

The Way of the Lamb: The Revelation of Jesus

This study will be in a different format from the previous studies I have done. It is difficult to devise a lesson based primarily on questions regarding this book scribed by John, the Beloved Apostle, as there are so many difficult images to interpret. It will require a bit more explanation than I typically give. I will begin by giving some background material and interpretive tools that will be the premise of the understandings presented here. This study is by no means a definitive work but hopes to touch on the primary themes of this book.

This particular take on the Revelation of Jesus is based on a book by **Darrell W. Johnson** entitled, ***Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey through the Book of Revelation***. Regent College Publishing, 2004. Darrell Johnson is Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Regent College in Vancouver. He approaches this Biblical text, not as a prediction of future events, but rather an unveiling of God's work and plan throughout the history of His people and the future hope we have. He believes that the Revelation received by John is a call to radical discipleship and truly is a message of Good News, not a doom and gloom prediction of the end times.

I found this book tremendously helpful in bringing me to a new understanding of the rich but complicated text. I've always preferred to avoid this final book of the Bible but since Darrell Johnson has unveiled to me "The Way of the Lamb" found in these words of Scripture, it has inspired me think differently and I pray that will also lead to changing the way I live my life. I hope you also find encouragement in through this journey on which we now embark.

By grace alone,

Faye Reynolds.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL on Revelation as Apocalyptic literature

1. Definition of Apocalyptic Writing

- a. Apocalypse means "Unveiling" – literally, "to pull the curtains back"
- b. Written to an oppressed, persecuted people
- c. Pessimistic about the present – "nothing will change"
- d. Optimistic about the future – "God will make it right"
- e. Written in code language so the oppressors will not understand the meaning, but the intended audience will. (as Spirituals were written during slavery which gave clues to the underground railway, etc)
- f. Use of repetition for emphasis and revealing patterns in history
- g. There is no 'new truth' but truth is revealed a new way.
- h. Uses language of the Old Testament – over 500 quotes from the OT in the book of Revelation

2. Breaking the Code: Numbers and colors have specific meanings in apocalyptic literature. This is a generalized guide of their meaning.

- a. Light verses Darkness represents Good verses Evil
- b. Colors:
 - i. White = Purity and goodness
 - ii. Red = Blood and War
 - iii. Pale = Famine and Death
 - iv. Gold and Purple = Royalty
 - v. Silver or White = Wisdom, agelessness
 - vi. Black = injustice, evil
 - vii. Bronze = strength already tested by fire
- c. Numbers
 - i. 1 = Prime – stands alone
 - ii. 2 = Witness (always two witnesses required at a trial)
 - iii. 3 = Balance, Harmony, Rightness (Complete)
 - iv. 3 ½ = Incomplete – usually an undetermined length of time
 - v. 4 = Earth, Creation, flesh (the four corners, the four winds)
 - vi. 6 = Imperfect (one less than 7)
 - vii. 7 = Wholeness, perfection
 - viii. 10 = Goodness, completeness
 - ix. 12 = Unity (12 tribes of Israel, 12 Apostles, the Church)
 - x. 1000 = Huge, great amount
- d. Symbols
 - i. Head - symbol of authority
 - ii. Eyes – wisdom and discernment
 - iii. Feet – foundation
 - iv. Voice – Power
 - v. Sword – Truth
 - vi. Face – blessing, approval
 - vii. Horn – strength
 - viii. Crown - wealth
 - ix. Stars – Angels or messengers
 - x. Lamp stands - churches

It is important as you read the Book of Revelation to keep in mind that the descriptions are not literal, but figurative images. These images are not meant to convey appearance, but to convey character. A number is rarely taken as a factual number, but rather as a symbol rich with meaning.

Lesson 1: Meet the Messiah

READ: Chapter 1: 1 – 8: Introduction and Greetings

1. What information are you given in the first 3 verses? Who is it written by and who is it written to? What is the purpose of the writing?
2. What phrase is used to introduce God? Consider the meaning of the number 7 when you read the seven churches and the seven spirits. How do the two connect with each other?
3. What are the phrases used to introduce Jesus? What/who is Jesus witness to? Reiterate the summary of the Good News as presented here.

READ: Verses 9 – 20

This is a description of the Character of Jesus as Messiah and Lord, not a physical snapshot of his appearance. Go through the description given of the one “like a son of man”. (Reference Daniel 7: 13 – 14)

Notice that Jesus is standing among the lamp stands. Jesus is in the midst of his churches. They are not alone – he is always with them.

Who is this Jesus? He is dressed in a robe, so he must be a priest. What is the function of a priest? He has a golden sash around his chest, signifying he is also royalty and since the sash is around his chest and not around his waist, it means that his work has been accomplished.

What does hair white as wool tell us about Jesus?

Blazing eyes?

Bronze Feet?

Voice of rushing waters?

What might the seven stars represent? The sword from his mouth? His face?

What phrase is repeated from verse 4? Who did it describe then, and who now?

Now, how would you define the character and qualities of the Messiah? John does not want his readers to have any doubt as to who has given him the following message and the authority behind it.

Who is the message for? It is for the churches. Again the number 7 may not mean only these seven churches as there were actually 10 main churches in that region at the time of John’s writing (~94 a.d.) The 7 stars are the angels or messenger that will help to deliver this message to the *whole*, known church at that time, and also in this time. It is a message for us.

Lesson 2 – A Word to the Church, Then and Now

(This lesson may take two or three sessions to cover in full)

The seven messages in Chapters 2 and 3 follow a specific pattern. They begin with an introduction of Jesus, the source of the message. Each description is different for each message, but related to the descriptions from Chapter one. A different character trait of Jesus is mentioned for each church, according to the message they need to hear. So each letter follows this pattern:

- “These are the words of him who” (character reference)
- I know this about you
- I have this against you
- A command or a warning is given
- Each message ends, “He who has ears, let him hear.”
- Concludes with a promise

Ask the following questions of each message to the seven churches:

- How is Jesus described and what character trait is emphasized in this description? How might that be appropriate for this church?
- What is the praise that Jesus has for this church?
- What is the concern he has for them?
- What are they commanded to do?
- What is the promise and how might it relate to this particular church?
- How does their situation relate to the church today?

A) Message for Ephesus – Rev. 2: 1 - 7

Ephesus was the trading hub of the region at that time and also the center of Christianity at the time of writing. As well, it was the home of worship for the mother goddess Artemis (Romans called her Dianna) and her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. One of the biggest industries was making and selling of miniature Dianna statues (sound familiar?). It also was home to the temple of Emperor Domitian, as Domitian demanded to be worshipped as a god.

This church was founded by the apostle Paul, nurtured by Priscilla and Aquilla and Timothy, pastored by the apostle John and thus home to Mary, mother of Jesus. It had quite a heritage! What does Jesus say to this church? Go through the questions given above.

