INTRODUCTION

History and Background of the Book:

_Revelation_ was written by the apostle John, the same one who wrote the gospel of John and the 1, 2, and 3 John. We know from the gospels that John had a special relationship with Jesus, possibly because as a young man he was follower of His. As is described in Rev. 1:9-10, John had been exiled to the island of Patmos because he would not quit testifying about Jesus to others. He was a preacher who got in trouble for preaching about Jesus. Most historians date this in the later first century, sometime between the times of 81-96 A.D. There was severe persecution of Christians during this time, and John was banished to this island to spend his last days on earth in seclusion. The book we know as Revelation is his record of a vision he received while on that island. It’s worth mentioning that God gave this special vision to a man who was undergoing pain and heartache as a result of his faith in Jesus. It’s almost as if God was saying to him, “I’m going to let you see things other people won’t see. In fact, I’m going to let you see some things I don’t even want you to describe to others.” Notice that the Book of Revelation was written primarily to the church. John in the Spirit on the Isle of Patmos was instructed to write to the seven churches. If you know anything about the symbolism of numbers in the Bible, you know that seven is the number of wholeness. It means completeness. Just as there are seven days in a week, so also when the Bible speaks of the seven churches, it means the whole church.

We began this series a few weeks ago by introducing to you what the Focus of Revelation is all about. Remember, there are a lot of things that are talked about and discussed within these 22 chapters. Despite all of the prophecy and apocalyptic events that take place throughout the book, the Focus of the book is Jesus Christ himself. Revelation literally means to uncover or unveil. What we are doing is taking back the veil and seeing a sneak peak of what’s about to happen. The greatest thing in all of this is that we already know the outcome. No matter if you ever fully understand everything that this book is talking about, you should understand that Christ and his saints (that’s us as Christians) are on the Winning Side. We come out victorious! I don’t know about you but I like those odds going into anything.

Remember that this book is both symbolic and literal. Not everything that is said is exactly as we may imagine it to be. John tells us a lot of things are ‘like’ unto or ‘as’. So far, God has given us a glimpse into #Things2Come. I believe the reason is to warn us of impending judgment and to get us to turn to Christ. Christ can save us from the judgment to come. We have seen Jesus break open six of the seals that bind the book. We’ve seen the four horsemen of the Apocalypse who represent the wars and killing, famine and pestilence, hunger and starvation, death and hell that the antichrist will unleash upon the earth. We’ve seen some pretty amazing and horrific things that are about to happen, but it’s just the tip of the iceberg. In all reality even though what we’ve talked about so far seems bad... it’s about to get far worse!

We are coming to the section in Revelation that encompasses over 60% of the book. 14 of the 22 chapters in Revelation are devoted to what the Lord has labeled as the Great Tribulation. Remember,
this period takes place AFTER the church leaves the earth, AFTER the church concludes her mission and is taken to be with the Lord.

**Side Note: Brief Timeline Review of what’s to come**

1. The Rapture
2. The Judgment Seat of Christ: Believer’s ONLY
3. Marriage of the Lamb
4. The Great Tribulation
5. Armageddon
6. The 2nd Coming of Christ
7. The Great White Throne Judgment: Everyone that’s NOT Saved
8. The Millennium
9. The New Jerusalem; The New Heaven and Earth

John tries to make it as simple as possible for us to understand the book of Revelation. Again, I don’t think there’s any way we can fully comprehend the scope of it all because our minds have a hard time imagining this. From here on through this Great Tribulation period John introduces series of sevens. Notice, there were seven seals. There will be seven trumpets, seven performers and seven bowls of wrath.

Last week we set the stage revealing the 1st 6 of the seals. Chapter 6 opens up the beginning of the Great Tribulation which will cover the next 14 chapters of the book of Revelation. Again, this is a 7 year period that the Earth has never experienced before. Jesus talked about the Tribulation back in *Matthew 24:21* “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, unto this time, no, nor ever shall be.” That’s a pretty amazing statement when you think of all the wars, famines, diseases, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions we’ve had over the past few hundred/thousand years.

*Daniel 12:1,* “And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time, and at that time, Thy people shall be delivered, everyone found written in the book.”

