

### Monday, December 30, 2019—Revelation 16-18

In the revelation John received, the Tabernacle of heaven opened (see 15:5) and God was pouring out His wrath on the earth (16:1). The God who was immensely patient, merciful, gracious, and compassionate was now fulfilling all His promises to bring judgment on the evil of the world. The angels declared what He was doing was true and just (16:7).

Despite the misery of the judgments, the people refused to repent (16:11). While the possibility was available, they did not take it. Instead, the dragon, beast, and false prophet assembled the rulers of the world at the valley of Megiddo to do battle against the Lord (16:14). Then, a mighty shout came from heaven and brought unprecedented natural disaster on the earth, making Babylon drink the cup of judgment for her sins (16:19).

One of the angels took John to see the great prostitute, Babylon, who made the people of the world drunk on her immorality and who had immoral relations with the rulers of the world (17:1-2). She was drunk with the blood of God's holy people who were witnesses for Jesus (17:6), but the very spirit of self-indulgence and rebellion against God would soon stir her followers to attack and consume her (17:16). They would do battle against the Lamb, but He will defeat them because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings (17:14). His righteousness conquers their unrighteousness.

Praise God for the holy, victorious Lamb.

### Sunday, December 29, 2019—Revelation 13-15

The sea was a symbol for chaos. Daniel had seen a beast coming from the sea, and John did as well. This beast had seven heads and ten horns—the pictures of leaders and authority. The dragon gave power to the beast and resurrected one of the heads so that people marveled at him, and the beast waged war against God's people. Revelation says this will be an opportunity for Christ-followers to have faith and endurance (13:10).

Another beast will rise and require all the earth to worship the first beast. He will require everyone to have a mark on the right hand or forehead in

order to do business (13:17). The rule of this second leader will require even more faith and endurance from Christ's followers.

They will daily have to consider the worthiness of Christ compared to the comforts and operations of the world. John saw the victorious Christ and a heavenly choir declaring the glory of Christ, and he heard angels declaring victory and judgment. This was to encourage God's holy people to endure persecution patiently and remain firm to the end (14:12).

Then, the judgment of Jesus will begin. He will harvest with a sickle, and seven angels will unleash seven plagues to complete God's wrath against the people of the earth. The chaos of the sea will give way to the control of the One who is the Lion and the Lamb.

Praise God for the victory of Jesus. Pray for enduring faith.

#### Saturday, December 28, 2019—Revelation 10-12

God revealed to John an overall message for all believers, yet God gave a portion to keep secret (10:4). We'll never know what John heard and saw or why God concealed it, but we can be confident He revealed everything He wanted through John's work. In fact, God said what He was showing John was what He promised the prophets (10:7). He has been faithful to point people to faith and coming judgment.

After the initial devastation and confusion caused by breaking the seals, God will send two witnesses to Jerusalem to prophesy (11:1-6). The beast will kill them after their work is complete, and the world will see their lifeless bodies lying in Jerusalem and celebrate. Then, God will bring them back to life and call them to heaven, and the seventh trumpet will sound (11:15), and the eternal reign of God will begin.

John saw great conflict between the great dragon, Satan, and those who kept the commandments of God and belonged to Jesus (12:1-17). Satan was thrown out of heaven, and God continually provided protection for His people. They defeat the dragon through their testimony and the blood of the Lamb and are not afraid to die (12:11).

Thank God for the blood of Jesus. Pray for an opportunity to share your testimony of life and hope in Him.

Friday, December 27, 2019—Revelation 7-9

John was writing to people who were bearing the heavy burden of persecution and the mental anguish of uncertainty. What Jesus revealed to him was a message of hope and endurance for some and a call to repentance and faithfulness to others.

John saw amazing things unfolding in his vision, and one of those events was the placing of God's seal on His people so they would be preserved through the terrible events to come (7:1-10). The believers could be certain that a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language would stand before the throne and worship the Lamb.

