

Sunday – December 24th, 2017

Reflection & Preparation

As we prepare to complete this year of Daily in the word, in this last week of reading, let's be prepared not to end with Revelation 22:21, but rather with its conclusion, begin again! That's right, let's begin again, with a fresh new energy, a new zeal, a new journey, a new desire, and a new pursuit! How can we do this or how is this possible? It is possible because we have a living Saviour (1st Corinthians 15:20), who left us His living word (Hebrews 4:12), and who expects us to remain His living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) and a burning light in a dark and dying world (2nd Corinthians 4:4). Our desire and pursuit to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10), cannot end with one reading through His word, or two readings or even ten but will end when we see Him face to face in Glory and shall be like Him (1st John 3:2).

So, as we read the second epistle of Peter, the three epistles of John, the little epistle of Jude and conclude with the Revelation of Jesus Christ, keep in mind that this is not the end but just the beginning of greater things to come in our pursuit of Christ now and for as long as the Lord chooses to lend breath to our miraculous though feeble bodies!

Speaking of The Book of Revelation please take note of at least the five following things:

1. It is one Revelation not plural revelations.
2. It is the book that reveals Jesus Christ, the one Whom we have pursued this past year
3. It is not a book to be avoided or afraid of (unless conviction sets in due to the need for salvation); we need not be intimidated by what we may have been told in the past or by its portraits of things to come.
4. It is, however, a book that is hard to believe because we have not truly experienced the things we read in real life (albeit, thanks to modern technology and vivid imaginations through electronic devices, the unbelievable is becoming more believable with each passing day!) Yet, despite the unbelievable, our responsibility is to, by faith, trust God and believe it nonetheless.
5. It is a book to read literally; what we read is what it is, so read it as such.

With that being said, let's prayerfully approach this final week of this year's devotional with the mindset that this, again, is only the beginning, preparing for next year's 365 days of Daily in the

word. Let today serve as an examination of our time in the word of God over the past year to see where we've grown, what we've learned, or how we've responded to the principles and commandments contained therein. Hopefully, we can all say that we've become more of the man God desires us to be, because of the word being evident in our lives. Moving forward, may we never be guilty of abandoning the pursuit of Jesus Christ by abandoning His word. We must make it our life, our conversation, to be in constant pursuit of Jesus, sharing Him with all to the glory of God in accordance to His amazing grace and in His most wonderful name, amen!

DEVOTIONAL SCRIPTURE REVIEW:

Titus 2:1 "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:"

Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 10:12-14 "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

James 3:5 "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

1st Peter 2:9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

Monday – December 25th, 2017

TODAY'S READING: I JOHN 1-5

OVERVIEW:

True Sonship confesses sin (chapter 1); true Sonship hates the world's system (chapter 2); true Sonship purifies (chapter 3); true Sonship loves God and His children (chapter 4); true Sonship believes the Bible (chapter 5).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

There are three things every person on this planet wants: Peace with God, fullness of joy, and security for the future. Interestingly enough, it is precisely those three things for which God said the Book of I John was written and included into the canon of Scripture.

First of all, chapter 1 and verse 3 says, *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, THAT (or in other words, “FOR THIS PURPOSE”) ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”* Peace with God is the result of our fellowship, or relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, chapter 1 and verse 4 says, *“And these things write we unto you, THAT (again, “FOR THIS PURPOSE”) your joy may be full,”* which is actually the result of the first purpose (peace with God) and the third purpose (security for the future).

Thirdly, chapter 5 and verse 13 says, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; THAT (and there it is again, “FOR THIS PURPOSE”) ye may know that ye have eternal life.”* And this third reason is really the key to the other two, because you will never really experience the peace of God or peace with God, nor the fullness of joy, until you know that you know beyond any shadow of a doubt that you genuinely have been born again. The Book of I John is in the Bible for that specific purpose!

Be it known, the Bible is very clear that every person that is genuinely born again is eternally secure. The Book of Ephesians was written to teach us that as members of the body of Christ, upon our salvation, we were actually placed *“IN CHRIST,”* and then *“SEALED with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (i.e. downpayment, literally, “engagement ring”) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory”* (Eph. 1:13-14). If you have genuinely been born again, there is no question about it,

you are eternally secure. The only question is, “Have you genuinely been born again?”

