Revelation 1:1) implies that symbols are going to be used in the book. He tells us that he is going to try to approach the symbols with as much common sense as possible, and to interpret the book literally as often and as much as possible.



1. Often times a symbol is interpreted by the book itself, for example, it tells us that the seven lampstands of Revelation 1 represent the seven churches. If the book actually identifies for us what is represented by the symbol, then why do you think the symbol is used in the first place?



2. Given the way Revelation often interprets a symbol or identifies what the symbol represents, what might we conclude in general about the way the book uses symbols and intends them to be understood?



3. Read Daniel 12:9, and then Revelation 22:10. What does this suggest about God's intention for us with respect to our ability to understand the book of Revelation?





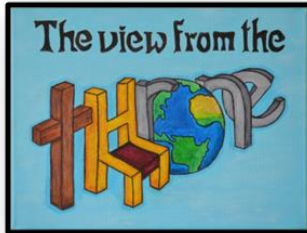
4. Read Daniel 12:7, and then Revelation 12:14. What do these two verses have in common?

CONCLUSION



What, so far, would you conclude are some of the reasons why God has given to us the book of Revelation?

THE VIEW FROM THE THRONE



INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

The view from the throne

Discuss as a group why you think that modern culture is so interested in “end of the world” type literature and movies?



Jim’s intention in this message is to identify the deliberate perspective from which the book of Revelation was written, namely, from the view of the throne of God. He bases this discussion on three names of God that are used throughout the book.

SECTION 1

Name #1, “The Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 1:8)

This name directs us to think about God’s eternal purpose.

1. What was a project that you have completed that brought you much satisfaction? Can you think of why was it so satisfying?
-



2. Jim compares our human experience of completing projects with the “project” that God has been working on: the universe, the earth, nature, and particularly, mankind. If the book of Revelation provides for us the “end of the story,” as it were, what would we expect it might tell us in terms of a project being completed?



3. Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:24 identified several things that God is planning to include in the completion of his project. Let’s try to identify what these things are which God is planning to include. (Note: that the verse mentions “transgression,” “sin,” and “iniquity” which for our purposes mean basically the same thing.)

a. *“to finish transgression”*



i. Read Genesis 15:16. This verse is spoken from God to Abraham and it helps us to understand what it means to “finish” transgression. The promise is that God will give to Abraham’s descendants the land of the Amorites; the Amorites are to be judged and destroyed because of their sin. But not yet! What reason does God give Abraham for a 400 year delay?



ii. What will happen when their sin is finished?



iii. How would you apply this principle to the end times?



b. *“to make an end of sin”* We just saw that God plans to “finish transgression.” Here it says that God will bring it to an end. Can you see any difference between “finishing” something and “ending” it?



c. “to atone for iniquity” Apparently it is not enough to finish evil and bring it to an end; there must also be atonement. With the help of a dictionary, define what this word “atone” means, and then try to describe what “atone for iniquity” means.



d. “to bring in everlasting righteousness” The first three things that we have seen above deal with the removal of evil. What do we see here on the positive side that has to replace the evil that has been removed?



e. “to seal up vision and prophecy” Read Matthew 5:17-18. What does Jesus say that must happen, which helps us to understand also what Daniel is prophesying here?



f. “to anoint the most holy place”

i. Read Revelation 21:3. What announcement does God make in this verse?

ii. If “anointing” represents the presence of God’s Spirit, what prophecy is Daniel also making?



4. Looking back at your answers to 3a-f above, what would you say is the major focus of Daniel’s prophecy with respect to God’s project:

- the universe
- the earth
- nature
- mankind



5. What does this tell you about God’s priorities for us as human beings?

SECTION 2

Name #2, “The Lord God, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8)

This name directs us to think about God’s sovereign power.



1. What do the words “almighty” and “sovereign” mean? It might be helpful to look these words up in a good English dictionary.

Almighty:

Sovereign:



2. If the words “almighty” and “sovereign” apply to God and how he works on his creation “project,” how can we harmonize things like “co-incidence,” “accident,” “cause and effect,” and “natural disaster,” things to which we are so accustomed in our human experience?





The kinds of massive catastrophes that Jim mentioned in his talk (for example, the tsunami of Boxing Day, 2004; hurricane Katrina, 2005; the earthquake in Haiti, 2010), as terrible as they have been, are only isolated disasters as compared with the kinds of disasters that mankind is yet to encounter according to the book of Revelation.

However, if we believe that the catastrophes we have already witnessed on earth are the judgment of God, we might also come to conclusions like: whenever anything bad happens, it is the judgment of God; or, that we are better than other people because they were judged and we weren’t. Worse still, we might even develop judgmental instead of compassionate attitudes towards people suffering from disasters.



3. Read Luke 13:1-5. How did Jesus handle it when people suggested that disasters they had witnessed were the judgment of God?



4. Discuss as a group how we should apply Jesus' response in Luke 13:1-5 to our understanding of natural disasters and other catastrophes in our day?



SECTION 3

Name #3, "The Lord, Holy and True" (Revelation 6:10)

This name directs us to think about God's divine perfections.



1. Read Revelation 6:9-11



a. What kind of crowd did John see? (v.9)



b. Are these people content just to let the past wrongs be forgotten? (v.10)



c. Does it appear that God plans on bringing about justice and judgment? (v.11)



d. Why, in this case, did God not bring judgment right away? (v.11)



e. What does his picture tell us:

- That God does not judge sin?
- That God does judge sin, but he waits for the right time to do so?



2. Read Romans 2:4-6. What mistake do people make in their thinking when they sin?



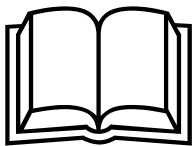
3. Read the following verses: James 2:13, 2 Peter 3:9, and Ezekiel 33:11. Does God prefer to judge or to show mercy and forgiveness?



4. Read 1 John 1:9. How do you know if you are one to whom God has shown mercy and forgiveness, or whether you are one who simply hopes God has just overlooked or not noticed yours sins?



CONCLUSION



The throne of God is the perspective from which the book of Revelation is written. This perspective leads us to recognize the character of God and understand why he does what he does. The Biblical story of God and man is not complete without the book of Revelation. What aspects of the character of God have you found revealed or confirmed so far in your study of this book?



“WORTHY IS THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN!”



INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”

Most of us have at least attended a wedding, some of us have been in wedding parties, in various roles. Many of us who have never been married still anticipate having a wedding of our own. In any case, if you had to choose, who do you think is generally the centre of attention in a wedding, the bride or the groom?

Let’s say, for argument sake, that it is the bride. Whether or not you would agree with that, discuss what might be the role, expectation, and experience of the groom throughout a wedding? (If possible, watch the YouTube video at this link, ignore the laughter, think about the groom: <http://youtu.be/FMSPxIo7sfE?t=25s>)

In what ways do you think Jesus Christ might be looking forward to his wedding?

SECTION 1

Jesus is worthy because of who he is and what he is like.

1. Read Revelation 5:1-7.

a. Verse 1: Who is pictured in this verse? What is he holding?

b. Verse 2: Who were the occupants of heaven looking for?



c. Verse 3: Where did they look?



d. Verse 4: How did John react to this problem?



e. Verse 5-6: What solution was found to this problem?



The main point of this study is to observe why Jesus Christ, and he alone, was worthy to open this book and release its contents, thereby completing God's plan for creation and mankind.



2. Read Revelation 2:18. How is Jesus specifically identified here?



3. What special qualifications and privileges might an only son have?



4. How would these things be true with respect to Jesus Christ and his Father?



Jim spent a good deal of time talking about the title which John gives to the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." His conclusion was that the "of" should be taken as possessive, that is, that this is the "Revelation owned by Jesus Christ." However, many Bible teachers believe that the "of" really means something more like "about," so that it is "the Revelation about Jesus Christ," or, "the Revealing of Jesus Christ."



5. Can you suggest ways that the role of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, might differ if the book of Revelation is “owned” by him versus it being a book “about” him?



Jesus also referred to himself in the New Testament as the “Son of Man.” If he is truly divine as the Son of God, he is also truly human as the Son of Man.



6. Read Genesis 3:14-15.



a. To whom were these verses spoken?



b. What final outcome is predicted for this “person”?



c. Who does this passage say is going to bring about this outcome?



d. In order for this promise to be fulfilled, then, the one who crushes the serpent’s head must be the ____ _ ____ .



e. If Jesus Christ is the One who fulfils this promise, he must be the ____ _ ____ .



f. Therefore, Jesus does not qualify to bring about the victory and judgment of God unless he is a _____ , the “seed of the woman.”



7. Read Hebrews 2:17



a. Look back to Hebrews 2:12. Who is this passage talking about? _____



b. Whom did Jesus have to become exactly like in order to qualify to be our High Priest?



8. The book of Revelation is a book about salvation, judgment, and eternal destiny. From what we have seen, Jesus, was qualified to be the “owner” of such a book because he was both Son of _____ and also Son of _____.



9. No one else could adequately fulfill the role of bringing salvation and judgment on mankind, because no one else is both _____ and _____.

SECTION 2

Jesus is worthy because of what he has done.



1. Read Revelation 5:7. What happened in this verse?



2. The Lamb’s action in v.7 resulted in waves of worship. Read the following verses to discover who participated in this worship.



a. Revelation 5:8-10,14



b. Revelation 5:11-12



c. Revelation 5:13



d. Read Revelation 5:9. For what reason especially did the four angelic beings and the twenty four elders worship the Lamb?



e. Read Revelation 5:12. For what reason especially did all the angels worship the Lamb?



f. Read Revelation 5:5. For what would John have been looking?



g. Read Revelation 5:6: What did John actually see? _____. What state was this animal in? _____.



h. Read Revelation 5:9. What did the Lamb accomplish by being slain?

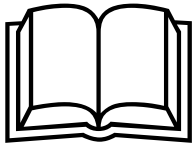


i. Read Revelation 5:10. What is the outcome for these people?



3. What is it, then, about the Lamb that makes him the special focus of worship both in heaven and on earth?

CONCLUSION



What things do you find in the following passages that are going to happen according to the book of Revelation, things that God shared with Jesus Christ and with him alone when he gave him this book?



