

THROUGH THE BIBLE REVELATION 14-16

If you cut chapters 11-14 out of Revelation it would be like watching a football game without a program.

You'd enjoy the *action* - but you couldn't identify the *players*. You'd know the *what*, but not the *who!*

These chapters give us “a roster of the end times.”

The Rebel forces include the dragon - the beast - his accomplice (*the false prophet*) - their headquarters, the city of Babylon - and a false religious system John refers to as “the great whore” (*not a flattering term*).

Whereas God's troops - call them “His Witnesses.” They include 144,000 Jews - 2 Jerusalem prophets - 3 angelic messengers - One like the Son of Man Who's carrying a sharp sickle - and the armies of heaven.

If you recall, Chapter 13 focused on the bad guys - particularly *the Beast*. And like any good roster it even gave us his number... 666... Whereas, chapter 14 lists God's team... That's what we'll investigate tonight...

And it's only fitting that the first person listed on God's team is *our best player, our captain, our coach, our general manager, our team owner, our everything all rolled into one*. John begins chapter 14, “Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion...”

John sees Jesus! After all, John's vision - this book - is [the Revelation of Jesus Christ](#)... not the revelation of the lamps, or the Beast, or the whore, or the seals, or 666. All too often we get caught up in peripherals and we miss Jesus. This book is about the glory of Jesus.

Jesus is no longer the humble Galilean preacher who walked dusty trails in first century Israel. He is now ["King of kings and Lord of lords."](#) He's been glorified and exalted, and today all creation is under His feet.

Jesus is the Lamb that roars like a Lion, and He is the Lion that bears the scars of a sacrificial lamb.

Here John sees the Lamb, but notice *His posture* and *His place*... He's ["standing on Mount Zion."](#)

That Jesus is ["standing"](#) tells us a lot. In Hebrews 1:13 we're told what the Father God says to His Son Jesus, ["Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool..."](#) Well, for nearly 2000 years now that's where Jesus has been - [sitting at God's right hand](#).

But here He ["stands to His feet!"](#) He stretches his legs and flexes His muscles. Jesus is finally ready to stride, and ride, and make war with this wicked world.

And notice *where* Jesus stands? He's ["on Mount Zion."](#) Mount Zion is one of several hills that make up the city of Jerusalem. It's where David built his capital.

Over time ["Zion"](#) became the name for the entire city.

Here John sees the Lamb standing in Jerusalem. He's standing in the place of kings. His intent is to rule.

And it's no accident He has returned to the scene of the crime. Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. And this is God's issue with our rebel planet. The world mocks, scoffs, neglects, and despises *the cross*. *Jesus Christ bled for us, why aren't we willing to be led by Him?*

Don't get upset when this chapter speaks of Hell, and blood, and judgment. *What would you think if you sacrificed your son for me, and then I spit in His face?*

God is just and righteous in all He does.

Revelation 14:1 is such a powerful picture... It needs to shape how we see Jesus today... One day soon, the Lamb will stand where He once was slaughtered.

He'll be glorified where He was crucified.

He'll be worshipped where He was hated.

He'll rule from a throne where He hung on a tree. Where Jesus showed mercy, He'll bring about justice.

When you think of the Jesus in your future - the Jesus everyman will meet, and face, and bow before...

Don't think of Mary's infant, or Jesus washing His disciples feet, or Jesus silent before His accusers...

Think of Jesus in all His regal glory, standing on Mount Zion, ready to put His foot down in judgment.

Yet, before this judgment, one last call to repent goes out. Chapter 14 is **“the last chance chapter.”**

It's a “last call” for salvation... Today, the Church preaches the Gospel, but in the last days God has other messengers. Verse 1, **“with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.”** We met them in chapter 7.

They were Jews - 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. And they're marked with the Father's name.

When I was 10 years old I went to football camp, and mom wrote my name in my underwear. You can share soap, T-shirts, even toothbrushes, *but not underwear.*

In the cabin chaos you needed to identify who's was who's - so she wrote my name in the waste band.

And that's what God does in the last days. It'll be crazy days in cabin Earth, so God writes His name on these 144,000 followers. God's enemies know that they belong to God. It's protection. This makes them indestructible witnesses - *super sharers of the Gospel.*

Remember at the end of chapter 13, folks who worship the beast have their allegiance sealed with a mark in their right hand or forehead. The number 666.

Here's the godly antithesis. His witnesses are dearer to God, than Satan's followers are to him, so their sealed not with a number - *but with God's holy name.*

Verse 2, “**And I heard a voice from heaven...**” The scene now shifts from Mount Zion back to heaven.