For the biblical proof of that, God never refers to “praying the prayer,” “walking the aisle,” “signing the card,” or anything even close. If it were that easy, II Cor. 13:5 would not exhort us to *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”* God clearly tells us that we are to *“examine ourselves”* concerning whether or not we are genuinely saved. God tells us in I John 5:13, that the criteria we are to use for that “examination” is the Book of I John. The *“THESE THINGS”* that John said were *“WRITTEN”* to let us *“KNOW”* that we have *“ETERNAL LIFE,”* are specifically chapters 1,2,3,4 and 5 of the Book God was using him to write. In fact, the word *“know,”* or some form of it, is found 27 times in this Book.

What the Book of I John actually does is present two simple tests to let us know that we (or anybody else for that matter) are genuinely saved. There is a DOCTRINAL test, and a MORAL test. Basically, all John does throughout this entire Book is present and expound upon these two tests.

Let’s talk first of all, about the DOCTRINAL TEST. The Doctrinal Test has two parts, or asks two questions:

1) What do you say about SIN? Chapter 1 is clear that those who are truly born again are those who have confessed that they are sinners. John adds, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and HIS WORD IS NOT IN US”* (1:10)! In other words, we are not saved.

2) What do you say about CHRIST? To be saved, God says that you must believe that *“Jesus is the Christ”* (2:22). *“The Christ”* means “anointed.” The Hebrew word “anointed” is the word “Messiah.” The Jews understood that Messiah (“the Christ”) would be God in a human body (Isa. 9:6 – *“THE MIGHTY GOD”*). Believing Jesus Christ is God (not “A” God, or emanated from God, but “THE” God!) is a necessity in order to be saved (2:22-23).

In short, the DOCTRINAL TEST says that those who are saved are those who believe that God became a man in the Person of Jesus Christ because mankind was hopelessly separated from Him by their sin. If you (or any other person, regardless of their “profession”) do not believe those two things, you cannot genuinely be saved.

So first of all, there is the DOCTRINAL TEST, which asks, “WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?” And then there is the second test, the MORAL TEST, which asks,

“HOW DO YOU BEHAVE? The Moral Test, likewise, has two parts:

1) The OBEDIENCE test. This entire Book is screaming out that you can “KNOW” that you are genuinely saved by your OBEDIENCE. John says that in chapter 2, verses 4-6, *“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”* Certainly, Christians do sin (2:1), but the predominant characteristic of their life is obedience.

2) The LOVE test. And the Love Test has three parts. John says that first of all, those who are genuinely saved will LOVE GOD. Again, this is repeated in various ways throughout the Book, but is put very succinctly in 4:19, *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* Secondly, John says that those who are genuinely saved will LOVE THEIR BROTHERS (AND SISTERS). As with each of these tests, it is repeated throughout the Book. A clear example of just how black and white the issue is, is found in 2:9-11: *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”* And then thirdly, John lets us know that those who are genuinely born again will NOT LOVE THE WORLD. Chapter 2, verses 15-17 say, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

As you can see, the Book of I John is a very important Book for which every person who professes to know Christ should be fully acquainted. Do you pass the tests God presents in this Book to let you know that you know Him?

Tuesday – December 26th, 2017

TODAY'S READING: II JOHN, III JOHN, JUDE

OVERVIEW:

II JOHN: The basis of love (1-3); the behavior of love (4-6); the bounds of love (7-13). III JOHN: The excellence of Gaius (1-8); the evil of Diotrephes (9-10); the elevation of Demetrius (11-14). JUDE: The command to contend for the faith (1-4); the condemnation of the counterfeits of the faith (5-16); the call to surrender in our faith (17-25).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The book of II John is a very important Book of the Bible for those of us living in the last days. It seems that the heed and call in “Christian” circles today is, “Let’s drop our petty doctrines for the sake of love.” The Book of II John is in our Bible to tell us the exact opposite!

As John begins this Book, he refers to himself as *“the elder.”* He is not referring to a position or office he held in the church, but rather to his age. John is an old man by the time he writes this Book – probably 80-90 years old.