Revelation 6:15-17



Revelation 7:9-10



Revelation 19:7



1. Having completed this study, can you now give four reasons why no other great person or religious leader or prophet, etc., is “worthy” of worship, but only Jesus Christ?

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.



2. There are many religions, many religious leaders, many views about how to be saved and have a future in God's heaven. What is the only one true way according to the book of Revelation?



3. What should we do if we find ourselves hoping to escape the coming judgment of God by trusting in a religion or person or means other than Jesus Christ?


BRIDAL PREPARATIONS: “THE THINGS WHICH ARE”




INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Bridal Preparations “the things which are”

In this talk we continue with the theme which we began in talk #3, preparations for the most glorious wedding of all, the marriage of the Lamb and his Bride. Those of


 you who have been involved in preparing for a wedding, especially from the point of view of the bride, what things need to be done?

 Now take the list of things that you have itemized, and discuss how each of these things might or might not apply to the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb as envisioned in the book of Revelation.

STUDY: Revelation 2-3



Revelation 2-3 consists of seven letters to seven different churches. Although the churches belong to different cities, and exist in different circumstances, and face different challenges, there are some common themes in the letters.

-  1. To help us identify the common themes, read the following sets of verses and identify a single word, a verb that is common to each of the verses. Also identify how many of the seven churches are addressed with this word.



a. Revelation 2:5, 2:16, 2:22, 3:3; 3:19

Common word: _____

Number of churches addressed with this word: _____ out of the seven



b. Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13; 3:22

Common word: _____

Number of churches addressed with this word: _____ out of the seven



c. Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:12; 3:21

Common word: _____

Number of churches addressed with this word: _____ out of the seven



2. a. Of these three verbs, discuss what activity must go first and why it must go first.



b. In what ways can we personally practice the act of “hearing” what God has to say?




c. The actual sentence in each of the first set of verses is this: “He who has an ear, let him hear....” We sometimes use a similar saying, that such and such a person “has no ears.” What words (antonyms) would you use to describe the opposite of “hearing,” that would describe a person who “has no ears”? You could use a dictionary to help answer this question.



d. Read Revelation 1:3. A blessing is promised to those who hear and _____ the things written in this book. There is no blessing for those who simply read or have heard the words of this book; the blessing is for those who go on and do what the book says!



e. In this Bible study guide, we have chose to use the ear icon,  , to identify questions that are intended to help us to apply to our lives what we are hearing. Can you now see why we have chosen this icon?



3. a. To whom are these seven letters in Revelation 2-3 written? _____



b. Apparently, then, even among people who attend church, some people have ears to hear and others do not. Therefore, by belonging to a church or by attending church, do we automatically find ourselves in the place of God’s blessing? _____



c. Read once more Revelation 1:3. What must we do to be sure we are in the place of God’s blessing?



4. a. Find a way to look up what the word “repent” means, and write down a definition for it.



b. As we saw above, five of the seven churches were instructed to “repent.” There were behaviours or attitudes which were wrong and needed to be changed. Look at the following verses and identify what was the main thing they were doing wrong. (Leave the third column blank for now.)

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Wrong behaviour or attitude</u>	<u>Change of behaviour or attitude</u>
Church of Ephesus Revelation 2:4		
Church of Pergamum Revelation 2:14		
Church of Thyatira Revelation 2:20		
Church of Sardis Revelation 3:1,4		
Church of Laodicea Revelation 3:16-17		



c. Through the column of the chart that you have just completed, you have identified five things that God sees wrong in his church – in various places, at various times, among various denominations. Go to the third column now, and try to describe for each of the five churches what the corrected attitudes or behaviours would be that God is looking for.



For each of the seven churches, there is a special promise to those who “overcome.” In the case of the five churches that we have just looked at, the persons who repent and change their attitudes/behaviour are the ones who have overcome.



5. a. Read Revelation 2:10. The church of Smyrna received no rebuke, no call to “repent.” However the followers of Jesus who made up the church at Smyrna still needed to “overcome.” What is it according to this verse that they needed to do to overcome?



- b. Read Revelation 3:8,11. The church of Philadelphia also received no rebuke, no call to “repent.” What is it according to these verses that the followers of Jesus who made up the church of Philadelphia needed to do to overcome?



6. a. From what you have seen of churches throughout your lifetime, have you observed any of the wrong behaviours or attitudes that Jesus confronted his people about in these two chapters of Revelation?



- b. How has what you have seen in your lifetime affected your attitude towards churches or your participation in church?



c. If you are a follower of Jesus, or if you choose to become a follower of Jesus, which of the challenges that you have discovered above might be the most difficult for you to “overcome”?



d. What things should you be doing to be sure you “overcome” such challenges?

CONCLUSION



Now that you have done this study, look back at what you wrote down for the second question in the introductory section about similarities between preparing for a wedding, and preparing to be part of the Bride of Jesus. Do you have anything to add to your answer now?



WAVES OF WRATH



INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Waves of Wrath

In this talk, Jim pointed out that time and timing is very important to God with respect to his dealings with creation and mankind. Have you ever experienced a situation in your life where, looking back, you can see that God's timing was not what you expected or wanted, but turned out to be best in the long run?





Read Genesis 15:16. God's timing for the "wrap up" of the human journey on earth is on his timetable, not ours. Can you remember from the talk, or can you see in Genesis 15:16 what was a main, contributing factor to what God has been waiting for?



1 a. Read Revelation 9:18-21.



i. What has just happened here according to v.18?



ii. Would you characterize this catastrophe as the kindness of God or the judgment of God?



iii. For some reason, this God-sent catastrophe killed only one third of mankind, so two thirds were still left. What effect do you think God would have wanted this catastrophe to have had upon the two thirds that survived?



iv. Read Revelation 9:20-21. What effect did this catastrophe have on the two thirds of mankind that survived?



v. Read Revelation 3:10. What alternate description does this verse use for the “tribulation” period?



vi. A test is a way to determine the quality of a given item. From what you observed above in Revelation 9:18-21, what is God testing when he brings judgment upon mankind?



b. Read Revelation 3:10.



i. Check the context of Revelation 3:10 to see who this verse is addressed to.



ii. What promise (in Revelation 3:10) does God give to these people?



iii. Now also read Revelation 3:8. From this verse and from v.10, why exactly are these people told that they will be “excused” from the coming time of testing?



iv. Who is addressed in Revelation 3:14?



v. Read Revelation 3:16. Is this church told to expect to be rescued from the coming time of testing?



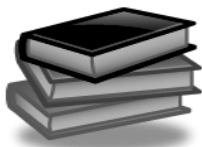
vi. Is the promise of rescue from the time of testing given to all people who go to church?



vii. Comparing what the church of Philadelphia is told, and what the church of Laodicea is told, does it seem we choose whether we will be rescued from the time of testing or whether we will have to go through it? How would we make that choice?

SECTION 1

The Seven Seals: the release of God's judgment



The first four seals of the book which the Lamb opens in Revelation 6 introduce, or “release” the time of judgment upon the earth. They prepare the way for God’s judgment by creating the circumstances on earth that will exist during the time of the tribulation. Let’s try to imagine and visualize what these circumstances will look like and how they might come about in the real world.



1. a. Seal one, Revelation 6:1-2, See also 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12.





b. Seal two, Revelation 6:3-4.





c. Seal three, Revelation 6:5-6





d. Seal four, Revelation 6:7-8





2. Read Revelation 6:9-11, seal five.



a. What kind of action on God's part is anticipated in v.10?



b. What kind of testing is anticipated in v.11 for those still remaining on earth for this coming time of judgment?



3. Read Revelation 6:12-17.



a. What sphere of creation does judgment seem to fall upon next? (v.12-14)



b. What outcome is now achieved in the human realm by the release of the six seals?
(v.15-17)

SECTION 2

The Seven Trumpets: the terror of God’s warnings



1. a. Read Revelation 8:1-2. What is the content of the seventh seal when it is broken?



b. Read Revelation 8:3-5. What role have “the saints” had in this new phase of God’s judgment?



c. Read Matthew 6:10. Can you see how this prayer of the saints might be partly responsible for God’s judgment coming on earth?



2. Scan the six trumpets as they are described in Revelation 8:6 to Revelation 9:21. What common thread do you find in these judgments that speak of “restraint”?



SECTION 3

The Seven Bowls: the end of God's patience



1. a. Read Revelation 8:13. What heavenly pronouncement do you discover here?



b. Now read Revelation 9:12. Judging from this verse and the verses which proceed it, what would you conclude is the first "woe"?



c. Now read Revelation 11:14. What do you discover has now passed?



Let's try to determine that to which the second "woe" refers. Jim points out in his talks that Revelation 10-12 is an interlude that separates the first half of the tribulation from the second half; and that Revelation 11:1-13, is a flashback that adds another dimension to the first half of the tribulation, namely, the activity of God's special two prophets during the first 3½ years of tribulation.



d. If these two sections, then, are interlude and flashback, what section is left between the passing of the first "woe" (Revelation 9:12) and the passing of the second "woe" (Revelation 11:14)?



e. What, then, is the second "woe"?



There is no similar statement in the book from this point on that would identify that the third "woe" is past. It is introduced in Revelation 11:14, but not clearly defined as to when it has been completed.



2. a. Read Revelation 8:13. What clue are we given about the three woes?



b. Read Revelation 11:15. What trumpet do we encounter here?



c. Scan ahead quickly through chapters 12-19 and try to discover, at least in general terms, what events or circumstances are forewarned by the seventh trumpet, and are therefore included in the third “woe.” You might be able to accomplish this just by observing paragraph titles if they are included in your translation of the Bible.



d. What possible confirmation of your conclusion do you see in Revelation 12:12?



3. Scan Revelation 16.



a. What group of seven things do you discover here?



b. Read Revelation 15:8. What unique circumstance, perhaps in terms of the whole Bible, occurs here?



c. Reread your answer to Section 2, question #2 above. What kind of restraint in judgment was there during the sounding of the six trumpet judgments?



d. Let's observe the difference of intensity that exists in the judgments of the seven bowls.



i. Read Revelation 16:2. What special focus of judgment do you discover here?



ii. Read Revelation 16:3,4,8,10,14. What kind of restraint that you found in the six trumpet judgments is missing in every case here?



e. Read Revelation 16:17. We have noticed that the seventh seal introduced the seven trumpets, and that the seventh trumpet introduced the seven bowls. According to Revelation 16:17, what does the seventh bowl accomplish?

