

The Future Tribulation

Revelation 4-18

October 1, 2023

*Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas*

The first time I personally studied Revelation was in 1996 in any great detail. I was at the time the managing director of Grace to You, and John asked if I would write the first draft of the notes for the book of Revelation for the MacArthur Study Bible. Verse by verse I went through and decided what needed to be commented upon and wrote concise explanations using his notes to do so. For months it was all-consuming. That's when I came to understand that this book is essential for every true follower of Jesus Christ. This is how D. Edmond Hiebert puts it. He says,

The book of Revelation is the true capstone of the Bible. Without it, our Bible would be incomplete; like a stirring story without an ending or a drama without a climax. That which is begun in the book of Genesis is brought to its conclusion in the book of Revelation. It is irreplaceable. For those who have spiritually illuminated eyes, the Apocalypse is one of the most precious and extraordinary writings in the world.

In January of 2021, we began studying the book of Revelation on Sunday evenings here at our church, and we have now studied through chapter 18. Next Sunday morning, Lord willing, we will move our study of Revelation from the evening to Sunday mornings, and we'll begin to study chapters 19-22, in which there are so many important, crucial issues that we will look at together. But today, I know a number of you have not been a part of those Sunday evening studies, and so, today I want to review the first eighteen chapters. I know, I know, you don't think I can do it. I did it in the first hour, so buckle up, here we go.

Today, I'm going to give you an overview. We've studied this book as I said, and as I've done so, I've given arguments from my conclusion and I've given much more detail than I can give you this morning, so I want you to think of this morning as more like a fly over, a view from 30,000 feet. Let's look at it together.

Revelation is the last biblical book written. The apostle John wrote it around the year 96 A.D. The best way to approach this book from the standpoint of interpretation is to take the futurist

model. That is, it argues that most of its events will be fulfilled in the future. Revelation 4 through 22, chapter 4 through 22 is predictive prophecy. I think as we walk through it today, you'll see that these things haven't yet happened. In symbolic language, it describes real people and real events that will come at the end of human history. That's where a literal reading, or I could put it this way, a normal hermeneutic leads you. If you simply read and study this book the way you would read and study any other piece of literature, that's where you arrive. So, let's look at it together. Let's begin where we ought to. Revelation chapter 1 verse 1: "The Revelation of Jesus the Messiah, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John." The Greek word for *revelation* is *apokalupsis* from which we get the English word *apocalypse*. The Greek word means "to uncover or to unveil." This book is the unveiling; it is the revelation from and about Jesus the Messiah. And notice verse 1 says, the theme "concerns the things which must soon take place." In fact, in Revelation chapter 4 verse 1, John uses that phrase as he introduces these future things. And again, in chapter 22 verse 6 at the conclusion of the body of this book, he uses it again. So, he bookends the major portion of this book, Revelation 4:1 to 22:5, with the expression "these are the things that must happen soon." Chiefly, that is the focus of this book. So, with that in mind, let's put together the theme. The theme of Revelation is "the unveiling of Jesus Christ and His glorious kingdom, resulting in the everlasting destruction of His enemies and the everlasting blessing of His saints." That's the theme of this book.

Jesus' words down in verse 19 of chapter 1 provide a natural outline for the book. Look at verse 19: "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things." Using that as a framework, here's an outline: You have first of all "The Things Which You Have Seen." That's the Setting of Jesus' Prophecy. That's what John sees in the vision of Christ in chapter 1. Then, secondly, you have "The Things Which Are." That describes the State of Jesus' Church in chapters 2 and 3, as there are letters written to the seven existing churches in Asia Minor in the first century. And then thirdly, you have "The Things Which Will Take Place." This describes The Stages of Jesus' Final Triumph." Begins in chapter 4, runs all the way through chapter 22.

Now notice this journey into the future begins in chapters 4 and 5 with "The Lamb and the Seven-Sealed Scroll." We are now looking at the future. And the point of these two chapters is