B) Message for Smyrna – Rev. 2: 8 - 11

Smyrna (Ismir, Turkey) was known as the “beautiful city” and crown of Asia. On their coins was stamped, “First City of Asia in Size and Beauty”. It had also been “resurrected” as it was destroyed in 580 BC, but rebuilt in 290 BC. It was strongly aligned with Rome and as a result quite anti-Jewish. In 195 BC a

temple was built to Dea Roma, the goddess of Rome. Believers experienced *thlipsis* – a crushing pressure to support Rome and worship its gods.

Smyrna was also a wealthy city. The only poor who lived there were the Christians because they were ostracized, boycotted and often denied employment. What does Jesus have to say to the believers in Smyrna?

C) Message for Pergamum – Rev. 2:12 - 18

The symbol for the city of Pergamum was the sword, for they were one of the few cities allowed to inflict capital punishment. It was built on a high rock and was famous for its magnificent library. It was also the center of Caesar worship. There was a battle for the mind going on in this city and believers were under pressure to be tolerant of many practices. Behind the city on a huge conical hill stood a host of temples and altars of which two temples were prominent. Askelepios was the god of healing and his symbol was a serpent (think of our symbol for doctors today). People came for miles for healing and to be touched by one of the harmless snakes that crawled over the temple floor. The other temple was to Zeus, whose temple cast a shadow upon the city.

The teachings of the Nicolaitans (Greek name) or Baalams (Hebrew name) allowed people to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to have sexual intercourse outside the bonds of marriage. The body was viewed as unimportant and therefore it didn't matter what you did with it. It was only the soul that mattered. Both practices were connected with the religions of the day and compromised Christian values and faithfulness. What does Jesus say to them?

D) Message for Thyatira – Rev. 2: 18 - 29

There is little information available on this city and it is the hardest message to interpret. It was a center for the worship of Apollo, the god of sunlight (also called Helios). The emperor of Rome was to be the incarnation of Apollo and referred to as the son of god. Thyatira was a prosperous commercial center (Lydia was from here) and home to many trade guilds. The trade guilds were connected to religious practices, which made it difficult for Christians to participate in the guilds, but they could not practice their trade without belonging. It was always a struggle for Christians as to whether they could be “both/and” in the business world. How might you fill in the blank, “I can be a Christian and still _____”? where Christians are tempted to compromise truth in our day and age? What is Jesus' message to this church?

E) Message for Sardis – Rev. 3: 1 - 6

Sardis was the largest and wealthiest of the seven churches. It was a very busy, booming church with lots of activities and ministry happening. This church was “the perfect model of inoffensive Christianity” (quote by George Caird). They were not under any persecution because it had accommodated to its society. Sardis, as a city, seemed invincible because of its location on a mountain but twice it was overtaken because of lack of vigilance. There is a

message about complacency to be found in this letter that has much to say to our church today. What are Jesus' thoughts on the matter?

F) Message for Philadelphia – Rev. 3: 7 - 13

Philadelphia was situated at the foot of a volcano which gave rich, fertile soil and also access to local hot springs. However, it also suffered from earthquakes and frequent tremors so the residents had a pattern of fleeing and returning and lived fearful lives. The city had been previously leveled in AD 17 and so was a relatively 'new city'. Jewish converts to Christianity faced great rejection and hostility from faithful Jews who had managed to live peacefully in Philadelphia. Christians threatened their peaceful co-existence. The door was closed to Christians being allowed to worship at the synagogues.

Philadelphia was also a missionary city for everything Greek. It was a center for Hellenizing the world to Greek language and thought. Located on one of the greatest highways in the world that led from Europe to the East, it would also be a great center from which to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. What does Jesus have to say to the believers of the "City of Brotherhood"?

G) Message to Laodicea – Rev. 3: 14 - 22

This city was located half way between Hieropolis which was home to the healing waters of a hot spring and Colossae, which was known for its cool, refreshing springs of drinking water. Laodicea lacked a local source of water and so it was piped in from several miles away. When the water from Hieropolis crashed over the cliffs opposite Laodicea, it was lukewarm, smelly from the minerals and unfit for anything. Drinking water from Colossae arrived lukewarm and had lost its natural freshness. This image is used by Jesus to speak to the church there.

Laodicea was famous for three things: 1. for its many banks which were all solvent. 2. for its clothing industry and known for its glossy wool from local sheep. Clothes were sent all over the world. 3. for its excellent medical school and especially famous for an eye salve that was believed to heal weak and failing eyes. Laodicea was a very self-sufficient city. Think of the word from Rev. 3: 17 and their implication, "you are poor, you are blind, you are naked". Compare Rev. 3:30 with Song of Solomon 5:2.

As Jesus spoke to these seven representative churches, he is speaking to churches around the world today; those suffering from persecution; those lulled from affluence; those weakened from social compromise; those inflicted with poor theology or spiritual complacency; and those who have remained faithful in spite of its surrounding environment. Even within our own personal lives, we struggle with what it means to be faithful at all costs. As you have studied these messages, I hope you have taken the time to personalize their message, heeding the warnings, and holding on to the promises and blessings of the faithful.

Lesson 3: A Vision of Heaven

Things are not always as they seem and by receiving a vision of heaven we have a better view of what is happening on earth. The most frequent command in Revelation is “LOOK! or BEHOLD” The second is “FEAR NOT”. The book of Revelation is NOT for fear mongering – it is a vision of HOPE!

READ: Chapter 4

Symbols:

- Throne = center of command; *rainbow = mercy; jewels= majesty*
- 24 Elders = 12 tribes of Judah (the church before the coming of Christ) plus 12 Apostles (The church after the coming of Christ)
- Seven Lamps = the Church
- Seven Spirits = Seven means wholeness, so it is the whole Spirit of God. Also the presence of God among his church.
- Sea = chaos.
- Four Creatures: Represent all of creation
 - Quote from Rabbi Abihu (AD 300) “there are four mighty creatures. The mightiest among the birds is the eagle, the mightiest among domestic animals is the ox, the mightiest among the wild animals is the lion, the mightiest of them all is man; and God has taken all of these and secured them to his throne. (Johnson, pg. 139)

4:1 – The door opens on a new reality. John isn’t transported up and away, but instead, a veil is removed in order for him to see more clearly new realities.