John hears a voice “**like the voice of many waters (or a roaring waterfall), and like the voice of loud thunder (the boom of a thunderclap)**”. Recall, in chapter 1 this is how John described the voice of Jesus. He speaks with authority. His voice drowns out all other opinions.

“**And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.**” The Lamb and 144,000 witnesses are standing on Mount Zion... *So who is this singing in heaven?*

These are the folks who believed in Jesus during the Great Tribulation and are martyred for their faith. For only the 144,000 can relate to what they’ve endured.

This is the same group seen in Chapter 6, asking, “**How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?**”

But now they’re no longer asking - they’re singing. The sought-after judgment is about to be dispensed.

The vast majority of heaven’s population - the Church - was spared the Great Tribulation. That’s why only the 144,000 Jewish witnesses can sing this song.

And John says of the 144,000, “**These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins.**”

Apparently, these witnesses are men on a mission. They don't have time for marriage, or family - and its concerns. *How could you celebrate an anniversary or coach Little League as God readies to judge the world?*

This is God's *last call*... The eternal destiny of men hang in the balance. God's witnesses will need to be single-minded. They're pledged to preach, not date!

Again, this is why the 144,000 - not the Church - are the only souls who know the song of the Tribulation believers. This is *a different day - different conditions*...

John adds, **"These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes."** Wow! Surely, the 144,000 live at a different time and minister under different conditions - but this is something that should be true of us all!

We need to follow the Lamb wherever He goes!

I like this poster... Jesus tells the guy, **"No I'm not talking about Twitter, I literally want you to follow Me."**

Verse 4, **"These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb."** These 144,000 Jewish witnesses were saved at the beginning of God's last call. They were the first fruits of this final harvest. Now they're leading others to salvation...

"And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God." These men are true blue - *impeccable witnesses in perilous times*.

It's like in baseball - your best pitcher is your closer. Here God raises up an army of closers for a *last call*.

But that's not *all*. That's not God's only method of end times' broadcasting... As the clock winds down - and time runs out - the Lamb pulls out all the stops...

Verse 6, "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people - saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

And this should speak volumes to you and me.

One day God will use angels to proclaim the good news. Angels are bold, obedient, accurate, powerful.

I'll bet angels are never too scared or too busy to share their faith. They're far more efficient than today's best evangelists. Yet for now God chooses to use us.

Jesus loves you, and wants you to share in the joy of seeing other people come to know Him. *God sees value in using folks saved by grace to share His grace.*

*This is our **one and only** advantage over the angels.*

Yet once the Church goes up, God will use angels.

Like the airplane that pulls the banners over Turner Field during a Braves game - the angel in verse 6 flies through the heavens preaching the everlasting gospel.

The Lamb's last call goes out through the 144,000 Jews, and the two witnesses, and now three angels...

Verse 8, “And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” As Jerusalem will be the headquarters of God’s Kingdom on Earth, Babylon has always been Satan’s headquarters. *The Bible is a tale of two cities.*

Here this second angel proclaims the crumbling of Satan’s empire... *The devil’s days are numbered.*

Verse 9, “Then a third angel followed them...” The first angel shared God’s salvation. The second, Satan’s devastation. A third warns of the sinner’s destination...

This angel is “saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.”

Usually, God tempers His judgments with mercy, but not here. People who resisted the witness of the Church, *and now God’s last call*, are sentenced to the “full strength” - 100 proof - undiluted wrath of God.

And apparently the final straw is when they receive the mark of the Beast in their forehead or in their hand.

Whether it’s a barcode, or microchip, or vein scan, or infrared tattoo, or a technology not yet invented - folks will know this is more than just convenient commerce.

It’s paid for by a pledge to the Beast.

Rather than trust Jesus Christ, they’ve put their faith in “Anti-Christ.” It’s the final rejection of God’s mercy.

This third angel warns... “He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Up until now John’s vision has shown us *the glories of Heaven* and *God’s judgments on Earth* - but now John gets a glimpse of *the torments of Hell*...

Yet Hell isn’t a message we hear a lot about today. Some churches downplay the idea of a literal Hell.

AW Tozer once wrote, “The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consequences of millions.” The third angel tries to convince mankind that Hell is real!