He is writing to *“the elect lady.”* She is not mentioned by name, but is obviously someone with whom John was very close, as he affirms his love for her and her children in the opening verses. Her husband was probably dead, and her children are now grown, and it appears that she was an extremely loving lady. In fact, she was so “loving,” she had unknowingly taken false prophets into her home and had lodged them (v. 10). In John’s travels, he has come in contact with this *“elect lady’s”* nieces and nephews (v. 13), and they have evidently let John know how their aunt had been victimized by these false teachers. John immediately writes to make sure this extremely loving, benevolent, and hospitable lady knew how the Lord wanted her to be discriminate and how to respond to these false teachers.

You see the urgency of his message in verse 12, *“Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.”* We don’t know the things John spoke to her face to face. Obviously, we didn’t need to know them or we would have them! But we do have the words of the first 11 verses, and the Spirit of God wanted us to have these words so that God’s people through the centuries would know how God wants us to respond to false prophets and teachers. This little

letter actually shows us how love is to operate when it faces false doctrine, prophets, and teachers.

In verses 1-3 John shows us the BASIS OF LOVE. He lets us know that the basis of genuine biblical love is truth. (Note that the word *“truth”* is hammered five times in the first four verses!) He shows us that love and truth are inseparably linked in Christianity, and that our love cannot be permitted to be governed by anything but *“TRUTH”*! The whole point in verses 1-3 is that we are not to indiscriminately share love for the sake of love. Rather, we share love for the sake of truth! And when truth is violated, love is redirected. Wow! You talk about going against the teaching of Laodicean Christianity!

In verses 4-6, John shows us the BEHAVIOR OF LOVE. Whereas the basis of love is TRUTH, the BEHAVIOR of love is OBEDIENCE. John sets the *“elect lady’s”* children as an example for sharing love: the fact that they were *“walking in truth.”* And he really brings it back to the same point he had just made: Walking in LOVE is walking in TRUTH; and, walking in TRUTH is walking in LOVE! The simple fact is, love obeys. It obeys the truth. And when truth is violated, love is not unleashed. The love of the truth keeps love in bounds. Yes, folks, love (true biblical love!) has boundaries!

That’s what John shows us in verses 7-11, the BOUNDS OF LOVE. In verse 7, John gives us the reason we must walk in love AND walk in truth. He says *“FOR (!) many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”* John is trying to get us to see that unless we understand the connection between truth and love, and unless we are walking in truth and in love, we will never respond to these deceivers and antichrists, as God would want! And John shows us that our response to them is extremely important to God! So important, that a wrong response will even have a profound impact on us at the Judgment Seat of Christ! Verse 8 says that we put ourselves in a position of losing rewards that we have already wrought! Verse 9 actually lets us know who and when TO love, and who and when NOT TO love. He tells us that truth limits love toward those who *“transgress”* the *“doctrine of Christ.”* In other words, if they do not believe that Jesus Christ is God in a sinless human body, we are to apply verse 10, not letting them in our house and not telling them *“God bless you.”* To do otherwise, John says in verse 11, is to become a *“partaker”* in their *“evil deeds.”* (These verses are obviously in reference to someone who comes to you on a mission to propagate false doctrine, and not simply those who may believe false doctrine.)

There are three main characters in the Book of III John. John shows us the EXCELLENCE of GAIUS in verses 1-8, the EVIL OF DIOTREPHEs in verses 9-10, and the ELEVATION OF DEMETRIUS in verses 11-14. As you read this little Book, ask yourself, “Which one am I most like: Gaius, Diotrephe or Demetrius?”

The Book of Jude was written from an HISTORICAL standpoint, to Jewish believers, charging them to “*earnestly contend for the faith,*” and to endure until the coming of Lord Jesus, their Messiah. From a DOCTRINAL (prophetic) standpoint, it is written to Tribulation saints to help them identify the Antichrist and his “*ministers,*” and to “*earnestly contend for the faith*” as they await the return of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, from a DEVOTIONAL standpoint, the Book of Jude teaches us that if we are eagerly awaiting the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will also be “*earnestly contend[ing] for the faith.*”

May that be our testimony in these dark, perilous last days!