**DIG IN: PART 1**

*Revelation 7-11*

What God gave to John in Rev. 6-19 is a vision of unspeakable horror. Remember chapter 5 tells of a 7 sealed scroll…the title deed to the earth. The question was asked, who is worthy to open that scroll, and reclaim ownership of the earth from Satan? We find that Christ alone is worthy! The Lamb is also the Lion! We looked at the first 6 seals last week, but between the 6th and 7th of each group, there is an interlude which explains the action and answers certain questions. This is what chapter 7 will do. So let’s look at the question that is probably on everyone’s mind, ‘Will people get saved during this time? How? And what will happen to them?’

Side Note: There are a lot of denominations today that say no one will be saved during the Tribulation. Some even ask how can people still be saved during this awful time especially when the Church has already been raptured? Well, we’re about to see exactly how this will happen. But people will get saved then the same way that people are saved today; through the working of the Holy Spirit. It will be harder to come to Christ because the Holy Spirit will no longer restrain (hold back) evil.

From here on through this Great Tribulation period John introduces series of sevens. Notice, there were seven seals. There will be seven trumpets, seven performers and seven bowls of wrath. I realize this is a
lot to process and you’re not going to be able to grasp it all. But again I ask you to hold on tight as we continue to unlock the mysteries of #Things2Come.

**The Sealed of Israel and the Fate of those who believe – Revelation 7**

✓ We’re about to see probably the Greatest Revival in the history of mankind. This will be a world-wide turning towards Christ.

✓ Vs. 1 - John saw 4 angles holding back the 4 corners of the earth. They’re holding back the great winds that come from each direction
  - This is when the break comes in after the 1st 6 seals are opened
  - The four angels were constrained as we’ll see in another verse by the other angel who was to preserve God’s people.
  - During this chapter God’s wrath will be restrained so that He can protect His people from the ensuing seventh seal, trumpet and bowl judgments.

✓ Vs. 2-3 - A 5th Angel charged the 4 not unleash the winds
  - Side Note: Angels are used as God’s Messengers to deliver His plans to the Earth
  - God is a Sovereign God and He is still in control of everything that is going on around us

✓ This 5th Angel carries with him a Seal
  - This is significant because he’s showing whose authority he’s under. This is the Seal of the Living God that will distinguish him from other False Religions
  - This seal will show the world in all reality who belongs to Christ and how belongs to Satan
  - This seal shows that God still protects His people in the midst of trials
  - We don’t know what this seal is but it’s probably going to be a visible seal

✓ Vs. 4-9: The 144,000 Sealed Servants of Israel
  - These sealed servants are all Jews. They come from 12 Tribes of Israel
  - 12 Tribes times 12,000 = 144,000
    - Notice that Dan and Ephraim are omitted and replaced by Joseph and Levi
    - This is because of their turning towards Idolatry
  - There’s a lot of debate about who these 144,000 will be but they aren’t from the Church Age. Remember the church has already gone up to Heaven.
  - These are Jews who will be saved during the Tribulation
    - Israel is God’s chosen nation and during the Tribulation Israel will finally turn back to realize their need for a Savior and that Christ is the Messiah they’ve been waiting for
    - Christ revealed this to Paul in Romans 9-11
  - This group of 144,000 is not Jehovah’s Witnesses as they believe themselves to be
    - We know this because the Bible says they are Jews.
    - Also, why would you believe in a religion that says only 144K are going to heaven? There are over 7.5 million active members today in the JW.
    - That gives you less than a 2% chance of making it into that final 144. I don’t like those odds. Those odds certainly aren’t in my favor