that God is worthy to occupy the universe's throne and to judge its treason against Him. But He will delegate that right to His Son. These events in chapters 4 and 5 take place in heaven and they introduce the judgments that God will unleash on the earth during the Tribulation and, in fact, the events of chapters 4 and 5 occur in heaven just before the Tribulation appears here on earth. Notice in chapter 4, you have "The Scene in Heaven: The Father and His Throne." This entire chapter describes the majesty of God's rule and His throne. It describes all that surrounds Him in the glories of heaven. It's a magnificent chapter. I encourage you to go back and listen. There's so much there about the greatness of God. But that brings us to chapter 5 which is where it's really leading and that is "The Search in Heaven." We meet The Lamb and we see the Book. In John's vision that he sees of God in chapter 4, when he comes to chapter 5, he sees laying on the open right hand of God is a scroll, a scroll of unparalleled importance. And then we learn that the Son of God, the Lamb that was slain, because of His faithful obedience, because of His redemptive work, is found worthy to inherit all things. Like Psalm 2, right, "I will give you the nations as Your inheritance," or as is also described in Hebrews 1 verse 2, Jesus is the "heir of all things." And so, the Lamb who was slain, the Eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ takes the scroll from the right hand of the Father.

What is that scroll? The mysterious book that He takes from the Father symbolizes the rightful inheritance that belongs to Him. It is in fact, the title deed to the earth. And that title deed to the earth is sealed with seven seals—as a will would have been done in the first century. And with the breaking of those seven seals, as he opens the scroll, Christ begins to judge the universe: to take from the usurper Satan what is rightfully His, to destroy all rebellion against God, and to restore the universe from the curse of decay and death. And He will do so during the seven-year Tribulation. The seven-year Tribulation. And it's that seven-year time period that is described in detail from Revelation chapter 6 all the way through chapter 18. So, we will spend the rest of our time this morning in those seven future years. The time of Jacob's trouble, the Tribulation, the last of Daniel's seventy weeks all describe that same seven-year period.

Jesus initiates the devastating judgments of the Tribulation by breaking, in chapter 6, the first six seals. The first four seals are famously described as horses and their riders, commonly called "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." Let's look at these six seals. The first seal in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 6 describes Antichrist's false peace. The prophet Daniel, which we studied some

time ago, explains that when Antichrist comes, he will at first accomplish his worldwide expansion, his empire, not by bloody battles, at least at first, but rather through treaties and covenants and agreements (Daniel chapter 9). So, the first part of the Tribulation will be characterized by the rapid growth of Antichrist's world empire achieved, for the most part, without blood shed and an empire that promises to bring peace across the planet. But it's a charade. The false peace is quickly shattered by the second horseman of the Apocalypse, the second seal in verses 3 and 4, which brings war.

There have always been wars on this planet. Right now, there are wars raging, in almost every generation of human history there have been wars. But the second horseman will usher in a time of unparalleled war. It will be world war in a totally new dimension. And that war will initiate, what often accompanies war, our third seal in verses 5 and 6, and that is famine.

Famine—in which food will be scarce. That often happens because of war and its destruction as well as the breakdown in supply lines and so many other things that we've witnessed only in very small ways in the last several years because of the events of the pandemic. Notice in verse 6, a quart of wheat, the amount that a single person needs every day, will sell for a denarius. In the first century, that was an average day's pay. And three quarts of barley, a cheaper grain usually fed to animals, will also sell for a denarius. In other words, what will take place is hyperinflation. Workers will work an entire day just to provide food for a family of three.

That brings us to the fourth seal. Unthinkably, it's the death of a fourth of humanity. A fourth of those left after the carnage of war and the decimation of famine will die. They'll die by the sword; they'll die, we're told here, by pestilence. So many will die that burial won't be possible, and rotting corpses will spread further disease, and they'll die by beasts of the earth. Animals will emerge from forests and swamps in search of food, and in desperation, that food will include humans. A fourth of humanity. Think about it this way. If a fourth of humanity died today, two billion people on this planet would die—almost the entire populations of China and India combined.

The fifth seal comes in verses 9 to 11, and it's divine justice. Because during the Tribulation on earth, the righteous who come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation, they will be persecuted and killed, but in heaven God will hear their prayers for justice. This fifth seal marks the mid-point of the Tribulation. At this point, something significant happens. Antichrist, the world ruler

who has established his empire, will break his treaty with Israel, and he will erect an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem as an object of worship—the abomination of desolation, as it's called. And he will demand, and the world will offer him, worship. And he'll unleash a massive wave of persecution against both Israel as the Old Testament people of God and New Testament believers. Believe it or not, we are just halfway through that seven years.

