

THE BOOK OF REVELATION, REVISITED

Wednesday, January 6, 2021 / First Assembly of God / Ft. Myers, FL
with Pastor Dan Betzer

HERE COMES THE BRIDE! OF CHRIST!

After 34 years of Wednesday night Bible studies, we have come to our final three such nights together before I retire. During those years, we have had nearly 40 major studies based on the exposition of scripture from both the Old and New Testaments. You have received hundreds of pages of my personal notes, which I hope have helped you. I have based this on Jesus' own commitment: Luke 24:45 - ***Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.*** This, it seems to me, should be a primary commitment of every church pastor: Ephesians 4:11-12 - ***And he (God) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...*** It is my most fervent prayer that these decades of studying the Word together have helped you develop spiritually and have truly edified (strengthened) you.

Tonight I have leaped ahead several chapters in Revelation to chapter 19 in order to complete the study this month. As we come to this glorious chapter, the Tribulation has ended and eternity is about to begin. The frightening seven-year Trib has ended, this horrendous earthly upheaval that has decimated the world population almost (not quite) to extinction.

It began seven years earlier with the sudden supernatural withdrawal of the saved (born again) Redeemed believers who disappeared from earth in the "catching away" (Rapture) of the Church. In that moment, every believer, living and dead, vanish from earth. These saints are caught up to be with Christ forever. "Absent from the body - present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

1 When we saints arrive in Heaven with the Lord, the first order of business
2 for us will be the Judgement Seat of Christ, where our work for the Lord
3 will be audited to see if we truly have merited eternal rewards, aside from
4 salvation and eternal life:

5 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

6 ***For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus***
7 ***Christ. [12] Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver,***
8 ***precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; [13] Every man's work shall be***
9 ***made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed***
10 ***by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. [14] If***
11 ***any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a***
12 ***reward. [15] If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but***
13 ***he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.***

14 Very few, if any texts in Scripture have impacted me more than that one.
15 It won't be long, I believe, until I stand before God to give an account of
16 my works; not WHAT I did so much as WHY I did it. What motivated
17 me? My love and commitment to Christ? Or personal reasons?

18 Following this judgment will come THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE
19 LAMB. Then will come the eternal honeymoon, so to speak, which will
20 be our primary emphasis tonight. This will incorporate our years of
21 celebrating with our Lord. All tears and earthly sorrow will be forgotten.
22 We will be in that state of delight until the Lord tells us to "mount up," so
23 to speak, and we come back to earth with the Lord to begin His Millennial
24 reign for a thousand years:

25 Isaiah 65:20-25 (The Living Bible)

26 ***"No longer will babies die when only a few days old; no longer will men***
27 ***be considered old at 100! Only sinners will die that young! [21] In those***
28 ***days, when a man builds a house, he will keep on living in it--it will not***
29 ***be destroyed by invading armies as in the past. My people will plant***
30 ***vineyards and eat the fruit themselves-- [22] their enemies will not***
31 ***confiscate it. For my people will live as long as trees and will long enjoy***
32 ***their hard-won gains. [23] Their harvests will not be eaten by their***
33 ***enemies; their children will not be born to be cannon fodder. For they***

1 *are the children of those the Lord has blessed; and their children, too,*
2 *shall be blessed. [24] I will answer them before they even call to me.*
3 *While they are still talking to me about their needs, I will go ahead and*
4 *answer their prayers! [25] The wolf and lamb shall feed together, the*
5 *lion shall eat straw as the ox does, and poisonous snakes shall strike no*
6 *more! In those days nothing and no one shall be hurt or destroyed in all*
7 *my Holy Mountain,” says the Lord.*

8

9 Revelation 20:4-6 (The Living Bible)

10 *Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those who had been given*
11 *the right to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded*
12 *for their testimony about Jesus, for proclaiming the Word of God, and*
13 *who had not worshiped the Creature or his statue, nor accepted his mark*
14 *on their foreheads or their hands. They had come to life again and now*
15 *they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

16 *[5] This is the First Resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come*
17 *back to life until the thousand years had ended.) [6] Blessed and holy*
18 *are those who share in the First Resurrection. For them the Second*
19 *Death holds no terrors, for they will be priests of God and of Christ, and*
20 *shall reign with him a thousand years.*

21 While the Rapture signals the beginning of eternal bliss with God, it also
22 marks all hell breaking loose on earth. All three of God’s judgements
23 (God’s anger, not man’s!) are vented down here: **The Seal Judgments**
24 (Revelation 6 to 8:1), **the Trumpet Judgments** (Revelation 8:6-11:15)
25 and **the Vial or Bowl Judgments** (Revelation 15:1 to 16:21).