1. Who is seated on the throne? This reminds us that God is in “control-central” so we know Who is in charge – we’re not just left on our own.
2. How do the jewels and the rainbow go together to present a balanced picture of the character of God?
3. Read Exodus 19: 16 – 19. What does thunder represent?
4. Sea of glass refers to God’s Realm surrounded by “controlled” chaos (this present world) for the sea is not choppy or rough, but controlled. At the end of Revelation in the New Heaven, the sea is gone, meaning the chaos is finally gone. How does this image help us understand how God can be in control and yet it seems like the world is running amok?
5. Who is present with God – what do the 24 thrones represent? (*FYI: Domitian the Roman Ruler was always accompanied by 24 bodyguards: This image would be familiar to the readers*) Who do the creatures represent?
6. What are the elders and the creatures doing around the throne?
7. How does this view of heaven encourage the believers? Does it help you to gain perspective in any way on God’s work and plan in our world today? *Note that anytime we worship, we are joining into an already ‘happening’ worship service that never ceases!*

READ: Chapter 5

Who is worthy to open the scroll? The scroll is God's plan from the time of Creation through to eternity. Who is able to explain this to us – to open the scroll and give understanding to the contents? There is no one that intelligent or wise – no one can understand the mind of God – BUT ONE! "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

*This is the most profound passage and pivotal to our understanding of the rest of the Revelation. John looks to see the **Lion**, and what does he see instead? He sees a **lamb** – a lamb that looks as though it has been slain. **This is an incredible truth that we must "get" at the very being of our souls.** The Lion doesn't win by being a lion, but by being a lamb. The lion of Judah doesn't rule as a lion would rule as king of the jungle, but rules as a lamb – extremely vulnerable and meek. The world always looks for the lions to solve the problem and to save us. The Jewish people were looking for a political Messiah to come in power and might to banish the Roman oppression and establish a new Jewish kingdom. Because they were expecting a different kind of deliverance, when the true Messiah actually came, they missed it. I feel the world is still looking for power and might to somehow bring things under control. Once again, we are looking for a lion's way, and missing The Lamb.*

Jesus reigns, not from a throne, but from a cross. The lamb does not inflict pain, but takes on the pain of others. If we truly want to reign with Christ, we must follow the Way of the Lamb and we must also reign from the cross. From this point on in Revelation, the way of the world will be contrasted with the Way of the Lamb. As each seal opens, we will see the past, the present and the future all before us in a single glance. The consequences of rejecting the Way of the Lamb are devastating, but those who remain faithful to the Lamb will gain Eternity, though they will not escape present suffering.

1. The lamb is described as having seven horns and seven eyes. From the code given at the beginning of this study, what two characteristics are attributed to Christ?
2. The seven seals are not on the scroll to keep the contents hidden but as a sign of ownership. Jesus is the only one authorized to open them. Why is Jesus worthy to open the scrolls? What did he accomplish?
3. What is the author conveying by the term "ten thousand upon ten thousand"?
4. In verse 12, there is a seven-fold praise – meaning perfect praise. What are the seven words attributed to Jesus? In verse 13 there are four words. What does the four represent? Who are these praises coming from? So we see the joining of the heavens and the earth = ALL of creation united in worship and praise.

Lesson 4: The Four Devastations

READ Chapters 6 and 7

We will not take the time to decipher every image, but endeavor to understand the overall image that John is describing.

Darrell Johnson sees the word, “Come”, not as a command for the horsemen to come from heaven, but as a prayer for the Lamb to come and establish His kingdom. However, as soon as the prayer is uttered, opposition appears. The horsemen represent the resistance and opposition that occur when the Way of the Lamb is rejected. Four represents the earth where the scene is taking place.

1. The white horse is the power of evil imitating Jesus with a bow and a crown. It is the ‘angel of light’ – one that appear to be good, but deceives many. Who are some of the false prophets and messiahs of our day? What are some of the deceptions that have caught the world and led it away from Christ?
2. The red horse is the symbol for war. As evil seeks to assert itself against the lamb, it chooses violence, generates strife and generates war. Most all of the wars on earth are rooted in spiritual conflict. Name some of the wars going on today in the world and what is the source of the conflict.
3. The black horse is the symbol of injustice. Bread, a staple for the poor becomes worth a whole days wage. Wine and oil (luxuries of the rich) remain inexpensive. It is greed and injustice that lead to hunger and famine in the world. Again, think of regions of the world where there is hunger and suffering. What are the causes of this? How is the gap between the rich and the poor widening in our country? What are the causes of this gap?
4. The ashen horse represents death and it isn’t just the guilty that die, but many, many innocent victims lose their lives because of the deceptive ways of those in power.

These four horses are not “the horsemen of the apocalypse” for they are not destructive forces sent from heaven, but rather the inevitable consequences when leaders in power resist the coming of the Kingdom of God.

“Seal one says if we do not go the Way of the Lamb there will be greater and greater conflict and the drive to conquer. Seal two says if we do not go the Way of the Lamb, there will be greater and greater violence. Seal three says if we do not go the Way of the Lamb, there will be greater and greater injustice and hunger. Seal four says if we do not go the Way of the Lamb, there will be greater and greater sickness and death” (Johnson pg. 174)

5. The fifth seal tells us that unfortunately the church is not exempt from the suffering caused by the world’s resistance to the Kingdom of God. We view underneath the altar because that is where the blood of the animals

sacrificed on the altar ended up. This is John's way of saying that the death of Jesus' followers is a priestly, sacrificial act. The saints cry out, "How long will you let this go on? Why don't you assert your rule?" And God answers, "Because my way is not the way of the lion; it is the Way of the Lamb." The saints are told to wait a while longer for a pre-determined amount of time. Read Col. 1:24. How does Paul's understanding reflect this teaching?

6. The Sixth Seal is the result of what happens when the world is left to its own devices. It implodes upon itself. There is an earthquake and a heaven-quake. The point is that judgment is not imposed from without but comes from within. God simply takes his hands off and the cosmos collapses upon itself. **Self rule leads to self destruction.**

There is now an interlude and we switch scenes from earth back to heaven.

Chapter 7

It is important to note here that the visions do not occur in chronological order – John is catching snapshots of ideas, not a linear order of events. In this chapter, we see that the world is not left to itself after all. There are four angels holding back the four winds and protecting those sealed.

In Chapter 6, the question was asked, "Who can stand?" Chapter 7 gives us the answer – those who are sealed.

1. 144,000 – By using the numbers from the beginning of this study, what might be the symbolic meaning behind this figure? (12 x 12 x 1000).
2. What does it mean to be 'sealed'? Read John 10:28; Ezekiel 9: 1 – 6, Exodus 12: 12 - 28
3. What is the seal? Eph. 1:13, Eph. 4:30, 2 Cor. 1:12 – The seal is not a literal branding on the forehead, but we are sealed by the Holy Spirit who reproduces Christ's character within us.
4. What does the seal protect us from? (vs. 14). We mentioned that the church of Smyrna was under great pressure. The Greek words, *mega thlipsis* literally mean "a great pressure" to describe what that church was going through. Here, they been translated "tribulation". Note that the multitude has come "out of the tribulation" or the time of great pressure. They are not saved from it, but their future is secure as they pass through it. This is not a reference to a future period called, "The Great Tribulation" but a reference to the ongoing pressure that believers face in a world that does not follow the Way of the Lamb. Followers of the Lamb will always be caught in the resistance toward the Lamb. The rest of chapter 7 is to comfort (the word 'comfort' actually means to fortify and strengthen) those facing such pressure and who cry out, "How long?" There is a glorious prize ahead.