✓ The 144,000 are a special body of Jewish believers that are called and dedicated to serve the Lord Jesus Christ Totally and Wholly during the Tribulation. The book of Revelation reveals 3 important things about them: Rev. 14:4-5
  - They are Virgins (never married)
- This will be the worst holocaust the world has ever witness and millions upon millions will be killed
- These 144,000 make a special vow and commit their lives to the end to never deny Christ
- They take a special vow to be the encouragers and ministers to the believers and to the others who will be severely attacked and persecuted by the antichrist
  - They are called the Servant of our God
    - They are COMPLETELY COMMITTED FOLLOWER of Christ. These 144 thousand definitely aren’t fans 😊
    - They will have the great responsibility to proclaim Christ and win others to Him
  - They are redeemed from among men
    - They’re the 1st to be saved during the Tribulation
- This all points to the Restoration of Israel when Christ clearly points that Israel would be saved in the end time
- Vs. 9 – John then sees a crowd so large you couldn’t even number it
  - This points out that there were many more saved during this time this just the 144K
  - It’s a crowd made up of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue
    - This is important because it’s not just Jews who get saved but also Gentiles
- Vs. 10-12: They begin to testify to the fact that they are saved
  - They join the angels in worshiping and praising the Lord
- Vs. 13-14: We know for a fact that people will get saved because of the literal translation
  - John didn’t know who these were but one of the elders told him that they’re the ones who came out of the Great Tribulation
  - This indicates that believers were martyred (killed) for their faith
- Vs. 15-17: God assures them that there’ll be no more suffering
  - The great paradox here is that the Tribulation will not only be a period of the greatest divine judgment ever known to this earth, but it will also be the time of the Greatest Revival the world has ever and will ever see
DIG IN: PART 2

We’re about to talk about the Opening of the 7th Seal. This seal brings with it the 7 Trumpet Judgments. These Judgments will be more horrific and more devastating than the world has ever seen or even imagined. There’s no way I can even begin to fathom just how bad it’s about to get. So let’s get right into it.

The 7th Seal and the Trumpet Judgments – Revelation 8-9

- Vs. 1 –The 7th Seal is opened and there came a strange, eerie, but awesome silence.
  - It is no doubt the longest silence that the joyful place of Heaven has ever known.
  - This silence will stand in stark contrast to the Heaven we see in chapters 4 and 5, as those gathered around the throne cry Thou art worthy, and a choir of 100 million declare: Worthy is the Lamb, and they cease not day and night crying Holy, Holy, Holy!
  - And then for 30 minutes all of heaven is dead silent! What does this silence stand for?
    - One preacher said this: “Some have suggested there will be no women in Heaven, but I wouldn’t dare say that!” 😊
    - Seriously—why does heaven come to a standstill? What does this silence represent?
    - This is that Calm before the storm. I can imagine that all of Heaven is holding its breath. It’s probably because what they see at the opening of the 7th seal is so terrible, so horrendous, so incredibly frightening, that no one in heaven dares to breathe a word
      - Maybe like the silence in the courtroom, just before the verdict is read—it’s like the silence in the executioner’s chamber, just before he pulls the switch, or administers the lethal injection
      - Or the silence in your house after you just broke your mom’s favorite antique dish from her dead great aunt

- Inside of this 7th Seal, the 7 Trumpet Judgments are contained and eventually explained

- Vs. 3-6: An 8th Angel appears at the heavenly altar and carries with him a censer with incense
  - This is significant because it seems as if both holy angels and redeemed humans want God to judge the world of the wicked angels and people
  - The angel then fills the censer with the fire of the altar and casts it toward the earth
  - This is accompanied by 4 signs that indicate imminent and divine judgment
  - It also provides a signal for the 7 angels to blow their trumpets in planned sequence

- The 1st Trumpet Judgment (8:7)
  - This contains the phenomenon of hail and fire mingled with blood. That’s a great picture isn’t it?
  - This judgment is similar to the 7th plague that God put on the Egyptians back in the O.T.
  - Vegetation is the main target of this 1st Trumpet Judgment however some human and animal life will also be affected
  - The destruction by fire of 1/3 of the trees and grass will be a huge devastating blow to the ecology of Earth and its ability to sustain animal and vegetable food
    - Think of all the animals that eat trees and grass
    - That’s gotta smell bad. Burnt grass and trees
The 2nd Trumpet Judgment (8:8-9)
- This is going to affect the sea in a crazy way
  - Did you know that 70% of the earth’s surface is covered by water?
- John sees what appeared to be something ‘as it were’ a great mountain plunging into the sea. Now, there’s a lot of debate about this one as well. Here’s what some believe it might be:
  - This could be some massive volcanic explosion that’s forceful enough to explode a mass of rock as large as a mountain into the ocean
- Whatever it ‘actually’ is will be pretty horrifying. Here’s why:
  - A 1/3 of the Sea will be turned into Blood (wouldn’t want to drink that)
  - A 1/3 of the sea life will be destroyed (there goes dinner)
  - A 1/3 of the ships were destroyed (I wouldn’t want to be on a Cruise during this time)
- What’s going to wipe all these ships out and the people surfing at the time will be a Massive Tidal Wave that you only see in the movies