He tells us the inhabitants of Hell are “*tormented with fire and brimstone...*” “*The smoke of their torment ascends forever...*” “*They have no rest day or night...*”

I’m not sure where the Jews got their information, but the Jewish Talmud reads, “*The fire of Hell is sixty times as hot as the fire on earth.*” Here we’re told people in Hell are tormented *by fire, by hot coals, by stifling smoke.*

In verse 10 the Greek word translated “*brimstone*” refers to sulphur flashes. Think of the flash-pots at a rock concert. You’re bombarded with mini-explosions.

Hell is like living in the mouth of an erupting volcano.

The heat is unbearable. It’s flames blister and burn. Layers of soot cause acute suffocation. Everybody in hell will grope for air like the chronic asthma sufferer!

And notice its punishment is *eternal*. *“The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever...”* Is it any wonder Hell’s residents *“have no rest day or night...”*

Imagine, *“no rest...”* Hell is like constant traffic... Or a hemorrhoid attack in a world without Preparation H.. Or an argument with your spouse that never, ever ends...

And there’s no pills to pop in Hell. Everybody is stressed, and depressed. It’s *“no rest day or night!”*

Everyone in hell will be plagued by remorse. It’s said, *“One of the horrors of hell is the undying memory of a misspent life...”* And Hell is void of any hope. Your status will never change. In Dante’s *“Inferno,”* a sign over Hell reads, *“He who enters abandons all hope.”*

And the worst of Hell’s torments is that it all occurs, *and I quote, “in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb...”* I interpret that to mean while folks agonize in hell they’re still aware of what’s happening in heaven.

It’s like a one-way glass. Residents of Hell see into Heaven, but Heaven doesn’t see into Hell. It’s bad enough to be tormented forever, but as it happens you are constantly gawking at pleasures you’ll never enjoy.

This third angel warns the world of a literal Hell. He along with the Lamb doesn’t want anyone to go there...

Verse 12, *“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says*

the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." There is no rest for those in Hell, but those who put their faith in Jesus will rest with the Lord forever.

Heaven is like a quiet afternoon in the hammock... with your phone on silent - *it's rest...* for all eternity.

This is why we need to get busy right now - *telling folks of Jesus, shining our light...* We'll have all eternity to rest, but only a few short hours left to do God's will.

I'm sure most of us believe in a literal hell... *If we do how can we be nonchalant about people going there?*

Verse 14, "Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle." Here's King Jesus... carrying a swing blade.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Verse 16, "So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

This is the final harvest. Just before the last battle, one final surge of souls will give their lives to Jesus.

In Matthew 13 Jesus told [the parable of the wheat and tares](#). Both grow up side by side. Their separation doesn't occur until the harvest. And this is indicative of believ-

ers and unbelievers. Judgment doesn't come until the end of the age, when Jesus puts in His sickle.

Its first pass He raptures the wheat, the Church.

But His second thrust of the sickle is an act of judgment, "Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." Spiritually speaking sin is like fruit. Let it hang around, and it ripens for judgment.

This is what happens in verse 19, "So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." Grapes are crushed and squished in the winepress. They're often stomped. And in the Bible "*the great winepress*" is an idiom for God's judgment.

Verse 20, "And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs."

Notice, it's not wine that results from this pressing, it's blood. Jesus crushes the rebels who defy His rule.

Here John has an actual time and place in mind.

This is all leading to [the Battle of Armageddon](#). There the blood of evil men will fill up a valley 1600 furlongs, or 200 miles long. Blood will rise to the horse's bridle.

It's interesting, 200 miles is the approximate length of the Holy Land - from the Golan to the Dead Sea.

John foresees the day when the valleys of Israel and Jerusalem, will become a blood-stained battlefield.

With the close of Chapter 14 the warning is over, and judgment begins. Revelation 15-16 is about seven bowls of judgment that get poured out on planet Earth.

These aren't bowl games! *God don't play.* The Lamb goes bowling, and the rebels on Earth are the pins.

John begins, “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.”

Remember, there're 21 judgments mentioned in the Revelation... In chapter 6 *seven seals are broken.* In chapters 8-9 *seven trumpets blast.* Now in chapter 16 *seven bowls brimming with judgment are poured out...*

And these bowls hold the worst plagues yet!

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus said, “Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved...”

In other words, this judgment is so severe it can't last forever. It cripples the Earth to the point where it can no longer sustain life. These are the bowl judgments.

You could title Revelation 15-16, “When God's Gloves Come Off.” From this point onward God will no longer cushion His blows. He'll land a final flurry of combination punches. God is going for the knockout!

By chapter 15 God has a rebellious planet on the ropes. Seven bowls are what drop it to the canvas.