Lesson 5: Judgment wrapped in Mercy

*The six seals reveal the history of the world and the consequences of rejecting the plan of God as revealed in Jesus. The seventh seal is the judgment that comes as a result of such rejection. In the Old Testament, the blowing of a trumpet served as a warning so these trumpets announce the coming of pending justice. God always gives ample warning and time for repentance – he is always giving ‘one more chance’ to surrender and believe. Before the trumpets blow after the seventh seal is opened, there is **silence** in heaven and God receives the prayers of his people for the earth’s inhabitants. Imagine – worship that has been going for all eternity stops! The incense represents the prayers of the saints crying “How long?” This incense holder is thrown to the earth in answer to the prayer. How long will the wicked prosper? No longer! God is now making his justice known.*

READ Chapter 8, 9

1. The number 1/3 becomes very significant in this passage. It is meant to convey the mercy of God, for the destruction is not complete. Yes, 1/3 is destroyed, but 2/3 remains unharmed. These are not easy words to read, but keep in mind the mercy being revealed through this symbolic number. Judgment comes “for those who dwell on earth”. This repeated phrase refers to those who resist the coming of God’s Kingdom, not all humanity.
2. The first four trumpets parallel the first four seals. They take place on earth as four is the symbol of earth. In the sounding of the trumpets, Creation goes haywire. First the land is destroyed (food), then the seas (Commerce), then the water (life source) and finally the sun, moon and stars (light itself). What are some ways that sin in our world is causing Creation to go haywire?
3. With the fifth trumpet, evil becomes unrestrained. Who is the fallen star? (Isaiah 14: 12 – 15) He is “given” the keys to the abyss. Once again, Satan only operates as allowed by God – not by his own authority. In this horrible scene, he releases the locusts. This is not easy to understand and I believe it is important to not read this too literally, but even figuratively it is terrifying. Satan is being told, “if you want to glorify destruction then go ahead and destroy.” (Abbadon/Apollyon means Destroyer.)
4. The sixth trumpet releases the conquerors. At the time of John, the Romans feared they would be toppled by invaders from East of the Euphrates. It is the picture of world war and the devastating loss of human life that results from war.

All of these destructive events are still warnings. Creation itself is crying out “Something is wrong here! We’re not living the way we were made to.” God is again giving warning after warning and calling for all to turn back to him. Is not the genocide in Rwanda, Sudan and other countries a warning that something is

seriously wrong in our land? Is not Columbine a warning that something is wrong in our world? Is the tsunami that devastated so many a sign that Creation is going amok? Is anyone heeding the warnings?

5. The saddest verse of all is verse 20, *“The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands.”* What are the works of our hands that keep us from trusting in God? What are the idols that get in the way of our complete repentance? What does it take for people to turn to God? In this chapter, people would rather die than repent. That is sad indeed.

READ Chapter 10

This chapter is for the church and a call to work. For, as long as there are those who have not repented, the church has a job to do and that is to proclaim the truth of God and his Good News. The sounding trumpets are actually all the things that are going wrong in the world and it is allowed in order to get our attention. But a warning sign isn't much good without knowledge of what it is warning against. Darrell Johnson writes: *“We are to declare the truth in the midst of all this happening. The truth is this: There is a God, a living God. This is God's world. It works God's way or it does not work. If we violate God's will and way, it will turn back on us.”* (pg. 199)

1. What does the rainbow signify around the angel's head? Why does it have one foot on land and one foot in the sea?
2. The messenger with a voice of seven thunders has something to declare, but John is told not to record it. We can only speculate as to what this message might be. What are your ideas?
3. John is given a small scroll to eat. This represents a task he must do. What is that task? Why is the task both sweet and bitter?
4. How do you struggle in your life to bear witness to God's kingdom? Do you believe that you are called as a prophet? What does that spiritual gift mean to you and who do you recognize as having the gift?

We are so afraid to judge – and we are told not to judge others, for we have so much in our own lives in need of correction. Warning is not the same as judging. This is a very difficult thing to discern, but there are ways that we can offer words of warning that come from a heart of love and concern and not from a condemning spirit. But they must truly be formed in a heart of love. If we want people to be destroyed because they are bad people, nothing we say will be loving. Our witness is a witness of love and a witness to the truth that something is indeed wrong with our world and perhaps there is a better way we can live.

Lesson 6 - The two Witnesses

After the sixth trumpet, again we have an interlude before the seventh judgment is pronounced. We have a pause after the number 6 which portrays incompleteness. The seventh completes the task of the first six.

READ Chapter 11: 1 - 14

1. The temple had been destroyed in 70 AD, so John is not being given a literal task of measuring a building. What is the temple? Read I Cor. 3:16, I Cor. 6:19, II Cor. 2: 6 – 16, I Peter 2:5
2. In Zechariah 2:1 – 5 why does God ask this prophet to measure the city? God is also asking John to measure the saints in order that God might protect them by dwelling within them as the wall of fire surrounds them.
3. The number 1260 days = 42 months = 3 ½ years and it means an indefinite period of time. (also referred to as “time, times and half a time”) This is generally felt to be the time between the first coming of Christ and His second coming. It is the period of the church where we are here as a witness to the world and serve under some protection, but not complete safety. The church wears sackcloth, the sign of repentance – we do not come with an attitude of superiority, but of humility to our neighbors. “Two lamp stands” signifies the witness of the church. Two olive trees – the message, if received is intended for peace. The testimony of two is true.
4. OT images: Reference II Kings 1, I Kings 17, Exodus 4 – 11. All of these images strengthen John’s statement that the church is the new prophet to the world and will do the same kinds of things as did the prophets of old.
5. Rev. 11: 7 – 14 is a foreshadowing of the events to be described in Chapter 13 to come. The real enemy of the church is not humanity, but Satan (Eph. 6:12) Sodom as a symbol signifies moral decay, Egypt signifies legalized oppression.
6. 3 ½ days – the church witness will be suppressed by Satan for a relatively short period of time. The greatest humiliation in Eastern culture is to leave a body unburied. It reminds us that when the church appears to be on the verge of extinction – God revives it again, stronger than ever.
7. Mercy again is revealed in the numbers 1/10th and 7000. In Isaiah 6:13, a tenth is saved and 9/10 is destroyed. Amos 5:3 – again 9/10 fall. I Kings 19:18 – Elijah cries that only 7000 are left. Here, only 7000 are lost. This is mercy and victory, not defeat! Because of the work and witness of the church, only one tenth is lost, the rest are saved. The math is reversed!