The sixth and seventh seals, along with all of the seven trumpet judgments and the seven bowl judgments describe events that occur in the second half of the Tribulation. The sixth seal brings supernatural disasters. Although the first five seals are acts of divine wrath, they won't obviously involve divine intervention in the world. But the sixth seal will clearly be catastrophic, divine judgment. Look at verse 12 of chapter 6, "There will be a great earthquake," surpassing all that has happened so far, and as a result "the sun will be like sackcloth...and the moon like blood." Those effects likely produced by volcanic ash and soot from volcanic eruptions that follow this massive earthquake. Verse 13, stars will fall. The Greek word, by the way, can refer to any celestial body; here, probably meteors. And verse 14 adds, "the sky will be split apart." That's describing the damage and partial destruction of the earth's atmosphere. And every island and mountain will be moved. The earth's tectonic plates will dramatically shift. As a result of this sixth seal, the sinners on this planet will finally be forced to admit that this is from God. That this is His wrath. Look at chapter 6. Chapter 6 and verse 15:

Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man (in other words, every human being on this planet, at all levels) hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"

Following that sixth seal, there is an interlude, a pause in the chronology in the book of Revelation. This is the first of three such interludes in this book. This is why it's confusing to some because for a moment John hits the pause button on telling the chronological story and says something that has to do with that larger period of time. This is the first of those here, and it has to do, in chapter 7, with the Tribulation saints. The message of chapter 7 is that in His grace, God will save and commission 144,000 Jewish missionaries to preach the gospel during the

Tribulation. That's verses 1 to 8. Beginning in verse 9, you see that in part from their ministry, He will save an innumerable multitude from across the world. Amazing, isn't it? That even in wrath God remembers mercy. God will save countless people on this planet during the Tribulation from His own wrath that He's pouring out justly upon them because He is by nature a Savior. That brings us then, after the brief interlude in chapter 7, to chapters 8 and 9 and the seventh seal.

The seventh seal. The breaking of the seventh seal on that scroll, the title deed to the earth, initiates a series of seven distinct judgments; judgments that are announced by the blowing of seven trumpets. Think of it this way that the seven trumpet judgments are contained within the seventh seal. If you want to think of it like this, in the seventh seal, it's like stacking Russian dolls. Inside of the seventh seal are these seven trumpet judgments that are each unfolded and unleashed chronologically one after the other.

The first trumpet comes in chapter 8 verse 7. And you'll see there in verse 7, there is hail, fire, and blood. Those likely result from the great earthquake back in verse 5. Because of the earthquake, there are volcanic eruptions. And because of the volcanic eruptions, water and steam are catapulted into the sky and fall as hail mixed with lava. The ash, the dust, and the lava could easily color and contaminate the water supplies so that they look like blood. And the combination of lava, ash, and the lightning from these massive supercell thunderstorms will ignite fires, verse 7 tells us, that will consume a third of the earth's land and vegetation. I just a moment ago mentioned Maui. That was such a tragic disaster. Can you imagine that happening to a third of this planet?

The second trumpet in verse 8, an asteroid or a giant meteorite comes to this planet. It ignites, apparently, in the atmosphere, but it remains intact and strikes this planet somewhere in one of the world's seven oceans. And the impact creates a huge tidal wave that destroys a third of the world's ships, both those at sea and those inundated at port. And it goes on to say the sea became blood. That could be literal. God could miraculously change the sea to blood or it could, as some have suggested, be a red tide, an event caused by the death of millions of tiny organisms resulting from the meteor collision with the oceans.

The third trumpet in verses 10 and 11 of chapter 8, a great star, possibly a comet or another meteor, as it enters the earth's atmosphere—this one doesn't remain intact, but it shatters into many pieces—falls to earth and poisons a third of the earth's fresh water.

Fourth trumpet, verse 12. A third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. The language, by the way, in verse 12 implies that God will do two things. First, that He will alter the day/night cycle in some way and that He will turn the dimmer switch on the stars and the sun, especially, and the moon. He will diminish supernaturally their intensity. However He accomplishes this, the effects will be dramatic: temperatures will plunge, normal weather patterns will change dramatically along with the tides leading to unusually violent storms and unpredictable tides, crops will be destroyed, animal and human lives will be lost.

The fifth trumpet comes in chapter 9. And again, there's a star, but this star is not a celestial body but is a person. Notice verse 2, "him." He will release demons from the bottomless pit, the maximum-security section of hell where they're currently bound, and these demons will then attack the earth in the form of "something like"—in John's carefully used "like" language—something like locusts, small grasshopper-like insects. They're described in verses 7 through 10 as intelligent, vicious, and invincible with a sting like a scorpion. And for five months, these demonic insect-like creatures will terrorize humanity. Notice, verse 6 says, people will long to die but death will flee them.