CONCLUSION



Most of what we have explored in this study has been information oriented rather than focused on practical application for our lives. However, the book of Revelation explicitly states that we will be blessed if we “heed” the things written in it.



1. Think through the study as a whole. Has this study inspired any desire, correction, or decision for your life?





Read Luke 21.34-36.



2. What advice does Jesus give us in these verses to help us avoid having to face the terrible tribulation to come?





3. In positive terms, try to visualize and describe what a person's life would look like if that person is going to be successful in escaping the tribulation to come.



THE GREAT DRAGON



INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

The Great Dragon

If you have seen or read a version of C. S. Lewis' work, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, you will have seen that Lewis' world of Narnia has man and animals dialoguing and experiencing life's challenges together. Perhaps he was imagining that the original paradise of God's creation boasted harmony between man and animals, somewhat as Jim described from the book of Genesis.



Would you have enjoyed a world like that?



What changes do you observe would have to occur for that kind of harmony between man and animals to exist today?





What changes other than that between man and animals do you think have occurred in creation as a result of sin entering the world?



SECTION 1

Meet your enemy (Revelation 12)



1. Read Genesis 3:15. In what ways do you see that the words of this verse were a declaration of war?



2. Read Revelation 12:3



- a. How many heads does the dragon have? _____



- b. How many horns does he have on his head? _____



- c. Read Revelation 17:9-12. Why is the dragon depicted as having seven heads and ten horns?





3. How does this description of the great dragon help you to envision his influence in the world throughout human history?



4. Read the following verses, and from them identify and think of specific examples of the strategies the dragon has used to wage war.



- a. Revelation 12:9, with respect to the world as a whole.



b. Revelation 12:10, and 17, with respect to followers of Jesus.



c. Revelation 12:13, and 15, with respect to the Jewish people.

SECTION 2

Track his ways (Revelation 13)



1. What is the role of a prophet, and what does a prophet accomplish? Feel free to use a dictionary to help you with a definition.



2. Read Revelation 13:11-17. In what ways is it strategic for the dragon to appoint a prophet to work with the Antichrist?





3. a. Scan Revelation 13 for a word that appears five times, and describes something that the dragon seeks. Can you identify what that word is? W _ _ _ _ _



- b. This word describes what God also is looking for. Can you identify something that has diverted worship away from God throughout human history, something that will also divert this away from the dragon unless he does something to remove it?

R _____



Throughout this series, Jim teaches that the “Great Harlot” is a symbol of all religion that is not the worship of God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Read Revelation 17:16.



- c. What is going to happen to her, according to Revelation 17:16?



- 4. a. Read Revelation 17:2-3. What kind of relationship have the kings of the earth had with the “Great Harlot” throughout human history?



- b. Read again Revelation 17:16. How will the Antichrist and his confederate kings differ in how they deal with the “Great Harlot”?



- c. What does this suggest to you about how the dragon treats others even if they have served him?

SECTION 3

Recognize his destiny (Revelation 20)



1. Read Revelation 20:1-3; and 20:7-10. How difficult is it for God to deal with the dragon?



2. Obviously God has allowed the dragon to be active throughout human history, even though he could have prevented this from happening. Let's observe some of the reasons why God allowed the dragon to be active. First, with respect to God's people.



a. Read Revelation 2:10. How does the dragon treat God's people at times?



b. Read Revelation 13:12 and 16. What does the dragon try to accomplish here, even if through the false prophet?



c. Read Revelation 13:15, and 17. How does he enforce these things?



d. Read Revelation 14:9-11. What will be the outcome for people who choose to have allegiance to the dragon and worship him?



e. What have we seen the outcome will be for those who refuse to worship the beast and refuse to receive his mark?



f. Read Revelation 14:12. What now do you see that this verse must mean?



g. Read again Revelation 3:15-16. If Laodicea in its ultimate fulfilment represents the church and Christians of the last days, what apparently will be the state of many Christians as the last days approach?



h. According to Revelation 3:16, how does Jesus Christ deal with such people?



i. How does the work of the dragon and the Antichrist solve this problem for anyone who might have survived on earth into the last half of the tribulation?



3. What else does God use the dragon to accomplish, this time with respect to those who reject the rule of Jesus Christ?



a. According to Revelation 17:16-17.



b. According to Revelation 20:7-9.



4. a. Read Revelation 20:10. Where is the dragon's ultimate destiny, and what will it be like?



b. Read Revelation 20:10,15. Who else will be there?



c. Read Matthew 25:41. What do you observe was God's preference and intention about the lake of fire, according to Matthew 25:41?

CONCLUSION



These questions are just for you as a group to think about and discuss together.



From what you have observed in this study, what would the dragon's intention for you and your destiny?





What strategies do you think he might be following to try to succeed with respect to you?





Read Revelation 12:11. What three means of escape has God provided for us?



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Discuss what these means of escape might look like for us in real life. See if you can think of specific examples of how these could be applied in our lives.



SURVIVORS (PART A & B)



INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Survivors

Before listening to any of this series on Revelation, would you say that you had a personal view or opinion about “eschatology,” that is, about how the



end times are going to unfold? If your answer is “yes,” describe what has been your view.



Do you think you are open to changing your view if you see that another view is more Biblical, or do you think it will be a difficult thing for you to make any change to your view?



Why do you think it is so hard for many people to be willing to change their view about eschatology?



This talk is about those who will escape the wrath of God and thus be among the “survivors.” While every person who ever lived will either face the wrath of God or escape it, in a special way the people who experience the tribulation period will be forced to face that choice in a much more decisive way, during their earthly lifetime. Jim’s conclusion from Scripture is that there will be three “waves” of survivors.

SECTION 1

Those who “escape by readiness”



1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9.



a. From verses 1-3, does it appear that this passage is addressing the issue of eternal judgment, ie. heaven and hell, or is it talking about something that is going to happen on earth?



b. From verse 9, what hope in this context is provided for followers of Jesus?



2. Now read Revelation 3:10.



a. What kind of “hour” is coming? _____



b. How is a time of testing different from a time of judgment?



c. Who is this “hour” going to affect? _____



d. Who is going to be rescued and exempted for this time of testing? Be sure to check the context of Revelation 3:10.



e. Therefore, is this verse describing an escape from tribulation that is going to happen on earth, or about an escape from the judgment of hell?



3. Read Mark 13:32-37.



a. According to v.32, when will the Lord return for his own people?



b. According to v.33-37, in what state does Jesus advise us to conduct our lives given the fact that God has not granted us to answer the question “when?”?



4. Read 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.



a. What similar advise does Paul give?



b. Is it really possible to live in the way Paul has just described? Think through what it would look like in real life if we lived like that. Try to imagine specific examples to help you visualize this.



SECTION 2

Those who “escape by fire”



1. Read Revelation 7:9-10. What does John see here?



2. Read Revelation 7:13-14.



a. Where has this group of people come from?



b. What was the criterion that they had met which qualified them to be in this “rescued” group?



3. Read Revelation 9:20-21. How did this “rescued” group differ in their response to God’s judgment compared with the rest of mankind?



4. Read Revelation 7:16-17. What suggestion is there here that this “rescued” group experienced at least some of the tribulation judgments of God upon the earth?





5. Read Revelation 15:2.



a. What differences do you see between the “rescued” group of people and the new group of people introduced here in Revelation 15:2?



b. Can you see why Jim concluded that this first “rescued” group who came “out of” the tribulation is a different group from those described in Revelation 15:2?





c. What hope does this give us for people who end up facing the tribulation period?

SECTION 3

Those who “escape by martyrdom”



1. Read Revelation 7:1-8.



a. What relationship does this group of people have with God (v.3)?



b. What nationality are they (v.4)? _____



c. How many people are in this group (v.4)? _____



d. Read Revelation 6:12, and then Revelation 8:1. In what part of the tribulation period is chapter 7 apparently happening?



2. Read Revelation 14:1-5.



a. What number of people are there in this group (v.1)? _____



b. Where are they (v.1)? _____



Note that “Mount Zion” is the Old Testament name for the location of Jerusalem. This is the only time that the designation “Mt. Zion” is used in the book of Revelation. It would be a name and location especially important to Jewish people familiar with the Old Testament and its traditions.



c. What is on their foreheads that identifies their allegiance (v.1)?



d. What are the five things that describe this group in v.4-5?

1.	2.	3.
4.		5.



e. What similarities do you see with this group in comparison with the group we saw in Revelation 7:1-8?



Jim's conclusion is that this group is one and the same with the group that was introduced in Revelation 7:1-8. The vision of the group in Revelation 7 occurred in the first half of the tribulation period.



3. Read Revelation 11:15. What signal do we find here that marks the end of the first half of the tribulation, and leads us into the second half?



Chapters 12 and 14 are interlude chapters, they set up the circumstances, main characters present, and agenda of the second half of the tribulation.



4. Therefore, in what part of the tribulation are we entering when we meet the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1-5?



Our conclusion, then, is that the 144,000 are Jewish people, specially chosen by God, who are identified and set apart by him in the first half of the tribulation. They have gone through a period of preparation and purification, and are now present and active (following the Lamb wherever he goes) during the second half of the tribulation. This sets us up to expect a work of God among his own people, the Jews, during the second half of the tribulation.



5. Read Luke 21:24, second half of verse. What did Jesus say would eventually happen to the Gentiles?
-



6. Read Romans 11:25-26. What did Paul say would happen after the time of the Gentiles was fulfilled?
-



7. Read Revelation 9:20-21.



- a. What result do we see in mankind at the end of the first half of the tribulation, despite the terrible first woe (the demonic, scorpion-like locusts) and the second terrible woe (a third of mankind killed in some kind of nuclear/chemical warfare)?
-



- b. If what we see in Revelation 9:20-21 identifies the end of the “time of the Gentiles,” happening by the end of the first half of the tribulation, what does that lead us to expect would happen in the second half of the tribulation?
-
-



8. Who is it that we have seen are called the “firstfruits” that have been purchased for God as we approach the second half of the tribulation? See Section 3, question 2d above.
-



Look up the word “firstfruits.” The firstfruits are never the whole harvest, they are only the beginning, almost the “promise” of more to come. If the 144,000 are Jewish people and they are just the “firstfruits,” what would we expect is yet to happen as the second half of the tribulation period progresses? Let’s answer that question now.