Verse 2, “**And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire...**” Hebrews 9:24 teaches us that the Temple on Earth was a small-scale model of God’s throne room in Heaven. And one of its features was a bronze laver - a bowl of water where priests tidied up.

Here in verse 2, John sees its heavenly prototype. “***I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire...***”

It’s a sea or body of water, but it’s motionless - it’s like glass... It has a fiery tint as if it’s stained with blood.

And he sees “**those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.**” In the earthly Temple, the priests washed in the laver. On Earth cleansing is needed. Today, we’re washed in the water of God’s Word.

But in Heaven we’re already clean. **We stand where once we washed.** Our lives testify to God’s promises.

Here, martyrs - who suffered for Christ’s sake in the Tribulation - stand as a testimony to God’s salvation.

John sees these people “***who have the victory over the beast...***” **But you say, “The Antichrist put them to death. How can you say they were victorious?”**

Realize that victory in the Christian life is sometimes won by *escaping* tribulation - but at other times by *enduring* tribulation! God gives the Church an escape, whereas these believers endure tremendous suffering.

Verse 3, and “They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying...”

You can check out the lyrics to Moses’ song in Exodus 15. Verses 3-4 provide *the lyrics of the Lamb*.

But before we look at the lyrics, I need to clear up some confusion about heaven’s music... Notice, these musicians are on the glassy sea with “*harps of God.*”

And I know what you’re thinking... “*No, please, not harps!*” The stereotype can’t be true... That we’ll sit around heaven all day listening to the strumming of boring harps. That’s torture, not heaven! *Don’t worry...*

According to the Vines Dictionary of NT Words, the Greek term “*kithara*” translated, “*harps*” - can also be rendered, “*guitar.*” Breath easy my friends!

The guys on the glassy sea are jamming with the Lamb on their electric guitars - their Les Pauls and their Stratocasters. *Jesus is the rock that doesn’t roll* - thus, there’s got to be a little rock-n-roll in heaven.

I will say this, everybody in heaven **is harping on Jesus!** He’s all heaven talks about. *And they have no idea why we are so silent!* Let’s join in their praise!

And here’s what they sing, “**Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.**”

God is about to pour out bowls of scalding judgment. Wicked men will blaspheme God. But Heaven's inhabitants will praise Him for those same judgments. His ways are "*just and true.*" He alone is holy.

It's the same response you see in a courtroom. The judge walks in, and *the guilty squirm*, while *the victim takes heart*. Here justice is about to be meted out...

Verse 5, "After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands." These angels are wearing priestly garb.

"Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever." These bowls are sloshing over with red-hot wrath. It's Judgment Day!

And notice the fireworks in heaven. "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."

Heaven chokes on the smoke of God's wrath.

In that excellent Bible commentary, "Chapter by Chapter," the author writes, "The temple in heaven is filled with smoke, as the earth below is about to be smoked." *I couldn't have said that any better myself.*

Chapter 16 is lights-out for this wicked world...

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”

I’ve read, if a lithium battery, planted under the skin, ever breaks - the lithium causes a vile sore. Here, these abscesses are somehow related to the mark that people accept in their right hand or in their forehead.

At one time the legions who worshipped the Beast were proud of this mark. Now their mark of allegiance has turned into a puss-u-us, cankerous, festering sore.

Another possibility, the *“foul and loathsome”* lesions could have something to do with nuclear radiation.

John Hersey in his book *“Hiroshima,”* paints a vivid picture of the survivors, *“Faces where wholly burned, eye-sockets were hollow, fluid from melted eyes ran down cheeks, mouths were mere swollen, pus-covered wounds.”* Like here, the victims broke out with running sores, and died slow, painful, torturous deaths.

Another possibility... these sores could be a mass outbreak of melanoma - skin cancer caused by an over-exposure to solar radiation. We’ll see that the fourth bowl gives power to the sun to scorch humanity.

Even SPF 100 sunblock won’t help!

Watch out! Another bowl is emptied in verse 3, *“Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature*

in the sea died.” This is Greenpeace’s worst nightmare! It makes the Gulf Coast oil spill look like a baby’s drool. It’s a ecological disaster of unparalleled proportion. All the Earth’s oceans are now poisoned.

Fish, seals, plankton die. The world launches a massive “*save the whales*” campaign, but to no avail. Waters that once teemed with life *die... No more sushi.*

In Revelation 8:8 “**something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.**” We discussed the possibility of the earth being impacted by a meteorite or a comet.

The mineral composition of an object from space would be high in iron. It could be that the iron interjected into the ocean turns the waters blood-red...