The sixth trumpet comes in chapter 9 verse 12, and there are four bound angels. These are almost certainly fallen angels, demons. And these four demons of death will be released, and they will lead a force of demons, we're told here, numbering two hundred million, and they will kill a third of the remaining population of the earth. Tragically, in spite of all these things, sinners will still not repent. Look at chapter 9 verse 20:

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, (verse 21) and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Folks, this is a reminder that only God's irresistible grace can save a sinner because sinners left to themselves, even facing everything we've seen already, will refuse to repent. That's how hard your heart and mine is apart from grace.

That brings us to a second interlude. Begins in chapter 10 verse 1 and goes to the middle of chapter 11. A second interlude that has a little book and two witnesses. In chapter 10, a mighty angel declares that God's plan for human history will soon be complete. And this mighty angel holds in his hand the little scroll from chapter 5, the title deed to the earth that Christ is breaking the seals on, and he holds it now open on his hand. Seals have been broken, the scroll is open, and so everyone can see its contents. They can see the record of the full fury of divine judgment still to come. And then the angel hands the scroll to John, and he tells him to eat it—that is to digest its contents. And as he does, as he tastes these great truths in his mouth—truths that Jesus will judge the wicked, that He'll take control of this planet, He'll establish His kingdom—he finds these truths sweet in his mouth. But as he realizes the coming fury of God's wrath and the inevitable terrible doom awaiting unbelievers, what tasted sweet in his mouth becomes bitter in his stomach as he realizes all that it will mean.

In chapter 11 verses 1 to 14, we learn that during the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, God will send two amazing witnesses to this planet. I think likely Moses and Elijah. He will send them, they will preach the gospel to the Jewish people, they will be invincible for a time in God's plan, and, ultimately, because of their ministry, Israel will be saved. As Paul talks about in Romans chapter 11, in that day "all Israel will be saved." But notice in verse 7 of chapter 11, these two witnesses will be killed by Antichrist. Eventually God will remove His hand and allow that. Their dead bodies, according to verse 8 and following, will lie unburied in Jerusalem and the world will have a party. The world will celebrate; they'll send gifts to each other. Finally, they're gone. But verse 11, after three and a half days, notice, they are raised, and in verse 12, they're taken into heaven. This is another expression of God's amazing grace. That even in the midst of what mankind deserves, He brings those who will share the gospel.

That brings us then back to the chronology into the seventh trumpet, the middle of chapter 11 verse 15. The seventh trumpet announces and contains seven bowl judgments that are described in chapter 16. But again, there's a second interlude here in chapters 12-14. So again, John hits the pause button on the chronology of this unfolding and tells us several important things. In chapter

12, we're reminded that throughout history, Satan, who's called the dragon here, has been at war with God. He's been at war with his Messiah, and he's been at war with God's people Israel, who are compared to a woman in this chapter. And, he tells us that Satan's attacks will intensify as the end draws near. In chapter 13, he introduces us to Satan's generals during the Tribulation campaign. Two men Satan will empower. The first of them is Antichrist, a profoundly evil human ruler who will establish himself as a false messiah. Anti-Christ, against the real Messiah, but the word *anti* also means "in place of." He will put himself forward in place of the real Christ. He will rule and receive the worship of the entire world. He's the beast from the sea in the first ten verses of chapter 13. Satan will also raise up a second human, the false prophet, who will promote false worship, especially the worship of Antichrist. He is the beast from the earth in chapter 13 verses 11-18. And then, when you're thinking about all of that and Satan and his henchmen, chapter 14 John provides a preview of the Lamb's final victory. He just wants you to know Jesus wins. The next scene then, as the chronology reestablishes, is in chapters 15 and 16 with the seven bowls.

The seven bowls. Chapter 15 picks up the chronological flow of events and describes the preparation in heaven for what are called "bowl judgments." The seventh trumpet both announces and contains the seven bowl judgments, again, think of the stacking dolls. Within the seventh seal are the seven trumpets, and within the seven trumpets are the seven bowls. What are these bowls? The bowl judgments are intense, rapid-fire judgments that come at the very end of the Tribulation and immediately precede and usher in the Second Coming. These final intense judgments are described as the pouring out of seven bowls of wrath. Don't think deep bowls, think shallow saucers. Think of a pasta bowl where the contents can be suddenly and violently dumped all at once. These come near the end of history in relentless ways.