With that certainty given, the Lamb broke the seventh seal (8:1), and all of heaven was silent for half an hour. The prayers of the saints were offered up to God, and the angels began to blow their trumpets. The first four trumpets unleashed devastation on land, sea, rivers, and heavenly bodies (8:6-12). Nothing was out of the reach of God's judgment.

Then, terror was unleashed on those without the seal of God. Great scorpions stung the people so that they wanted to die but couldn't. Then an army of angels unleashed plagues that killed one-third of the earth's population. Still, the surviving would not repent (9:20-21).

Thank God for the certainty of salvation and the word that confirms His promises and plans. Pray for growing faith and obedience.

Thursday, December 26, 2019—Revelation 4-6

John had the privilege of seeing some of the glory of heaven and of God Himself. Seated on His throne, God was brilliant. Surrounding the throne were 24 thrones and 24 elders seated on them. They lay their crowns before God and worship Him for His character and creative ability (4:1-11).

In the hand of God was a sealed scroll, and John wept because no one was found who could open the scroll. Suddenly, He saw Jesus—the Lion of

Judah who was the Lamb who was slain (5:5-6). He had become powerful because He had emptied Himself. He was, therefore, worthy to open the scroll and, better yet, to receive glory, honor, wisdom, strength, riches, and power. John saw the elders fall down in worship (5:14).

Jesus began to break the seals on the scroll. The first four seals sent four horsemen to the earth to begin the judgment process God had long promised. The fifth seal stirred the response of the souls who had been martyred for their faithfulness to God (6:9). The breaking of the sixth seal unleashed natural disasters that brought devastation around the world.

Thank God for the privilege of reading Scripture and seeing a glimpse of the future. Pray for a heart that worships Jesus faithfully.

Wednesday, December 25, 2019—Revelation 1-3

The New Testament church faced challenges each day which pushed them either toward apathy or discouragement. They battled the impulses that pulled them toward legalism or licentiousness. To walk more faithfully and confidently, John shared the Revelation Jesus gave to him.

Jesus wanted them to hear and obey (1:3) because He was the commander of all the rulers of the world (1:5). He deserved praise and love for His freeing all believers from sin and making them a kingdom of priests. When John saw the vision of Jesus, He fell down like a dead man (1:17). John was consumed with the greatness of Jesus!

Jesus spoke through John to seven churches in the New Testament world. Ephesus was faithfully serving but did not love Jesus as they first had (2:4), so He called them back to Himself. Smyrna was suffering greatly, so He encouraged them to endure (2:10). Pergamum and Thyatira, too, had been faithful but needed to repent of certain things (2:16, 20)

Sardis looked alive but was spiritually dead. He called them to wake up (3:2). To Philadelphia He promised protection in suffering (3:10). Laodicea needed to recognize their mediocrity and allow Him to empower their usefulness in the Kingdom (3:15). "Hear and obey," He said to all.

Praise Jesus today for being worthy of obedience and praise.

Tuesday, December 24, 2019—2 John, 3 John, Jude

John was as close to Jesus as anyone who knew Him. That may be the reason John was so adamant about love. Jesus told His disciples they were to love one another. This would be the evidence of His reality and their discipleship. John kept calling the Body of Christ to love each other.

Love meant doing what God commanded. Christ commanded that they love one another (2 John 6). This circular pattern is practically impossible if one simply tries to will himself to love someone emotionally. Emotions are not matters of the intellect. Unconditional love, however, is a choice of the mind, not a condition of the emotions. John was calling them to renew their minds continually so they could act in love continually.

God's love would stir them to guard the truth among themselves. True love would not tolerate false teaching. It was detrimental to the health of the Body. Jude knew this tragedy as well and called his readers to contend for the truth that was delivered to them (Jude 3).

The love of Christ compels His people to welcome others—into their homes and into their hearts (3 John 5-6). Hospitality builds bridges and builds the Body. This good work proves Christ's presence (3 John 11).

Pray for a heart that loves people and loves truth.

Then, the judgment of Jesus will begin. He will harvest with a sickle, and seven angels will unleash seven plagues to complete God's wrath against the people of the earth. The chaos of the sea will give way to the control of the One who is the Lion and the Lamb.

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