Of course, there’re other possibilities for this plague.

Red-tide is a phenomena caused by a saltwater parasite. It turns the ocean red and kills fish. Ironically, the organism has a nickname... “**the cell from hell.**”

The possible doomsday scenarios are endless. *How* it happens is conjecture. *That* it happens is certainty.

“Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.”

This is why these bowl judgments have to occur within a few days of Jesus’ return. Humans can live a maximum of ten days without water. If the bottled waters and coca-colas sustain us a few more weeks, then earth’s inhabitants will be able to survive maybe a month after the third angel pours out his bowl of wrath.

“And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” In the wake of this suffering we wonder how a loving God can exact such severity. Our tendency is to forget what this world did to deserve its punishment.

Yet God doesn't forget... This Christ-rejecting world has innocent blood on its hands. Since just 1980, 1.3 billion unborn, innocent children have been aborted.

That would be 16% of today's global population. For every five people you meet there's one person missing.

And abortion is just one cause of the blood on this world's hands... think of the wars, the genocide, the vice, and hatred... it all cries out for God's vengeance.

We might get squeamish in the face of judgment.

But not God. His judgments are *“just and true.”* *“You are righteous, O Lord...”* God doles out *“their just due.”*

And Heaven isn't finished defending God's righteous wrath. In verse 7 John writes, *“And I heard another (maybe an angel) from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”*

Don't make the mistake of seeing just one side of God's heart. Yes, He is kind and benevolent - merciful and gracious. But His mercy comes at a steep price.

God decreed that the wages of sin is death. This is the price of God's mercy... *someone had to die for us.*

And that someone is Jesus. God focused all that we deserved on Jesus... When God sees a child molester, a wife beater, a rapist, a serial killer, a pimp... He gets angry. Yet God stored up all His wrath for one strategic moment. At the cross He poured it out on His only Son.

The hammer intended for sinners fell on Jesus... so that God could treat us with mercy - not judgment.

Yet if you reject Jesus - if you act as if the price God paid is no big deal - you put yourself back under God's judgment... *But don't blame God. It's not His fault!*

As the angel from the altar cries out, *"Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

Verse 8, *"Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire."* Global warming will be a huge problem. And it's man-made. Our sin will bring on God's judgment.

Say a meteorite rips through the ozone and leaves a hole - the sun could turn into a blow torch and scorch the planet like a prairie fire. *God's wrath is heating up.*

Verse 9, *"And men were scorched with great heat..."* You'd think they'd repent, and cry to God for mercy...

Instead, “They blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.” God obviously has the power to stop the plagues, but people are in complete defiance.

Even in the face of judgment the world shakes its fist in God’s face and hurl insults at Him. How arrogant!

“Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast...” God is ordering precision strikes against deliberate targets. And this angel has the Beast in his scope! He’s commanded to take out his throne.

“And his kingdom became full of darkness...” It’s lights out for the Beast. Thick darkness engulfs the Earth. It’s so dark the sufferers can’t perceive beyond their blisters and sores. They flail about in their agony.

Verse 10, “They gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.” This seems unfathomable. *Why not repent? Give in. Why not tap out... and surrender?*

2 Thessalonians 2 tells us people at the time will believe “*a strong delusion.*” Not just “*a lie,*” but “*the lie*” - the age-old lie! Recall how Satan tempted Eve...

He convinced her God was trying to stunt her growth by withholding the forbidden fruit. He said *if you eat,* “*your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God...*”

Following Satan was the means to enlightenment.

And the world today is already being conditioned to believe that lie. Right now, Christianity is postured as the one repressive, intolerant religion - responsible for 2000 years of war, hatred, bigotry, and prejudice.

The Bible manipulates by guilt, represses freedom, and fosters hate. Only a Neanderthal takes it seriously.

Here's what's being said today, *"Biblical Christianity is holding society back. Shed its shackles and follow the god within!"* This lie will grow louder and louder.

Verse 12, *"Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared."* From this point on, the stage will be set for the final battle - we call it, *"the battle of Armageddon."*

It's a clash between the armies of this world and the army of Jesus Christ. And one of the major players in this battle to end all battles are *"the kings of the east."*

Daniel 11 is another prophecy that sees this same event. When the Antichrist invades Israel he'll be attacked by Syria from the north, and Egypt from the south, but to no avail. The only hindrance to the plans of the Beast is news of armies approaching from the East. Is this the Chinese? A confederacy of nations?

All we're told is how they reach the battlefield.