Chapter 16 describes these bowl judgments. Chapter 16 verse 2, the first bowl brings an open, oozing, malignant sore on all of those who worshipped Antichrist. And, apparently, that sore, in God's amazing providence, develops wherever they received the mark of the beast. Humanity in its wisdom thinks that it can accomplish great things, and God chooses to put His finger on that very thing.

The second bowl in verse 3. This is like the second trumpet but far more widespread and devastating. Here, we're told that all of the oceans will become or come to resemble coagulated

blood. Look at verse 3: “and every living thing in the sea died.” Can you imagine? The ocean and its shores will be covered with decaying corpses and overwhelmed with the foul smell of death.

The third bowl. The earth’s fresh water turns to blood. This includes every source of fresh water on the planet. No clean water to be found to drink or to clean their sores.

The fourth bowl comes in verses 8 and 9. Perhaps through the destruction of the earth’s protective atmosphere that we read about earlier, the sun will begin to scorch this planet. In addition to bringing intense heat and drought and painful burns and blisters, the polar ice caps will also melt which, some scientists suggest, will raise sea levels worldwide from 100 to 200 feet flooding and destroying most coastal cities. But look at verse 9 of chapter 16, here’s how humanity responds: “They blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues, and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory.”

The fifth bowl brings supernatural darkness that covers the planet—a darkness so deep that you won’t be able to see. You won’t be able to see others. It will leave every sinner totally isolated, locked in his own misery. Think about that for a moment. I mean, even today, during the day a toothache is a distraction, but at night, it’s all consuming. In the total darkness of that time, the misery of their malignant sores, the stench of the dead marine life, the absence of drinking water, the raging, burning heat will drive them, we’re told, to gnaw their tongues in pain.

The sixth bowl. The Euphrates River dries up. This is preparation for the Battle of Armageddon that’s coming. It prepares for it by providing an easy route for Antichrist’s armies to make their way to Israel.

The seventh bowl comes in verse 17 of this chapter. This bowl will complete the bowls and, therefore, will complete the seventh trumpet judgment and will, therefore, complete the seventh seal judgment. This will immediately precede the Second Coming, and it will be the worse disaster in the history of the world. It begins with the mother of all earthquakes. Look at chapter 16 in verse 18. “And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.” (Look at verse 19.) The great city, Jerusalem, “was split into three parts...the cities of the nations fell.” Cities all over this planet will collapse into rubble,

and Babylon the great as well, the capital city of Antichrist. In addition, according to verse 20, this earthquake will radically alter earth's topography and its tectonic plates will shift and buckle. Verses 18 and 21 point out that along with the earthquake, there will be violent, unrelenting thunderstorms with hailstones weighing a hundred pounds. The effects of this final bowl extend to the Second Coming and the establishment of the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. When this final bowl is emptied, chapter 15 verse 1 says "the wrath of God is finished."

But that brings us to chapters 17 and 18 where we learn of the destruction of Babylon. Again, chapters 17 and 18 step away from the strict chronological flow of events to enlarge on something that happens in the seventh bowl. Go back to chapter 16 verse 19, "Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath." Babylon the great—that may be a city built on the site of the ancient city on the Euphrates that becomes the capital of Antichrist's empire, or Babylon may simply be used metaphorically to refer to another of the world's great cities that becomes his capital city. But regardless, it'll be destroyed. John begins in chapter 17 with the destruction of Religious Babylon. Chapter 17 focuses on the false religious system that Antichrist will use. It's described here; that false religious system is described as a harlot or a prostitute. You see, during the first half of the Tribulation, during the first three and a half years, Antichrist and his political allies and the false prophet will partner together with and use all of the world's false religions, whether it's Islam, Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, whatever it is, they will use all of it, and they will all come together in one great ecumenical force.

But something happens at the mid-point of the Tribulation. Chapter 13 describes it. Antichrist will receive what appears to be a lethal wound. He will appear to die, and he will appear to be raised from the dead—at the mid-point of the Tribulation. And after his supposed death and resurrection, everything changes. He will set up an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, what both Daniel and our Lord called "the abomination of desolation." And he will demand that he alone be worshipped as God. Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, he "opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." As a result of this change in his program, he and his cronies will hate the harlot. They'll hate the false religious system that unites all of the world's false religions, and they will destroy every other religion at the mid-point of the Tribulation and

make Antichrist alone the sole object of worship. Look at chapter 17 verse 16, says, they “will make her desolate.” They’ll plunder the incredible wealth that’s been accumulated by the world’s false religions. And they’ll make her naked, that is, they’ll fully expose the hypocrisy and corruption connected to those religions. They “will eat her flesh.” That graphically portrays their destruction as hostile and extremely violent. And it ends by saying they’ll “burn her up with fire.” When Antichrist is done, there’ll be nothing left of the rest of the world’s religions.