9. Read Revelation 15:1-5.



a. What time of the tribulation period is introduced in v.1?



b. Who do we meet in v.2, and why are they there?



c. What dimension of Biblical appreciation do we encounter here that we have not seen before in the book of Revelation, v.3?



d. How might this reference to Moses corroborate the ethnic background of the people singing this song?



e. Read Exodus 40:34-38. In the Old Testament when Moses was leading the people, before there was ever a permanent temple built in Jerusalem, what provision did God give his Israelite people as a place for him to dwell?



f. Read Revelation 15:5. What description of heaven is suddenly introduced here?



The story of the Bible is a tragic one with respect to the Jewish people. They certainly had religious zeal, but they could never seem to connect with God for salvation. After the discipline of the exiles to Assyria and Babylon, Jews returned to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. They never again fell into idolatry. But instead, they fell into a religious system that shut out Jesus. The church age has been a time of terrible loss for the Jews. They have been set aside and it is the Gentiles who have been saved through Jesus.

Romans 11 gives us hope that there will yet be a widespread return to God by the Jews, an embracing of Jesus as their Messiah. Now in our study we are seeing all kinds of signals and renewed connection with the Old Testament, things which raise our hopes that God is finally going to do something great to bring his own people, the Jews, back to himself.



g. If this is what we are seeing happen in the second half of the tribulation, namely, a massive return of Jewish people to Jesus, their Messiah, what price do they pay for this return? See Revelation 20:4.

CONCLUSION



So, it appears that some escape the wrath of God by **READINESS**, by living a life of radical devotion to Jesus and by being ready for him no matter when he comes.

Others escape the wrath of God by **FIRE**, repenting and turning to Jesus in a time of great suffering and distress.

Others escape the wrath of God by **MARTYRDOM**, by being beheaded and starved and hunted throughout the reign of the Antichrist.

👂 Is Jesus worth all this?



WORLD EMPIRE AND THE END OF RELIGION



INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

World Empire and the End of Religion

Followers of Jesus are sometimes heard to say something like, “Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship.”



From what you have seen or experienced, in what ways would you agree and in what ways would you disagree with that description of Christianity?





About 33% of the world’s population claim to belong to the world religion called Christianity. This comes to about 2.4 billion people.



Do you think that all these people have a personal faith in Jesus Christ and practice a personal relationship with him? Or is it possible that some (or many) people just experience Christianity as a cultural identity or social structure into which they were born?





Talk 8 is largely about the “end of religion.” In what sense should we expect that the end of religion will also mean the end of Christianity?



STUDY: “Babylon the Great”



1. Read Revelation 14:6-12. Jim pointed out that the “agenda” for the final 3½ years of the tribulation is given to us in these verses.



a. What are the three primary agenda items identified in these verses?

1. (v.6)

2. (v.8)

3. (v.9)



b. If in the last 3½ years of the tribulation, religion is eliminated from the earth (symbolically stated as the fall of Babylon), what are the two competing agenda items left, based on the items you identified in question “a” above?

1.

2.



c. We have previously seen that many people, including some Christian people, have been “lukewarm” towards God. What change will these last two, competing agenda items of the tribulation bring about?



d. Read again Revelation 14:12. How does this verse help to prepare “the saints”?





The city name, “Babylon,” is clearly symbolic. That is to say, there is no literal city on earth called “Babylon” which will be the focus of judgment. Rather, as this talk identifies, “Babylon” represents false religion, that is, any and all religions that are not centred upon Jesus Christ, God’s Son.



2. a. Read Revelation 17:1-6. What further symbol does Revelation use to describe this mystical city?

b. How does this symbol of a harlot “fit” as a symbol for false religion? Think in terms of God’s perspective. (v.2)



c. Read again Revelation 17:2. What two categories of people are lured into the trap of this symbolic woman’s influence?



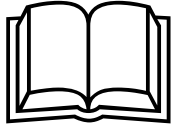
d. How would you say that “the kings of the earth” have committed acts of immorality with religion? Can you give illustrations?





e. How would you say that the nations have been “made drunk” by the influence of religion? Can you give illustrations?





Let's now observe what is the destiny of the "Great Harlot," what is it that is going to happen to all false religion.



3. a. Read Revelation 17:12. What appears to be the governmental structure of the kingdom of the Antichrist?



b. Read Revelation 17:16-18. What is the great accomplishment that God has destined this ruling kingdom to fulfill for him?



c. Read Revelation 17:14. What discovery will the Antichrist and his forces make when they try to include Jesus Christ and his followers as part of their obliteration of world religion?



d. Read Revelation 18:2. In what way has Babylon (or world religion) already fallen before it "falls" into complete destruction at the hands of the Antichrist and his forces? Can you envision what is meant here? Can you suggest any examples from what you have seen in your life or in the news?





4. Read Revelation 18:4-5.



a. What warning is given to followers of Jesus?



b. While this warning has special relevance for those living in the last half of the tribulation, it has relevance also to followers of Jesus in all times. What would it look like for followers of Jesus today to separate themselves from all false religion and religious practices?



5. a. Read Revelation 18:3. What third category of people suddenly appears here (in addition to kings and the nations of the earth)?



b. Read Revelation 18:11-19. What causes the great sense of loss for this new category of people?



This loss of wealth, along with the apparent collapse of world trade and of the world economy could imply that world religions have been the primary impetus for global economic prosperity; that when religion falls, so does the impetus for economic prosperity. However, Jim suggested another possibility, namely, that in the final stage, the “Great Harlot” of world religion has morphed significantly into a global idolatry of money, wealth, and economic prosperity; and that this last idol will be thrown down just as will all other world religions.



6. a. Read Ephesians 5:5. In God’s view, according to this verse, what is wrong with the love of money?



b. In this talk, Jim identifies the love/pursuit of money and wealth as the newest world religion. What evidence do you see that money and prosperity has become a major focus of modern society and the global community?



c. Read Revelation 3:14-22. What effect can money and prosperity have even on followers of Jesus?



d. Can you suggest why the church might be lured into this kind of idolatry when she has been fairly successful in avoiding other kinds of false religion?



7. Read Revelation 17:6 and 18:24.



a. What other effect has the “Great Harlot” of false religion had upon humanity?



b. Can you see how false religion and world religions might have become responsible for such a serious influence as this?

CONCLUSION



Earlier, in this study, we discussed the importance of followers of Jesus removing themselves from participation in false religion and false religious practices.

However, if the last great false religion is that of the pursuit of money and prosperity, it is a bit more difficult to see how to “come out of her.”



Discuss as a group what steps followers of Jesus might take to help be sure they are not caught in the last great false religion, that of the love of money and the pursuit of prosperity.



PEACE AT LAST (PART A & B)



INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

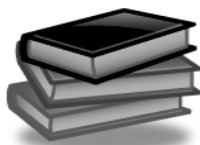
Peace at Last

The starting point for this set of two talks was the importance of taking God’s Word seriously, believing it, and knowing that he is committed to keeping it. Jim shared that a moment in his life when God’s Word really mattered was at the burial of his mother.



Has there been a moment in your life when you really had to decide whether or not you believed that the Bible gives us God’s Word, and that it must be taken seriously both by God and by us?

STUDY: “Millennium”



Jim states that he has become firmly convinced that the “Millennium” of Revelation 20 (the reign of Jesus on earth for 1,000 years) needs to be taken literally, for it provides the means and opportunity for the realization of many otherwise unfulfilled Biblical prophecies. He also believes that the Millennium provides an epoch of human history which finishes the experience of mankind on earth and helps to demonstrate the inadequacy of the view that “all roads lead to heaven.”

In this study we will explore the reasons that led Jim to the conclusion that the Millennium of Revelation 20 needs to be taken literally, as well as the circumstances surrounding and resulting from the Millennium.

A theme introduced in Psalm 2:9 and repeated three times in the book of Revelation is that the Messiah will “rule the nations with a rod of iron.”



1. Read Revelation 19:11-16.



a. Who is the person riding on the white horse that John sees? How do you know?





b. What great event is introduced in v.11, something that followers of Jesus have been looking for ever since Jesus was taken up into heaven after his resurrection?



2. Read Revelation 19:7 and 19:20.



a. Where are we in Revelation 19 with respect to the general timeline of the rest of the book of Revelation?



b. How much time is there left at this point for human history, as we now know it, to continue to evolve?



c. Read Revelation 19:15. How would you characterize ruling “with a rod of iron”?





3. Read Hebrews 2:8



a. What observation does this verse make about the rule of Jesus Christ?



b. When you look at our world today, what evidences do you see that Jesus Christ is not yet ruling “with a rod of iron”?



For this reason, ie. that the enforced reign of Jesus over the nations has not yet occurred, and is still predicted as future in Revelation 19:15 at the second coming of Jesus, Jim concludes that the Millenium of Revelation 20 is the only “window of opportunity” in human experience that allows for Psalm 2:9 to be fulfilled.



4. If Jesus is going to “rule with a rod of iron,” does this suggest willing or unwilling subjects?



5. Read Revelation 20:4-6. Who will be reigning with Jesus during the Millennium?



6. Determine what other group of people has been eliminated; read Revelation 16:12-14, Revelation 16:16 and Revelation 19:17-21.



7. Who, then, is left to be the “subject” nations of the millennial rule of Jesus, the time when he will “rule the nations with a rod of iron”?