Wednesday – December 27th, 2017

TODAY'S READING: REVELATION 1-5

OVERVIEW:

John's description and our Lord's instruction concerning the "Revelation" (chapter 1); the seven letters to the seven churches representing seven periods of church history (chapters 2 and 3); the scene in heaven following the Rapture and during the Tribulation (chapters 4 and 5).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

We embark today into one of the most incredible Books of the entire Bible, the Book of Revelation. Many through the centuries have thought that this Book was so shrouded with mysteries that it could never fully, and perhaps even remotely be understood. Actually, there is really very little in the Book that is a mystery, and when it is, it is clearly presented as such. The difficulty in understanding the Book of Revelation stems from two basic problems: #1) not believing what we read. In other words, reading it, and asking the wrong question. Asking, "What does it mean?" rather than asking, "What does it say?", and simply believing it. #2) Not "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Tim 2:15). Let's take a couple of minutes to allow the Lord to reveal to us (I Cor. 2:7-14) His divisions in this intriguing Book.

In the 22 chapters of this Book, something significant happens two times: heaven opens. When heaven opens the first time in 4:1-2, somebody goes up. When heaven opens the second time in 19:11, somebody comes down. In 4:1 when somebody goes up, heaven opens and John, who is a picture of the church, hears a voice, the sound of a trumpet, and in the moment in the twinkling of an eye, finds himself in heaven at the very throne of God. It is clearly identifying the Rapture, for it describes exactly what Paul detailed in I Thessalonians 4:13-17. In 19:11 when somebody comes down, heaven opens and the Lord Jesus Christ comes out of heaven on a white horse with His armies following behind, also on "*white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean*" (19:14). The "armies" are clearly the church (see 19:7-8), and the event is unmistakably the Second Coming of Christ. A simple way to distinguish between these two events is that at the Rapture, Jesus comes in the clouds FOR His saints (I Thess. 4:17), and at the Second Coming, Jesus comes to the earth WITH His saints. Whereas the Rapture ends the church age and ushers in the Tribulation, the Second Coming ends the Tribulation period and ushers in the Millennium ("milli" = 1,000, "anum" = years – Rev. 20: 1-6).

So, these two significant events “divide” the Book into three sections:

- 1) Chapters 1-3
- 2) Chapters 4-19
- 3) Chapters 20-22

Interestingly enough, in Chapter 1 and verse 19, God told John that there would be three sections to the Revelation he would receive.

- 1) “The things which thou HAST SEEN” (past)
- 2) “The things WHICH ARE” (present)
- 3) “The things which SHALL BE hereafter” (future)

You are no doubt seeing the connection between the three divisions of the Book created by the two times heaven opens, and the three tenses in which God told John to write in 1:19. However, there is a key that many (most?) miss when making these connections! Notice what John says in chapter 1 and verse 10: “*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.*” Now, most assume that John is talking about the fact that he was just having one whole of a spiritual time one Sunday afternoon and had this “revelation” from God. As we have talked about since the very beginning of our 365 Days of Pursuit, the “Lord’s day” is the theme of the Bible. It is that 1,000 year “day” that He set aside for Himself way back in Genesis 2:3 (c.f. II Peter 3:8). John is saying in Rev. 1:10 that the Spirit of God picked him up and catapulted him forward in time to the Day of the Lord, and it was from the vantage point of someone way out in the 21st century at the time of the Lord’s Second Coming that he was to write in these three tenses described in 1:19.

From the standpoint of “the Lord’s Day,” the Book of Revelation actually “divides” (II Tim 2:15) like this:

- 1) Rev. 1-3 – “*hast sent*” (past) = Church Age to the Rapture
- 2) Rev. 4-19 – “*which are*” (present) = Tribulation to the Second Coming
- 3) Rev. 20-22 – “*shall be*” (future) = Millennium on into Eternity.

Because this Book is “*the Revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1:1a), the Book had to be “divided” into these three tenses because our Lord Jesus Christ is He “*which is, and which was, and which is to come*” (1:8). Our Lord is incredibly consistent.

With these basic guide posts, the Book of Revelation is really not very difficult to figure out, if you simply believe what you read.