The 3rd Trumpet Judgment (8:10-11)
- John sees a Great Star falling from heaven
  - This most likely will be a Meteor
  - Remember meteors are stars that fall from the heavens
- Remember, the 2nd Trumpet Judgment just affected 1/3 of the Seas (Salt Water)
- This meteoric explosion will break apart and affect over 1/3 of the World’s Fresh Water.
- The name of the ‘Star’ is called Wormwood. This debris or particles from the Star will poison the water and before people become aware of this they will die from drinking it
- Wormwood gets its name from a plant that grows in waste or in desert places that is very bitter
- Think of the affect this will have on the earth:
  - Shortage of Water
  - Thirst among the people
  - A panic because of thirst and lack of fresh water (I wouldn’t want to have to take a bath in Mt. Dew)
  - Sheer Terror and fright because of what’s already happened
- Before we move on to the 4th Trumpet I want you to take note of how Wormwood is used in the Scriptures:

  Wormwood became a symbol of idolatry because of its bitterness
  - It leaves a bitter taste for God to swallow
  - Jeremiah 9:13-15

  Wormwood symbolizes the bitterness that an immoral person brings into one’s life
  - Pr. 5:3-5

  Wormwood symbolizes the way people treat God with disdain
  - Dt. 29:18; Jer. 23:15; Amos 5:6-7

The 4th Trumpet Judgment (8:12-13)
- How many have ever seen some kind of Eclipse in person? (and I’m not talking about the car)
- This 4th T.J. will be some sort of astronomical eclipse
This isn’t just going to affect the moon or the sun but most of the heavens
This is talked about back in Joel 2:10, ‘ ...the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.’
Again, there’s a lot of speculation as to what this affect will have on the earth but here’s a few possibilities:
  - 1/3 of the sun, moon, and stars will be eclipsed
  - There will be an eclipse that will blacken out 1/3 of the day; our days have about 24 hours in them... it may mean it’ll be reduced to 16 hours
  - There will be no light at all for a 1/3 of the night. No moon to shine and give out light
Whatever is meant here is intended for judgment on the earth from God
God is leading the people to repent or be judged
God is throwing out all forces of Nature. They have no power or authority that can even match God’s power. God holds creation in the palm of His hands.
  - It’s not up to Mother Nature. It’s up to GOD the Father
Here’s the picture that we’re getting: God’s fed up with the sin and disobedience and enough is enough. No more mercy.
The antichrist has already had a holocaust that has slaughtered millions and now it’s God’s turn to wipe out these wicked people and wipe out the earth entirely
Vs. 13 – Here’s where it almost gets scary. As if it hasn’t been bad already with the opening of the 1st 6 Seals and now the 1st 4 of the Trumpet Judgments... There’s an Angel declaring in the Heavens that the final 3 judgments are going to be worse than what they’ve already seen
  - How’s this possible?
  - The Angel is crying out about 3 Woe’s that are about to happen. This is significant as we’ll see

✓ The 5th Trumpet Judgment (9:1-12)
WOW! I don’t even know what more to say. There’s so much in these 12 verses that it could take an hour to talk about but I’ll go quick 😊
John sees a “fallen star”
  - Notice the pronoun ‘him’ is given to this fallen star
Again, there’s much speculation regarding different things and as to who are what this is talking about. For sake of time I’ll give you a few
Some believe This ‘being’ to be either Satan or some other high ranking Fallen Angel
  - Abaddon or Apollyon are words that mean: Destroyer (vs. 11)
In comparing Scripture with Scripture the Fallen Star appears to be Satan himself
  - Lk. 10:18; Is. 14:12-15
Jesus Christ has the keys to the bottomless pit but for some reason gives the keys to this being (Satan)
He allows Satan to afflict the earth
  - But note that there are restrictions much like what happened with Job. You can torment them but can’t kill them
There is an Abyss or a Bottomless Pit that will be opened by the Fall
This is the place where evil spirits and demons are kept until the end of the world
Smoke arises out of the pit. Smoke like the smoke of a great furnace
  - The Smoke of the underworld will attack men and women
  - The breath of life will be suffocated out of them
Vs. 3-6 – Out of the Smoke come out locusts
Remember this book is full of Symbolism so it may mean actual locust or could be like unto