Chapter 18 goes on to describe the destruction of Political-Commercial Babylon. Same capital city in which the false religious system will be built, but it will also be the center of the world’s politics and all of the world’s industry. It’ll be the center of his empire and it too, chapter 18 says, will be completely destroyed. God announces it in the first eight verses, and then the world mourns it in the rest of the chapter until heaven celebrates the end. So, there’s the first eighteen chapters of Revelation.

What are the lessons for us? What are the lessons from the coming Tribulation? There’s so many that unfolded in my own mind and in the text as we walked through it, but let me just give you a couple to think about.

Number 1. Jesus is God, and as God, He is extremely patient and He has delayed His wrath, but He is also just and His wrath is coming. You know our world likes to think because nothing has happened except the flood so far—anything on that level—that we’re okay. Ephesians 5:6 in the context of sexual sin, and people giving themselves over to sexual sin, it says, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Paul says, “Listen don’t be deceived.” Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. Harvest might be still out there. You might not see the harvest yet, but it’s coming. You see, when we read this book, and we read the things that we’ve looked at this morning, it seems surreal, almost unbelievable, because nothing like this has ever happened, except the flood. But it’s true, and it’s certain. Remember how this book began? In chapter 1 verse 1, it began by saying this is the testimony of Jesus. Jesus Himself said this will happen.

Number 2. You personally will face Jesus Christ. I just want you to let that sink into your mind for a moment. You personally will face Jesus Christ. If He delays His coming, you will face Him after death. But if He returns, you will face Jesus Christ. Everyone on this planet, every human being who’s ever lived, will face Jesus Christ, and you will either flee in terror because of His

wrath that you will justly experience as we read in chapter 6. If you don't repent and believe in Him, then you will experience his wrath. Remember how it's described in chapter 6? The wrath of the Lamb. All of this is Jesus Christ, and you will experience that. Or you will fall in worship because of his grace. Those are the only two options. You can't remain indifferent, undecided about Jesus Christ. You will flee in terror or you will fall in worship. Those are the only two options. In fact, He is a Savior, and He delights to save. He endured God's justice for all who would believe in Him, so that we can experience not wrath but grace. In fact, go back to Revelation chapter 5. I love this. This is the scene in heaven. Verse 7:

He came (the Lamb who had been slain) came and took the book out of the right hand of God who sat on the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures (those are heavenly beings) and the twenty-four elders (those represent the church in Revelation) fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book, and to break its seals, (here it is) for You were slain, and you purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

Listen, your only hope of avoiding the wrath of the Lamb is accepting the death of the Lamb in your place. You must do what the humans on this planet will not do during the Tribulation. You must repent of your sins, and you must put your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. His life lived in your place, a perfect life of obedience; His death as a sacrifice satisfying the justice of God so that you could be forgiven; and His resurrection in which God accepted that sacrifice. You must repent and believe in Him or you will flee from Him and His wrath. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 says, Jesus "rescues us from the wrath to come." He's the only one who can because it's His wrath.

Thirdly, believers should respond to all of this with evangelism and with gratitude. We should pray for, and share the gospel with the unbelievers in our life because if Jesus comes back today in the rapture, we studied last week, and we're all gone, guess who's here to encounter what we just studied together? May God make us evangelists in the lives of the people that we know and love. And, as we contemplate the approaching storm of the wrath of God and the Lamb, we should be overwhelmed with gratitude that Jesus rescues us from the wrath to come. Not because

we deserve it, but because he earned it. You and I, rather than enduring all that we've just learned together, will enjoy the joys of heaven and the rest of eternity in perfect, unending, unmitigated joy because there is a Savior, and His name is Jesus. The Lamb slain. May God fill our hearts with gratitude and worship.

Let's pray together. Father, thank You for our time together this morning. Thank You for the clarity of Your word. Thank You for telling us how history ends. Help us to live soberly in light of these things. And, thank You, O God, thank You, that Jesus rescues us from the wrath that's coming both during the Tribulation and the eternal wrath in the lake of fire. Lord, we thank You and praise You that we have such a Savior, and it's in His name that we pray. Amen.