Once you have that basic breakdown of the Book, the things our Lord reveals are nothing short of astounding. For example, when you place the seven letters written to the seven churches in Rev. 2 and 3 in today's reading into the context of the Book, they actually represent seven periods of church history that picks up basically where the Book of Acts leaves off, and takes you all the way up to the Rapture, which again, is found in Rev. 4:1, immediately after the letter to the Laodiceans.

Sure, the seven letters were addressed to real churches that really existed in Asia Minor historically and addressed real needs they were facing in approximately 95 A.D. when John received the revelation, but in their context, they also outline the history of the church to an absolute tee. (A 76 part study is available through our lending library).

The following is a brief overview of church history as defined by Rev. 2 and 3:

Church	Reference	Approximate Dates	Meaning
Ephesus	Rev. 2:1-7	90 A.D. – 200 A.D.	“Fully purposed”
Smyrna	Rev. 2:8-11	200 A.D. – 325 A.D.	“Bitterness” or “Death”
Pergamos	Rev. 2:12-17	325 A.D. – 500 A.D.	“Much marriage”
Thyatira	Rev. 2:18-29	500 A.D. – 1000 A.D.	“Odor of affliction”
Sardis	Rev. 3:1-6	1000 A.D. – 1500 A.D.	“Red ones”
Philadelphia	Rev. 3:7-13	1500 A.D. – 1900 A.D.	“Brotherly love”
Laodicea	Rev. 3:14-22	1900 – Rapture of the Church	“Rights of the people”

Thursday – December 28th, 2017

TODAY'S READING: REVELATION 6-11

OVERVIEW:

The first account of the Tribulation and Second Coming through the opening of the seven seals (6:1-8:1); the second account of the Tribulation and Second Coming through the sounding of the seven trumpets (8:2-11:19).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Yesterday's reading concluded with John revealing to us the SCENE IN HEAVEN immediately following the Rapture of the redeemed Church of Jesus Christ (chapters 4 and 5). When we pick up in chapter 6 in today's reading, John is revealing to us the SCENE ON THE EARTH immediately following the Rapture.

This chapter begins the revelation of the Tribulation Period, which of course, culminates with the Second Coming of Christ. In fact, what we will see in chapters 6-19, are actually four accounts of those events. This is a point that you need to nail down in your mind if you are going to keep between the white lines of how God has "divided" the Book of Revelation! It is at this point that most commentators, theologians, and Bible "experts" lose their way in this Book. They try to approach these chapters from a western mindset (linear, or sequential thinking — i.e. this happens, and then this happens, and then that, etc.), forgetting that the Bible (as we've talked about before) is an Asian Book, and is written circularly as opposed to linearly. There is perhaps no place in the Word of God where that is more clearly seen than in Revelation 6-19. Rather than one continuous, sequential time-line in these chapters, what God does is takes you through the same ground (the Second Coming of Christ) four different times, from four different perspectives. Sure, commentators, theologians, and Bible "experts" balk at such a preposterous idea, trying to appeal to our sense of reason, purporting, "Why in the world would God do something as unthinkable as take you through the same ground four different times from four different perspectives?", forgetting, of course, that that's exactly what He did in the Gospels! The Gospels give us four accounts of the First Coming of Christ, and because God is so unbelievably consistent, before He concludes His revelation to man, in the Book of Revelation, He gives us four accounts of the Second Coming of Christ!

If you miss what God is actually doing in these chapters, the Book of Revelation becomes a chaotic nightmare requiring a lot of doctrinal gymnastics to keep it

making any kind of logical sense. Seeing that one simple factor (four accounts of the same events), however, keeps this seemingly complex Book unbelievably simple and easy to understand.

God brings us through the first account of the Tribulation and Second Coming through THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS in Revelation 6:1-8:1. (In fact, make a note in your mind as you read chapter 6 today, that this chapter alone provides the first complete account of the Tribulation and Second Coming. The opening of the first five seals (6:1-11) covers the entire seven years of the Tribulation Period, and the opening of the sixth seal (6:12-17) is the first account of the Second Coming of Christ.