- Some believe this will be demonic creatures
- They will be given scorpion like power (vs. 3)
  - Scorpions strike with their tail
  - The sting isn’t fatal but it does cause terrible suffering
- They will be restrained from damaging nature (vs. 4)
  - Probably means they won’t be real locusts
  - Probably ‘real’ beings because they take commands
- They are to afflict only the people who don’t have the seal of God
  - God will seal His people during the Tribulation
  - Believers will die at the hand of the antichrist but not a single one will be touched by God’s Judgment
- They won’t kill people, only torment them (vs. 5)
  - This is going to be a 5 month torment and they won’t die which is the easy way out

Look at their attributes in vs. 7-10
- Vs. 11 – They have a king to rule over them
  - He’s an angel: meaning he has power
  - This is why most believe this will be Satan. He is the King of the Fallen Angels. He’s the Prince of Darkness
- I can’t even begin to imagine this demonic attack on mankind

The 6th Trumpet Judgment (9:13-21)
- John hears a voice coming from the golden altar and this angel issues a command in vs. 14 – *Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates…*
  - The Euphrates River is a natural water boundary between the middle East and the Far East
  - God promised Abraham land that extended to the Euphrates *(Gen. 15:18)*
- This judgment is coming from the throne room of God and He is executing Judgment for the slaying of the millions by the antichrist. God is going to hear the prayers at the altar of incense of all those who cry out for justice to be served
- These 4 loosed angels have one purpose and that’s to wipe out 1/3 of the earth’s population
  - Remember: in the 4th Seal, ¼ of the World’s population is already wiped out and now add to that another 1/3
  - Let’s imagine it this way. Suppose there were 4 Billion left after the Rapture and 1 Billion killed would represent the ¼. Now out of the 3 Billion left, 1 Billion more are wiped out
  - More than half of the population at the start of the Tribulation is now gone following this event. That’s A LOT of people
- Vs. 15 – There’s an exact hour, day, month, and year as to when this will happen
- Vs. 16 – The horsemen gather an army of 200 Million
  - Not sure if it’s all fallen angels or wicked men but whoever it is that’s one impressive army
  - That’s about 2/3 the size of America’s total population right now
- Vs. 16-19 – These riders will be protected
  - This symbolizes they will be indestructible. Man won’t be able to stop them
- These riders will have power in their mouths, heads, and tails
  - This symbolizes their intelligence, deceptive speech, and poisonous strikes
There’s a purpose for all this judgment and it’s the same purpose God has used throughout history...
  ▪  It’s for a Call to Repentance

This culture we live in today is pretty Wicked, but that’s nothing compared to the sin that will be more magnified during this time.

There will be an increase in murders and theft and witchcraft and idolatry and sexual immorality during this time.

God spared 2/3 of the remaining population to see if they’d repent and give them a 2nd chance
  ▪  Even though God knows what’s going to happen before it happens, He still gives us a free will. We have a choice to make and choose to accept Him or reject Him

God gives them a chance to turn from their wickedness but they refuse

It’s easy to say after seeing all that they’ve seen they’d turn to God, but we see horrors every day and people still refuse to repent. We grow accustom to our sin and become blinded by it. Instead of repenting and getting right with God we blame Him

WRAP UP

All we’ve seen in the past 2 chapters in Horror after Horror unleashed upon the earth. Remember there’s still more to come. There’s still one final Trumpet that will sound and introduce the 3rd Woe.

We’ve just begun to unlock the secrets within this book. Remember that though some horrific things are coming to earth the Christian has nothing to fear because we’ll be gone. I never try to scare someone into getting saved, but if you’re not saved this should serve as a great warning of what’s heading your way. Remember, we already know the end of the story so stay tuned each week as we continue to look at and catch a small glimpse of #Things2Come.