8. If the earth, its environment, and its inhabitants during the Millennium are ordered completely according to the will and rule of Jesus, describe what it might be like to be alive then, given what you know in general about Jesus? (It might help to read the passage that Jim referred to in the Old Testament, Isaiah 65:17-25)





9. Read Revelation 20:7-9.



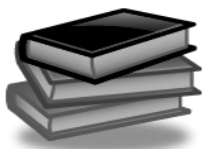
a. How do the inhabitants (ie. the subject nations) of the Millennium respond to Jesus and his rule when they get a chance?



b. What happens to them? (Revelation 20:9)



c. Since these people are those who had received the mark of the Beast and had worshipped his image, what judgment had previously already been pronounced against them? Read Revelation 14:9-11.



One of the objections raised against Biblical Christianity is this: “If God is good and he loves people, how can he send people to hell for eternity”? Here we may find one of the deeper purposes of the Millennium.

The subject nations who survive the Millennium, as we have seen, are people who have already rejected Jesus through the tribulation period. They have already been condemned to hell, as we saw in Revelation 14:9-11. Nevertheless, they get to live through the Millennium. They get to experience the closest thing to heaven on earth.



10. a. Yet how do they respond to Jesus at the end of the Millennium?



b. Why do you think they would respond to Jesus in this way, when they have enjoyed “heaven on earth” under his rule?



c. Maybe God has proved something to the human race through the Millennium, namely: how do people who have refused Jesus, who have not wanted him to be their Saviour and Lord, how do they feel about being under his reign?



d. Think of those who do not want Jesus, but who still hope to go to heaven some day. What would it be like for them if they were in heaven forever under Jesus’ rule?



e. Our world has cheerfully concluded that God is good, and all roads lead to heaven. How does the Millennium help us to understand why there really is no heaven for those who reject Jesus, and why heaven is not the ultimate place for everyone?



11. a. Can you summarize now why Jim entitled the Millennium as a period of “Enforced Peace”?



b. Jim entitled the description of the new heaven and the new earth as described in Revelation 21-22 as “Embraced Peace.” Can you now describe what will be the primary distinction between those who lived under the Millennial rule of Jesus and those who will live under his eternal rule in his perfect and final Kingdom?



c. Can you see what it is that will make that distinction?



d. How does this highlight the importance of our choice about accepting or rejecting the rule of Jesus in our lives while we are presently alive on earth?



12. Think about the following descriptions of the eternal kingdom, and suggest what each of them might be trying to tell us or symbolize for us.



a. No sea (Revelation 21:1)



b. No tears (Revelation 21:4)



c. No sinful people (Revelation 21:8,27)



d. No temple (Revelation 21:22)



e. No sun or moon (Revelation 21:23)



f. No curse (Revelation 22:3)



g. No night (Revelation 21:25, 22:5)



h. Perfect symmetry (Revelation 21:16)



i. Building materials are all precious metals and precious stones (Revelation 21:11-21)



13. How do you feel about the fact that the human race will apparently carry its national identities and ethnic background into the eternal kingdom of Jesus? (See Revelation 21:24-27 and Revelation 22:1-2).



CONCLUSION



1. Read Revelation 21:3,7 and 22, as well as Revelation 22:3-5. What is is about the eternal kingdom of God that is of the greatest significance?





2. Read John 17:2-3. How does Jesus define “eternal life”?





3. How is this similar to what we have discovered about the new heaven and the new earth?

ANSWERS



Talk #1 "The time is near"

SECTION 1 – "The time is near"

1. *Revelation 1:1 and 1:19, the "things" being revealed through the book of Revelation that are going to take place soon. This seems simply to be referring to the content of the book of Revelation. We would have to read on in the book to be more specific.*

Revelation 1:7, Jesus is coming; he will be seen, even by those who crucified him; all peoples will mourn over him.

2.
 - a. *The disciple whom Jesus loved.*
 - b. *Likely, the apostle John.*
 - c. *Gospel of John, Book of Revelation*
 - d. *That he would be alive when Jesus returned, and therefore would not ever have to die himself.*
 - e. *Peter's question and Jesus' answer. People jumped to the conclusion that Jesus' answer to Peter was that John would never die.*
 - f. *At least within John's lifetime.*
 - g. *John points out that Jesus did not say John would never die; Jesus simply pointed out to Peter that his plan for John was none of Peter's business.*
 - h. *"Time is near"*
 - i. *2 Peter 3:8 – To God, even 1,000 years is but a moment.
James 4:14 – A single human life is but a puff of vapour that appears and disappears.*
3.
 - a. *Group discussion.*
 - b. *Group discussion.*
 - c. *Might miss the experience of graduating? Of getting married? Of having children or grandchildren? Retirement? etc. The intention here is to help us reflect whether we would welcome Jesus' return. This question appears again, a bit differently, in talk #4.*

SECTION 2 – Revelation as a predictable sequence of events

1. *Group discussion.*
2. *His purpose was so that people will hear his message and "heed," ie. "do" what it says.*

3. *To watch for things that the book is calling us to do, especially in light of the soon return of Jesus, and the terrible judgments to come.*
4. *The things which John has seen; the things which are; the things which will take place after these things.*
5. *No right or wrong answer. Think through and come up with your own titles. Discuss as a group.*
6.
 - a. *Isaiah and his wife had a son following this prophecy, which may have seemed to them as a fulfilment of the prophecy. However, the birth of Jesus was the ultimate fulfilment of this prophecy according to Matthew.*
 - b. *The gift to mankind of “a son” was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus; but the earthly, visible reign of Jesus as King happens much later. No one could have guessed there were thousands of years of time hidden within these verses.*
7. *None of us knows everything. Therefore we must have a humble, charitable, and respectful attitude towards others who have views different from ours.*

SECTION 3 – How will we interpret the book of Revelation?

1. *Symbols are used to add meaning for anyone who wants to take the trouble to think about them.*
2. *The book gives us enough examples to give us hope that we will be able to discern what is represented by many or most of the symbols.*
3. *Even if in Old Testament times, Daniel was hard to understand, the book of Revelation is given to make things more clear and understandable for us.*
4. *What they have in common is referring to years as “times.” This shows us that John, the writer of the book of Revelation, is deliberately connecting his prophecies to those of the book of Daniel. It would be profitable at some point to read the book of Daniel and see if it, along with the book of Revelation, contributes to our understanding of the end times.*

CONCLUSION

Some possibilities: To help us know what is to come, even if we cannot be specific about the timeline; to teach us how to live in view of what is coming; to help us anticipate the return of Jesus; to realize God has a plan which he is working out.



Talk #2 The view from the throne

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Group Discussion.

SECTION 1 – Name #1, “The Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 1:8)

1. *Individual response.*
2. *Individual response.*
3.
 - a.
 - i. *Their sin is not yet complete.*
 - ii. *They will be destroyed.*
 - iii. *When the world has become a global community and people collectively sin to the point of no return, that is the time when God will bring judgment upon them; their transgression has finished its course.*
 - b. *You can end something at any time, whether it is finished or not. God does not plan on letting sin just go on forever. Man may prefer to continue living in sin, but when he has sinned to the point of no return, God will bring sin to an end, and mankind to judgment.*
 - c. *As Daniel looked ahead, he recognized that God would have to provide a satisfactory sacrifice for sin. This was accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ.*
 - d. *The eternal kingdom of God must be righteous. God’s people must be perfected to be part of that kingdom. Others must be excluded.*
 - e. *Jesus says that all prophecy and Scripture must be fulfilled. Daniel likewise prophesies that all Biblical prophecy and Scripture must be brought to fulfillment and completion.*
 - f.
 - i. *That God will dwell among people and be among them.*
 - ii. *That the final goal of God’s creation is a place where he and man will dwell together.*
4. *Mankind.*
5. *God’s purpose in creation is to prepare mankind for eternity and eternity for mankind, but the major thing he has to do in preparation is to deal adequately with the sin problem. God’s presence (heaven on earth!) can include mankind only if sin is removed.*

SECTION 2 – Name #2, “The Lord God, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8)

1. *Almighty: Having unlimited power; Sovereign: Having supreme rank, power or authority.*
2. *Admittedly, the sovereignty of God versus the free will of man, and fate versus chance/natural law is a subject inspiring endless debate among philosophers and theologians. Discuss as a group.*
3. *Jesus did not say that they were acts of special judgment of God, but he did say that every single person faces a similar fate ultimately if they do not repent. Death, by one means or other, is the fate of every single human being apart from the salvation of God.*
4. *Group discussion.*

SECTION 3 – Name #3, “The Lord, Holy and True” (Revelation 6:10)

1.
 - a. *The souls of people who had been killed for their faith and their obedience to God.*
 - b. *No, they are intensely aware that they have been unjustly treated, and that if God is holy, he must bring judgment upon those guilty of such things.*
 - c. *Yes; they are not told to just forget about it; they are told simply to wait a little while longer for their cries to be answered.*
 - d. *His purposes on earth, and his plan for others were not yet completed.*
 - e. *That God does judge sin, but he waits for the right time to do so.*
2. *That because they are not judged for the things they do wrong, God overlooks sin and it is ok to sin. But actually, God is being merciful and delays judgment to give them time to come clean about what they have done and receive forgiveness. If they do not do so, judgment WILL come.*
3. *According to these verses, it is clear that God prefers to show mercy and forgive rather than to judge.*
4. *Those who come to God and admit to him the sins they have committed, and ask for forgiveness through Jesus Christ, they are the ones who are forgiven. Those who do not talk to God about their sins, who do not ask him for forgiveness through Jesus Christ, they are still in a position of impending judgment.*

CONCLUSION

Group discussion.



Talk #3

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Group Discussions.