In chapters 8:2-11:19, God brings us through the Tribulation and Second Coming for the second complete time, this time through THE SOUNDING OF SEVEN TRUMPETS. The third account is found in chapters 12-14, as this time God brings us through this same ground through THE REVEALING OF SEVEN PERSONAGES (or SEVEN PERSONALITIES).

Then, the fourth and final time through the Tribulation and Second Coming is found in chapters 15-19, through THE POURING OF THE SEVEN VIALS.

There is waaaaaaay too much to comment on in today's reading, just remember that one of the keys to understanding this incredible Book is recognizing that this is not symbolism that John is revealing that needs to be interpreted or figured out. Just believe what you're reading, understanding that John is a man living in the first century using first century terminology, trying to describe events happening in the world in the 21st century!

Friday – December 29th, 2017

TODAY'S READING: REVELATION 12-17

OVERVIEW:

The third account of the Tribulation and Second Coming through the revealing of the seven personages (chapters 12-14); the fourth account of the Tribulation and Second Coming through the pouring of the seven vials (chapters 15-16); the Babylonish mother (17:1-6); the Babylonish monster (17:7-18).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we move into chapter 12 in today's reading, John begins the description of the third account of the Tribulation and Second Coming that our Lord revealed to him. In this account, these events unfold through THE REVEALING OF SEVEN PERSONAGES that are found in chapters 12-14.

The first PERSON is the WOMAN, referred to in 12:1-2, 4-6, and 14-17. The WOMAN is clearly the NATION OF ISRAEL.

The second PERSON, mentioned in 12:2, 4-5, is the CHILD, and is none other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The third PERSON, referred to in 12:3-4, 7-9 and 12-17, is the DRAGON. The DRAGON, as 12:9 leaves absolutely no question, is SATAN.

The fourth PERSON, the ARCHANGEL mentioned by name in 12:7-9, is MICHAEL.

The fifth PERSON is identified in 13:1-10 as the FIRST BEAST. This FIRST BEAST is none other than the famed ANTICHRIST.

The SECOND BEAST is the sixth PERSON revealed in this tour of the Tribulation and the Second Coming, and is not mentioned by name, but is the FALSE PROPHET who will work in conjunction with the ANTICHRIST during the Tribulation. He is described in 13:10-18.

The seventh and final PERSON or PERSONAGE in this third account of the Tribulation and Second Coming is the 144,000 described in 14:1-5. The 144,000 are the TRUE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.

Once again, there are simply too many things going on in these chapters to comment on everything that is worthy of commentary. Because so many

American cults have been spawned by a misunderstanding and false teaching concerning the 144,000 (the Jehovah's FALSE Witnesses, the World-wide Church of God, the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Mormons – the so-called "Latter Day Saints," and the "Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints"), perhaps a comment or two is imperative.

The 144,000 mentioned in chapter 14 are the same 144,000 that were mentioned in chapter 7. The only difference between the 144,000 in these two chapters is their location. In chapter 7 they are on the earth. In chapter 14 they are in heaven (i.e. *"The Mount Zion"* – 14:1). The big question, of course, is who are they? Chapter 7, verses 4-8 lets us know that they are 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel. They are 144,000 literal, physical Jews. Much to the dismay of the aforementioned cults, there is not a Gentile in the bunch! The next time an antichrist (I John 2:22) comes to your door and tells you they are a part of or are trying to become a part of the 144,000, just ask them which tribe they are from. Some things are just pretty dog-gone simple! These 144,000 Jews will be miraculously converted sometime at the beginning of the Tribulation Period (7:1-3). Note that 14:3 says they will be *"redeemed from the earth"*, and 14:4 says they will be *"redeemed from among men."* It appears that their miraculous conversion will be like that of the Apostle Paul, Paul referring to himself in I Corinthians 15:8 as *"one born out of due time."*

After their conversion to Christ, the 144,000 will then be sealed in their foreheads (7:3) with what is called *"the seal of the living God,"* which is the Father's name: JEHOVAH (7:2-3; 14:1). They are sealed for three reasons:

- 1) TO MARK GOD'S PERSONAL POSSESSION. God marks them with His name for the same reason we put our name on what belong to us. We are saying "This is mine!"
- 2) TO GUARANTEE GOD'S PERSONAL PROTECTION. Our name on our stuff may not deter people from messing with it. The name of Jehovah on something is a totally different story!
- 3) TO FULFILL GOD'S PERSONAL PURPOSE. God's purpose has always been to reach the whole world. That was the purpose God wanted to fulfill through Israel in the Old Testament. It is the purpose He now wants to fulfill through the Church. And, it will be His purpose through the 144,000. During the Tribulation Period, they will be *"the servants of our God"* (7:3) who will be used of God to fulfill His purpose to evangelize in every part of the world. Matthew 24:14 says that during the Tribulation Period, *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end*

come" (i.e. the Second Coming). That will be carried out by the 144,000. They will be the *"firstfruits"* (14:4) of those saved during the Tribulation Period, but through their *"witness"* (Matt. 24:14), there will be an incredible harvest to follow! According to Rev. 7:9, those who respond will be from every single nation, kindred, people and tongue! The 144,000 will be like 144,000 invincible (7:3) "Apostle Paul's" roaming the earth, evangelizing everywhere they go (I Cor. 15:8).

Notice that when chapter 14 opens, the 144,000 have been raptured to heaven. When chapter 14 closes, the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth in judgment (14:14-20; II Thess. 1:7-9). In 14:6-13, John reveals God's last call to lost man. This will most likely take place in the final few months, weeks, or even days of the seven year Tribulation. God gives His last call through four voices that John hears (14:6-13).

As we move into chapters 15 and 16, John reveals the fourth and final tour through the Tribulation and Second Coming, this time through the figure of THE POURING OF THE SEVEN VIALS. Perhaps the best way to comprehend what is happening in these chapters is to understand that for the last 6000 years of human history, God, Who is loving, gracious, merciful and kind has been storing up His wrath. In that 6000 year period, God's name has been defied, disgraced, defamed, ridiculed, reproached, belittled, betrayed, and blasphemed. He has watched and listened from His throne room as puny little people have exalted themselves as if they were God. But be it known, for the last 6000 years, though God has been *"longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (II Peter 3:9), His wrath has been filling up, being stored in seven vials (15:1; 16:1) in the temple of the tabernacle in heaven (15:5,6). The Tribulation Period is actually that time when God says, "That's enough!", and His wrath is poured out upon the earth (16:1).

Note that *"the woman"* described in chapter 17 (also referred to as *"the great whore"*), is a woman that has been seen throughout the entire Bible!

- She is the STRANGE WOMEN of the Book of Proverbs.
- She is the RELIGIOUS WOMAN of the Tower of Babel.
- She is *"THAT WOMAN, JEZEBEL"* of the Book of Revelation (2:20).

Chapter 17 reveals that she is the false religious system that the Antichrist will use during the Tribulation Period to unite the world religiously: the Roman Catholic Church. Beware! The stage is being set right now in these last days of the Laodicean Church Period for the Antichrist to use that false system.

Saturday – December 30th, 2017

TODAY'S READING: REVELATION 18-22

OVERVIEW:

The fall of Babylon (chapter 18); the Second Coming of Christ (chapter 19); the Millennium (chapter 20); the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem (chapters 21-22).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Beginning in chapter 6, John has brought us four different times through the Tribulation Period which, of course, culminates with the Second Coming of Christ:

- 1st account – The OPENING of 7 SEALS. (6:1-8:1)
- 2nd account – The SOUNDING of 7 TRUMPETS. (8:2-11:19)
- 3rd account – The REVEALING of 7 PERSONAGES. (12-14)
- 4th account – The POURING of 7 VIALS. (15-16)

It is a very important key to recognize that chapters 17 and 18 do not advance the events of the Book of Revelation beyond chapter 16. These two chapters actually provided the commentary and explanation of two key verses. Chapter 17 is the explanation of chapter 14 and verse 8 where John says, *“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”* Chapter 18 is the explanation of chapter 16 and verse 19 where John says, *“And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”* Understand it this way: Rev. 17 is a MYSTERY form of Babylon where she is a RELIGIOUS system. Rev. 18 is a LITERAL form of Babylon where she is a COMMERCIAL city (both a political and economic system).