Read Chapter 11:15 – 19

This is the famous Halleluiah Chorus as put to music by Handel. Strange that it is the third woe, when we sing it as a song of victory. For those who embrace the coming of the Kingdom, there is joy and celebration. For those who resist the Reign of God, however, it is woeful news indeed.

Lesson 7: The Masquerade

Remember that this is not a chronological account and so the images we face in Chapter 12 hearken back to the birth of Christ through to his coming again. It is a capsule of his ministry. It is also a portrayal of Satan's resistance to Jesus and the tools he uses to undermine the Kingdom of God and the Way of the Lamb.

1. In Revelation 4, we were taken into the throne room, now (11:19) we are taken into the Holy of Holies – the Ark of the Covenant – the symbolic dwelling place of God. All is opened and revealed to the believer. What encouragement do you gain from this vision?

Read Chapter 12

The word “sign” is key as we enter into the theological center of this book. There are seven scenes in Chapters 12 – 15: **(1)** Rev 12:1–17; **(2)** Rev 13:1–10; **(3)** Rev 13:11–18 **(4)** Rev. 14:1-5; **(5)** Rev 14:6 – 13; **(6)** Rev 14:14-20; **(7)** Rev 15:2-4.

2. The woman represents the people of God, Israel, Mary (mother of Jesus) and the Church all rolled into one. The symbols of the sun, moon and stars for Israel are found in Gen. 37:9.
3. The Dragon is Satan. What characteristics are represented by the heads, horns and crowns? What are the deceptions that Satan is trying to portray with these symbols? Reflect on Gen. 3:15 and the role that this woman (the church) plays in the battle. How is the church protected? (vs. 13 – 17)
4. Who is the child? Compare Rev. 12:5 to Psalm 2 and particularly vs. 9.
5. How are Satan's plans foiled in regards to this child? Satan is described in verses 10 – 12 as 1) an Accuser, 2) a Deceiver and 3) a Killer. What are the antidotes to these evils achieved in Christ?
6. In this account, the battle for heaven is fought on earth. Christ is pitted against Satan and Satan is the loser. Notice how many times Satan is “hurled down”.

So the big question we all face is, “Why are things still so bad, when Christ won the battle through the cross and Satan has been flung down in defeat?”

There is no easy answer, except that the time is still not right. God has Satan well in hand and for a limited amount of time, Satan has a certain amount of liberty to continue his games of deception and he is angry because he knows his time is short. The faithful as represented by the woman know a certain amount of protection from Satan's schemes and efforts. Even the earth participates in their protection. In Chapter 13 we will now meet the Counterfeit Trinity for Satan shall employ two helpers in his battle to overcome the world, Leviathan and Behemoth.

Read Chapter 13

Political satire is often represented in the form of cartoons and repeated images begin to take on special significance for regular readers. During the cold war, most people knew what you were talking about when reference was made to Uncle Sam and the Red Bear. The United States and the USSR were commonly known by these symbols. Some Old Testament images also had political meanings for the contemporaries of that culture. If you read Daniel 7, you will find reference to the same images John has in mind in Revelation 13. Also reference Job 40:15 and 41:1. Leviathan and Behemoth came to represent the evil that sought to destroy God's creation and his goodness.

The second member of the evil trinity is the beast of the sea. At the time it may have represented Rome. In Daniel, it represented Assyria, Egypt or Babylon. For us the beast of the sea represents **any worldly power** that undermines the authority of God in this world. Its ways are not the Way of the Lamb: not the way of sacrifice, but manipulative power; not the way of servant hood, but dominance and control; not the way of love, but the path to conquest.

1. What are some of the organizations today that oppose the rule of God? How does Satan use political power to undermine God's authority and attack the church?
2. The fatal wound signifies the resilience of these political systems. Whenever one system fails, another one will take its place. When Rome fell, another Power took over, perhaps worse than the Roman Empire. As Communism weakens, Nationalism and ethnic cleansing is taking over. Can you think of other examples where one evil has replaced another?
3. Consider the power of consumerism. How is this system contrary to The Way of the Lamb? How has Satan used this system captivate the world and even infiltrate the church? What about Nationalism? How has Satan benefited from this system?
4. It is important that Christians learn to be suspicious of human institutions and always evaluate their practices. We must take our allegiances lightly for ultimately we are faithful to God and God alone. Consider I Sam. 8: 4 – 21. Why did God not want Israel to have a king? How has this prediction continued to be true today regarding political systems?

The Beast of the Earth is the third member of the counterfeit trinity and this beast must certainly cause the Church to sit up and take note. For this beast that has formed allegiance with Satan is **Religion**. Just as political systems can be corrupted, so can religious systems as they too are human institutions. No political system can exist without an ideology behind it. Religion is the ideology – the belief system that breaths life (vs 15) into the political system. The job of the third beast is to win the minds and hearts of people toward worldly powers and away from the Triune God. Satan gives it artificial signs and wonders to sway the people toward the beast. (vs 13, 14)

1. In what ways has religion been used to support political agendas?
2. What ideologies have distracted people away from God and toward worldly or political powers?
3. The anti-Christ has been identified as bearing the numbers 666. Often it has been thought of as a specific person whose name can be discovered by manipulating numbers through various means. In keeping with the symbolism of Revelation, it is preferable to consider that if 777 would represent complete perfection (three sevens), then 666 represents complete imperfection (one less than perfect). Therefore, *the anti-Christ is more accurately interpreted as any religion or ideology that detracts from the truth of Christ and the Way of the Lamb.*
4. The seal of the beast is not a literal stamp on the forehead, just as the seal of Christ is not a literal mark, but rather the sealing of the Holy Spirit (see page 10, #3 above). To be sealed is to bear the character of the master. Those sealed by the Lamb bear the mark – the character of the lamb. Those marked by the beast are those who embrace the ideology of the beast. *The forehead represents ideology and the hand represents the working out of that ideology in practice.*
5. This marking is connected to commerce and the ability to buy or sell (vs. 16) for most of our ideologies have to do with purchase power. Can you imagine how difficult it would be for Christians if we refused to have anything to do with the stock market or mutual funds because its principles go directly against the teachings of Jesus?!? Discuss the ways in which North American Christians are held in bondage to systems that are in conflict with God's ways. Do we settle with rather than oppose culture because "that is just the way things are. . ."?
6. What are some historical connections between the Church and the State? What will it cost Christians to truly stand against the beasts of politics and religion in the true name of Christ?
7. False religion always falls short of God's Glory by 1) its compromise, 2) its buying into power, rather than rejecting it and 3) its false worship. When religion loses its way, it worships power.