SECTION 1 – Jesus is worthy because of who he is and what he is like

1.
 - a. *He who is sitting on the throne, God. A book which is sealed shut.*
 - b. *Someone who would be worthy to break open this book and release its contents.*
 - c. *They looked in heaven, on earth, and “under the earth” – the grave? They found no one that could open the book.*
 - d. *He wept greatly; he must have been deeply grieved and disappointed.*
 - e. *The Lion of the tribe of Judah, also pictured as a Lamb, was found worthy to open the book and to release its contents.*
2. *The Son of God.*
3. *By his very relationship, he is the rightful heir to all that his father owns; hopefully he has been raised by his father to have the same values and behaviour as his father; hopefully he has been prepared by his father to be able to be a good manager of all the father passes on to him.*
4. *As God’s Son, he is the rightful heir to all that God owns. As God’s Son, he is also therefore divine, and would share the divine perfections that make him worthy: holy, faithful, true, sinless, omniscient, victorious, etc. He can “handle” successfully all that God has made. He would do it faithfully according to his Father’s wishes.*
5. *If Jesus “owns” this book, then he has the right over it to bring it to fulfilment, to orchestrate its contents. He has the right over every dimension of the book, mercy, judgment, salvation, worship, and inheritance of the new age to come. If it is just about him, we might expect the content to be very focused on providing us with new revelation about who Jesus is. He might perhaps have just a passive role other than the book specifically identifies as his doing.*
6.
 - a. *The serpent.*
 - b. *Crushed head (NIV), thus a fatal wound.*
 - c. *The seed of the woman.*
 - d. *Seed of the woman.*
 - e. *Seed of the woman.*
 - f. *Human being.*

7. a. *Jesus.*
b. *Like us.*
8. *God, Man.*
9. *God, Man.*

SECTION 2 – Jesus is worthy because of what he has done

1. *The Lamb took the book out of the hand of God.*
2. a. *The four living creatures or angelic beings; as well as the twenty four elders; these are the beings who hold high authority and respect in the heavenly places.*
b. *Thousands, or better, millions of angels.*
c. *Every single thing that has ever been created.*
d. *The Lamb had been slain.*
e. *The Lamb had been slain.*
f. *A lion.*
g. *A Lamb. He looked like he had been slain; however, now he is alive.*
h. *He purchased, or “redeemed,” the people of God.*
i. *They have been made into a kingdom under God.*
3. *The fact that he was slain and as a result, made it possible for there to be an eternal kingdom of God with mankind.*

CONCLUSION

Revelation 6:15-17, The terrifying judgment of God that is going to come upon the world, and upon all people who do not receive God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7:9-10, The salvation of millions of people from every part of the earth and from every background, people who receive forgiveness from Jesus Christ when they bow down to him and receive his salvation.

Revelation 19:7, The marriage of the Lamb to his Bride; it appears that the Bride is the collective number of all who have obeyed God and made Jesus Christ their Saviour and Lord.

1. i. *He is God’s one and only Son, who has accomplished his Father’s will, he is the only one to inherit the Father’s kingdom and become the Bridegroom of God’s redeemed people.*
ii. *He is also truly human, so he fulfills all God’s promises about the Saviour of the world.*
iii. *He is the only one who is holy and sinless, so he could be a high priest between man and God.*

- iv. *He is the only one who died and rose again for the sins of the world and to purchase people for God.*
- 2. *Only through Jesus Christ.*
- 3. *Any other person or means will fail us. We should turn away from any other hope and put our trust in Jesus alone, because he is God's one and only approved way of salvation. No one else was found worthy to fulfill such a role.*



Talk #4 Bridal Preparations

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Group Discussions.

STUDY: Revelation 2- 3

- 1.
 - a. *Repent; five.*
 - b. *Hear; seven.*
 - c. *Overcome; seven.*
- 2.
 - a. *“Hear,” because until you have listened to what God has to say, you would not know from what you must repent, or over what you must strive to overcome.*
 - b. *Read Scripture, meditate, listening prayer, listen to Bible teaching, sermons, hear from others, etc.*
 - c. *Uninterested, stubborn, know it all, unteachable, apathetic, rebellious, disobedient, self-deceived, etc.*
 - d. *“Heed,” or “keep,” depending on your translation. NIV says “take to heart.”*
 - e. *We are hoping that each of us will have an “ear to hear,” with the result that we will act upon what we are hearing and thus receive God’s blessing.*
- 3.
 - a. *The seven churches.*
 - b. *No.*
 - c. *We must “hear,” yes, but we must also be putting into practice what we have heard. If what we hear “goes in one ear and out the other,” and makes no change in our life, then we have not had “an ear to hear.”*
- 4.
 - a. *Repentance basically means to turn around, change direction, change one’s mind; in spiritual terms, it means to regret evil that one has committed, and turn to do what is right instead.*

b. & c.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Wrong behaviour or attitude</u>	<u>Change of behaviour or attitude</u>
<i>Church of Ephesus Revelation 2:4</i>	<i>They were no longer in love with Jesus like they once were.</i>	<i>Make Jesus the centre of their lives; love him and live for him above all else.</i>
<i>Church of Pergamum Revelation 2:14</i>	<i>Dabbling in idolatry, and sexual immorality.</i>	<i>Refuse to participate in any religion other than the worship of Jesus; and choose to live a morally pure life.</i>
<i>Church of Thyatira Revelation 2:20</i>	<i>False teaching; sexual immorality; participation in idolatry.</i>	<i>Check all teaching we receive to be sure it is Biblical. Choose to live a morally pure life; refuse to participate in any religion other than the worship of Jesus.</i>
<i>Church of Sardis Revelation 3:1,4</i>	<i>Spiritual pretenders (v.1); dirty behaviour (v.4).</i>	<i>Stop being a hypocrite! If you are a follower of Jesus, live like one! Don't pretend one thing and live another.</i>
<i>Church of Laodicea Revelation 3:16-17</i>	<i>Lukewarm: they were just half-hearted followers of Jesus, because this world has so much to offer!</i>	<i>Be careful that money and pleasure and success are not the real focus of your affection and worship. Love Jesus above all else and live for him.</i>

5.
 - a. *They needed to be willing to suffer and even die if that is what it costs them to be a follower of Jesus.*
 - b. *They needed to take advantage of "the open door" that God had given to them, to use the freedom that God had created for them to serve Jesus and live for him; and not be sidetracked by all the other options of life that are available to those who live in a culture where there is freedom.*

6.
 - a. *Individual response.*
 - b. *Individual response.*
 - c. *Individual response.*
 - d. *Individual response.*

CONCLUSION

Individual response. Group discussion.



Talk #5 Waves of Wrath

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Individual response.

God gives people and nations time to either repent of their sins or sin to the point of no return. This latter state is related to developing such a "hard heart" that they cannot and will not listen to God, no matter how he speaks to them.

1. a. i. *A huge human catastrophe of some kind, perhaps of war, resulting in one third of all mankind being killed.*
 - ii. *Clearly, this is part of God's judgment upon mankind.*
 - iii. *Well, likely God would want people's hearts to be filled with fear, so that they might humble themselves and come to God for forgiveness and salvation and escape from any future judgment.*
 - iv. *No effect. They just continued on in their evil ways in defiance of God.*
 - v. *An "hour of testing."*
 - vi. *He is testing people, how determined they are to continue in their sin. He is testing to see if there is anything he can do to get them to stop sinning. He is testing to see if they have sinned to the point of no return.*
- b. i. *It is addressed to the church of Philadelphia.*
 - ii. *That he will keep them out of the coming hour of testing or tribulation.*
 - iii. *Because they have kept God's word; that is, they have lived the way God has asked them to live; and because they have held fast to his Name. They had publicly and privately identified themselves as followers of Jesus.*
 - iv. *The church of Laodicea.*
 - v. *No, they are told they will be spit out of Jesus' mouth.*
 - vi. *Cannot be the case since this church of Laodicea is not promised rescue.*
 - vii. *Yes, we can choose. People who choose to love God, to follow Jesus in their lives, to obey his Word, and to turn away from sinful practices; such people are promised rescue from the coming time of testing. But other people are not promised this same rescue.*

SECTION 1: The Seven Seals: the release of God's judgment

1.
 - a. *Jim suggested that the "white horse" and its rider were sent out to completely deceive the world.*
 - b. *The red horse and its rider remove peace and inspire people to kill one another.*
 - c. *The black horse and its rider release famine into the world, and food available, but only at a premium price. While the poor of the world suffer, the rich are just going to enjoy their wealth, represented by oil and wine; but this will create global tension between the "haves" and the "have nots."*
 - d. *Again, a fourth of the earth's population will be exposed to even greater dangers that lead to death. The "wild beasts" of the earth could be literal, but in keeping with the book of Revelation as a whole, governing authorities are often depicted by beasts. These "wild beasts" could, then, indicate cruel dictators and despots.*
2.
 - a. *Judgment on those who have committed murder.*
 - b. *Some more people are going to choose to become followers of Jesus, and they are going to be "tested" to the point of whether or not they will die for him. Will they stay true to Jesus even if they have to die for it, or will they opt to deny Jesus to save their lives?*
3.
 - a. *The heavens and the earth.*
 - b. *People are terrified because they now know that the judgment of God is coming.*

SECTION 2: The Seven Trumpets: the terror of God's warnings

1.
 - a. *When the seventh seal is broken, immediately seven angels with the seven trumpets appear. So it must be that the content of the seventh seal is the seven trumpets.*
 - b. *They have been praying, and God is now about to answer.*
 - c. *If the saints have been praying, "your kingdom come, your will be done," judgment is a necessary part of the process before God's kingdom can be righteously established.*
2. *The trumpet judgments all seem to be a restrained form of judgment, in that only third of the earth, sea, sky, and human race is destroyed.*

SECTION 3: The Seven Bowls: the end of God's patience

1.
 - a. *Three "woes".*
 - b. *It must be the judgment of the fifth trumpet, the plague of demonic locusts.*
 - c. *The second "woe."*
 - d. *Revelation 9.13-21.*
 - e. *The terrible catastrophe, perhaps war that leads to the death of a third of the human population.*

2.
 - a. *The three “woes” are the last three trumpets, so we should conclude that the third “woe” is the seventh trumpet.*
 - b. *Seventh and last trumpet.*
 - c. *The seventh trumpet seems to announce the beginning of the last half of the tribulation period. Therefore, the rise of the Antichrist and all the harm that he will do to the earth; and the seven bowls of the wrath of God; the annihilation of false religion and the collapse of the global economy; these are all included in the unfolding of the warning signal proclaimed by the sound of the seventh trumpet.*
 - d. *We see a repeat of the pronouncement of a “woe” coming upon the earth. This would possibly be a restatement of the third “woe.” We see that the devil or the dragon is now about to have his last opportunity to destroy the earth and its inhabitants. Therefore we would anticipate a terrible time on earth because of the devil’s activity, and a time of great judgment if God is about to deal with the devil and his followers on earth according to their deeds.*

3.
 - a. *The seven bowls of the wrath of God.*
 - b. *No one, not even the highest angels, are able to stand in God’s presence at this time when he is pouring out his final tribulation judgments on the earth.*
 - c. *They were all restrained to only harming one third of their focus, whether land, sea, sky, or mankind.*
 - d.
 - i. *It appears that the focus of the seven bowls will now be to judge those who have chosen an ultimate rejection of Jesus by receiving the mark of the beast and by worshipping the beast and his image. Those who are choosing Jesus during the second half of the tribulation period appear to be protected from these waves of God’s wrath.*
 - b. *Now the judgments poured out on earth are intensified to the point where there is complete judgment poured out instead of restrained or limited judgment.*
 - e. *It brings to an end the judgment of God. God’s judgment on earth is now complete. This suggests, by the way, that the content of Revelation 17-18 are a flashback and are included in what has happened during the time of the reign of the Antichrist and the seven judgments symbolized by the seven bowls.*

CONCLUSION

1. *Individual response.*

2. *Be careful that we do not lose our awareness of the times we live in or of the stakes we are facing. Be careful that we aren’t so caught up in our human life that we forget what things are coming upon us and upon the world very soon. Pray that we may be able to be among those who escape the coming time of terrible judgment.*

3. *Group discussion.*



Talk #6 The Great Dragon

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Individual response.