They march into the plain of Meggido through a dried up river bed. Traditionally, the Euphrates River is the boundary between east and west. It's 1800 miles long. In places it's two-thirds of a mile wide - thirty feet deep.

This great river bed is *the highway to Hell*. Here's the road the eastern armies will take to Armageddon.

In 1990 Turkey finished a dam whereby they can shut off the headwaters to the Euphrates. The Ataturk Dam may one day it may aid the kings of the east.

Verse 13, “**And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.**” This is gross... frog-like demons coming out of a person's mouth... *it makes you want to croak!*

“**For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.**” These demons deceive world leaders and coax the nations to the final showdown with God.

Jesus speaks in verse 15, “**Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.**”

“**And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.**” Or, “**Mountain of Megiddo.**”

Meggido is a city in northern Israel, on the southern boundary of the Valley of Jezreel. It's the site of numerous historical battles... from Deborah and Barak to Gideon, to Saul, to General Allenby in WW1.

Today, there's an Israeli Air Force base in the middle of the valley. Its fighter jets fly sorties to Syria and Iran.

When Napoleon Bonaparte saw the expansive plain of Megiddo he remarked, “All the armies of the world could maneuver for battle here.” One day they will.

The term “The Battle of Armageddon” is a misnomer.

Megiddo simply serves as the staging area for the armies of the world as they move against Jerusalem.

The final conflict is really “the Battle of Jerusalem.” And we’ll talk about it in two weeks - in Revelation 19.

Verse 17, “Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air...” Again, notice the target - “the air.”

Remember who Ephesians 2:2 calls “the prince of the power of the air?” It’s Satan. This is why he has such influence on music, media, airwaves, and wi-fi.

He spreads so much of his filth through the air.

Apparently, this seventh and final bowl judgment is aimed at Satan himself and his vast domain. God is going to defeat the devil at the pinnacle of his power.

“And a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” Or “It is finished.”

The words harkens back to the cross of Christ.

On the cross Jesus bought back the creation. *Here He takes possession.* With this final bowl, Jesus evicts the squatters and takes hold of what belongs to Him.

“And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men

were on the earth.” This quake blows up the richter scale! Finally, the big one! But its epicenter isn’t LA, the San Andreas fault - it’s the city of Jerusalem.

“Now the great city was divided into three parts...”

Today, Jerusalem is a divided city... East Jerusalem is Arab - West Jerusalem is Jewish. But you think Jerusalem is divide now, here God splits it in three...

And this earthquake not only impacts Israel. There’s a ripple effect... “And the cities of the nations fell.”

This geological event is enormous. It impacts cities all around the world. Imagine, New York, London, Rome, Beijing, Moscow, Tokyo - all these cities in ruin.

John mentions the impact of this strike on one city particularly. “And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” This is Satan’s headquarters. She’s made to gulp down a swig of God’s fierce wrath.

It’s interesting that all the ancient calendars operated on twelve 30 day months - a annual total of 360 days.

Yet today’s solar year is an asymmetrical 365.25 days. Something tipped the Earth’s axis? It caused a wobble? Geologists speculate that in Earth’s past we took a direct hit from a cosmic projectile, a meteor.

Something knocked the planet off its hinges. And if it’s happened before, then it can happen again...

Verse 20, “Then every island fled away...” The heat from the fourth bowl will melt the polar caps. Scientists say if that happened sea levels would rise 200 feet all across the globe. Today’s coastal cities will disappear.

“And the mountains were not found.” Expect tidal waves and tsunamis when the continental plates shift.

All the Earth’s topography is in for a radical face lift.

Verse 21, “And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent.” A talent was an ancient Hebrew measurement - the equivalent of one-hundred pounds. Think... 100 pound hailstones!

When my brother lived in Dallas, he complained about hail the size of golf balls denting his pick-up. But imagine hailstones the size of a beach-ball or bigger!

There’re all kinds of theories of what might cause such a phenomena - but again don’t miss the obvious!

Recall the OT penalty for blasphemy? It was *stoning!*

Here it’s heaven that’s throwing the rocks. This vile and wicked world has blasphemed God, and God is responding with a punishment that fits the crime.

Yet despite it all, verse 21, “Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.” People fail to get the point!

Rather than repent, they stiffen their necks, and dig in their heels - and continue in their die-hard rebellion.

The religion of the Antichrist is *“follow your heart”* - but make that mistake, and you'll go straight to Hell.

God's bowls aren't games. **God don't play!** Don't get bowled over. Repent! Turn to Jesus while you can!