



"DEAR CHURCH"

A SERIES ON THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"DEAR CHURCH", PART 11 STANDING IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

October 6, 2019

Pastor Randy Remington

BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

MAIN TEXT(S):

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?"

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

*From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed,
from the tribe of Reuben 12,000,
from the tribe of Gad 12,000,
from the tribe of Asher 12,000,
from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000,
from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,
from the tribe of Simeon 12,000,
from the tribe of Levi 12,000,
from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,
from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.*

*"There may be
no escape from the
just Wrath of the Lamb,
but there is always
refuge in the Lamb.
The God who loves us
made provision for
that very refuge."*

—Pastor Randy

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

"Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. (Rev. 6:1-8:5)

SUMMARY

In chapters 6-8 of Revelation, the book takes a turn. The focus shifts from the churches and from the Lamb of God to the judgement that is poured out on the earth. The Lamb begins to open the seals mentioned in chapter 5. As they're opened, things begin to happen.

To the original audience in the 1st century, these things would have brought them hope. They were in the midst of persecution and suffering of many kinds. The book of Revelation reminds us all that God is in control. He will judge evil and make all things right. He will protect those that serve him, people from every nation and tribe. Though the imagery in Revelation can be frightening, the ultimate message is that God is in control of all things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker's message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN

These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Have you ever experienced hope in the midst of a difficult situation? What happened?
2. What image or word first comes to your mind when you hear the word "prayer"?
3. What has been the most meaningful thing you have learned or been reminded of in this series on Revelation?
4. Last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it has an impact on your life in anyway?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions on the passage and observations about what's been read.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. In Revelation chapter 6, what pattern do you see when the first 4 seals are broken? How are the 5th and 6th seal different?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CONT.

2. In Revelation chapter 6, with the breaking of the 5th and 6th seals, two groups of people are mentioned. Who are the two groups and how do they respond to what's happening?
3. In Revelation chapter 7, what do the angels do? Why do they do this?
4. How many people are "sealed" in Revelation chapter 7? How many people does John see? Who are the people and what are they doing?
5. In Revelation chapter 8, what happens when the 8th seal is broken? How does humanity influence what happens after this seal is broken?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. The original audience of the book of Revelation was facing persecution and suffering similar to what is described in the breaking of the first four seals in Revelation 6. How do you think they viewed these verses? What similar things are happening in our world today? How should these verses impact how we view those things?
2. What reaction do you think the original audience of this book (who were being persecuted) had to the description of the breaking of the fifth and sixth seals? How might these verses have given them hope or taught them about God? How might people facing persecution today view these verses?
3. What do the actions of the angels at the beginning of Revelation 7 teach us about God's character? How have you seen something similar happen in our world (or in the past)?
4. What does Revelation 7 tell us about who will be in heaven? What will they be doing? Where will the people be from? How does this fact inspire or challenge our church?
5. What does Revelation 8 tell us about prayer? Do our prayers make a difference in the world? Why or why not?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application.

Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max

1. How do you view suffering in your own life? What does this passage confirm or teach you about suffering?
2. Do these passages make you afraid or give you hope? Why? Do they challenge your view of God? Why or why not?
3. How has God protected you or comforted you in the face of suffering? How has that impacted your trust in God? What have you learned about God's character?
4. How does Revelation 7 challenge your ideas of what church should look like?
5. How do you feel about prayer? How does Revelation 8 challenge or confirm your view of prayer?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.

Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. If you are personally going through a time of tribulation or suffering, what can you do this week to remind yourself of the hope and comfort you have because of God's love? How can your group pray for you this week?
2. If you are feeling fearful or challenged because of these passages, how can your group pray for you as you seek to trust God more fully?
3. Does this passage challenge your view of prayer or inspire you to take prayer more seriously? What can you do this week to improve your prayer life?

NOTE: On the following page (for most weeks) you will find a set of sermon notes created by Charissa Burns, an artist who calls B4 home. We include them purely for your enjoyment and encouragement, courtesy of Charissa. You can follow her on the 'Gram @charissaburnsstudio