Group discussion.

Group discussion. Think of what has happened to the cosmos, the earth and its environment, humanity, the spirit world, etc.

SECTION 1: Meet your enemy (Revelation 12)

1. *This predicts a lifetime struggle between the serpent (Satan) and his offspring and the woman and her offspring (humanity); perhaps in general terms, a struggle between good and evil. It also predicts how the whole struggle will end, with a fatal blow to the serpent and a painful but not fatal blow to the woman's seed. So, if Satan has known about this prediction from the beginning, surely he is out to fight back as hard as he can, and if possible, change the outcome from what God has predicted.*
2.
 - a. *Seven.*
 - b. *Ten.*
 - c. *The dragon fights his war against humanity by having as much control as possible over human government. Seven is the Biblical number for perfection or completeness, so in a sense, it is saying that wherever there is human government, it is a head which is part of the dragon's hidden work. But the text may also imply that there have been seven kingdoms or global empires throughout human history. The ten horns represent some kind of confederacy of ten individual kings who will exist in the final stages of the dragon's authority.*
3. *The dragon does not make himself clearly visible, but he accomplishes his purposes through people; from a more global perspective, he works through earthly rulers, trying to accomplish his own purposes.*
4.
 - a. *Deception. He tries to get the world to believe lies about God, about religion, about humanity itself, about good and evil, about the spirit world, about eternity and human destiny, etc.*
 - b. *One way is psychological warfare, he "accuses them day and night." He constantly tries to demand God's action against his children because of their failures, weaknesses, sins, etc., or even over hypothetical failures, such as he did against Job in the Old Testament. He also tries to get God's children (ie. followers of Jesus) to*

constantly think the worst about themselves and about one another. Another way is physical, as he makes war: he brings sickness, tragedy, hostilities, death, etc. against God's children to try to hurt them and hurt God.

- c. Verse 13 talks about persecution, and we have to admit that the Jewish people (the "woman" who gave birth to the male child) have been persecuted constantly throughout history; and he tries to cause her to be swept away; could this mean genocide is the ultimate goal of the devil towards the Jewish people?*

SECTION 2: Track his ways (Revelation 13)

- 1. A prophet is one who speaks out publicly; usually it is in a religious context of some kind. In the Christian context, it can be speaking out the Word of God, or it can be speaking out revelations from God about things to come.*
- 2. It is always less effective when someone is talking about himself/herself, as if to say, "Look how great I am." Much better for someone else, a devoted follower, to do the speaking, especially if that person is a persuasive speaker. In the case of Revelation 13, the prophet is also given power to perform miracles as he declares the "wonders" of the Antichrist, such as his resurrection from the dead. The prophet seems absolutely devoted to the Antichrist, so represents him powerfully.*
- 3. a. Worship.
b. Religion.
c. Somehow, the Antichrist and his confederates are going to strip her of all her power and influence. Religion is going to be broken to pieces and turned into dust during the reign of the Antichrist. There will be no more world religion and other religion once the false prophet directs all worship to the Antichrist.*
- 4. a. They have had a mutually dependent relationship: kings have gained and held power by holding on to the religion of the people and even leading that religion; but religion has had power because of the authority of the kings that embrace her.
b. They will throw her off their back and destroy her. The dragon throughout history has used religion and its priests and temples etc., for his own purposes while that was useful for his purposes. But when she is no more use to him, he throws her away and destroys her.
c. He is completely self-centred about himself and hateful to others. He will use anyone and anything for his own purpose as long as that is useful. Once he has no use for them, he will happily ruin them and throw them away.*

SECTION 3: Recognize his destiny (Revelation 20)

1. *One single angel is able to bind him, neutralize him, and throw him into the abyss. God has no problem dealing with the devil when he is ready to.*
2.
 - a. *He brings about persecution such as imprisonment and martyrdom.*
 - b. *He tries to force all people to be in willful submission to him by taking his mark, and by worshipping him and his image.*
 - c. *Those who refuse to worship are killed; and those who refuse the mark are excluded from all commerce, even from shopping.*
 - d. *They will be subject to the eternal judgment of fire and brimstone.*
 - e. *Those who refuse to worship are killed; and those who refuse the mark are excluded from all commerce, even from shopping. (same as c)*
 - f. *Those who choose to have allegiance to Jesus Christ instead of allegiance to the Antichrist will have much to endure and will have to have perseverance and faith.*
 - g. *They will be more interested in money, wealth, and prosperity than in devotion to Jesus Christ. Yes, they may be Christian, but of the lukewarm variety.*
 - h. *He is not satisfied with lukewarm followers. He says he will "spit them out of his mouth." Might this mean he will reject them until he sees which way they go?*
 - i. *The work of the Antichrist actually forces people to choose between good and evil, to worship the devil or worship Jesus; and make this choice with such commitment that they will be willing to die for their choice. This solves the problem of "lukewarm" followers of Jesus.*
3.
 - a. *Ultimately, to punish and destroy all false religion for its unfaithfulness to himself.*
 - b. *The devil more than once gathers people together to one place to war against God, and this sets those people apart for God's wrath to be poured out upon them.*
4.
 - a. *The lake of fire: painful, 24/7, eternal, no escape.*
 - b. *The Antichrist, his false prophet, and then all human beings that did not look to the true and living God for salvation, either Old or New Testament.*
 - c. *God loves the world and everyone in it. Hell was not made for mankind, it was made for the host of angels who rebelled with Satan against God. However, human beings who have joined that revolt will share the same punishment.*

CONCLUSION

Group discussion.

Group discussion.

1. *The blood of the Lamb.*
2. *Their testimony.*
3. *Willingness to die for Jesus if need be!*

Group discussion.



Talk #7A & B Survivors

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Individual response.

Individual response.

Group discussion.

SECTION 1: Those who “escape by readiness”

1.
 - a. Verse three describes a time on earth when the world’s inhabitants will be focused on developing peace and safety, but will be thrown into some kind of terrible upheaval instead.
 - b. Some kind of rescue so that they will not have to face the upheaval on earth to come.
2.
 - a. An hour of testing.
 - b. Judgment is something that happens to those who have already been tested and found guilty. Therefore, this is a time to determine who must be judged, and who is going to be forgiven.
 - c. Everyone who lives on earth.
 - d. Those who are of the church of Philadelphia, defined as those who have kept the word of Jesus’ perseverance. So, the Christians who have been loyal to Jesus Christ.
 - e. This verse describes something that is coming not upon those in Hades or in the next world, but those who are alive on the earth. It is a time of testing, not a time of judgment. Judgment will follow the time of testing. So the promise here must also be one for escape from coming tribulation on earth, for those who have already “passed the test.”
3.
 - a. No one knows precisely if it comes to setting a day or time.
 - b. No Christian alive at any time in any generation should assume that they have lots of time. Instead, Jesus warns us to live as if the moment of his return is imminent. Jesus uses the words “Take heed,” “Keep alert,” “don’t be caught asleep.”
4.
 - a. Here Paul describes what keeping alert and paying attention looks like. He describes the believer as one who participates in all the privileges, blessings, and

responsibilities of earth, but as one passing through, as one who does not know at what second he/she will be called to step away and leave it all behind. One who is always conscious that the best, the worst, and all things in between that are in this world are temporary. Be ready to go!

b. Group discussion.

SECTION 2: Those who “escape by fire”

- 1. A great multitude praising God for their salvation, people from every corner, every background, every language of the world.*
- 2. a. They have come “out of” the great tribulation.
b. They had “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*
- 3. This group of people recognized how wrong had been their religious and moral views, they responded to God’s word, and turned to him for salvation. The rest of the world simply hardened their hearts against God. They became more and more stubborn in their sins, more and more determined to hate and ignore God, no matter what he did.*
- 4. They had apparently gone through things like hunger, thirst, burning heat, etc., things where part of the judgments of the seven seals and the seven trumpets.*
- 5. a. Those in Revelation 15:2 faced a completely different kind of tribulation, they had encountered the Antichrist and had been forced to either take his mark and worship him, or to pay the consequences. The intention of the false prophet was to execute any who refused to worship and take the mark of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:15), and according to Revelation 20:4, that is exactly what happened.
b. Individual response. Group discussion.
c. The tribulation is a period of time when God is forcing the issue of spiritual allegiance on the world. Thankfully, it is not the time of a closed door, but of an open one. Yes, the cost will be great, but people can still choose Jesus; they are not shut out forever just because they have been previously unfaithful and unready. God gives them this second and even third chance.*

SECTION 3: Those who “escape by martyrdom”

- 1. a. They are his bond-servants
b. They are of the “sons of Israel”.
c. 144,000
d. Between the sixth seal and the seventh seal, which means it is still during the time of the first 3½ years of the tribulation.*