Quote from Darrell Johnson, *Discipleship on the Edge* page 238.

*"John is telling us that **the** issue for the rest of the journey is worship – Who will I worship? Who will I adore? Who will get my attention? Who will have my undivided allegiance?"*

*The profound religious insight that lies behind these kaleidoscopic pictures in chapter 13 is that men and women are so constituted to worship some absolute power, and if they do not worship the true and real Power behind the universe, they will construct a god for themselves and give allegiance to that. In the last analysis, **it is always a choice between the power that operates through inflicting suffering, that is, the power of the beast, and the power that operates through accepting suffering, namely, the power of the Lamb.** (Metzger, Breeding the Code, 77)*

Lesson 8: Heaven, Hell and The Wrath of God

I will be straight forward with you. I do not like the idea of Hell. I am uncomfortable talking about the wrath of God. I much prefer the sunny side of God – his unconditional love and endless faithfulness and especially his compassionate grace. So these next few chapters of Revelation are a struggle for me. But they are Scripture, and so wrestle I shall with the whole character of God.

Darrell Johnson says the Book of Revelation is a re-evaluation of our Christian journey. *“Revelation should cause us to seriously re-evaluate how we understand the flow of history; of how we understand what is going on in the world and in our lives; and how we understand the place of Jesus in the universe. The document was written to cause a radical re-evaluation of power, of suffering, of the consequences of every day decision-making.”* (pg. 253)

Read Chapter 14

1. 12 x 12 x 1,000. Can you now decipher the symbolism of that number 144,000 and what it represents? What does it mean to bear the mark of the Lamb?
2. “Those who did not defile themselves with women for they kept themselves pure”. This phrase does not mean that only celibate males get to heaven, but refers figuratively to those who have not defiled themselves with the Harlot of Babylon whom we are about to meet. It is those who have remained faithful to Christ.
3. Summarize the “eternal gospel” using John 3:16, Romans 5:8, I Tim 1:15, Rev. 1:5. Read John 12: 23 – 31. What is the significance of “The hour has come”? How is the news of the three angels (messengers) good news?
4. The angels reveal that we all have choices to make on a daily basis and that there are consequences to those choices. These are not arbitrary punishments applied to those who chose to differ, but rather the consequences of choosing certain paths. Worshipping the ways of the evil trinity will not lead to peace – they simply won’t end there. It is a path of slavery and torment where there is no rest. The Good News is there is always a choice! And we will see that God continues to provide opportunity for all people to choose HIM!
5. What is your understanding of Hell? Do you take the images of burning sulfur literally or do they create a picture of understanding? What does hell mean to you?
6. Verses 14 – 20 are difficult to understand and I did not find Darrel Johnson’s interpretation fully satisfying. It appears that Jesus, the one “like a son of man” is involved with reaping the faithful from the earth, while two angels are responsible for the harvest of destruction. Johnson points out that the image of harvest is always a salvation image in Scripture rather than destruction. There is confusion regarding the image of a sickle being used to harvest the grapes as that is not the way grapes are harvested. The image of grapes and vines usually represents Israel. What is being communicated here? Johnson believes that Christ is the vine that is placed in the winepress of God’s wrath and that it is his blood that flows to cover the sins of the world. Therefore the harvest image continues to be an image of salvation. I will leave this for you to come to your own understandings and refer you to Darrell’s book or other commentaries.

* 1600 Stadia: This is the traditional length of Palestine from Tyre to Egypt. Also 4x4x10x10 is symbolic of all of creation – enough blood to cover the sins of the world.

Read Chapter 15: 1 - 4

1. The image of the lamb continues to persist, even through to the victory. Jesus wins by being a lamb, not by being a conqueror or warrior or king. Rev. 14: 1 – it is the Lamb who stands on Zion – the symbolic reference to the place of the King of all nations. In Rev. 15: 3, it is the song of the Lamb that is sung by those who have gained victory of the beast. This is so vital to understanding the book of Revelation. Darrell Johnson identifies seven distinguishing marks of the Lamb's people from Rev. 14: 1 – 5 and Rev. 15: 1 - 4. Discuss what these seven features mean to you as a believer:
 - a. Believers are “purchased” – they are not their own any longer. Christ claims not only ownership of them, but also a claim on their destiny.
 - b. They are “first fruits to God and to the lamb” – they yield to God as a living sacrifice, knowing everything belongs to God.
 - c. They are “engaged to Christ” and will remain faithful.
 - d. They are blameless. Not that believers are perfect but “no lie was found in their mouth.” They seek truth.
 - e. They follow the Way of the Lamb and strive to be like the Lamb. It is not “their way”, it is always “the Lamb's way”.
 - f. They win the victory over the beast, even through death and suffering.
 - g. They are known by the songs they sing! Their songs are “saturated with Scripture and radically God-oriented”. (Johnson, pg. 277)

Read Chapter 15: 5 – 16:21

The wrath of God is symbolized in the seven bowls of wrath that are poured out upon the earth. This is the completion of judgment and a sobering passage to read. Johnson reminds us that we encounter the wrath of God in every book of the Bible. We cannot dismiss this aspect of God's character, as much as we might like to! However, wrath is not the fitful, unpredictable anger that humans experience. Leon Morris defines it as “God's strong and settled opposition to all that is evil which arises out of God's very nature. God's wrath is a burning zeal for the right coupled with a perfect hatred for everything that is evil.” (Johnson, pg. 284).

As we continue, it is important to remind ourselves that these pictures are not a literal event – where actual angels will pour out bowls of awful stuff. The images are much richer with meaning and significance if we look beyond the surface and into the details.

1. Tabernacle of Testimony – this represents the place that housed the tablet of the 10 commandments. God's code has been broken and the consequences are a natural result of going against the path we were created to follow. The Tabernacle also represents the Holy presence of God. The bowls are the response of holiness to evil.
2. The Seven Angels are dressed in gleaming white linen with golden sashes around their chest to depict holiness. Wrath is a righteous outpouring not an angry vengeful response.
3. The Seven Bowls follow the same sequence of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. We are looking at the same events from a different perspective. The seven seals show the perspective of the suffering church. The seven trumpets offer the perspective of the world and its response to the call to repent. The seven bowls now reveal God's perspective of earth from His holy throne.