26 During these seven years on earth, Satan will rule supreme, flanked by his
27 henchmen, The Antichrist and the False Prophet (Revelation 13). Again
28 and again, Israel will be attacked politically and militarily, but God comes
29 to her aid (read carefully Ezekiel 38 and 39). During this tribulation
30 period, there will be a one-world government, a one-world religious
31 system in which all people will be required to take the Mark of the Beast:

32 Revelation 13:16-18

33 *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,*
34 *to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: [17] And*

1 *that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name*
2 *of the beast, or the number of his name. [18] Here is wisdom. Let him*
3 *that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the*
4 *number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

5 Now with the world in turmoil, over a billion people dead in Antichrist's
6 lethal wake, the armies of the world march on Israel, the epicenter of
7 which will be the Valley of Armageddon.

8 We now pick up the stunning 19th chapter of Revelation, our glorious
9 study for tonight:

10 Revelation 19:1-21

11 *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven,*
12 *saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the*
13 *Lord our God: [2] For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath*
14 *judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her*
15 *fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. [3]*
16 *And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.*
17 *[4] And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and*
18 *worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. [5] And*
19 *a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his*
20 *servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. [6] And I heard as*
21 *it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters,*
22 *and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord*
23 *God omnipotent reigneth. [7] Let us be glad and rejoice, and give*
24 *honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath*
25 *made herself ready. [8] And to her was granted that she should be*
26 *arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the*
27 *righteousness of saints. [9] And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are*
28 *they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he*
29 *saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. [10] And I fell at his*
30 *feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy*
31 *fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus:*
32 *worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. [11]*
33 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat*
34 *upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth*

1 *judge and make war. [12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his*
2 *head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew,*
3 *but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:*
4 *and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which*
5 *were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen,*
6 *white and clean. [15] And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that*
7 *with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of*
8 *iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of*
9 *Almighty God. [16] And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name*
10 *written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*
11 *[17] And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud*
12 *voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and*
13 *gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; [18] That*
14 *ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of*
15 *mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and*
16 *the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. [19] And*
17 *I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered*
18 *together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his*
19 *army. [20] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that*
20 *wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had*
21 *received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image.*
22 *These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*
23 *[21] And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the*
24 *horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were*
25 *filled with their flesh.*

26 What a change from the opening chapters of Revelation to the glorious
27 conclusion! The dark and gloomy, destructive scenes have changed to the
28 brilliant light of Heaven itself as we, you and I, join the throngs of the
29 saved around the throne of God. Note how John clarifies the change:

30 Revelation 19:1-5

31 *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven,*
32 *saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the*
33 *Lord our God: [2] For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath*
34 *judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her*
35 *fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. [3]*

1 *And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.*
2 *[4] And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and*
3 *worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. [5] And*
4 *a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his*
5 *servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.*

6 Here is a story from comparative modern history that delights my soul:

7 The composer was in despair. Struggling now to earn a living in London,
8 after some prosperity in earlier days of his career, he knew days now when
9 he could not afford to buy food. One night in 1741, depressed and
10 defeated, he wandered the lonely streets of the great city. It was nearly
11 dawn when he finally arrived back at his shabby room. On his table was
12 a thick envelope. It had been sent by Charles Jennens, a man who wrote
13 this composers librettos (the text of operas). Examining the pages, the
14 composer found them covered with Scripture texts.

15 Wearily he tossed the pages aside and crawled into bed. But he could not
16 sleep. The words he had read kept going through his mind.

17 *Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, my people, saith your God*

18 *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light...*

19 *For unto us a Child is born!*

20 *Glory to God in the highest!*

21 *Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

22 Now too stirred to sleep, he got up and went to his piano. Music flowed
23 from his heart - rich, majestic, triumphant. He began to write. Night and
24 day for three weeks he wrote feverishly. He forgot sleep, food and rest.
25 He refused to see anyone. At last on the day the work was finished, one
26 friend managed to gain entrance. The composer was at his piano, sheets
27 of music strewn around him, tears streaming down his face. He exclaimed
28 to his friend, *"I do believe I have seen all of Heaven before me and the*
29 *great God Himself!"* he exclaimed.