2.
 - a. 144,000
 - b. Standing on "Mt. Zion."
 - c. The name of the Lamb and of God the Father.
 - d. 1) They are morally pure; 2) They follow the Lamb faithfully; 3) They have been purchased by God as "firstfruits"; 4) They do not ever lie; 5) They are blameless.
 - e. They are same in number, 144,000; apparently the same in ethnic background, suggested by the use of the Old Testament name, "Mt. Zion." Their character is appropriate to "bond-servants" of God.
3. The seventh trumpet.
4. The second half of the tribulation period.
5. Their time would be fulfilled.
6. All Israel would be saved; there would be a great turning to God among Jewish people.
7.
 - a. They still did not repent of their sin and evil.
 - b. That we would be coming to the time when "all Israel will be saved." It would make sense if we discover that it is primarily Jewish people who are turning to Jesus during the last 3½ years.
8. The 144,000.
9.
 - a. The seven last plagues which will complete the outpouring of God's wrath upon mankind.
 - b. We see another unnumbered group of people who apparently have stood firm and refused to take the mark of the Antichrist and have refused to worship his image.
 - c. They sing the song of Moses. This is a clear allusion to the Old Testament since Moses was the one who lead Israel out of the land of Egypt, and gave them the Old Testament Law.
 - d. This group of people has a special affinity to Moses and his form of worship. It would make sense that they are Jewish people.
 - e. The tabernacle.
 - f. The temple of the tabernacle of Testimony.
 - g. They are even willing to die for him if that is what it takes. It will be a time of terrible suffering, yet of overwhelming joy, when God's specially chosen people, the people of Israel, suddenly realize that Jesus is their Messiah; though they crucified him, he still loves them and his arms are wide open to receive them. When their only choice is to worship an idol (the image of the Antichrist) or to worship the true God through Jesus Christ, they finally see clearly, and run to Jesus!

CONCLUSION

Individual response. Group discussion.



Talk #8 World Empire and the End of Religion

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Group discussion.

Group discussion.

Group discussion.

STUDY: “Babylon the Great”

1.
 - a. *Global preaching of the gospel, the fall of Babylon the Great and the activity and demands of the Antichrist with respect to humanity.*
 - b. *Preaching of the Gospel of God and the reign of the Antichrist.*
 - c. *The contest for man’s soul is now crisply defined: every person will have to choose between Jesus and the Antichrist; all other religious choices will be eliminated, and the Antichrist will enforce allegiance to himself. The choice to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ will also mean the choice to stand firm against the demands of the Antichrist, no matter what the cost. No more fence sitting. All people will be forced to choose Jesus or Antichrist.*
 - d. *It tells them that the choice of allegiance to God and his Gospel is going to call for courageous endurance. They might suffer much for their choice, but when that happens, they should not think something has gone wrong. God has forewarned them the cost of choosing Jesus during this period of time.*

2.
 - a. *It pictures her as the “Great Harlot,” or prostitute.*
 - b. *A harlot is a woman who draws people into a sexual relationship that is not legitimate. From God’s point of view, he made mankind for himself, that mankind should love him and live for him. The first and foremost commandment is to love God with all our heart. The “Great Harlot” is the “woman” who draws humans away from loving God into love for someone or something else. This is what all religion apart from Jesus Christ brings about.*
 - c. *The kings of the earth; and those who dwell on the earth, thus, mankind as a whole.*

- d. *Earthly government in its various forms, down through the generations of human history, is almost always associated with national or local religions. If a king can succeed in being seen as religious leader (or at least as a devout, religious adherent) he will have much greater power over his people because the people fear their god(s) and see their leader as specially connected with their god(s).*
 - e. *Drunkenness is a state of being unable to see things and process things clearly. We say that someone drunk is “under the influence.” Religion takes hold of people and keeps them under her influence. Their beliefs, values, and behaviour are controlled by their religion. This gives religion tremendous power over the nations.*
3.
 - a. *The final form of world empire appears to be ten kings who join forces and collaborate with the Antichrist.*
 - b. *The complete overthrow and destruction of Babylon, thus, the destruction of all religion remaining on earth.*
 - c. *They will discover that Jesus Christ is the one exception to all other religions. He really is God Almighty, and no one including the Antichrist or the devil himself can overthrow the true and living God.*
 - d. *It has fallen morally. Religion is man’s attempt to reach out to God, to win God’s approval – though each religion has a different view of what success would look like. Universally, religion provides its own set of standards to which people must attain to win such approval. This means that religion, at least in theory, should make man a better person. But on the contrary, the book of Revelation tells us that all such religion has in fact fallen into the hands of demons and is used by them to steer mankind into further uncleanness, hatred, and evil.*
 4.
 - a. *That they should separate themselves from any religion or religious practice that is not truly focused on the worship of Jesus Christ. Judgment upon false religion is declared to be imminent and harsh, so followers of Jesus should not incriminate themselves in the activity of false religions.*
 - b. *Followers of Jesus are to be very careful what religious organization, culture, and practices they will participate in. They should separate themselves from all religion that is not faithful to Jesus. Separating ourselves from these things might not be an easy thing for different people in different cultures and countries.*
 5.
 - a. *Merchants, business people.*
 - b. *Total collapse of trade and economic activity.*
 6.
 - a. *It is a form of idolatry.*
 - b. *Group discussion.*
 - c. *The Laodicean church has been so prosperous financially that she feels no need of anything else. Her wealth has led her to believe she is under the blessing of God, when in fact she is far removed from God. The passion of her heart is not loving God, it is loving money, financial security, and the earthly prosperity that this wealth provides. Without realizing it, she has succumbed to the final manifestation into*

which the “Great Harlot” has morphed. So much so that the Lord pictures himself on the OUTSIDE of the heart, knocking at the door, requesting to be invited in.

d. Money and wealth does not look like a religion. It is a way of life. It is the culture in which the church lives.

7.
 - a. *Much bloodshed.*
 - b. *Group discussion.*

CONCLUSION

Group discussion.



Talk #9A & B Peace at Last

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Individual Response.

STUDY: “Millennium”

1.
 - a. *His description matches with the description given of Jesus Christ in Revelation 1, and he is called “King of kings and Lord of lords.” This therefore must be the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ.*
 - b. *Followers of Jesus have been waiting and looking for the second coming of Jesus Christ. This 2nd coming is pictured here.*
2.
 - a. *We are at the end of the tribulation period, when the Bride of Jesus is now prepared. We are at the time of the final war of the Antichrist against God’s Messiah. This is also where the Antichrist is destroyed, so we must be at the very end of the tribulation.*
 - b. *Human history as we know it ends here, for now Jesus has returned.*
 - c. *Seems to imply ruling that is firm, inflexible, and with forced obedience.*
3.
 - a. *While he is sovereign and destined to rule all things, in our world as yet, his rule is not complete.*

- b. At the time of this printing, there are things like the war and terrorism in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan; there is persecution of the church in many places like China; there is much immorality; there is much sickness and plague in Africa and elsewhere.*
4. *Unwilling subjects. Why would he have to "rule with a rod of iron" over those who are gladly and voluntarily submitting to him? Ruling with a "rod of iron" seems to imply rule over those who do not want to submit: they must be forced.*
 5. *Those who have been raised in the first resurrection, with special mention of those who, during the last half of the tribulation have either died for Jesus or at least refused the mark of the Beast and refused to worship him and his image. Jim pointed out several clues that a good percentage of this latter group would be from Jewish background.*
 6. *The Antichrist (Beast), the false prophet, and all the kings and rulers of the earth and their armies who have gathered together to make war against Jesus.*
 7. *All the remaining inhabitants of the earth who had received the mark of the Antichrist and who worshipped him and his image, but who had not been part of the Antichrist's army which was destroyed by Jesus directly.*
 8. *Jesus Christ is the Creator of earth. If he is to establish his reign and set up a kingdom in harmony with his character, we would expect an earth renewed in environment (biology), topography, astronomy, and humanity. It would be a place of paradise, just like the garden of Eden.*
 9.
 - a. *They seem to want the renewed world for themselves. They want to destroy the "camp of the saints and the beloved city" which would represent those reigning with Jesus. They want to overthrow the ruling power, apparently to have paradise to themselves.*
 - b. *They are destroyed by the Word of God.*
 - c. *They had already been destined to the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*
 10.
 - a. *They like the paradise he has created, but they reject his rule when they get a chance.*
 - b. *They love the paradise, but they hate having to live under the rule and righteous standards of Jesus Christ.*
 - c. *They can't stand it!*
 - d. *It would be an eternity of forced submission, a hateful existence. It would even be unpleasant for God and for all the inhabitants of the eternal kingdom if there were millions of people who just hated being there, who were there against their own will.*
 - e. *Summarize what has been said through question #10 above.*
 11.
 - a. *It will be a time of peace and paradise enjoyed and enforced by Jesus and those who have chosen him. But the subject nations will be FORCED to live according to the rule of Jesus. Yes, there will be peace, but it will be mandatory, not voluntary, at least from the point of view of the subject nations.*

- b. Those who are part of the first resurrection, whose names are in the book of life, who have chosen Jesus and his ways as their own, and who thus live into eternity, into the eternal kingdom of God; they too will enjoy paradise and peace in a new heaven and a new earth. But Jesus will not have to force his rule on them. They have gladly and voluntarily embraced it, and they will be empowered by Jesus at last to live in the perfection of holiness without sin. They will enjoy peace and paradise, something only available under the reign of Jesus, but they will love Jesus' reign, not resent it.*
- c. It is all about choosing Jesus and his ways NOW. Those who choose Jesus and his ways in this life will welcome the same in the life to come. Those who don't want Jesus and his ways in this life will not want it then either.*
- d. The eternal kingdom of Jesus in the new heaven and earth is a direct extension of the kingdom and reign of Jesus on this earth. It is in this life where we make the choices that will govern our eternal destiny, because, as just mentioned, eternity will be an extension of the present.*

12. *a.-i. Individual responses.*

13. *Individual response.*

CONCLUSION

- 1. The actual presence of God among people.*
- 2. It is all about our relationship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ. Knowing, loving, and being loved by God is eternal life.*
- 3. Heaven is not ultimately about a beautiful earth, it is about loving and being loved by God. And it all starts in this life!*

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