4. With each series of seven, the devastation increases. With the seven seals, one fourth is destroyed – and so it serves as a warning. With the seven trumpets, one third of everything is destroyed – again as warning and a call to repent. With the seven bowls, the destruction is total. There are no more warnings. Those who reject the Way of the Lamb are consequentially followers of The Destroyer and by that choice will face destruction.
5. The bowls of destruction are not aimed at humanity as a whole, but at the beast and those who follow the beast. The cycle is the same as the seals and the trumpets: The first bowl of destruction affects the earth, the second - the sea, the third affects the waters supplies (rivers), the fourth attacks the sun, the fifth bowl is aimed at the pit of evil and the sixth bowl unleashes the enemies across the River Euphrates. The Romans feared those who lived east of the Euphrates. There was a myth that caused great anxiety which claimed that Emperor Nero had not really died but was living east of the Euphrates and recruiting the fierce Parthian soldiers. He might soon march on Rome and create havoc.
6. Armageddon: In Hebrew, “Har-Meggido” or Mountain of Meggido which is located 60 miles north of Jerusalem and was the place of battle between King Josiah and King Neco of Egypt. Judah lost that battle and it led to their eventual captivity in Babylon. Therefore, this “Battle of Har Meggido” is the Great Reversal, for this time the Lion of Judah will win the war.
7. Frogs come out of the mouths of the “evil trinity”. Frogs are pictures of evil spirits which smooth talk the kings into gathering for war.
8. The seventh bowl is the final devastation. The seventh seal was the beginning of the seven trumpets. The seventh trumpet was the beginning of the seven bowls. The first two were never completed, but finally we get to the seventh symbol of judgment and it goes into the air to finish “The Prince of the Air” and we finally hear those words, “It is done!” which echoes Christ’s own words upon the cross, “It is finished.”

Darrell Johnson points out five truths about judgment:

1. Judgment is horrible.
2. Judgment is chosen by actions and therefore deserved
3. Judgment only comes after the opportunity for repentance.
4. Judgment fits the crime
5. Judgment is just.

In closing, discuss the character of the Triune God as a God of love, a God of holiness, a God of mercy, a God of compassion along with his character as a God of judgment and wrath. How do you reconcile all the aspects of God into one who is righteous altogether? How is judgment consistent with love?

Lesson 9: The Seven Marks of Babylon

Throughout history of civilization there have always been countries that symbolize evil. Babel, Ninevah, Tyre, Babylon, Persia, China, Russia, North Korea have all held this title in their history. George W. Bush has identified the “axis of evil” in our own time. In the book of Revelation we are not to identify any one country as “evil”, but to realize that all countries have elements of “Babylon” within them. These are superpowers that work to manipulate and control through economy, politics and religion. These are the ones that sleep with the Harlot of Babylon.

Read Chapter 17 and 18

1. There are several contrasts set up within Revelation.
 - a. The Lamb is contrasted with the Beast
 - b. The Holy Trinity is contrasted with the Evil Trinity
 - c. The mother of Jesus is contrasted against the Mother of Harlots
 - d. The Bride of Christ is contrasted against the Harlot of Babylon
 - e. The City of Jerusalem is contrasted with The City of Babylon.

The question is always before the hearer of the Revelation: Which will you choose? Which will you follow? Which city will be your city – which God, your God!

Compare the two cities in the following texts:

Rev. 17:1 with Rev. 21:9

Rev. 17:3 with Rev. 21:10

Rev. 19:10 with Rev. 22:8

2. The prostitute (symbol of unfaithfulness) sits on the waters (symbol of chaos). She woos the kings (the powerful) away from the Lamb. She is drunk on the blood of the martyrs – all those who have died because they were faithful to Christ.
3. “. . . Who once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss . . .” This isn’t easy to explain, but it seems to be a counterfeit resurrection. This resurrection will not lead to victory, but rather to defeat. It is possible that this is a code for the readers to recognize a specific enemy. The seven hills is a definite reference to the Seven Hills of Rome and this passage was to encourage the believers that the time of Rome’s rule is limited. However, the fall of Rome would not be the end of struggle for the Christian church. New powers replace old ones and as long as there is resistance to the rule of Christ, oppression will continue.
4. Verses 15 – 18 reveal the fact that evil eventually implodes upon itself. Forces bent upon destruction eventually destroy themselves. They cannot prevail. The reference to “one hour” means that the rule will not be long and the collapse will be quick. The Roman Empire fell in one week. Any city or nation is a Babylon if it carries these seven marks or character traits: What evidence do you see in Canada of these traits?
 - a. God is always left out of all decisions.
 - b. Sensuality is foremost.
 - c. Injustice is rampant
 - d. Goods and Products (GNP) are worshipped.
 - e. Violence is prevalent
 - f. Governance is deceptive and holds to counterfeit Values
 - g. Idolatry of self

It is a challenge to be a Christian while living in the “city” – the City of Babylon. Yet we all do. We all live within a society whose primary values oppose the Way of the Lamb.

1. How do you stay faithful to the Lamb as you live in the “city”? What areas do you find the greatest struggle?

In Chapters 17 and 18, we see the final destruction of the earthly powers that have opposed the reign of Christ. The destruction is complete and finally, it will rise no more. The end will be quick – in one hour her doom has come! It is important to note that there never is the Battle of Armageddon. The battle is over before it begins because evil destroys itself. As we will see in Chapter 19: 11 – 21 all Jesus has to do is show up and the battle is over. The horrors of destruction never come from heaven – they are a product of evil itself.

Read Chapter 19: 1 – 10

This is a beautiful passage of Scripture and is so rich with meaning once you understand the ritual of betrothal that was practiced in the days of Jesus. I will quote extensively from Darrell Johnson’s book, pages 311 – 312.

There were three steps in getting married: there was engagement, or more technically, betrothal; preparation for the wedding; and the wedding supper itself.

It began with the betrothal ceremony. The prospective groom would leave his father’s house and travel, accompanied by his best man, to the prospective bride’s house. There the groom would finalize arrangements with the bride’s father, in particular, settling on the “purchase price”. (In that day, a woman was “bought with a price.”) As soon as the groom paid the purchase price, the marriage technically went into effect. The man and woman were legally husband and wife, although they would not live together for some time. She was declared to be “consecrated” to the groom – “set apart” exclusively for him. A new covenant was established between them, sealed by drinking a cup of wine, over which a betrothal benediction was pronounced: “This cup is a new covenant.”

Then the groom would leave the bride’s house and return to his father’s house. He would be away from her for roughly twelve months. During the period of separation, the groom would prepare a room for the bride in his father’s house. And during the separation period, the bride would prepare herself for the wedding.

Now, although they did not see each other during this time, and although they did not have sexual intercourse, they were legally and spiritually bound to each other. “So binding was the betrothal agreement, this covenant, that if the man died during the betrothal period, the woman was considered a widow. To break the betrothal agreement was the same as divorce.”