1

2 Millions of people have been able to believe that. The first audience to
3 hear the composition in Dublin in 1742 gave it the great ovation in the
4 city to that time. Weeks later, London heard it for the first time and again
5 it was a triumph. The King (George II) was so impressed that during the
6 Hallelujah Chorus he rose to his feet, a custom that still prevails. Since
7 that time, millions have thrilled to what has become the most beloved
8 composition of all times: George Frederick Handel's MESSIAH!
9 Hallelujah is a word that means PRAISE THE LORD!

10 Try to imagine, if you can, the coming glorious celebration in Heaven as
11 the saints of all ages, flanked by at least 100 million angels (Revelation
12 ***5:11 - And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about***
13 ***the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was***
14 ***ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...***) sing
15 to God Himself their praise and adulation! Satan is about to be pitched
16 into Hell at this point, along with the Antichrist and the False Prophet. All
17 of Heaven has anticipated this grand moment. The Prince of Glory, Jesus
18 the Messiah (Christ) has prevailed over all foes. Redeemed humanity
19 sings His praises. For generations the followers of Jesus have prayed,
20 "Thy Kingdom come" and now that moment has arrived.

21

22

1 THE FINAL TEST: THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

2 Once again I call to your attention the final test of believers: will we have
3 any rewards? Not necessarily as already pointed out on page 2 of these
4 notes, taken from Paul's writings to the church in Corinth, Greece. It is a
5 joy to sing "Mansion Over The Hilltop" but it just isn't necessarily so.

6 Before we are given entre to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Jesus),
7 our wedding garments will be thoroughly tested to assure God that
8 nothing will be allowed inside that brings attention to ourselves rather
9 than Christ. That "trousseau" check will be an event called THE
10 JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. Every believer will stand before
11 Almighty God for an audit of our lives. (Again: I Corinthians 3:9-15)

12 The issues to be settled and confirmed:

- 13 • We are saved by faith in Christ Jesus, not by our works. Freedom
14 from sin, eternal life, and a new relationship with God come with
15 salvation - but not rewards!
- 16 • When we are born again, we start to build our lives on a sure
17 foundation which is Jesus Christ. (And He is the standard by which
18 we will ultimately be judged by God. Someone told me recently that
19 he felt he was good enough to go to Heaven. Unfortunately for him,
20 that is not the case for the "standard" alone that God will accept is
21 the life and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Unless you and I measure
22 up to Him, we are "dead in trespasses" and have no hope of glory.
23 Only the acceptance of Jesus and His life into ours opens Heaven's
24 portals for us!) But what materials do we use in our building? The
25 gold, silver and precious stones that will endure the test at this
26 judgement are those things we do motivated by our love for Jesus
27 alone. The hay, wood and stubble are those things we do for our own
28 satisfaction. Since all our materials will be judged by fire, the hay,
29 wood and stubble cannot and will not survive. **OUR REWARDS
30 ARE BASED ON WHAT REMAINS AFTER THE FIERY TEST.**

31

- 1 • What are the rewards? Darlene and I have gone through quite a few
2 castles in Europe. Beautiful? Yes. But they would not be a goal of
3 mine. I would rather have a quaint log cabin by the side of a fish-
4 filled lake! Rewards in Heaven will not consist of “stuff.” No, not
5 even mansions. Remember Jesus’ words: John 14:2 ***In my Father's***
6 ***house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.***
7 ***I go to prepare a place for you.*** Jesus never promised us a mansion
8 but He did commit to a Place for us.

- 9
- 10 • We will cast our crowns (rewards) at Jesus’ feet. Revelation 4:10
11 ***The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the***
12 ***throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast***
13 ***their crowns (rewards) before the throne...*** We often sing The Old
14 Rugged Cross where in the chorus the lyrics are: “So I’ll cherish the
15 old rugged cross... til my trophies at last I lay down.” Would it not
16 be shameful to be escorted to meet our Lord face to face and as we
17 bow before Him, hands outstretched, all we have to lay at His feet
18 are ashes? We will not be allowed into the Marriage Supper of the
19 Lamb with soiled robes, ashes-stained hands and a tattered
20 old suitcase.

21 QUESTION: Should a professing Christian, a Sunday-morning follower
22 of Christ, a non-witnessing, non-giving, non-missionary minded carnal
23 believer receive the same reward in Heaven as the Apostle Paul? Yes, he
24 or she may receive salvation. But rewards? Think about it!

25

26 Next time: THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST TO EARTH

27