Chapter 19 is the revelation of the greatest event in human history – the Second Coming of Christ, or “the Day of the Lord.”

1. IT IS THE EVENT TO WHICH ALL OF GOD'S WORD IS POINTING. We have seen this from the very beginning of our 365 Days of Pursuit. The theme of the Bible is the Day of the Lord. We read about it in almost every single Book of the Old Testament, either specifically, or in picture form. It is “that day” when the Lord Jesus Christ finally receives the glory that is due His name!

2. IT IS THE EVENT OF WHICH ALL OF GOD'S PROPHETS HAVE BEEN PREACHING. That's not just my guess or opinion! That is specifically what the Bible says in Acts 3:20-21 – *“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS since the world began.”* See what event Jude 14 says Enoch was preaching about thousands of years before the First Coming of Christ!
3. IT IS THE EVENT FOR WHICH ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE ARE PRAYING. In fact, Jesus said it is actually to be the first request of prayer: *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”* (Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:2). It becomes the number one prayer of your heart when you recognize that it will be the first time since Adam sinned in the Garden that the Lord Jesus Christ will receive the glory He deserves, and in that day, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).
4. IT IS THE EVENT AT WHICH ALL OF GOD'S HOSTS WILL BE PRAISING. That is what Rev. 19:1-7a describes. We will praise him because His SALVATION has been fully EXEMPLIFIED (19:1). We will praise Him because His JUSTICE has been fully EXECUTED (19:2-4). We will praise Him because His SOVEREIGNTY has been fully EXERCISED (19:5-6).
5. IT IS THE EVENT FOR WHICH ALL OF GOD'S CHURCH HAS BEEN PREPARING. This is the day when our marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ will be consummated. We will be wearing then the wedding garment that we prepared through the ability our Bridegroom gave to us to live righteously (19:7-8).

John takes the remainder of chapter 19 (verses 11-21) to describe this “greatest event in human history.” By the time the chapter comes to a close, everyone gets exactly what they deserve. The Lord Jesus Christ finally gets the glory He deserves as King of kings and Lord of lords. The beast (Satan in a human body, the Antichrist), his false prophet, and all of his followers will get what they deserve as they are cast into the “lake of fire.” Everyone gets exactly what they deserve — everyone! With one exception, however: US! Because God is merciful, He won't give to us what we deserve, because what we deserve is to be cast into the lake of fire with everyone else. Because God is gracious, He will

give to us what we could never deserve: eternity with Him! Can somebody say, "AMEN!"?

Chapter 20 is awesome. It reveals the Lord Jesus Christ spanking the devil like a two-year old at K- Mart, exercising the power and authority that has always been His, as He sets up his millennial (1000 year) reign. This is "that day" (the "seventh day") that the Father "blessed" and set apart for Himself (i.e. "the Lord's day") as a day of rest way back in Genesis 2:1-3, that II Peter 3:8 revealed would be a thousand year day that would come after 6000 years of toil, in which there would be no evening and morning. The remainder of chapter 20 describes the fierceness of the final judgment we commonly refer to as the Great White Throne Judgment. The description is nothing short of horrific, as will be the event itself.

Politicians in these last days have been talking about a "New World Order." Revelation chapter 21 describes "God's New World Order." John reveals that there will be a New Heaven that will be inhabited by the "Gentiles," a New Earth that will be inhabited by the "Jews," and a New Jerusalem that will be inhabited by "the church of God" (I Cor. 10:32).

Chapter 22 concludes with seven practical responses to the Book of Revelation, and to the conclusion of the revelation of God's Book (the Bible!):

1. Trust the Truth of God you hold in your hand.(22:6,18-19)
2. Live with the imminent return of the God of Truth in your thinking.(22:7a,12a,20a)
3. Do the Truth of God you know in your mind.(22:7b,14-15)
4. Worship the God of Truth you have in your heart.(22:8-9,13,16)
5. Share the Truth of God entrusted to your stewardship.(22:10-11,17)
6. Work in response to the Truth of God you have received.(22:12)
7. Walk in the grace of the God of Truth until He comes for you.(22:20b-21)

May we all say with John, "*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" (22:20b)

I say with John, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*" (22-21)