At the end of the betrothal period, the bridegroom, dressed in festive attire, and accompanied by his best man and friends, would make his way back to the bride’s house. Although everyone had a rough idea of when the groom would come, they did not know the exact day or hour. Usually, to add the element of surprise, he would arrive around midnight. His arrival would be preceded by the shout, “Here is the bridegroom! Come out. Come out to meet him.” Then with great joy, the bride, veiled and accompanied by her maidens, who were carrying lamps, would come out to join the groom and his attendants. Then the wedding feast would begin!

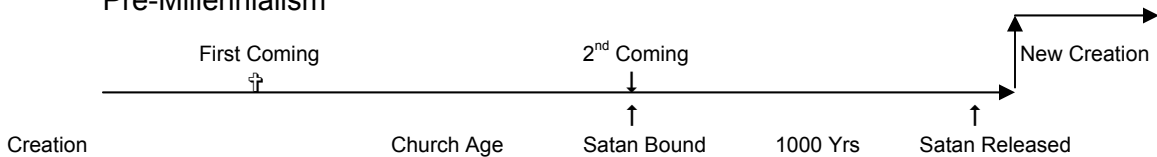
Discuss together the many images Jesus used to describe his relationship to us found in the betrothal ritual. What does it mean for us to remain faithful as the betrothed of Christ until he returns?

Lesson 10: The Millennium and the New Jerusalem

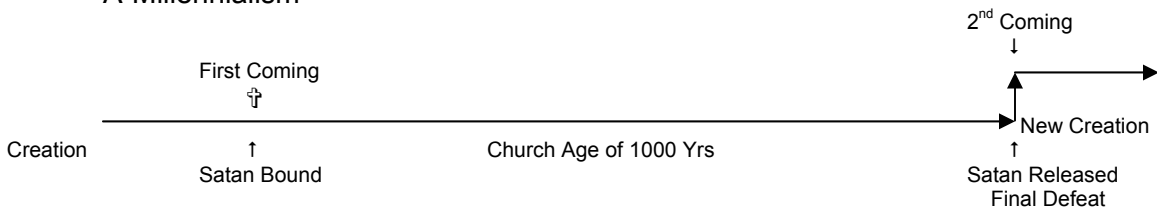
Read Chapter 20

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in depth the various theories of the millennium. In brief, **pre-millennialists** believe that Jesus will return before the Thousand years of reign which is described in Chapter 20. **A-millennialist** stress that Jesus is reigning right now and the thousand years is a symbol of the Church age and **post-millennialists** argue that Jesus comes again after the millennium.

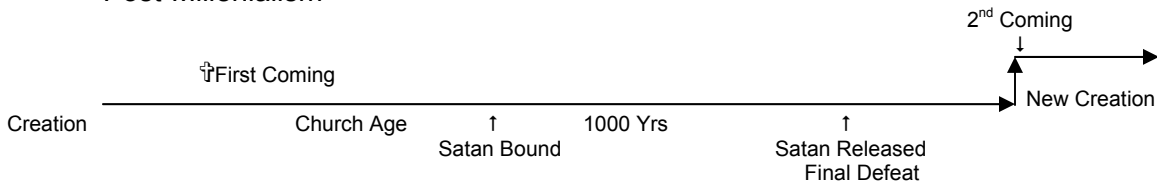
Pre-Millennialism



A-Millennialism



Post-Millennialism



It is not my place to discern which view is “more right” than the other. Here are some thoughts to keep in mind:

1. If we are consistent with our interpretation of symbols and numbers, then 1000 years is not a statistic, but a symbol of an extensive period of time. 10 is symbolic of completeness. $10 \times 10 \times 10$ – three is the work of the triune God and so we see that this time is a perfectly complete amount of time. It is God’s time.
2. Jesus is already King – it isn’t a future anticipation but a present reality. However, he reigns as a Lamb – not by force, but by sacrifice and love.
3. The church is not helpless against the forces of evil. We have been equipped with everything we need to overcome. Christ is all we need!
4. The gospel is powerful enough to change things even now. The details of the final act are not clear, but God is working and will continue to work among us until the time He deems is right.
5. The Scriptures are not definitive on the specifics regarding the end. Some speak of a “rapture”, some of seven years of tribulation but the

texts referring to these events can be taken several different ways. Different interpretations need not divide the church for none of it is within the control of the church. It is all God's timing. We must simply remain faithful to our Betrothed until He comes to claim us for the wedding feast!

One Interpretation: *Darrell Johnson believes that Jesus began his reign on earth at the time of Incarnation. He won the battle against Satan through the temptations in the desert and from that point on proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand. Satan was sent to the Abyss, but his two henchmen, the Beast of Politics and the Beast of Religion continue to do his bidding on earth, creating havoc. The church can overcome these beasts by remaining faithful to the Way of the Lamb. We must continue to bear witness to the Lamb and give people every opportunity to reject the beasts and their leaders. When the time is right, Satan will be loosed from the Abyss giving one last effort to destroy the faithful, but Jesus will just "show up" and Satan will meet the final defeat and be cast into the lake of fire.*

Verses 11 – 15 Judgment of the Dead

1. The question of faith verses work cannot help but come up at this point. What is this judgment all about? Is it about salvation? Do our deeds affect the outcome of our destiny? What does this passage mean to you?
2. Read James 2: 14 – 26 and discuss this passage along with the passage in Revelation. Does this bring any insight into what Jesus is looking for at the Day of Judgment?
3. What is the first death and what is the second death? Also read Rev. 21:8 in reference to this. Hades is not a synonym for hell, but rather simply a place where the dead go – neither good nor bad. It is the place of 'sleep' before the call to judgment. It is difficult to understand time lines when we speak of death. Do our souls literally sleep before they are resurrected into the presence of Christ? What did Jesus mean when he said to the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in paradise"? What is paradise? I find it most helpful to consider linear time as an earthly concept and that death releases us from "Time". So there is no today or tomorrow – there is only a "now".

Read Chapters 21 and 22 – The New Jerusalem.

1. What will there NOT be in the New Jerusalem?
2. What will there BE?
3. What do the images presented here of the New Jerusalem mean to you? What is it to which you look forward?
4. Why is no temple needed? Similarly, why no sun, moon or stars?
5. How are the consequences of sin from the Garden of Eden now reversed?
6. Read again 22:17. How can we as followers of the Lamb continue to proclaim this welcoming message to our neighbors and friends and enemies?
7. What is your belief, concept or understanding of the Second Coming of Christ?

Thank you for going through this study with me and I pray that I have been faithful to the text and its meaning – that I have not added or taken away from its meaning. Also, I trust that I have been fair to Darrell Johnson's writings and his teachings.

Faye Reynolds on behalf of Women in Focus of the BUWC